

Bearwood and Merley

Bearwood and Merley ward comprises of two residential areas and countryside to the north of Poole. The two residential areas are divided, and surrounded, by areas of heathland and Green Belt. Merley is somewhat isolated from other parts of the BCP area and is most closely linked to Wimborne. The Castleman Trailway, a disused railway line, provides a pedestrian and cycle link between Merley and Broadstone. Bearwood integrates with older housing alongside Ringwood Road, a major A-road in the east of the ward. To the north of Bearwood the Canford SANG provides good access to the Stour Valley River corridor.

Sustainable neighbourhoods

Bearwood and Merley contains two sustainable neighbourhoods:

- **Bearwood Sustainable Neighbourhood** is largely based on the walking catchment of the local centre at the junction of King John Avenue and Knights Road, but also includes a small parade of shops in Fulwood Avenue, and a shopping parade along Ringwood Road which is easily accessed along the main road through Bearwood. Both areas provide a range of services for residents. The area also benefits from good access to open spaces, a doctors' surgery with a planned expansion, a primary school, play areas, a community centre, and local employment opportunities. A sustainable transport corridor between the area and Poole and Wimborne is planned.
- **Merley and Oakley Sustainable Neighbourhood** is primarily served by the local centre at Sopwith Crescent, which provides a small number of services and shops and is largely walkable within the neighbourhood. The ward also benefits from a doctors' surgery, a first school, access to open space, play areas, and a community centre. A sustainable transport corridor between the area and Poole and Wimborne is planned.

Active travel infrastructure, open space and recreational facility enhancements

The walking and cycling infrastructure between Merley and Bearwood has had some investment in recent years, although there is potential for further improvements to improve the walking and cycling experience within the ward. We will explore opportunities to improve routes towards Wimborne alongside some potential improvements within the individual communities, including to and from schools. We have also identified enhancements to existing open spaces and recreational facilities, and potential new facilities that would enhance the liveability of the ward and would be supported.

Broad townscape characteristics

The area is characterised by postwar estate housing and interwar/postwar suburban detached housing, typical of many of the BCP area's suburbs. New development should typically incorporate good quality soft landscape and boundary treatments to the front, integrate with the positive characteristics of existing development while adding appropriate interest, and strengthen the relationship between buildings and the street where this is presently weak. Development should also take any opportunities to improve housing layouts to create clear perimeter blocks to overlook streets and public spaces.

Canford Magna has its own unique village character and is within a conservation area. It is important that development is of a modest scale and design, maintains the village's rural character and preserves or enhances the character and appearance of the conservation area.

Retail areas

Four retail centres wholly fall within Bearwood and Merley: Merley Local Centre, Bearwood Local Centre, and two smaller parades of shops at Ringwood Road/Poole Lane and Fulwood Avenue, as shown on the policies map. These centres are the focal points of the sustainable neighbourhoods and proposals should aim to maintain or enhance the vitality, viability and diversity of these centres.

Employment areas

The Francis Avenue Employment Area, as shown on the policies map, will be safeguarded for employment uses.

Canford School plays an important role within the local economy as both an education facility and employer. The school campus and grounds occupy the former heart of the ancient Manor of Canford and as such have an historical significance to the origins and growth of Poole. There are a number of listed buildings within or close to the school boundary, including the Grade I Listed parish Church of St John, John of Gaunt's Kitchen and the main school building itself, which is the former Manor House. In addition, the whole of the site falls within the Canford Magna Conservation Area and the grounds are included on the Dorset Gardens Trust Local List. Given the economic, architectural and historic importance of the school and the need to maintain it in a viable and optimal use, we support the school in bringing forward essential development to meet its operational and educational needs over the plan period.

Housing

We expect around 1,545 homes to be built in the ward, 1,364 homes have planning permission (including the urban extensions north of Merley and Bearwood), with 120 homes on other allocated sites and 60 homes coming forward as windfall opportunities, mostly through intensification of existing plots. Provision of new homes is encouraged within the local opportunity areas and on the local opportunity streets (outside employment areas) where there is potential for regeneration and/or enhancements to townscape character.

The ward contains part of Canford Heath, one of the largest remnants of the Dorset Heathlands. Parts of the ward are therefore within 400 metres of

the Dorset Heathlands where a net increase in residential development is not suitable. The north of the ward contains the River Stour and areas at risk of flooding. The Green Belt wraps around the residential areas limiting further housing development potential.

Site allocations

Bearwood and Merley contains five site allocations:

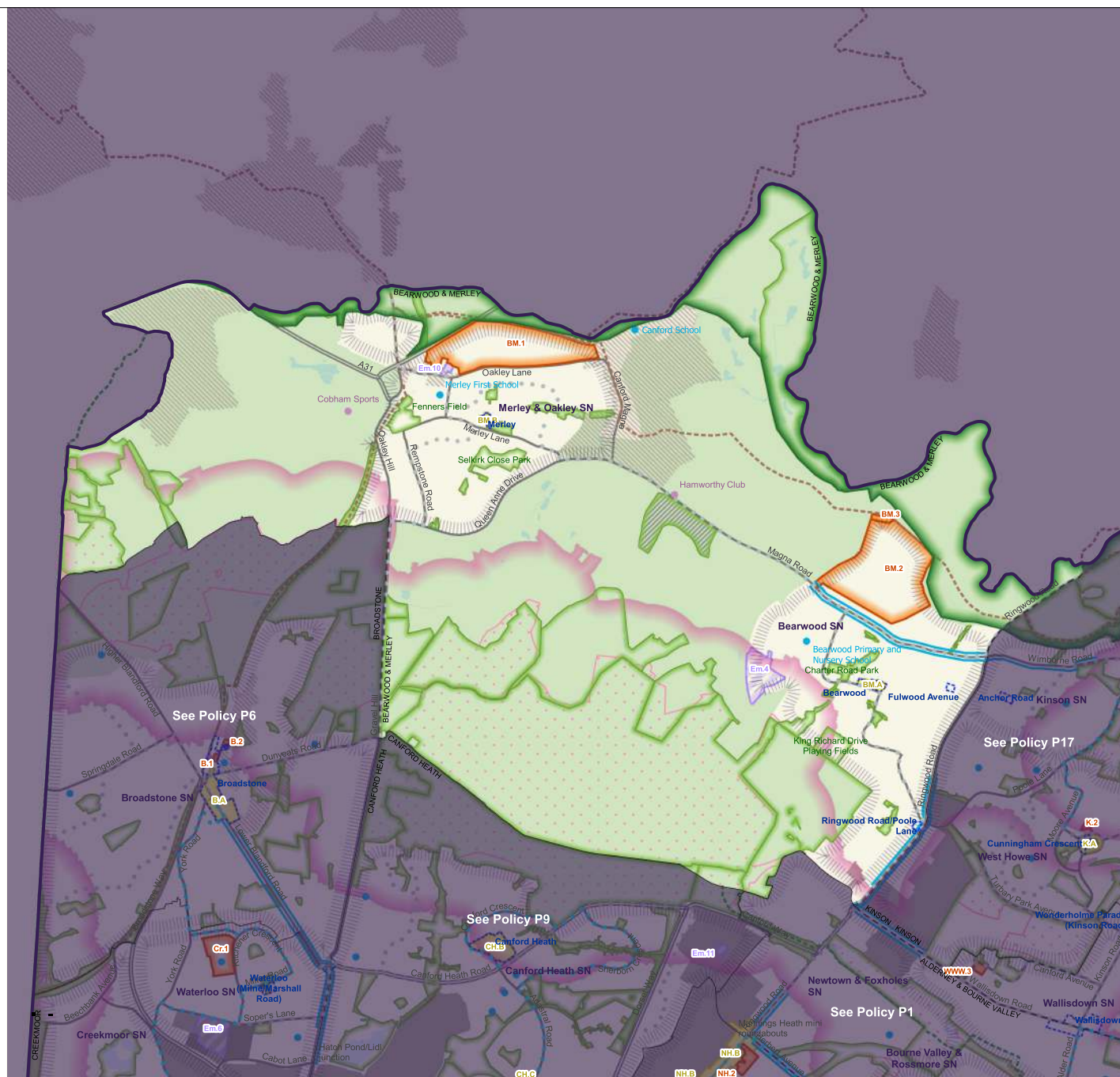
- **Land north of Merley (BM.1)** and **Land north of Bearwood (BM.2)** form strategic urban extensions and benefit from planning permissions, including outline consent for both schemes. The sites will continue to be allocated to ensure new phases deliver high quality developments that play a central role in meeting the area's housing needs. Development on the sites is to be informed by design codes agreed by the Local Planning Authority that are shaped by masterplanning exercises undertaken with the local community. Developments on these sites will need to create a strong sense of local distinctiveness, and respect the character of the surrounding area, with particular focus on landscaping, heritage assets and their settings, and the transition between the urban area and open countryside beyond. In particular, the new local centre at Land north of Bearwood will need to create a strong focal point for the new community. Appropriate buffers will be necessary to physically separate and provide a natural setting between the heritage assets and the proposed built form. Permanent

Bearwood & Merley key diagram

- ||||| Sustainable neighbourhood boundaries
- Site allocation
- Local opportunity area
- Local opportunity street (frontages)
- Retail centre
- Employment allocation
- Existing employment areas
- School
- Community facility enhancement
- Greenway
- Other key bus routes
- Key trail
- Open space*
- Stour Valley River Corridor Project
- Conservation Area
- Dorset Heathlands
- 400m heathland consultation area
- Green Belt
- Land safeguarded for cemeteries
- Ward boundaries
- Other wards and areas outside BCP
- BCP boundary

*Only public open spaces over 0.1ha in size are shown.

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boundaries will need to be considered and provided for the new Green Belt boundary. The sites will provide a mix of homes, with a focus on much-needed family housing (including affordable housing). Both schemes will provide some plots to enable opportunities for self-build, and care homes to meet the needs of the ageing population.

- **Land opposite Knighton House, Knighton Lane (BM.3)** is a small site located to the north of the Land north of Bearwood strategic urban extension site. The site will provide a sympathetic development incorporating much-needed family homes.
- **Churchill Business Park and surrounds (Em.4)** forms an employment allocation. The business park is under construction at the time of writing and will provide new jobs for the increasing local population. The allocation includes an additional two and a half hectares of land located to the southeast of the business park.
- **Cruxton Farm buildings (Em.10)** is allocated for employment use, and a cross subsidy from the adjacent housing development has been secured to help deliver this use.

Local opportunity areas

Bearwood and Merley contains two local opportunity areas, **Bearwood Centre (BM.A)** and **Merley Centre (BM.B)**. These local opportunity areas are similar, in that both would benefit from improvements to layout, appearance and commercial/community offer of the local centres. Development in these areas should be mixed use incorporating commercial and community uses, with some residential, to strengthen the offer of the local centres. Development in these areas should enhance the character and appearance of the local centres with good quality architecture and soft landscaping.

Local opportunity streets

Sections of Magna Road and Ringwood Road have been designated as local opportunity streets where gentle increases in height may take place to either enlarge existing properties or create additional properties where appropriate. All development should provide a fine-grained character and provide soft landscaping and tree planting to the front of plots where development is set back from the street.

Strategic Policy P2: Bearwood and Merley

1. Sustainable neighbourhoods

The sustainable neighbourhoods within Bearwood and Merley will be enhanced by:

- Strengthening the retail and community facility offer, and townscape quality of the Bearwood and Merley Local Centres;
- Exploring opportunities to enhance the public realm and improve pedestrian and cycling infrastructure and safety at/around the following streets, roads and locations (or surrounding routes):
 - Between Magna Road and King John Avenue to improve accessibility to Bearwood Primary School and the Bearwood Local Centre
 - Oakley Lane
 - Oakley Hill
- Supporting proposals to develop new infrastructure or enhance existing infrastructure including community facilities, schools, health services, open spaces and play areas, including:
 - Bearwood Primary School and Merley First School, supporting expansion
 - Doctors' surgeries, supporting expansion
 - The Hamworthy Club and Cobham Sports and Social Club, retaining and enhancing the community and sports facilities
 - King Richard Drive Playing Fields, including new play and fitness equipment
 - Fenners Field, including the retention and improvement of pitches and upgrades to the play area
 - Selkirk Close Park, retention of pitch area and upgrades to the play area
 - Castleman Trailway, enhanced surfacing, wayfinding and accessibility to improve its function as a strategic greenway
 - Charter Road Park, including upgrades to the play area
- Providing skate park / wheeled play opportunities linking to new youth facilities within the ward;
- Upgrading links and connectivity for people and nature to the Stour Valley;
- Improving the safety and attractiveness of walking and cycling routes to and around schools;
- Supporting new teaching and sports facilities, and associated buildings where they are required at Canford School to meet the educational and operational needs of the school; and
- Working with public transport operators to deliver a high frequency bus corridor between Bearwood and Merley and Poole, Bournemouth and Wimborne Town Centres.

2. Housing

A minimum of 1,545 homes will be built in the ward. The allocated sites will provide 546 new affordable homes.

3. Site allocations

The following sites are allocated for development and are shown on the policies map:

a. Land north of Merley (BM.1)

The site is allocated for up to 550 homes and a care home or extra care home within the region of 60-bed spaces. Development proposals must:

- Provide 40% affordable housing and a mix of housing types with a focus on housing suitable for families;
- Be informed by a design code to be agreed by the Local Planning Authority;
- Incorporate at least eight hectares of public open space, including a range of play spaces and green corridors;
- Incorporate structural landscaping to create a strong permanent and defensible Green Belt boundary;
- Preserve or enhance surrounding heritage assets and their settings, including Canford Magna and Oakley Lane Conservation Areas, adjacent listed buildings and the carriage drive, with a landscaped buffer to heritage assets;

- vi. Provide a SANG that forms part of the Stour Valley River corridor including the former railway land, designed in accordance with the Dorset Heathlands SPD;
- vii. Prioritise cycling and walking facilities for shorter trips within the new community and to existing facilities in Merley and Wimborne;
- viii. Ensure the design of the scheme is capable of forming part of a sustainable corridor in terms of bus, cycling and walking access;
- ix. Make a financial contribution towards the implementation of a sustainable transport corridor between the site and Poole and Wimborne, including bus services;
- x. Provide mitigation to address any unacceptable impacts on the highway network with highway improvements to Oakley Lane, including the junction with the B3073 at the Willett Arms Public House and the junction with Magna Road;
- xi. Provide a public car park to serve the local community facilities at Canford Magna and the SANG;
- xii. Provide at least five self-build plots; and
- xiii. Make financial contributions to additional school capacity and upgrading the local doctors' surgery.

b. Land north of Bearwood (BM.2)

The site is allocated for a minimum of 800 homes, a minimum of a 60-bed care or extra care home and a local centre incorporating space for business start-ups/incubator units, shopping and community facilities (Use Classes E and F). Development proposals must:

- i. Provide 40% affordable housing and a mix of housing types with a focus on housing suitable for families;
- ii. Be informed by a design code to be agreed by the Local Planning Authority;
- iii. Incorporate at least 11 hectares of public open space, including a range of play spaces and green corridors;
- iv. Incorporate structural landscaping to create a strong permanent and defensible Green Belt boundary;
- v. Preserve or enhance nearby heritage assets and their settings;
- vi. Provide a SANG that forms part of the Stour Valley River corridor, designed in accordance with the Dorset Heathlands SPD;
- vii. Provide at least five self-build plots;
- viii. Ensure the design of the scheme is capable of forming part of a sustainable corridor in terms of bus, cycling and walking access;
- ix. Prioritise sustainable transport measures to facilitate cycling and walking for shorter trips within the new community and to existing facilities in Bearwood and Merley;
- x. Make a financial contribution towards the implementation of a sustainable transport corridor between the site and Poole and Bournemouth Town Centres, including bus services;
- xi. Provide mitigation to address any unacceptable impacts on the highway network;
- xii. Create a second vehicular access from Magna Road to the east of Knighton Lane; and
- xiii. Make financial contributions to additional school capacity and upgrading the local doctors' surgery.

c. Land opposite Knighton House, Knighton Lane (BM.3)

The site is allocated for in the region of 15 homes. Development must deliver 40% affordable housing and provide a mix of housing types with a focus on housing suitable for families. Development proposals must:

- i. Provide a pedestrian and cycle link that connects with pedestrian and cycle routes in the Land north of Bearwood allocation;

- ii. Be predominantly two storeys (approximately 6-9 metres) in height; and
- iii. Preserve or enhance nearby heritage assets and their settings, including the Listed Granary north-west of Knighton House.

d. Churchill Business Park and adjacent land (Em.4)

The site is allocated for 5.4 hectares of employment uses (Use Classes E(g), B2 and B8). Development proposals must:

- i. Ensure compatibility with adjacent housing;
- ii. Be designed in such a way to ensure that residents of the housing development and users of the employment site are prevented from direct access onto Canford Heath;
- iii. Provide suitable mitigation including replacing foraging habitat to ensure the protection of bird species such as nightjars;
- iv. Provide suitable transition between the urban edge of Poole and the countryside, with strong landscaping to provide a permanent Green Belt boundary; and
- v. Make a contribution towards the implementation of a sustainable transport corridor including bus services, between the site and Bournemouth and Poole Town Centres.

e. Cruxton Farm buildings (EM.10)

The site is allocated for business, commercial and service uses (Use Classes B2, B8, E(b)), E(c), E(e) and E(g)). Development proposals must:

- i. Provide a pedestrian and cycle connection in the north of the site which connects with the proposed road network within the Land north of Merley allocation;
- ii. Reuse and convert existing buildings wherever possible;
- iii. Preserve or enhance heritage assets and their settings including the Oakley Lane Conservation Area and the listed buildings at 2-12 (evens), 17 and 19 Oakley Lane; and
- iv. Ensure the design of the scheme is capable of forming part of a sustainable corridor in terms of bus, cycling and walking access.

4. Local opportunity areas

a. Bearwood Centre (BM.A) and Merley Centre (BM.B)

Development is encouraged that enhances the area's quality and character. Development proposals must:

- i. Be up to and not in excess of three and a half storeys (approximately 12 metres);
- ii. Enhance the retail and community facility offer;
- iii. Introduce a fine-grained character and vertical rhythm;
- iv. Form perimeter blocks, with buildings facing the streets within and around the site; and
- v. Provide enhanced tree planting and landscaping along key routes within the area.

5. Local opportunity streets

The local opportunity streets on Ringwood Road and Magna Road, as shown on the policies map, will generally be suitable for proposals that result in building heights equivalent to no more than one additional storey (approximately three metres) above the building context height.

6. Infrastructure

Land off Magna Road adjacent to Canford Park Arena, as shown on the policies map, will be safeguarded for potential cemetery provision.