

ALDERHOLT MEADOWS

LANDSCAPE STRATEGY

JANUARY 2023



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PROJECT DIRECTOR	Hugo Nowell

REVIEWED BY DESIGN DIRECTOR	Matthias Wunderlich
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APPROVED BY DESIGN DIRECTOR	
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Exmouth House, 3-11 Pine Street
London EC1R 0JH

+44 (0)20 3567 0715
www.uistudio.co.uk

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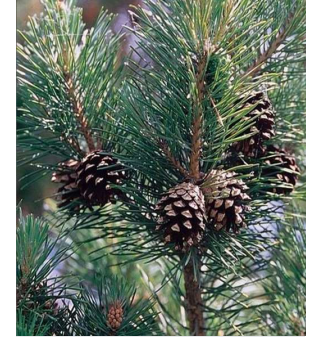
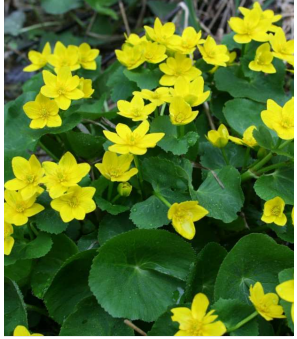
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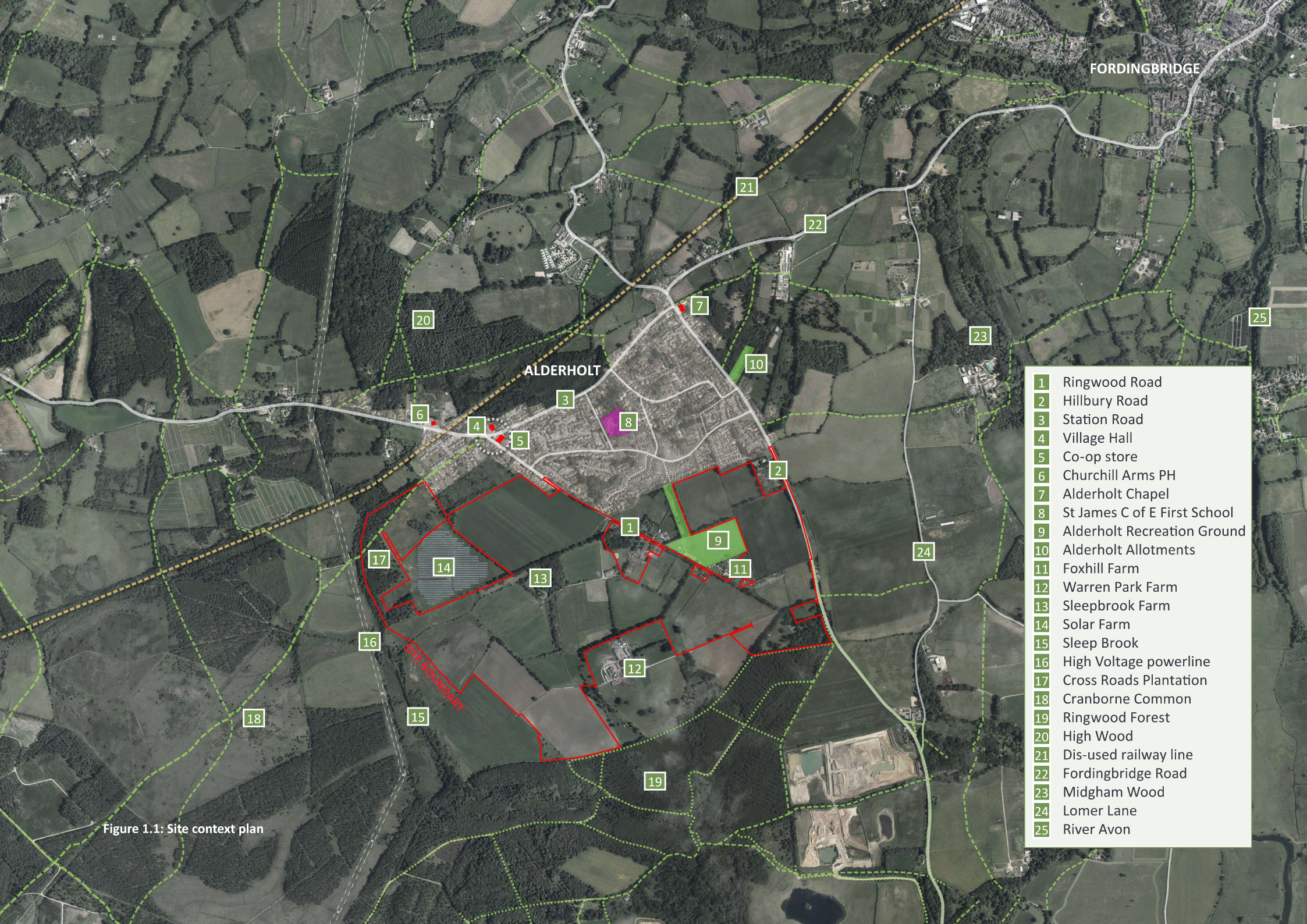


INTRODUCTION

This report has been prepared by Urban Initiatives Studio for Dudson Homes and sets out the landscape strategy promoted as part of the proposals for Alderholt Meadows.

The report is structured in the following chapters:

- Chapter One outlines the existing character of the site and its context and provides an overview of its landscape and ecological assets;
- Chapter Two outlines the Council's policy in respect of open space provision and Suitable alternative natural greenspace (SANG) and the requirement in policy terms of the site; and
- Chapter Three provides an overview of the landscape strategy and the types of spaces that are proposed as part of the development and summarises the quantum of open space and SANG that will be delivered.



FORDINGBRIDGE

ALDERHOLT

- 1 Ringwood Road
- 2 Hillbury Road
- 3 Station Road
- 4 Village Hall
- 5 Co-op store
- 6 Churchill Arms PH
- 7 Alderholt Chapel
- 8 St James C of E First School
- 9 Alderholt Recreation Ground
- 10 Alderholt Allotments
- 11 Foxhill Farm
- 12 Warren Park Farm
- 13 Sleepbrook Farm
- 14 Solar Farm
- 15 Sleep Brook
- 16 High Voltage powerline
- 17 Cross Roads Plantation
- 18 Cranborne Common
- 19 Ringwood Forest
- 20 High Wood
- 21 Dis-used railway line
- 22 Fordingbridge Road
- 23 Midgham Wood
- 24 Lomer Lane
- 25 River Avon

Figure 1.1: Site context plan

1. LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AND CONTEXT

1.1 OVERVIEW

1.1.1. Alderholt is located to the north-east of Dorset County close to its boundary with Hampshire and the New Forest District. To the north-west of the settlement the land rises to the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs Area of Outstanding National Beauty (AONB); to the east is the New Forest National Park and to the south the South East Dorset Green Belt. There are also protected landscapes to both the east and west including the River Avon Special Protection Area and Cranborne Common, part of Dorset Heathlands SPA, a Ramsar Site and a SSSI.

1.1.2. Compared to other parts of Dorset the Site is relatively unconstrained.

1.1.3. The Alderholt Meadows Site covers an area of 122Ha on land to the south of Alderholt.

1.1.4. The Site includes arable fields and grazing pastures to either side of Ringwood Road and encompasses land that is part of Sleepbrook Farm and Warren Park Farm (to the west of Ringwood Road) and Foxhill Farm (to the east of Ringwood Road). The Site extends southward towards Ringwood Forest (Plumley Wood), westwards towards Cranborne Common and eastwards to Hilbury Road. The northern edge of the Site abuts the existing built up edge of Alderholt.

1.1.5. Hedgerows define field boundaries within the Site and some of these include mature trees. The north-western part of the Site is wooded (Cross Roads Plantation) and there is also a small copse towards the centre of the Site around Sleepbrook Farm.



Image 1.1: Arable fields west of Ringwood Road contained by Ringwood Forest to the south

Physical landscape resources

1.1.6. The Site is composed of arable fields and grazing pastures to either side of Ringwood Road. Ringwood Road extends from Hilbury Road to the southeast of Alderholt initially running east to west and then northwards through the village to meet Station Road at Charing Cross in the northwest of Alderholt.

1.1.7. Both Ringwood Road and Hilbury Road are country lanes without footways or street lighting for most of their length. Traffic may pass along these lanes at national speed limit reducing to 40mph as the roads enter the village and to 30mph when homes line the roads to both sides.

1.1.8. The character of the environment to either side of Ringwood Road varies from north to south.

Homes, predominantly built in the latter part of the 20th Century front the northern section of the road; this gives way to a mix of homes on larger plots and other low intensity uses (riding school, camping and caravan site, Alderholt Recreation Ground and associated buildings and small farm buildings) alongside the central section of the road and arable fields and grazing pastures to either side in the southern section.

1.1.9. This southern section of Ringwood Road is defined by hedgerows to either side with mature trees (predominantly oak) emerging from the hedgerow on the western and southern sides of the road.

1.1.10. Arable land is also present to the west of Ringwood Road for approximately 250m between the northern and central section. This part of the road is also defined by hedgerow but without trees.

1.1.11. East of Ringwood Road the Site is composed of seven fields and is defined by Hilbury Road (to the east), the southern edge of the Alderholt built up area (to the north) and Alderholt Recreation Ground and Foxhill Farm (to the west). The smallest plots immediately south of Foxhill Farm are less than a hectare in size and the largest to the east over 7.5 hectares. Each field is defined and enclosed by hedgerows.

1.1.12. A large single storey pitched roof chicken shed measuring approximately 130m long by 16m wide and with two grain silos of height 6m is located along the northern edge of one of the southernmost fields and is clearly visible from Ringwood Road.

1.1.13. West of Ringwood Road the Site extends to Ringwood Forest (Plumley Wood) at its southern edge wrapping around but excluding Warren Park Farm; towards Cranborne Common to the west (but excluding the protected heath and SSSI); and towards the built up edge of Alderholt to the north and including part of the Cross Roads Plantation.

1.1.14. The western part of the Site is composed of a further 16 arable fields or pastures (either part of or in their entirety) together with a number of copses and woodland plantations including parts of Cross Roads Plantation. The size of the fields

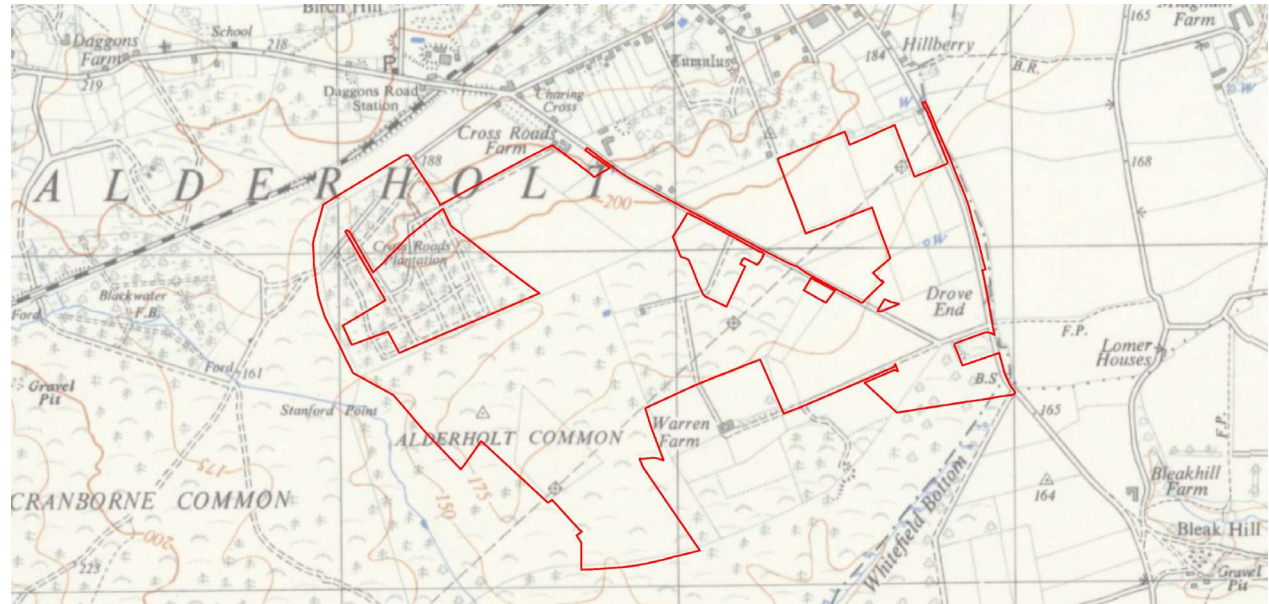


Figure 1.2: Historic plan (1948)

varies from less than a hectare to over 15 hectares for the largest field at the northern edge of the Site. The Site encompasses Sleepbrook farmhouse which is located within a copse towards the centre of the area.

1.1.15. Much of the western part of the Site was formerly Alderholt Common and was converted to arable use / pastures in the latter half of the 20th Century (as indicated in the historic plan dating from 1948 - Figure 1.2 above). Field boundaries are less well defined in this area; some fields are enclosed by mature hedgerows; others lack a clear boundary.

1.1.16. The northern edge of the Site abuts the built up edge of Alderholt and Alderholt Recreation Ground. A number of residential homes on Ringwood Road either overlook or back onto the Site. Properties on Hazel Close, Saxon Way and within Hilbury Park also back onto the Site.

1.1.17. Views across the Site can be made from Ringwood Road, Hilbury Road, from land east of Hilbury Road, and from elevated land at Cranborne Common to the west. Areas of woodland around the Site (Ringwood Forest / Plumley Wood to the south and Cross Roads Plantation to the north-west) restrict views of the Site from elsewhere and in that sense the land feels self contained.

1.1.18. Low voltage power lines extend across the Site to the west of Ringwood Road and a high voltage power line suspended from pylons extends north to south along the edge of Cranborne Common, outside of, and to the west of the Site.

1.1.19. There is an existing solar farm to the northwest of Sleepbrook Farm. This is encompassed by the Site but outside of the application redline.

1.2 TOPOGRAPHY + LANDFORM

1.2.1. The Site slopes gently from south to north from a height of approximately 48m above ordnance datum at the southern edge adjacent Ringwood Forest, to 64m above ordnance datum at both the north western edge of the Site close to Cross Roads Plantation and north eastern edge immediately to the south of Hazel Close.

1.2.2. Beyond the Site to the west the land initially falls to Sleep Brook and then rises to a height of over 90 metres at Pistle Hill on Cranborne Common.

1.2.3. Land beyond the Site to the east is level before dropping down to the River Avon and its floodplain which is at a level of approximately 25m AOD approximately 2km away.

1.3 HYDROLOGY AND WATER FEATURES

1.3.1. The Site falls within the catchment of the River Avon and there are a number of wet ditches, ponds and minor streams that collect water on the Site. Watercourses, the most notable being the Sleep Brook located to the west of the Site, flow from north to south towards Hammer Brook in Ringwood Forest and onwards to the River Avon to the south east.

1.3.2. Several ponds are located on the southern edge of the Site adjacent Ringwood Forest.

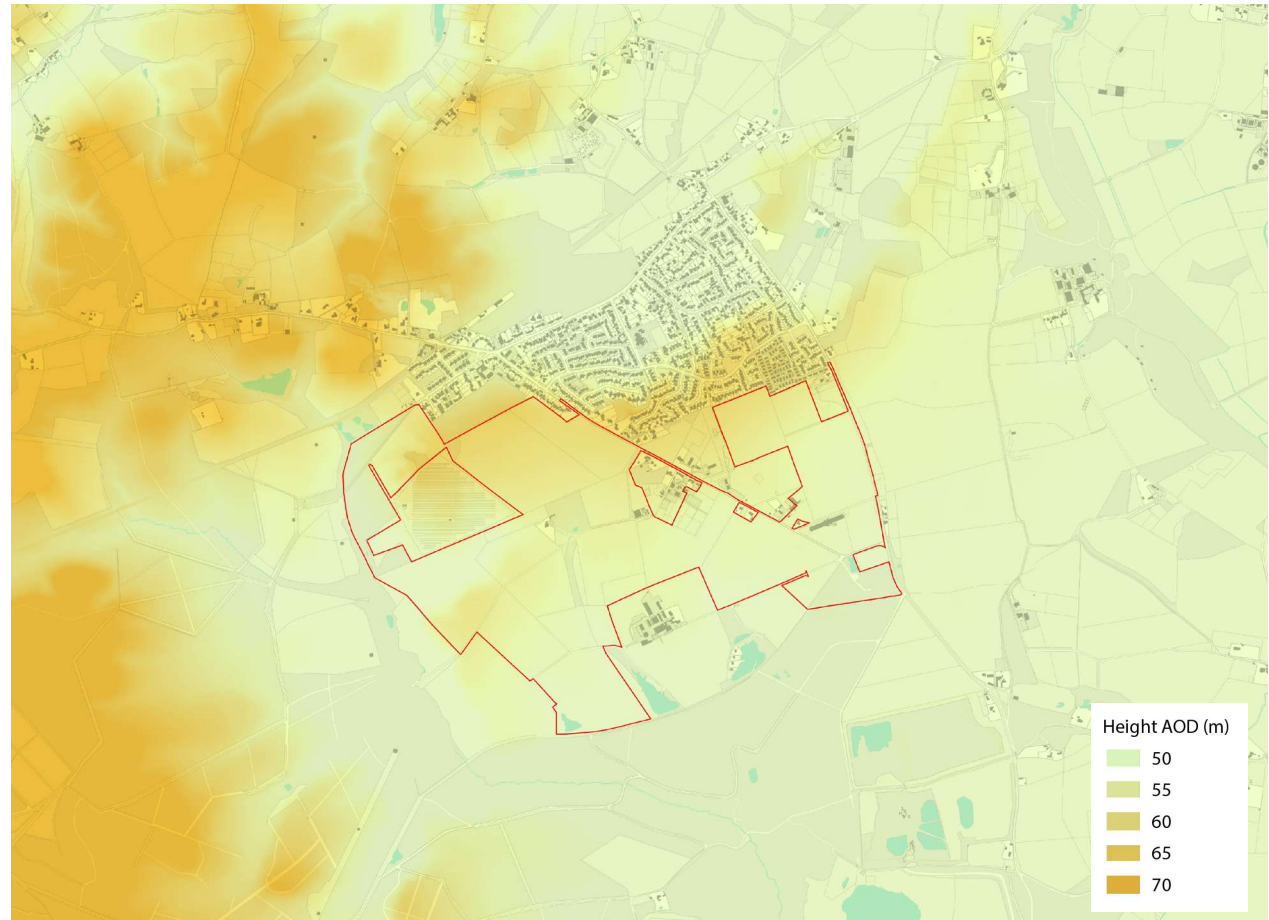


Figure 1.3: Topography

1.4 LAND USE AND VEGETATION PATTERNS

1.4.1. As referenced above the Site is composed of a number of arable fields and pastures; many of these are enclosed by hedgerows often incorporating trees. There are also a number of copses and plantations within the Site.

1.4.2. Hayden's Arboricultural Consultants undertook a tree survey in December 2021 and this records the location, condition, age, size and species of trees and the location, condition, age and species of hedgerows on the Site. Existing trees and hedgerows are categorised by their quality in accordance with BS5837: 2012 as:

- Category A: Trees of high quality with an estimated remaining life expectancy of at least 40 years;
- Category B: Trees of moderate quality with an estimated remaining life expectancy of at least 20 years
- Category C: Trees of low quality with an estimated remaining life expectancy of at least 10 years, or young trees with a stem diameter below 150mm; and
- Category U: Those in such condition that they cannot realistically be retained as living trees in the current land use for longer than 10 years.

1.4.3. Trees and hedgerows in categories A to C are considered for retention; Category U trees are considered unsuitable for retention.

1.4.4. The majority of trees on the site are located within hedgerows. The exception being

at Cross Roads Plantation in the north-west of the Site, around Sleepbrook Farm in the centre and on the northern edge of Ringwood Forest in the southeast corner. Refer to Figure 1.4 which indicates the location of trees and hedgerows on the site and their Category.

1.4.5. The Category A trees (high quality) within the Site are almost all oak trees and are located in four places:

- As part of the hedgerows that form the western and southern boundaries to the large field north of Sleepbrook Farm;
- As part of a hedgerow that runs east to west to the north of Warren Park Farm;
- As part of a hedgerow that forms the western boundary to the field immediately south of Hazel Close and north of Alderholt Recreation Ground; and
- As a grouping of trees in the south-eastern corner of the site close to Ringwood Forest.

1.4.6. There are a number of other Category A trees on hedgerows towards the north-eastern corner of the site and on the southern edge close to Warren Park Farm.

1.4.7. East of Ringwood Road hedgerows are generally mixed and composed of hawthorn, blackthorn, ash, oak and hazel. Some include trees the majority of which are oak but also with some ash, hawthorn and birch. Most hedges in this area are Category B (moderate quality).

1.4.8. West of Ringwood Road the quality of hedgerows varies. Whilst many are Category B

(moderate quality) several are poorly maintained and with gaps; the tree survey identifies these as Category C (low quality). Hedges are usually mixed and composed of hawthorn, blackthorn and oak and with willow also part of the mix. Trees are again predominantly oak but with willow, birch, ash, Scots pine and poplar also featuring.

1.4.9. There are three areas of woodland within the Site:

- An area of mature mixed woodland to the south-east adjacent Hilbury Road composed of Category A trees (mostly oak but including birch and sycamore and an understorey of spindle, blackthorn, hawthorn and willow);
- An area of mixed woodland (Category B trees) to the immediate east of Sleepbrook Farm composed of Scots pine to the north interspersed with birch, oak and spruce and willow to the south interspersed with birch and oak. The area around the farmhouse includes a mix of ash, birch, cypress, holly, oak, sweet gum and willow trees (Category C); and
- An area of mixed woodland to the north-west of the site at Cross Roads Plantation.

1.4.10. East of the Cross Roads Plantation is an area of semi-improved grassland with bramble and gorse scrub.

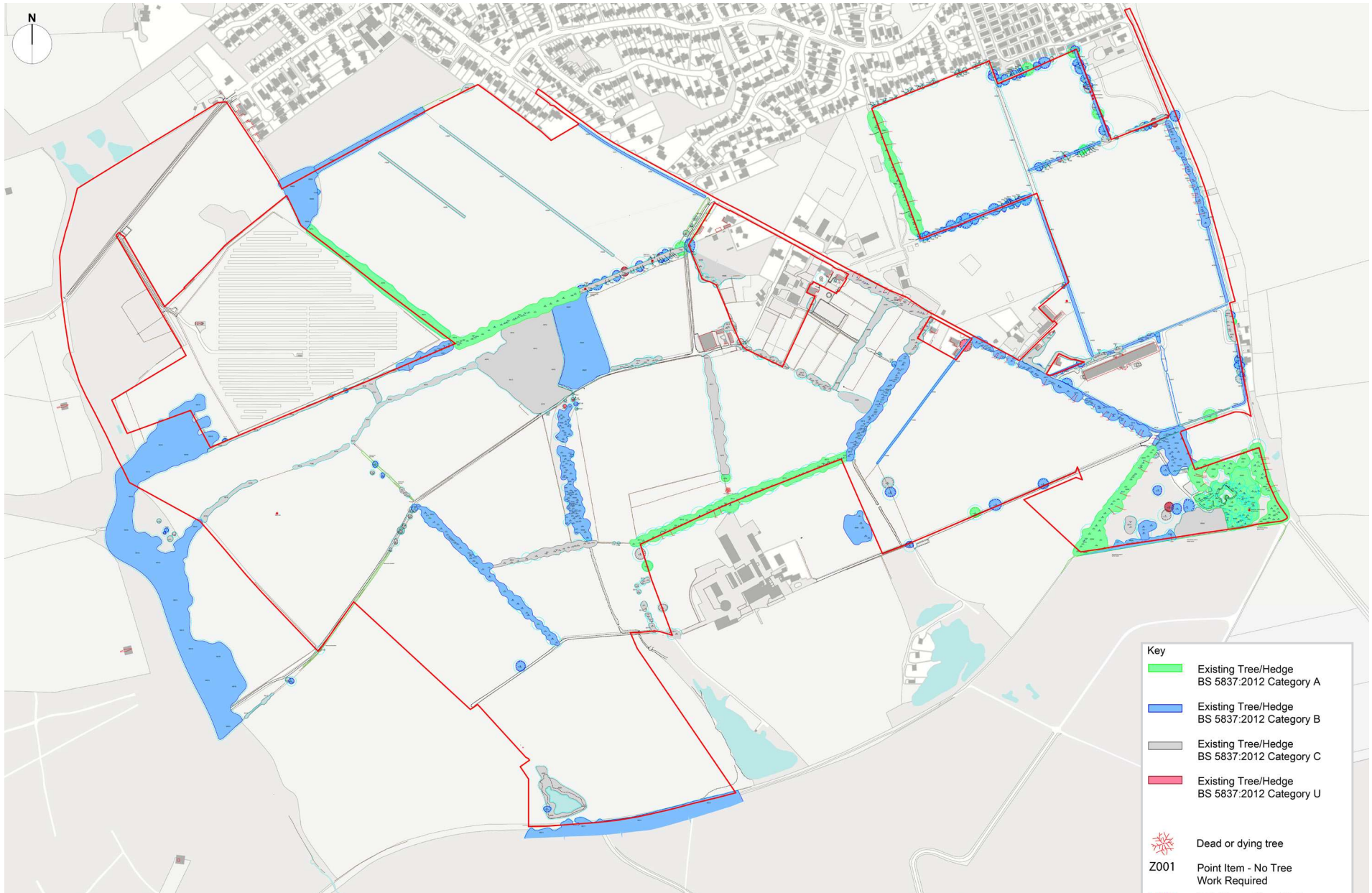


Figure 1.4: Existing trees and hedgerows (taken from tree survey prepared by Hayden's Arboricultural Consultants - December 2021)

1.5 PUBLIC ACCESS

1.5.1. A public bridleway extends through the Cross Roads Plantation across the north-west corner of the Site and connects Station Road / Ringwood Road (Charing Cross) via Blackwater Grove to Cranborne Common and beyond to Verwood.

1.5.2. No other public rights of way cross the Site however there are a number of public rights of way in the wider area including public footpaths that extend west to east from Hilbury Road to Lomer Lane and southward from Hilbury Road to Ringwood Forest. Many of these routes are poorly maintained. There is also a network of permissive paths within Ringwood Forest to the south of the Site.



Image 1.2: Public bridleway extending across the elevated Cranborne Common (to the west of the site)



Image 1.3: PROW fingerpost sign and stile on Lomer Lane



Image 1.4: Permissive path that extends through Ringwood Forest

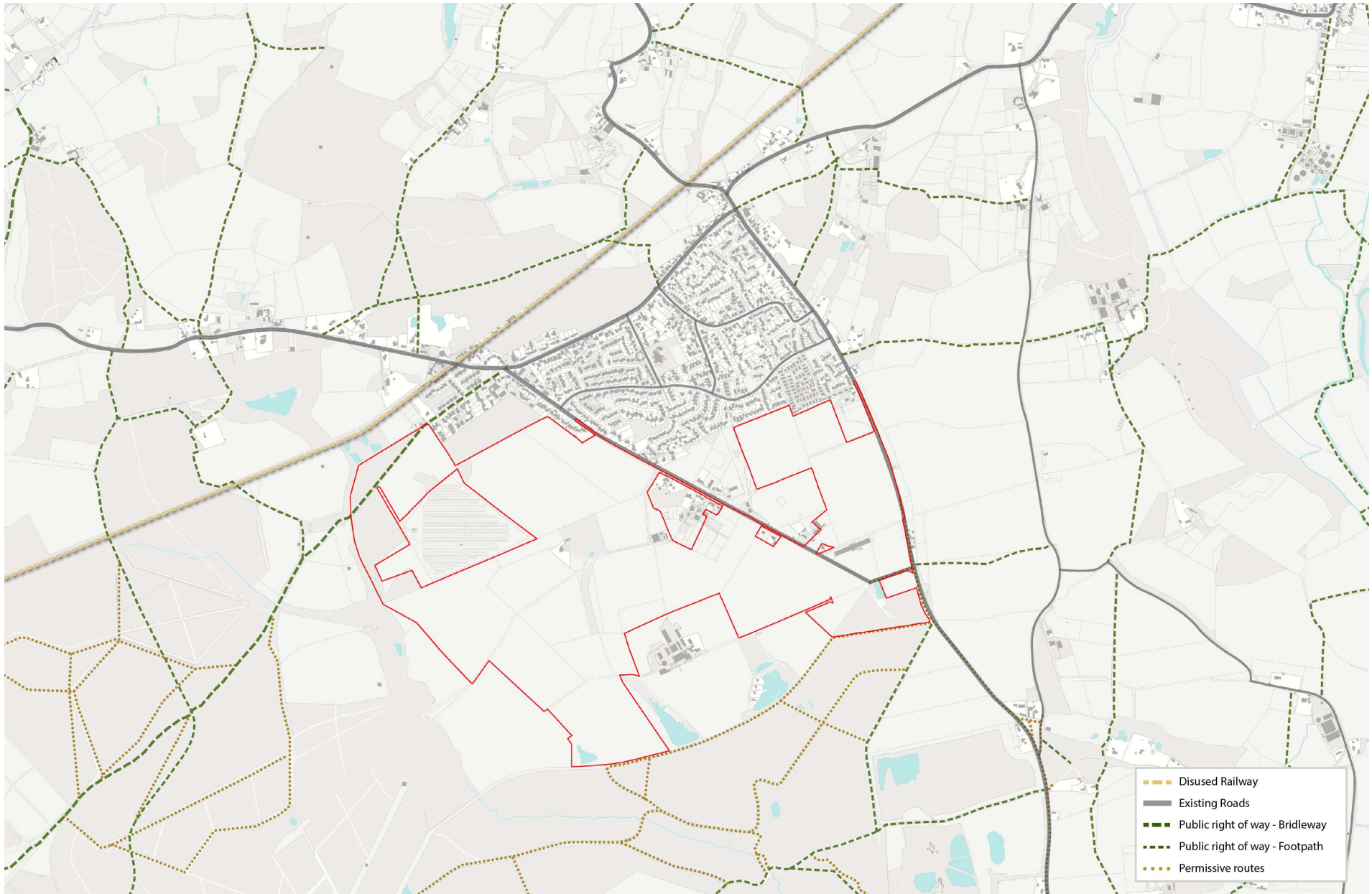


Figure 1.5: Network of Public Rights of Way and permissive paths

1.6 ECOLOGICAL VALUE OF THE SITE

Nature Conservation Designations

1.6.1. There are no landscape or ecological designations that apply to the Site itself however Cranborne Common, to the west of the Site, is part of Dorset Heaths Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Dorset Heathlands Special Protection Area (SPA), a Ramsar Site and a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). Part of the site is within 400m of the protected heathland; the remainder of the site is within 5km of the protected heathland and Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) will need to be provided to mitigate the impacts of residential development.

1.6.2. Sleepbrook Farm SSSI and Ringwood Forest and Home Wood SINC are adjacent to the Site to the west and south respectively.

1.6.3. The Site falls within the catchment of the River Avon SAC.

Ecological value

1.6.4. Ecological assessment of the site carried out by Lindsey Carrington Ecological Services (2019) and ABR Ecology Ltd. in 2022 identify that the site includes a range of habitats including:

- Broad-leaved, mixed and wet woodland;
- Hedgerows defining field boundaries and including native species-rich and non-native species-poor hedges;
- Scattered trees and mature treelines;
- A range of grasslands including wet semi-improved (SI) (marshy) grassland, rush pasture, SI neutral grassland, poor SI grassland, improved grassland;
- Arable farmland;
- Bramble, gorse and silver birch scrub;
- Standing water including ponds and ditches;
- Tall/short herb communities - tall ruderal and ephemeral/short-perennial vegetation;
- Bare ground; and
- Hardstanding.

1.6.5. The surveys also indicate that these habitats support a range of species including:

- Badgers - two setts were identified towards the east of the Site near Foxhill Farm;
- Barn owls - a roost was identified at Foxhill Farm;
- Bat roosts for a number of species and a number of foraging routes through the site;
- Breeding birds within arable and woodland areas;
- Nightjars from the heathland to the west that forage in the western part of the Site and fly along hedgerows through the area;
- Great crested newts in the ponds; and
- Reptiles including common lizard and slow worm, and a 'low population' of grass snake.

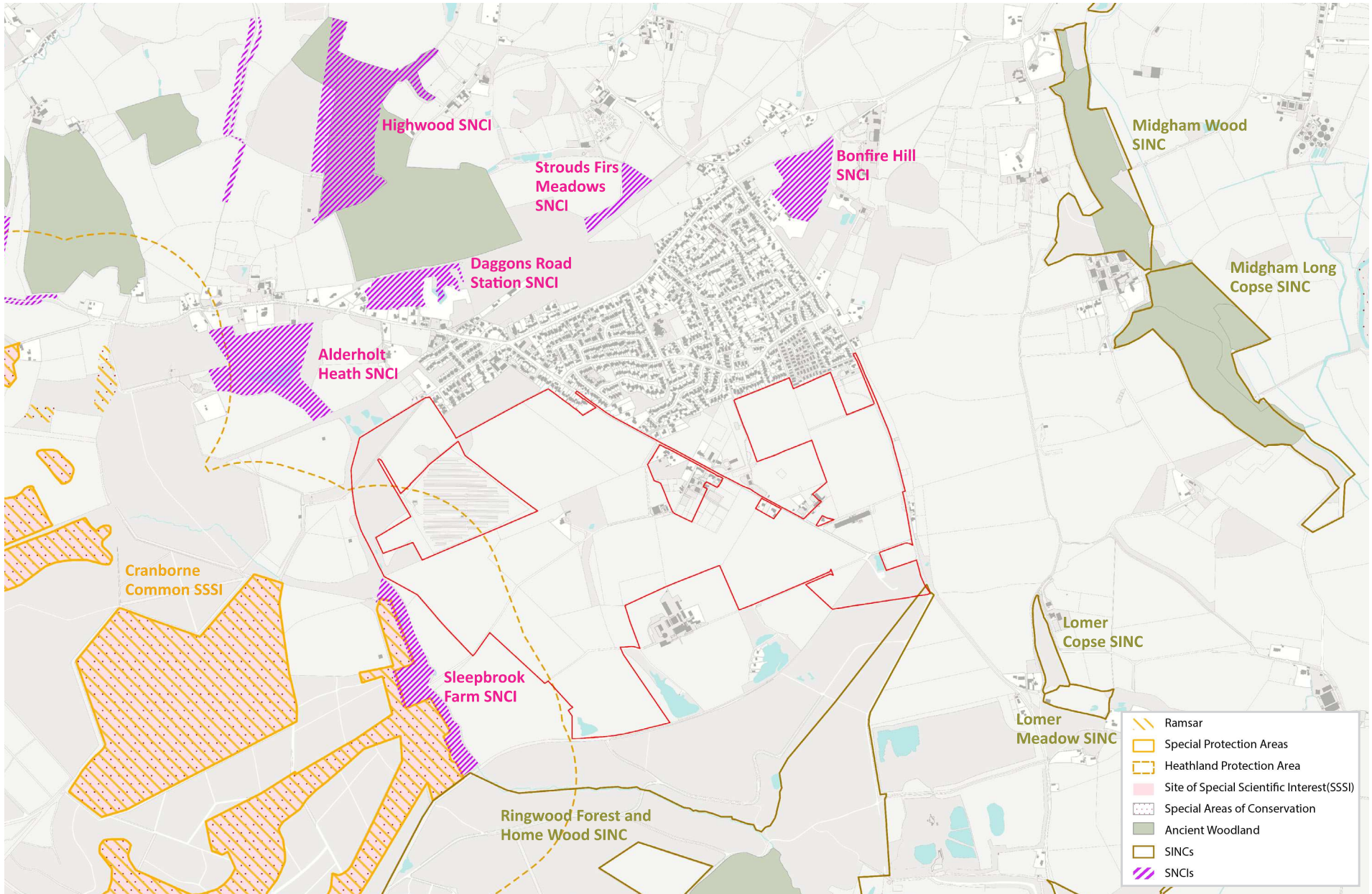


Figure 1.6: Nature Conservation designations

Opportunity for ecological enhancement

1.6.6. The site offers significant opportunity for ecological enhancement to deliver biodiversity net gain. Whilst the Alderholt Meadows masterplan promotes new homes on parts of the Site significantly more than 50% of the Alderholt Meadows site area will provide open space either in the form of a range of interconnected public open spaces that form the setting for the residential neighbourhoods or as part of three significant areas of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) two linked areas to the west and the other to the south-east of the site area.

1.6.7. The ecological assessment report prepared by ABR Ecology Ltd. makes a number of recommendations to retain and enhance the ecological value of the site. These include:

Retention of hedgerows

1.6.8. Hedges to not be incorporated within the curtilage of residential properties but retained as wildlife corridors across the development. Where important hedgerows require removal these to be replaced by new hedgerow (not on a like-for like basis but with a longer hedgerow to offset hedgerow loss). Hedgerows to be protected by a minimum 2m construction and post construction buffer. This to be extended where trees are present within the hedge. Where hedgerows have been identified as commuting and foraging features for light-sensitive bat species a minimum buffer of 6m with a long sward is required along its entire length and incorporated within a minimum 10m dark corridor.

Retention of veteran and mature trees

1.6.9. This to include veteran features (such as dead wood and cavities) which provide valuable wildlife habitats for bats, fungi, birds, invertebrates and lichen. Where trees cannot be retained they should be replaced with a number of new trees in accordance with the Dorset Biodiversity Appraisal Protocol (DBAP).

Retention of areas of woodland

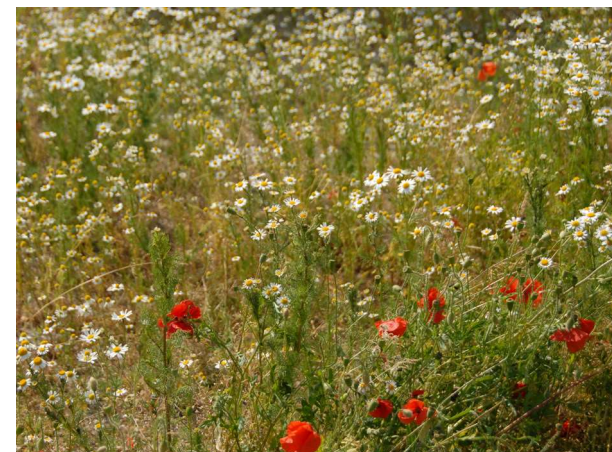
1.6.10. Existing woodlands to be retained and buffered by a minimum of 10m from the development footprint. Potential to improve some areas of woodland.

Grassland and rush pasture

1.6.11. The rush pasture around Sleepbrook farmhouse to be fully retained as part of the development.

Ponds and ditches

1.6.12. Existing ponds to be retained and ponds and ditches buffered by a minimum of 5m and this falling outside of the residential curtilage.



Enhancement measures

1.6.13. A range of measures should be incorporated as part of the landscape strategy to provide habitats for wildlife and enhance biodiversity. These include:

- The creation of dark corridors across the site such as species rich hedgerows to provide additional commuting routes for bats and nightjars;
- Areas of native woodlands providing a habitat for a range of bird and invertebrate species and also foraging for badgers;
- Area of scrub and gorse for breeding birds including the Dartford warbler and also reptiles;
- Native planting and fruiting species within the residential development to provide winter foraging and provide cover for breeding birds;
- The creation of new ponds and wetland areas which will provide enhanced foraging grounds for bats and habitats for other species including great crested newts and invertebrates;
- Provision of hay and wild flower meadows in the western half of the site for skylarks, nightjar foraging and for invertebrates; and
- Uncut long grass areas along hedgerows (6m wide) providing seed for birds and also a habitat for reptiles and invertebrates.

1.6.14. In addition other measures can be incorporated across the area to support wildlife including:

- Integrated bat lofts, tubes, soffit boxes and bricks within the new dwellings and bat boxes within woodland and treelines;
- Bird nesting boxes/bricks within dwellings;
- Bee bricks within dwellings for solitary bees; and
- Fencing that is hedgehog friendly (providing gaps to facilitate movement).



2. PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

2.1 CORE STRATEGY POLICY

Core Strategy policy - open space provision

2.1.1. The Christchurch and East Dorset Local Plan Core Strategy adopted in April 2014 sets out requirements for open space in Policy HE4. This identifies a requirement of 3.75 hectares of open space per 1,000 people (ie 37.5 sq m per person). This figure is broken down as follows:

- Recreation grounds and public gardens including parks 0.5Ha per 1,000 population;
- Amenity green space 0.5Ha per 1,000 population;
- Natural and semi-natural green space 1.0Ha per 1,000 population;
- Active (outdoor) sports space 1.25Ha per 1,000 population;
- Children and young peoples space 0.25Ha per 1,000 population; and
- Allotments 0.25Ha per 1,000 population.

2.1.2. Based on the development of 1,700 homes, with the average number of people per household at 2.4, this would give rise to an anticipated population of 4,080 people living in Alderholt Meadows. Applying policy HE4 this generates a requirement for 15.3 hectares of open space, with the following anticipated quantum of each type, associated with the development proposals:

- Recreation grounds and public gardens including parks - 2.04 hectares;
- Amenity green space - 2.04 hectares;
- Natural and semi-natural green space - 4.08 hectares;
- Active (outdoor) sports space - 5.1 hectares;
- Children and young peoples space - 1.02 hectares; and
- Allotments - 1.02 hectares.

Suitable alternative natural greenspace (SANG)

2.1.3. Core Strategy Policy ME2: Protection of the Dorset Heathlands states that:

'In accordance with the advice from Natural England, the evidence available to the authorities and Core Strategy Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA), no residential development will be permitted within 400m of protected European and internationally protected heathlands.'

and that

'Any residential development between 400m and 5km of these areas will provide mitigation through a range of measures as set out in the Core Strategy, Site Specific Allocations Development Plan Document and the Dorset Heathlands Planning Framework Supplementary Planning Document including:

- *Provision of on-site and off-site suitable alternative natural greenspace (provided in accordance with guidelines set out Appendix 5).*
- *Provision of other appropriate avoidance/mitigation measures.'*

2.1.4. The appendix to the policy provides fourteen guidelines for the design of SANG areas:

- 1 Sites must have adequate parking for visitors, unless the site is intended for local pedestrian use only, i.e. within easy walking distance (400m) of the developments linked to it. The amount of car parking space should be determined by the anticipated numbers using the site and arriving by car.
- 2 Car parks must be easily and safely accessible, be of an open nature and should be clearly sign posted.
- 3 There should be easy access between the car park or housing and the SANG with the facility to take dogs safely from the car park to the SANG off the lead.
- 4 Access points should have signs outlining the layout of the SANG and the routes available to visitors.
- 5 Paths must be easily used and well maintained but most should remain unsurfaced to avoid the site becoming too urban in feel. A majority of paths should be suitable for use in all weathers and all year around. Boardwalks may be required in wet sections.
- 6 All SANGs with car parks must have a circular walk that starts and finishes at the car park.
- 7 It should be possible to complete a circular walk of 2.3-2.5km around the SANGs, and for larger SANGs there should be a variety of circular walks.
- 8 SANGs must be designed so that visitors are not deterred by safety concerns.
- 9 SANGs should be clearly sign-posted and advertised.
- 10 SANGs should have leaflets and/or websites advertising their location to potential visitors. It would be desirable for leaflets to be distributed to new homes in the area and be made available at entrance points and car parks.
- 11 SANGs must be perceived as natural spaces without intrusive artificial structures, except in the immediate vicinity of car parks. Visually-sensitive way-markers and some benches are acceptable.
- 12 SANGs must aim to provide a variety of habitats for visitors to experience (e.g. some of: woodland, scrub, grassland, heathland, wetland, open water).
- 13 Access within the SANG must be largely unrestricted with plenty of space provided where it is possible for dogs to exercise freely and safely off lead.
- 14 SANGs must be free from unpleasant visual, auditory or olfactory intrusions (e.g. derelict buildings, intrusive adjoining buildings, dumped materials, loud intermittent or continuous noise from traffic, industry, sports grounds, sewage treatment works, waste disposal facilities).



Figure 3.1: Illustrative Landscape Strategy Plan

3. LANDSCAPE STRATEGY

3.1 LANDSCAPE STRATEGY OBJECTIVES

3.1.1. The plan for Alderholt Meadows is landscape led with homes and other facilities set within a rich landscape of grasslands, meadows, woodlands and wetlands. These will provide a fantastic resource for both the existing and future residents of Alderholt and a haven for wildlife. The landscape strategy responds to the existing landscape assets both within the site itself and on adjacent land and has been generated around the following objectives:

- **1. A connected landscape**
There are many walking routes within the wider countryside close to Alderholt but many of these are not well connected with the village. Our vision is to connect the routes delivering a much greater and accessible green space network for Alderholt's residents, bringing improved access to nature and providing the essential green spaces in which wildlife can flourish.
- **2. Enhancing biodiversity**
The natural features and the pattern of the landscape, the hedgerows, mature trees and watercourses will be retained and enhanced and new habitats will be introduced transforming farmland with relatively low biodiversity into a matrix of habitats that will support a rich wildlife. Provision of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) will mitigate impacts on the protected heathland and provide attractive spaces for both people and wildlife close to new homes.
- **3. A healthy landscape**
Alderholt Meadows is planned and conceived to make walking and cycling the most attractive way to get around and to provide immediate access to a mix of open spaces and landscapes that will enhance the well-being and mental health of all of Alderholt's residents. A network of attractive and safe walking and cycle routes are proposed that will extend through the area and link with existing paths and public rights of way in the wider countryside. Children's play, fitness trails and public art will enhance the routes.
- **4. Sense of Place**
New homes will be laid out in distinct neighbourhoods and each will benefit from a neighbourhood park. In addition a larger Alderholt Park will be created on the northern edge of Alderholt Meadows adjacent to and doubling the size of the existing Alderholt Recreation Ground. These spaces will provide the settings for social interaction, play and local events and add to the sense of place in Alderholt Meadows.
- **5. A beautiful place**
The landscape will complement buildings to create a beautiful place. This will be achieved through careful design of every aspect of development and a creative and a coordinated approach to the whole place and its maintenance and management. The landscape will be designed to provide interest at all times of the year through a careful selection of plant species and a coordinated palette of materials will help to deliver a clear and distinct identity.

3.1.2. In addition the landscape will contribute to the energy strategy for Alderholt Meadows with a solar farm promoted on land towards the west of the Site.

3.2 A CONNECTED LANDSCAPE

Existing connections

3.2.1. A public bridleway extends through the Cross Roads Plantation across the north-west corner of the Alderholt Meadows Site and connects Station Road / Ringwood Road (Charing Cross) via Blackwater Grove to Cranborne Common and beyond to Verwood.

3.2.2. No other public rights of way cross the Site however there are a number of public rights of way in the wider area including public footpaths that extend west to east from Hilbury Road to Lomer Lane and southward from Hilbury Road to Ringwood Forest / Plumley Wood. There is also a network of permissive paths within Ringwood Forest / Plumley Wood to the south of the Site.

3.2.3. The Alderholt Meadows Site is currently farmland and with no public access. This limits accessibility to the countryside for existing residents and means that a walk in Ringwood Forest is likely to involve getting in the car first.

Delivering a more connected network

3.2.4. The landscape strategy aims to ensure that Alderholt Meadows is a place where the countryside starts at the front door and where wildlife and nature will flourish in a connected network of habitats and spaces. A network of green walking routes will extend through area and these will open up access to the land south of Alderholt for both existing and future residents.

3.2.5. The network of walking routes on the Site will provide an attractive alternative to walking onto Cranborne Common reducing pressure on the sensitive heathland. The green routes will not only benefit people but also provide green corridors that connect habitats and benefit wildlife. The green routes have been planned so that connections to existing paths in Ringwood Forest could be delivered in the future.



Image 3.1: A network of walking routes will link Alderholt with existing landscape assets including walking routes in Ringwood Forest



Image 3.2: Grasslands will be managed to provide walking routes through them and to enhance biodiversity

3.3 RESPONDING TO THE LANDSCAPE AND ENHANCING BIODIVERSITY

Existing assets

3.3.1. The Alderholt Meadows Site includes arable fields and grazing pastures to either side of Ringwood Road and encompasses land that is part of three farms; Sleepbrook Farm and Warren Park Farm to the west of Ringwood Road and Foxhill Farm to the east.

3.3.2. The Site extends southward towards Ringwood Forest / Plumley Wood and westwards towards Cranborne Common. The northern edge of the Site abuts the existing built up edge of Alderholt.

3.3.3. Hedgerows define field boundaries within the Site and majority of trees are located within these hedgerows. The exception being at Cross Roads Plantation in the north-west of the Site, around Sleepbrook Farm in the centre and on the northern edge of Ringwood Forest / Plumley Wood in the south-east corner. A tree survey was undertaken in December 2021 (refer to Figure 1.4) and this indicates that the majority of high quality trees (Category A) are oaks.

3.3.4. In addition to the hedgerows and trees there are a number of ponds and ditches and bramble, gorse and silver birch scrub that provide important habitats for wildlife. To the west of the Site adjacent to Sleep Brook is lowland heath and designated as a SSSI and part of Sleepbrook Farm SNCI.



Image 3.3: Pond at the southern edge of the site adjacent Ringwood Forest

3.3.5. These habitats support a range of species including badgers, barn owls, breeding birds and range of bat species. Nightjars from the heathland at Cranborne Common, to the west, forage in the western part of the Site and fly along hedgerows through the area and there are a number of bat foraging routes that cross the site.

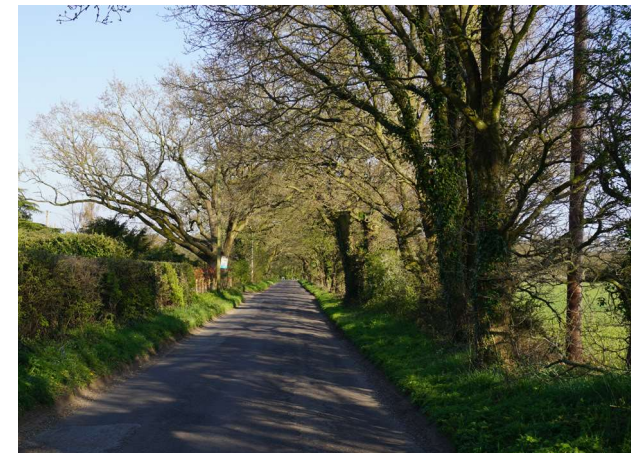


Image 3.4: Oak trees on Ringwood Road

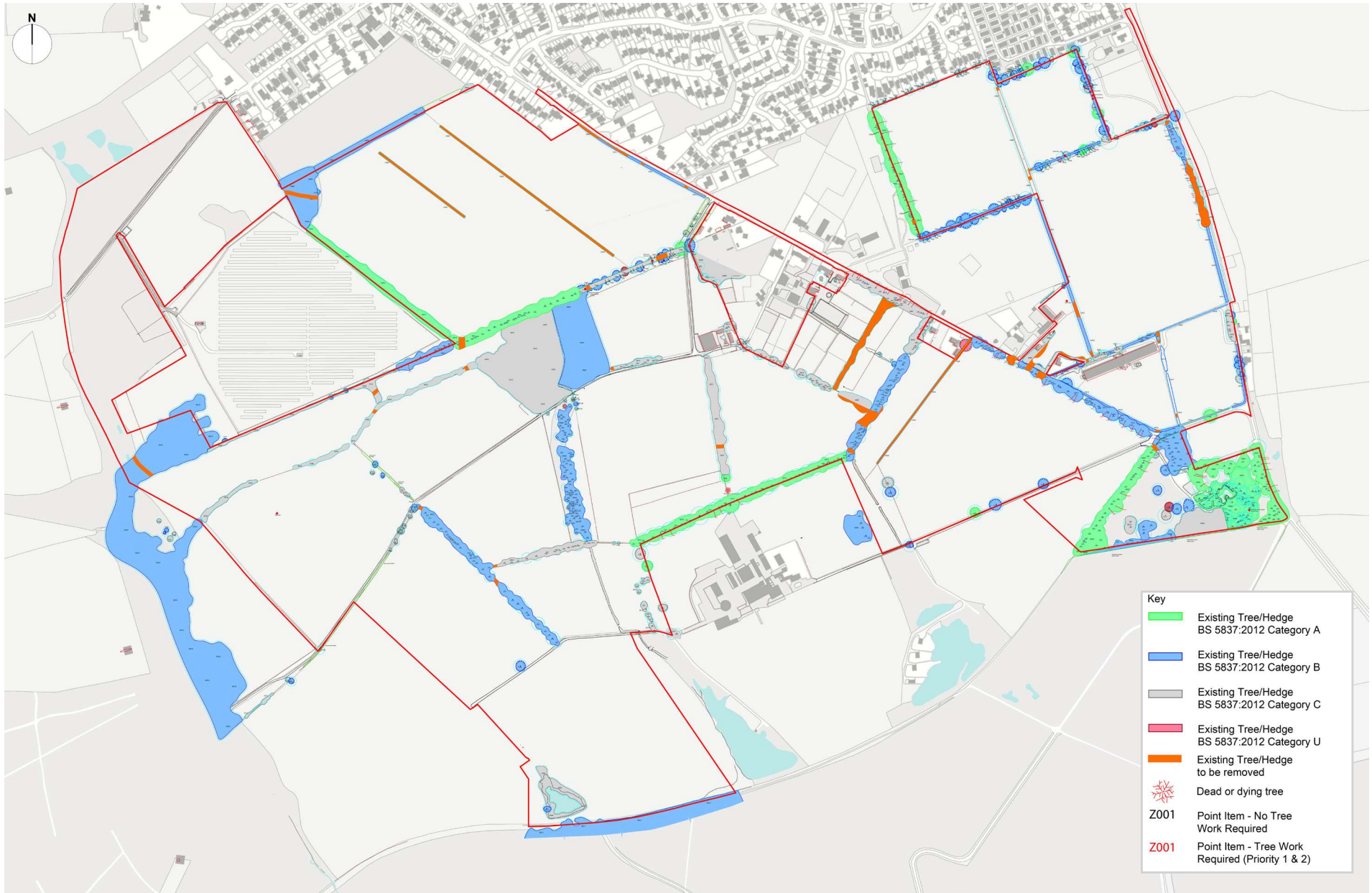


Figure 3.2: Plan indicating existing trees and hedgerows to be removed (based on tree survey prepared by Hayden's Arboricultural Consultants - December 2021)

Ecological enhancement

3.3.6. The proposals for Alderholt Meadows will deliver significant enhancement of the Site. Significantly more than 50% of the site area will provide open space either in the form of a range of interconnected public open spaces that form the setting for the residential neighbourhoods or as part of two significant areas of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) one to the west and the other to the south-east of the Site area.

3.3.7. The residential areas have been laid out to respond to the landscape and to minimise loss of hedgerows or trees. This will only be required in discrete locations to deliver new access to, and connections across the Site as indicated in Figure 3.2 (on the facing page). This includes:

- At the new site access on Hilbury Road (short section of Category B hedgerow to be removed);
- Selective tree and hedge removal to provide access to the site off Ringwood Road;
- Removal of a Category B and Category C hedgerows that extend perpendicular to Ringwood Road towards the centre of the site;
- Removal of Category C hedgerow in northernmost field;
- Creation of discrete gaps in hedgerows to deliver an enhanced network of walking routes that connect different parts of the area to one another.



Image 3.5: The landscape will be designed and managed to enhance biodiversity with new ponds, wetland areas and wildflower meadows



3.3.8. The majority of the existing hedgerows are retained as wildlife corridors that extend across the site and with a landscape buffer retained for any that have been identified as foraging routes for bats. These corridors will be unlit. Existing ponds and ditches will also be retained.

3.3.9. A range of measures are proposed as part of the landscape strategy to provide habitats for wildlife and enhance biodiversity. These include:

- Areas of native woodlands providing a habitat for a range of bird and invertebrate species and also foraging for badgers;
- Area of scrub and gorse for breeding birds including the Dartford warbler and also reptiles;
- Native planting and fruiting species within the residential development to provide winter foraging and provide cover for breeding birds;
- Provision of new hedgerows planted using a mix of native species;

- The creation of new ponds and wetland areas which will provide enhanced foraging grounds for bats and habitats for other species including great crested newts and invertebrates;

- Provision of hay and wild flower meadows in the western half of the site for skylarks, nightjar foraging and for invertebrates; and

- Uncut long grass areas along hedgerows (approximately 6m wide) providing seed for birds and also a habitat for reptiles and invertebrates.

3.3.10. Many of these habitats will be established in the extensive areas of SANG at the western edge of the site. New habitats will complement Cranborne Common and Ringwood Forest and create a mosaic of habitats within which wildlife can flourish in the future.

3.3.11. A roost for bats will also be provided as part of a seating structure in the south-eastern SANG.

Urban wildlife strategy

3.3.12. Designing for wildlife will not be restricted to the open spaces and SANG areas but will extend throughout Alderholt Meadows. Consideration will be given to providing habitats and homes for wildlife as part of the design of all parts of the development and in particular the buildings, streets, courtyards and gardens.

3.3.13. The selection of tree, shrub and herbaceous species will consider the wildlife they support. Wherever possible native plant species will be selected, and species that provide fruit or berries or a good source of nectar for insects will also be selected. The planting of a native tree is proposed in all rear gardens that exceed 10min depth.

3.3.14. The lighting strategy has been designed to be sensitive to wildlife and particular bats and to avoid light spill.

3.3.15. A range of further measures are proposed to support urban wildlife. This includes:

- Integrated bat lofts, tubes, soffit boxes and bricks within the new dwellings and bat boxes within woodland and treelines;
- Bird nesting boxes/bricks within dwellings;
- Bee bricks within dwellings for solitary bees; and
- Fencing that is hedgehog friendly (providing gaps to facilitate movement).



Image 3.6: Habitat wall

3.4 A HEALTHY LANDSCAPE

Health and well-being

3.4.1. The recent Covid pandemic has shed new light on the way we live and highlighted the importance of the local neighbourhood, the benefits of having community facilities close to hand and in particular the positive value that access to nature and green spaces can have on health and well being. Recent Government surveys have indicated that during the pandemic four in ten adults spent more time in nature and nine in ten reported that being in nature made them happy.

3.4.2. The landscape strategy for Alderholt will ensure that all residents will have excellent access to both a natural landscape within the Alderholt Meadows site and also to the wider countryside including Ringwood Forest to the south.

3.4.3. Opportunity to get involved in community growing initiatives and spend time being active outside can also bring significant health and well being benefits. Alderholt Meadows will provide this opportunity with community growing initiatives, community gardens and orchards and allotments all included as part of the development.



Image 3.7: Neighbourhood spaces will include community orchards and community growing areas. Allotments are also proposed

Children's play

3.4.4. The landscape within Alderholt Meadows will be designed to provide a stimulating and engaging environment for play. This will be provided both through formal play areas and more informal playful landscapes. Play areas will be designed to blend with the landscape and use natural materials that are both robust and enduring but aesthetically pleasing.

3.4.5. Play areas will work with the landscape taking advantage of natural features including trees that may provide shelter or hedges that provide enclosure and through sculpting the landscape to create landform that encourages imaginative and active play.



3.4.6. Play areas will be designed to challenge and promote children's growth by providing opportunities for them to engage in multiple different types of play and to use their bodies and minds to interact with the environment and others. This means providing an environment for:

- **Active play** – with opportunities for running, jumping, climbing, swinging, spinning and rolling;
- **Sensory play** – through use of different textures, smells (through planting design) and sounds;
- **Creative and imaginative play** – by providing props for role-play including play houses, stages, or other imaginary scenes; and
- **Social play** – with places to talk share and cooperate.



Image 3.8: Play areas will be designed to work with the landscape and use natural materials

3.4.7. Play areas will be designed to cater for all ages with a large play facility proposed within Alderholt Park complementing the existing play area in the recreation ground and smaller more local play areas provided within new open spaces within each of Alderholt Meadows new neighbourhoods.

Sports facilities

3.4.8. Alderholt recreation ground already provides a number of sports pitches however none have all-weather surfaces which restricts their use. The Alderholt Meadows masterplan proposes to double the size of the recreation ground and this offers opportunity to deliver additional sports facilities for Alderholt including new pitches. Alternatively the existing pitches could be upgraded with all weather surfaces. It is intended to work with the local community to develop the design of Alderholt Park and agree the facilities that will be incorporated within it.

3.4.9. Discussions have already been held with the Lawn Tennis Association about establishing state of the art tennis facilities as part of the improvements. And this could form part of the future offer in the village.

3.4.10. The network of green routes through the development provides an environment that is conducive to active pursuits including trail running. Sign posted routes are proposed with lengths varying from 2,500 to 5,000m. Exercise trail equipment will be located along the routes.



Image 3.9: Exercise trail work station

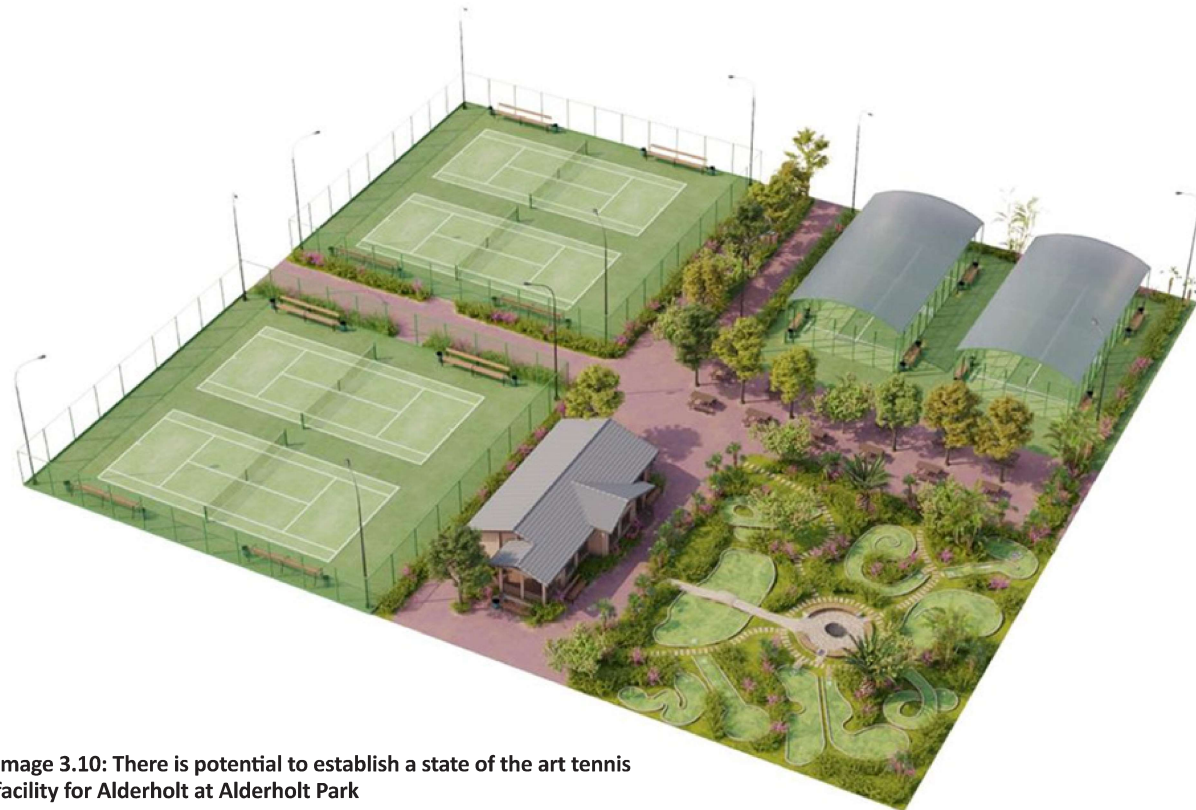


Image 3.10: There is potential to establish a state of the art tennis facility for Alderholt at Alderholt Park

3.5 SENSE OF PLACE

3.5.1. The Alderholt Meadows masterplan proposes four discrete but interconnected residential neighbourhoods all within touching distance of a new mixed-use centre conveniently located on a realigned Ringwood Road and where it can be easily accessed by existing and new residents. The layout of development is structured around a network of green corridors that connect homes with the centre, open spaces that provide foci for the neighbourhoods, a larger space, Alderholt Park, that provides an open space resource for the whole village and more extensive green areas to the west and south of the Alderholt Meadows site that link the development with the wider countryside and are designed to maximise biodiversity.

3.5.2. Structuring development around the green infrastructure delivers a strong identity and sense of place to Alderholt Meadows.



Figure 3.3: Alderholt Park in combination with the existing Alderholt Recreation Ground will provide a space that extends to approx. 10Ha

Alderholt Park

3.5.3. As already referenced it is proposed to double the size of the Alderholt Recreation Ground by adding the large field (approximately 5 hectares) north of the recreation ground to the space. This will maintain the green outlook from existing residential properties on the southern edge of Alderholt and deliver a significant resource for the village. It is anticipated that the majority of the space will remain open but with addition of new planted areas, paths, seating and children's play. Additional sports pitches and facilities could also be introduced.



Figure 3.4: Neighbourhood Green Space at the heart of the north western neighbourhood

Neighbourhood Spaces

3.5.4. A neighbourhood park will form a focus for each of the four neighbourhoods. Homes will front onto and enclose these spaces and they will provide a place for social gatherings, children's play and relaxation. The spaces will be primarily soft landscape with grassed areas, tree, shrub and herbaceous planting and areas of wildflower meadow. The spaces may also include community orchards and growing areas allowing the local community to engage and take ownership of parts of the area.



Figure 3.5: Existing hedgerows are retained and form part of green corridors through Alderholt Meadows

Green corridors

3.5.5. The green corridors will provide linkages between different parts of the area and will be multifunctional acting as movement corridors for people and wildlife, enhancing biodiversity and helping to manage surface water. Many will incorporate existing hedgerows and with landscaped margins where a sward of grass and herbaceous vegetation supports wildlife and enhances biodiversity. Corridors used by foraging bats will be unlit.



Image 3.11: Swales are designed as positive features around which development is structured

Swales and attenuation ponds

3.5.6. The management of surface water has been considered as an integral part of the masterplan and informs the structuring of the development. This includes a network of swales and attenuation ponds that:

- Respond to the lie of the land – the natural levels and existing drainage patterns and above ground drainage features;
- Mitigate off-site impacts in terms of flood risk and water quality, including the effects of climate change;



Figure 3.6: Swales carry water to attenuation ponds which both mitigate flooding, provide amenity and enhance biodiversity

- Provide additional amenity space and reinforce movement corridors;
- Enhance biodiversity through the provision of habitats and ecological corridors; and
- Provide attractive features that enhance sense of place.

Community growing

3.5.7. Neighbourhood open spaces will include community orchards and community growing areas. It is also proposed to provide allotments within the site.

3.6 A BEAUTIFUL PLACE

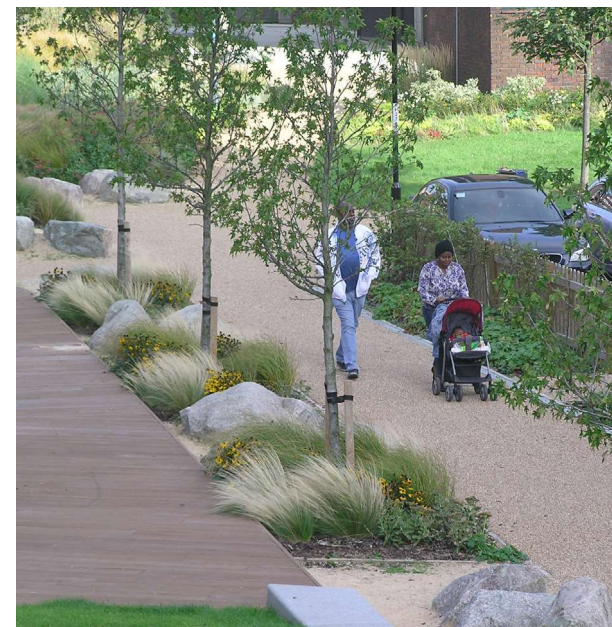
3.6.1. The Building Better, Building Beautiful Commission published its final report 'Living with Beauty, Promoting health, well-being and sustainable growth' in January 2020. One of its main aims and recommendations was to 'Ask for Beauty' in new development where 'beauty includes everything that promotes a healthy and happy life, everything that makes a collection of buildings into a place, everything that turns anywhere into somewhere, and nowhere into home.'

3.6.2. Alderholt Meadows will be a beautiful place and the landscape strategy will help to achieve this. At a strategic level this means taking a coordinated approach across the whole masterplan area and beyond; locally it means careful design that uses appropriate and robust materials in the design of the public realm and planting that is appropriate to the location providing both a physical, sensory and contextual response to the place.

3.6.3. Alderholt Meadows will provide a range of conditions and environments and the landscape strategy responds to this with a more informal / naturalistic approach taken to the design of the SANG areas on the sites periphery and a more formal approach to the streets and spaces within the residential neighbourhoods.

3.6.4. The quality of the landscape setting will be a defining feature of Alderholt Meadows helping to create a place with a unique identity and providing the link between the suburban character of the existing village and the open countryside, heathland and woodland to the south and west. The broad aims of the landscape strategy are to:

- Deliver high quality landscape for play and recreation;
- Retain and enhance the existing landscape and ecological assets;
- Respond to flood risk and deliver a surface water drainage strategy that becomes a positive landscape feature within the development;
- Enhance biodiversity and maintain ecological corridors through the site; and
- Mitigate impacts of recreational use on the European designated sites through provision of extensive areas of SANG to the south and west of the site.



Approach to landscape design

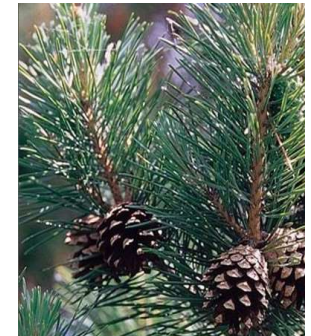
3.6.5. The design of the landscape adopts the following principles:

- Use of native species contextual to the surrounding area wherever possible;
- Use of species that support wildlife - flowering and fruiting species;
- Specifying of species with consideration of their size and form at maturity and their maintenance and management requirements;
- Consideration of prevailing environmental conditions, soil type and drainage, and pest and disease tolerance;
- Avoiding large numbers of the same species in more formal areas to safeguard against the risk of tree losses through climate change, pest and disease; and
- Providing a sensory experience through texture, colour, and smell throughout the year.

3.6.6. The landscape design will help to deliver sense of place, aid legibility and identity. Where there is space, on the main streets and within parklands, larger stature trees will be specified; within more intimate spaces smaller stature trees will be more appropriate.

3.6.7. Alderholt Meadows will be a green place and each home will include a tree (of appropriate size within its plot); the interface between properties and the public realm will be defined either by a low wall or hedge; and climbing plants will help building to blend into the landscape.

3.6.8. Herbaceous plants will be incorporated in planted areas in neighbourhood spaces delivering additional colour and scent through their flowers and attracting pollinating insects.



Swales and Attenuation features

3.6.9. The swales and attenuation ponds will form an integral part of the landscape structure of the Alderholt Meadows site. The swales follow streets as part of the sites network of green routes and as such create visually pleasing landscaped elements that will help to define the character of the residential neighbourhoods, enhance legibility as well as providing ecological corridors along which wildlife can move.

3.6.10. The swales lead to attenuation features, wetland areas that include permanently wet ponds set within a wider wetland / reedbed environment.

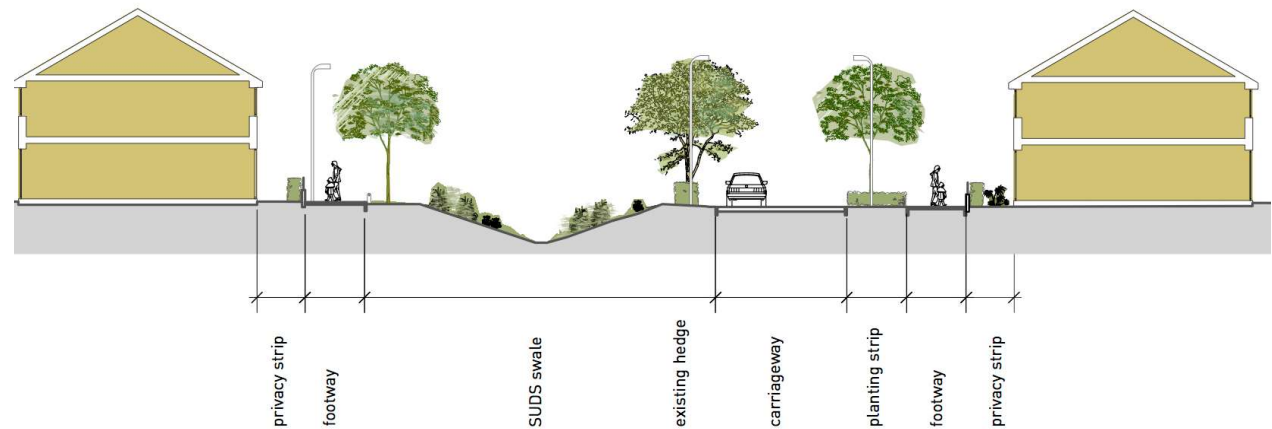
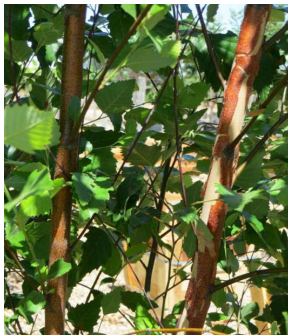


Figure 3.7: Section through typical swale feature



Criteria	Specification
Dimensions	Typically 10- 15m wide and of variable length and with slopes no steeper than 1 in 3. Depth up to 2m
Landscape treatment	<p>The majority of the swale will be maintained as grass with a mix of amenity grass and wildflower meadow (e.g. Emorsgate EM8 mix).</p> <p>Approximately 10% of the area to be planted with a mix of species tolerant of occasional inundation including the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trees: <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> (common alder), <i>Betula nigra</i> (river birch), and <i>Salix alba</i> ‘Chermesina’ (white willow) planted as a mix of Heavy Standards and feathered trees; • Shrubs: <i>Amelanchier lamarkii</i> (m/s), <i>Corylus avellana</i> (hazel) planted at minimum 45-60cm size; • Herbaceous plants: <i>Astilbe</i> species, <i>Carex</i> species, <i>Cornus</i> species, and <i>Iris</i> species (pot grown).
Boundary treatment	Varies. Where appropriate existing hedges will be retained and will provide the boundary to the swale. Where a swale runs alongside a vehicular route vehicle trespass onto the swale to be achieved through the use of pressure treated timber posts (minimum 150 x 150mm) located at 1m centres.
Crossing points	Swales will create a barrier to movement particularly when wet and crossing points will be provided either in the form of vehicular routes (streets) or timber bridges (pedestrian access only). These will connect to the network of routes through the site.
Other	Playful landscape features including stone boulders or logs will be provided in swale corridors to create an imaginative setting for play.

Figure 3.8: Design principles for swales

Criteria	Specification
Dimensions	Varies, but designed to provide capacity to address floodrisk. To be engineered with shallow bank profiles and marginal shelves to provide a naturalistic appearance. The terraced banks will ensure that they are safe for children
Landscape treatment	<p>Wet elements: Emergent species planted around the margins including species such as marsh marigold, yellow flag iris, water forget-me-not and common rush. Also including tree species such as <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> (common alder), <i>Betula nigra</i> (river birch), and <i>Salix alba</i> ‘Chermesina’ (white willow) planted as a mix of Heavy Standards and feathered trees.</p> <p>Dry elements: The majority of the ‘dry’ attenuation pond will be maintained as grass with a mix of amenity grass and wildflower meadow (e.g. Emorsgate EM8 mix). As with swales approximately 10% of the attenuation ponds to be planted with a mix of species tolerant of occasional inundation (see under swales)</p>
Other	<p>Boardwalks extend across area in places and timber decked areas to allow pond dipping to enhance visitor experiences and provide for educational use.</p> <p>Signage and lifebelts will also be provided in the vicinity of the wet ponds.</p>

Figure 3.9: Design principles for attenuation ponds

Planting design

3.6.12. The quality of the landscape setting will be a defining feature of the development at Alderholt Meadows helping to create a place with a unique identity. The proposals retain the majority of the existing landscape features on the site including trees and hedgerows and supplement these with new planting that will enhance biodiversity, screen visual intrusion and establish an attractive setting for play and recreation. This new planting will be delivered as part of a wider landscape strategy of connected routes and spaces delivering green corridors that are both beneficial for people and wildlife.

3.6.13. Where appropriate native species are promoted as this will enhance biodiversity. Consideration is also given to the dynamic nature of planting – living things grow, and appropriate choices must be made on which species should be planted and where.

3.6.14. Figure 3.10 identifies a range of tree species that are considered appropriate for the site and indicates where these should be located. This is by no means an exhaustive list and is provided as a guide at this stage.



Species	Main street	Secondary street	Minor residential street	Residential courtyards	Front gardens	Alderholt Park	Neighbourhood spaces	Swale corridors	Woodland planting (SANG)	Free standing trees (SANG)	New hedgerows
Acer campestre (field maple)		Yes	Yes	Yes						Yes	
Alnus cordata (Italian alder)	Yes					Yes					
Alnus glutinosa								Yes			
Amelankier lamarkii (snowy mespilus)				Yes	Yes		Yes				
Betula nigra (river birch)								Yes			
Betula pendula (silver birch)				Yes	Yes		Yes				
Betula pendula 'Jacquemontii' (himalayan birch)				Yes	Yes						
Castanea sativa (sweet chestnut)						Yes					
Corylus avellana (hazel)									Yes		Yes
Corylus colorna (Turkish hazel)		Yes		Yes							
Crataegus monogyna (common hawthorn)									Yes	Yes	Yes
Crataegus monogyna 'Pauls Scarlet' (hawthorn)			Yes		Yes						
Juglans nigra (black walnut)		Yes					Yes				
Pinus sylvestris (Scots pine)							Yes			Yes	
Quercus robur (oak)	Yes					Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes
Quercus robur 'Fastigiata' (fastigiate oak)	Yes			Yes							
Salix alba (white willow)								Yes	Yes		
Salix alba 'Chermesina' (white willow)								Yes			
Salix caprea' (goat willow)								Yes	Yes		
Sorbus aucuparia sp (rowan)		Yes	Yes		Yes						
Tilia x euchlora (small leaved lime)	Yes										

Figure 3.10: Tree species and locations

Location	Planting type and conditions	Size of stock
Main streets	Clear stem trees planted at even spacings as an avenue. Trees to be planted within a landscaped margin adjacent the carriageway and in a tree pit of 2 x 2m minimum dimension (or as part of a more continuous landscaped trench). Use of root barriers adjacent the carriageway to be considered.	Extra Heavy Standard (16-18cm) or Semi-mature trees supplied rootballed.
Secondary streets	Clear stem trees planted within a tree pit of 2 x 2m minimum dimension within verge or landscaped margin to street (where this exists).	Minimum size Extra Heavy Standard (14-16cm) trees supplied rootballed.
Minor residential streets	Clear stem trees planted within a tree pit of 2 x 2m minimum dimension within verge or landscaped margin to street (where this exists).	Minimum size Extra Heavy Standard (14-16cm) trees, supplied rootballed.
Residential courtyards	Clear stem trees planted within a tree pit of 2 x 2m minimum dimension within a soft landscaped area or paved area.	Minimum size Extra Heavy Standard (14-16cm) trees, supplied rootballed.
Front gardens	Clear stem trees planted within a tree pit of 1 x 1m minimum dimension within a soft landscaped area.	Minimum size Select Standard (10-12cm) trees, supplied container grown.
Alderholt Park	Clear stem trees planted within a tree pit of 2 x 2m minimum dimension. Trees planted as avenues defining paths or in groups of 3, 5 or 7 trees with specimens at 8 to 10m centres.	Minimum size Extra Heavy Standard (14-16cm) trees, supplied rootballed. Avenue trees Extra Heavy Standard (16-18cm) or Semi-mature trees supplied rootballed.
Neighbourhood spaces	Clear stem trees planted within a tree pit of 2 x 2m minimum dimension. Trees planted in groups of 3, 5 or 7 trees with specimens typically at 8 to 10m centres.	Minimum size Extra Heavy Standard (14-16cm) trees, supplied rootballed.
Swale corridors /attenuation ponds	Mix of clear stem trees planted within a tree pit of 1 x 1m minimum dimension within the swale and smaller feathered and multi-stemmed trees to provide a more naturalistic effect. Trees planted in groups.	Clear stem trees Heavy standard 12-14cm rootballed; feathered trees (1.75-2.5m height) supplied bare root or container grown.
Woodland planting (SANG)	Mix of native transplants and whips planted at 1m centres and including a number of feathered trees to provide impact (approx 5%). Trees to be planted in tree tubes to assist establishment.	1 + 1 transplants and whips (100-125cm) supplied bare root; feathered trees (1.75-2.5m ht) supplied bare root or container grown.
Free standing trees (SANG)	Clear stem trees planted within a tree pit of 2 x 2m minimum dimension. Trees planted either individually or in groups of 3, 5 or 7 trees with specimens typically at 8 to 10m centres.	Minimum size Extra Heavy Standard (14-16cm) trees, supplied rootballed.
New hedgerows	Mix of native transplants and whips planted as double staggered row at 450mm centres and in tree tubes to assist establishment. Post, rail and pig wire fence at height 1100mm to provide protection to emerging hedgerow.	1 + 1 transplants and whips (100-125cm) supplied bare root.

Figure 3.11: Plant types and sizes in relation to locations

3.6.16. Trees need to be given adequate space to grow and appropriate ground conditions in which to establish. Figure 3.10 identifies the species that are appropriate for different locations within the Alderholt Meadows Site. Figure 3.11, above, identifies the size of planting stock and the conditions within which they should be planted.

Amenity planting

3.6.17. In addition to tree planting amenity planting at ground level will be hugely beneficial in enhancing the quality of the streetscape and residential amenity. The following principles are promoted in respect of amenity planting for Alderholt Meadows:

- A 2.5m wide margin planted with low growing shrub and herbaceous species is proposed alongside the main street delivering character and legibility to this street;
- Low growing planting at property interfaces within courtyard areas and where built form is used to define and enclose street spaces to soften the hard landscape within these areas;
- Shrub and hedge planting should be used to define property boundaries in combination with low brick walls or railings;
- Planting in public areas to be generally be low growing to ensure that natural surveillance is retained; and
- Species selected for both ease of maintenance but also to deliver year round colour, flowers and fruit that support wildlife and biodiversity.

3.6.18. Appropriate low growing species include Escallonia species, Hebe species, Hypericum calycinum, Lavandula species, Santolina species, Spiraea species and Symphoricarpos species. These supplemented by herbaceous perennial species including Ajuga, Heuchera, Rudbeckia, Salvia and Sedum species.

3.6.19. Appropriate hedging species include Acer campestre (field maple), Amelanchier lamarkii (snowy mesphilus), Carpinus betulus (hornbeam), Escallonia species, Ligustrum ovalifolium (privet) and Taxus baccata (yew).



3.7 QUANTUM OF OPEN SPACE PROPOSED

3.7.1. The total area of open space to be delivered as part of the Alderholt Meadows proposals is **19.1 hectares**. This is significantly more than the 15.3 hectares required by Core Strategy policy HE4.

3.7.2. The space provided as part of the proposals has been categorised against the criteria identified in this policy as follows:

- Recreation grounds and public gardens including parks, active sports and children and young peoples space – 8.16 hectares;
- Amenity green space – 2.04 hectares;
- Natural and semi-natural green space – 4.08 hectares; and
- Allotments – 1.02 hectares.

3.7.3. Three categories of space, recreation grounds, active sports and children’s play and young peoples space have been grouped for the purposes of the calculations as these types of space will not be mutually exclusive but rather provided within the larger open spaces delivered as part of the Alderholt Meadows proposals. The open space quantum proposed at Alderholt Meadows are set out in Figure 3.12 and the distribution of spaces is indicated in Figure 3.13.

Open space type	Quantum proposed (Ha)	Policy recommendation (Ha)	Variance against policy
Recreation grounds and public gardens / Active (outdoor) sports space / Children and young peoples space	8.25Ha	8.16Ha	+0.09Ha (+1.1%)
Amenity green space	3.69Ha	2.04Ha	+1.65Ha (+81%)
Natural and semi-natural green space	6.28Ha	4.08Ha	+2.20Ha (+54%)
Allotments	0.88Ha	1.02Ha	-0.14Ha (-14%)
Total	19.1Ha	15.3Ha	+3.8Ha (+25%)

Figure 3.12: Proposed open space compared to policy recommendations

3.7.4. The quantum of open space proposed is greater than that required by planning policy for all open space types except for allotments and significantly greater in respect of amenity green space and natural and semi-natural green space. This reflects the landscape led approach to the design of Alderholt Meadows, the retention of existing green infrastructure and the incorporation of sustainable urban drainage features into the design of the development.

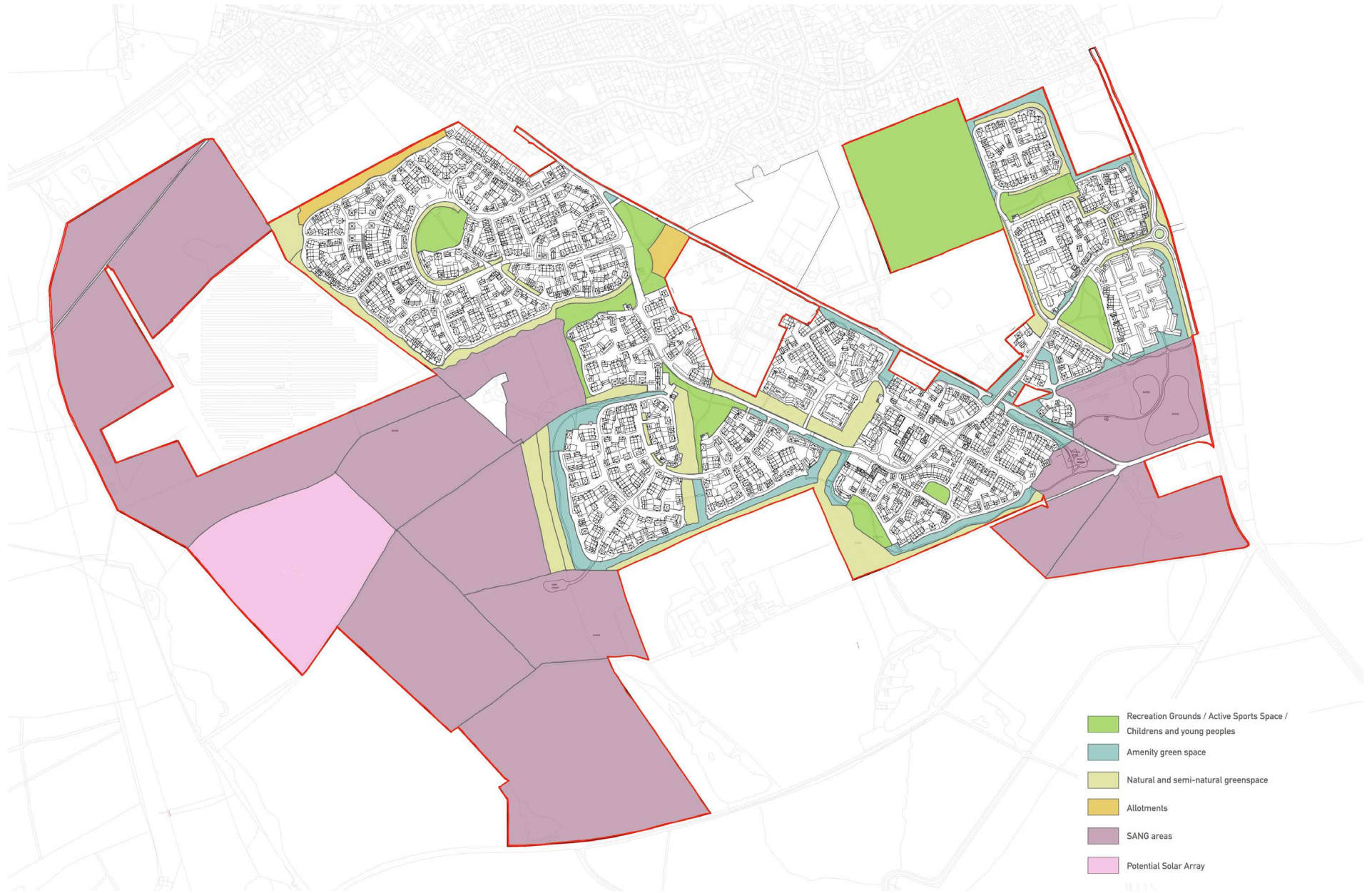


Figure 3.13: Open space assessment for Alderholt Meadows

Provision of SANG

3.7.5. Two significant areas of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) are proposed as part of Alderholt Meadows; one occupying the western part of the Site and the second to the south-east of the site. The western SANG is larger with an area of 42.39Ha; the south-east SANG has an area of 9.05Ha. Both SANG's will mitigate impacts of the development of the European designated sites and provide a variety of habitats that enhance biodiversity. Both SANG areas interface with Ringwood Forest to the south and offer the potential for future linkages to be established in the future.

3.7.6. Collectively the open spaces and SANG areas provide 70.45Ha of publicly accessible land for the residents of Alderholt. This represents 57% of the overall site area of 123Ha. A further 6.4Ha plot at the western edge of the site is identified as a potential location for a solar array that would provide a renewable source of energy for Alderholt.

SANG Design

3.7.7. The SANG areas have been designed in accordance with best practice and will provide a range of habitats that support biodiversity and in particular an environment that complements the heathland environment to the west. This includes:

- Areas of native woodlands providing a habitat for a range of bird and invertebrate species and also foraging for badgers;
- Area of scrub and gorse for breeding birds including the Dartford warbler and also reptiles;
- The creation of new ponds and wetland areas which will provide enhanced foraging grounds for bats and habitats for other species including great crested newts and invertebrates;
- Provision of hay and wild flower meadows in the western half of the site for skylarks, nightjar foraging and for invertebrates; and
- Uncut long grass areas along hedgerows (approximately 6m wide) providing seed for birds and also a habitat for reptiles and invertebrates.

3.7.8. Open grassed areas are also proposed allowing space for dogs to be exercised freely.

3.7.9. The SANG areas will provide a network of informal walking routes which offer the opportunity for a variety of circular walks both through the SANG itself and also connecting to Ringwood Forest to the south. The western SANG will extend northwards to Cross Roads Plantation and this presents the potential to divert walkers off the bridleway that passes through this Plantation



Figure 3.14: Part of the western SANG proposed at Alderholt Meadows

into the SANG area and thereby reducing some of the current visitors to Cranborne Heath. Boardwalks will be provided around new ponds and wetland areas. Seating and picnic areas will also be provided.

3.7.10. The SANG areas will be clearly sign posted and informal car parks will be provided for each of the two SANG areas with access to these from Ringwood Road.

3.7.11. A roost for bats will also be provided as part of a seating structure in the south-eastern SANG.

3.7.12. Further information on SANG proposals and how they accord with Natural England requirements are provided in the HRA report and SANG Habitat Creation and Management Plan prepared by EPR which are provided as Technical Appendices to ES Chapter 9.

