

Planning Statement

Alderholt Meadows, Alderholt, Dorset



On behalf of Dudsbury Homes (Southern) Ltd

Prepared by Intelligent Land

February 2023



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1. Introduction

1.1 Intelligent Land has prepared this Planning Statement on behalf of Dudsbury Homes Southern) Ltd (The Applicant) in support of an outline planning application for a mixed-use development at Alderholt, Dorset. The scheme comprises residential development, employment, a village centre with retail, health and commercial space, recreation and open space, a location for a solar array and Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) and has been submitted to Dorset Council (DC) as the Local Planning Authority (LPA).

1.2 The proposed development as described on the application form is:

“Outline application for a mixed-use development of up to 1,700 dwellings including affordable housing and care provision; 10,000sqm of employment space in the form of a business park; village centre with associated retail, commercial, community and health facilities; open space including the provision of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG); biodiversity enhancements; solar array; and new roads, access arrangements and associated infrastructure. (All matters reserved apart from access off Hillbury Road).”

Purpose of this Document

1.3 This Planning Statement sets out the details of the site, its context and the proposed development for the site, including details of which matters are submitted for formal approval and which are reserved for future determination. Its purpose is to assist the Council in determining the application by clearly explaining the proposal and how it has come about.

1.4 It provides the planning policy context at both national and local level including the overwhelming need for housing and supporting infrastructure to create truly sustainable settlements. The Statement provides the ‘story’ of how the proposals have come about and the process which has led to the submitted application. This includes a summary of the masterplanning process, possible phasing of development, infrastructure and affordable housing offer and Heads of Terms for planning obligations.

1.5 The scale of the proposal means that it falls within the thresholds requiring Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). The application is therefore supported by an Environmental Statement (ES) prepared by Rapleys and all the underpinning technical reports together with a non-technical summary. A scoping report was submitted, and response received from Dorset Council on 21 December 2022 which has informed the application. The planning

application is accompanied by a separate Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) explaining the considerable engagement that has been undertaken.

The Vision for Alderholt Meadows

- 1.7 Alderholt is a sizeable Rural Service Centre with a population circa 3,000 people with limited facilities serving people's day to day needs. It provides a significant opportunity to establish a self-sustaining settlement built on sound planning principles that look to the future in terms of meeting people's needs for housing, healthy environments, outdoor space, local employment and accessible facilities and services to meet daily needs. Additionally, and no less important is the need to address climate change and enhancement of biodiversity.
- 1.8 Alderholt Meadows is Dudson Homes' vision of how these matters can be accommodated through building beautifully and creating a place that also looks outstanding, drawing on local vernacular examples of good design. The ethos of Alderholt Meadows is captured in the applicant's vision:

We believe that where we live affects how we live. Our vision is to create a place which will inspire and be cherished. A place where community can live sustainably, grow and prosper.

We aim to set a high benchmark in terms of design, sustainability, energy performance, modern methods of construction and biodiversity net gain which positively address climate and ecological emergencies.

The Proposed Development

- 1.9 Paragraph 1.2 contains the description of development as submitted on the planning application form. The application site, denoted by the redline on Figure 1.1, and which forms the submitted location plan extends to 122 hectares (301 acres). The site extends to both sides of Ringwood Road with primary access to be taken from Hillbury Road. The main point of access is the only element where detailed approval is being sought, all other aspects of the proposal are submitted in outline.
- 1.10 The application site encloses but does not include the existing solar array to the west of Alderholt. The solar array is leased to Good Earth energy. Access to this is maintained along the Bridleway running east-west from the western end of Blackwater Grove.

Figure 1.1: Location Plan



1.11 Although other matters of detail and design are reserved, the application is supported by an Indicative site masterplan, Figure 1.2, and a series of technical studies in order to demonstrate that the form and scale of development proposed is acceptable, sustainable and viable. The Indicative Masterplan shows how the development could be delivered in a form which responds to the technical and environmental inputs from the varied disciplines supporting the application and which have been considered through the EIA process. The information contained in the Design and Access Statement, Design Code and parameter plans provide a framework for future detailed design and to inform Reserved Matters applications.

Figure 1.2: Indicative Masterplan



Design and Access Statement (DAS) and Design Code

1.12 This Planning Statement should be read in conjunction with the DAS and Design Code. The DAS has as its starting point an assessment of local heritage and the vernacular form of development in settlements associated with the eastern part of Dorset. The DAS describes the characteristics of the site and how the proposed development responds positively to the constraints and opportunities and produces a set of parameter plans to support the outline application.

Parameter Plans

1.13 A set of Parameter Plans are submitted as part of the outline planning application. They serve to define the extent of the development from which detailed reserved matters applications will be submitted. The parameter plans are:

Land uses

Access and movement

Density

Green and blue infrastructure

Land Use Budget

- 1.14 Table 1.1 identifies the proposed land uses and site area and should be read in conjunction with the Parameter Plans.

Table 1.1: Land Use Budget

Land Use	Area (Hectares)	Amount	%
Residential (Class C3) including an 80 bed care home	38.8	1,700	32
Green/Blue Infrastructure	19.1		15.6%
SANG provision	51.4		42.1%
Primary road infrastructure	3.4		2.8%
Solar array	6.4		5.2%
Employment	1.7	10,000sqm	1.3%
Village Centre	1.2	4,000sqm	1%
Site Area	122		

Environmental Statement

- 1.15 An ES has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 and advice contained in the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG). In preparing development proposals for the site, it was determined that an EIA would be required by virtue of exceedance of the thresholds set out in Schedule 2, section 10 ‘urban development project’ of the 2017 Regulations. In addition, the Site is located adjacent to a ‘sensitive area’ as defined by the Regulations, this being a European site, Dorset Heathlands Special Protection Area, Ramsar and Special Area of Conservation. Consequently, the Applicant is voluntarily submitting an ES and it is not necessary to seek a formal Screening Opinion.
- 1.16 In order to refine the information and aspects of the environmental topics that the EIA will consider, a Scoping Opinion Report (ES Technical Appendix 1.1) was produced with the intention that the Council could subsequently adopt that document as the formal Scoping Opinion Report confirming the EIA content to accompany the planning application for the Site. The Scoping Opinion Report was submitted to the Council on 17th November 2022,

whilst baseline work for the ES was being undertaken. The Scoping Opinion from the Council was received on 21 December 2022 (ES Technical Appendix 1.2).

1.17 The applicant's Scoping Opinion Report identifies the following technical topic areas to be included within the ES:

- Transportation
- Landscape, Townscape and Visual Amenity
- Ecology/Conservation
- Society, Population and Economy
- Flooding, Drainage, Water Resources
- Archaeology and Heritage
- Climate Change
- Air Quality
- Cumulative Effects

1.18 The Council Scoping Opinion confirms that as a minimum the topics of Ecology, Historic Environment/Cultural Heritage, Landscape and Visual, and Flooding should be included within the ES and a follow up letter was received that requested Minerals to also be included. Notwithstanding this, Dudsbury Homes have committed to including the topics identified in paragraph 1.17 above.

1.19 The response to the additional information over and above that included within the submitted Scoping Opinion Report that has been requested to be included within the ES, together with the Applicant's response, is provided in Table 1.2 below (Table 1.1 in the ES Main Volume).

Table 1.2: Scoping Opinion Response

Environmental Topic Area	Council Additional Requirements over and above that already identified in Applicant Scoping Opinion Report	Applicant Response
Ecology	To thoroughly assess impacts on functionally linked land/impact pathways on <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hydrology of River Avon – nutrient loads, • Water quality impacts on Solent Marine Sites. 	Included within the Ecology chapter and associated technical appendices.
Landscape, Townscape and Visual Amenity	Recreational impacts on Dorset and New Forest heathlands and Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Effects on tranquillity, lighting, traffic on the AONB and cumulative effects of other development on all sides.	Provision of SANG included within the scheme to off-set these potential impacts – referenced in the Landscape and Visual chapter, the Ecology chapter and the Society, Population and Economy chapter, and associated technical appendices.
Archaeology/Heritage	Paragraph 6.109 of Scoping Report should reference ‘further excavation’ rather than ‘evaluation’.	Noted and understood. The ES itself references this correctly.
Flood Risk/Drainage	Drainage strategy should be based on 45% climate change rather than the 40% quoted.	The Flood Risk and Drainage chapter and associated technical appendix include assessment and calculations on the 45% basis.
Minerals and Waste	Minerals Assessment to determine quality/quantity of mineral and possibly a proposal for prior extraction is required should the development progress to a full application. The ES should consider likely effects the development on these elements.	This is not assessed in the ES at this time. Further commentary is provided within the Planning Statement accompanying the outline application, and in paragraph 1.14 below.

2. The Site and its Context

The site and Location

- 2.1 Alderholt lies approximately 3km to the south west of Fordingbridge, Hampshire, 8.5 km north east of Verwood, Dorset, 9km north of Ringwood, Hampshire and 24km north east of Wimborne, Dorset. The land that comprises the outline planning application lies to the south and west of Alderholt and measures 122 hectares in area (Figure 1).
- 2.2 The majority of the application site is in agricultural use and is within five private ownerships. Dudsbury Homes has options over all the land within the redline of the application, apart from those which form part of the public highway. All private landowners are signed up to an equalisation agreement enabling development subject to planning being progressed without internal dispute over value. The application site also includes highway land and a bridleway, with the latter within one of the land ownerships.
- 2.3 Ringwood Road which runs north west to south east on the western side of Alderholt divides the application site in two. Land to the east of Ringwood Road and west of Hillbury Road abutting the southern edge of Alderholt forms the eastern parcel of the application site. It also wraps around the existing Alderholt Recreation Ground. The land is gently undulating with a slight fall from north to south.
- 2.4 Land to the west of Ringwood Road comprising a much larger area forms the western part of the site. This western part adjoins Ringwood Forest (Plumley Wood) to the south east of the site, wraps around Warren Park Farm's farmhouse, outbuildings and fishing lakes, and encompasses much of Sleepbrook Farm and Crossroads plantation which sits to the north and west of the existing solar array. This parcel also includes the large agricultural field that adjoins that part of Ringwood Road as it enters/leaves Alderholt. This western area also slopes gently from north to south with areas of gentle undulation apart from the very northern field of Cross Roads plantation which slopes from south to north.
- 2.5 To the west of the application site lies Sleep Brook, a stream that in part is covered by a national SSSI nature conservation designation. Beyond this to the west lies Cranborne Common. Cross Roads Plantation in the north west of the application site is dissected by a bridleway which provides access to the existing solar array as well a multi-use route to Cranborne Common and beyond.

Accessibility

- 2.6 The application site is entirely in private ownership apart from incorporation of highway land to facilitate access, pedestrian improvements and sight lines. Different land ownerships are served by direct accesses off either Ringwood Road, Hillbury Road or via the bridleway/Blackwater Grove. Apart from the bridleway there are no public rights of way or permissive routes through any of the site. There are, however, several routes that adjoin or are close to the site which provide a wider network of walking and cycling links to Fordingbridge, Verwood and other surrounding locations.
- 2.7 Currently Alderholt is served by a limited bus service operated by Dorset Community Transport. This provides a service to its close neighbour, Fordingbridge and on to Ringwood.

Local Services and Facilities

- 2.8 Alderholt, despite having a population of circa 3,000 has very limited services and facilities. Originally, Alderholt was planned for a greater range of such facilities which would provide for daily needs. However, these have never materialised and where some such facilities were provided, they have not been sustained. Today, Alderholt provides a pub, retail store occupied by the Co-op, a First School, two Churches and their associated buildings and a large sport and recreation ground incorporating a sports and social club.
- 2.9 Fordingbridge, approximately 3km from Alderholt and with a population of about 6,000 provides a broader range of facilities including a GP practice which many Alderholt residents' use. Fordingbridge has a historic high street with a range of shops. Ringwood and Verwood are higher order centres with a greater range of services and facilities including supermarkets.

Planning History

- 2.10 There is no relevant planning history so far as planning applications are concerned. The site has, however, been promoted for development through the East Dorset Local Plan Review 2016 and 2018 which has been subsumed into the emerging Dorset Local Plan process and featured as part of options in the Regulation 18 Issues and Options document published by DC in January 2021.

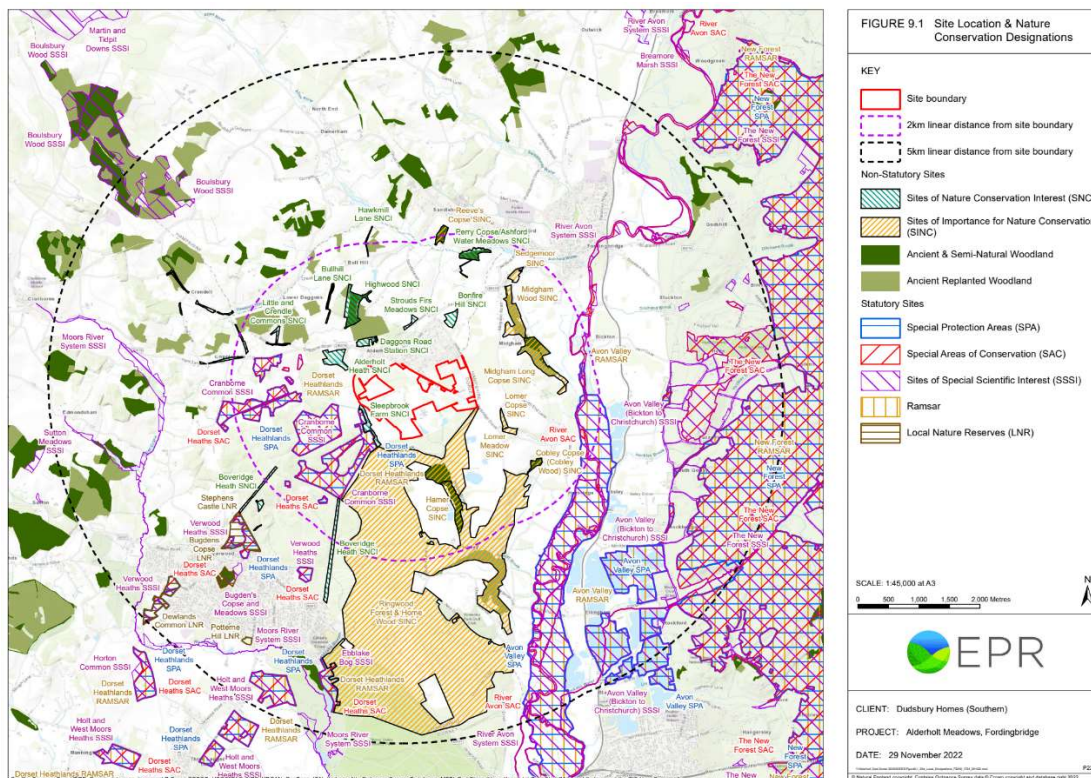
Designations

- 2.11 *Habitats* – Several nature conservation designations are present within the Zone of Influence (ZOI) of the application site (Figure 2.1). The ZOI extends out to 5km for International and

nationally designated sites, and 2km for local wildlife sites and takes in sites within Dorset and Hampshire. All sites have been assessed for their conservation importance.

- 2.12 The Internationally and Nationally protected sites in Dorset include amongst others the Dorset Heaths SAC, Dorset Heathlands SPA, Dorset Heathlands Ramsar site and Cranborne Common SSSI. In Hampshire, within the Avon Valley can be found the River Avon SAC, Avon Valley SPA and Ramsar site and both River Avon System and Bickton to Christchurch SSSIs. In the New Forest within the ZOI are the separate New Forest SAC and SPA, Ramsar site and the New Forest SSSI.
- 2.13 Local Wildlife sites, known as Sites of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCI) in Dorset and Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) in Hampshire are found within 2km of the application site. These sites are of County importance. There are 11 SNCI in Dorset and 9 SINC in Hampshire within the ZOI.

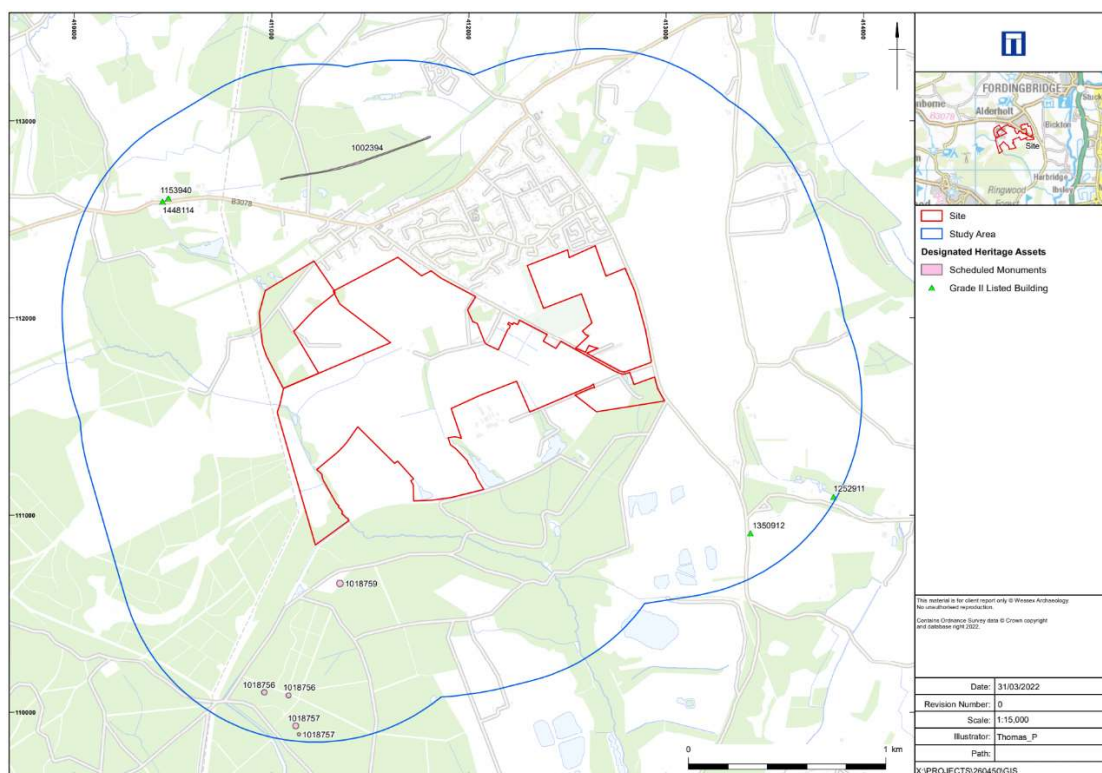
Figure 2.1: Nature Conservations Designations (Source: ES Ecology Chapter)



- 2.14 **Heritage Assets** – A 1km study area was established to assess the impact on designated assets. There are no assets with the application site. Within the study area there are no World Heritage Sites, Conservation Areas, Registered Parks and Gardens or Registered Battlefields. There are four Scheduled Monuments and four Grade II Listed Buildings within

the Study Area. They either fall within the northern or southern extents of the Study Area and their locations are shown on Figure 2.2. Given their locations in relation to the site and for some the significant intervening woodland there is no intervisibility or settings issues identified.

Figure 2.2: Heritage Assets within the Historic Environment Study Area (Source: HEDBA April 2022)



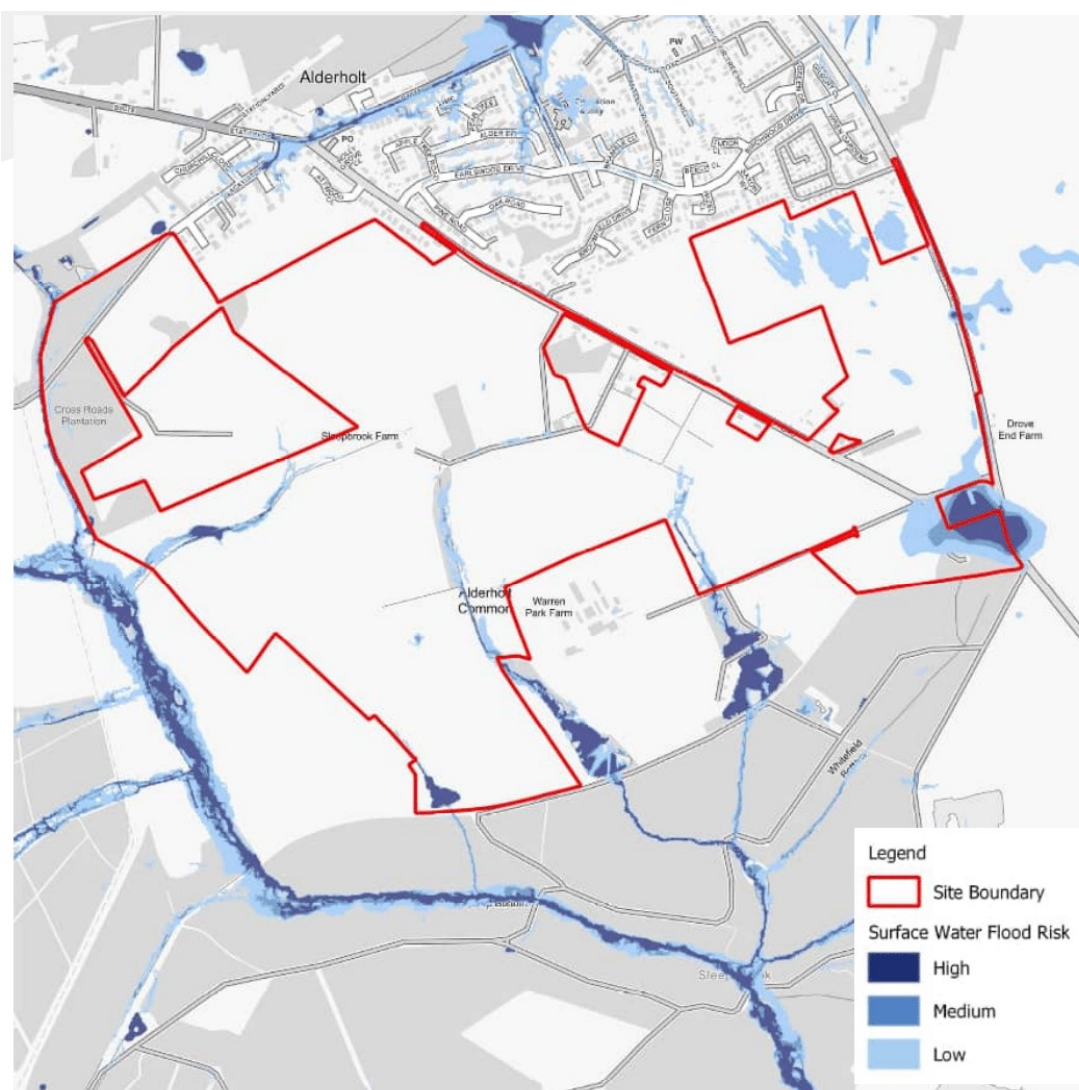
2.15 As for non-designated heritage assets only archaeological recordings are identified and these are of a prehistoric stone axe findspot, a group of medieval or post-medieval pillow mounds, an area that appears to be a post-medieval ridge and furrow and three areas of post-medieval extraction pits. From data in the Heritage Environmental Register the site has high potential for at least medieval and post medieval remains. A geophysical survey has been completed on most the application site and this has not identified anything of significance.

2.16 **Flood Risk** – Approximately 54 hectares of the 122-hectare application site is shown in the indicative masterplan as developable and comprising predominantly of fields and greenspace. There are multiple watercourses either on or close to the application site as well as several ponds or small lakes. The application site lies entirely with Flood Zone 1 according to the Environment Agency (EA) Flood Maps. Sleep Brook which lies to the west of the

application site is susceptible to flooding but this is localised along the watercourse corridor and is some way from where the indicative masterplan proposes development.

- 2.17 The EAs Risk of Flooding from Surface Water map with the application boundary in red, Figure 2.3, shows the site to be predominantly at very low to low risk of surface water flooding. However, medium to high-risk surface water flooding is shown for small areas at locations across the site. The Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment (PFRA) Areas Susceptible to Groundwater Flooding map shows the site to be in an approximately 0-25% risk.

Figure 2.3: Alderholt Meadows Surface Water Flood Map (Source: FRA/Environment Agency)



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- 2.18 *Landscape* – there are no statutory or non-statutory landscape designations within the site. In the wider landscape context, there are environmental designations that have some relevance to landscape and visual matters. These include Cranborne Common, an internally

important nature conservation site; Sleepbrook Farm SNCI and Ringwood Forest and Home Wood SINC, both County wildlife sites; and several areas of ancient woodland located close to the site. A tree survey has been undertaken which identifies a number of Category A trees and hedgerows towards the north eastern corner of the site and on the southern edge close to Warren Park Farm.

- 2.19 Natural England divides England into 159 National Character Areas (NCA) based on a combination of landscape, biodiversity, geodiversity and economic activity. The site is located within NCA 135 – Dorset Heaths which is defined as a landscape of predominantly low relief, where erosion has left incised but shallow valleys, now dry or holding small watercourses. Soils are predominantly sandy and agriculture is generally pasture with some arable cropping. Much of the undeveloped land and less fertile areas are covered by large tracts of conifer plantations or by heathlands of international importance.
- 2.20 *Utilities* – within the application site there is overhead high voltage (HV) electric cables and buried Openreach infrastructure. Some of the HV cables serve existing buildings which will not be retained while other branches of both infrastructures will require diverting. At the proposed Ringwood Road site entrance there is overhead and buried Openreach infrastructure, buried gas and water mains. Diversions may be required at detailed design stage.
- 2.21 At the proposed roundabout on Hillbury Road, there is buried Openreach and water infrastructure that is anticipated to require relocating into the new roundabout. As above, once more detailed plans for the S278 works are available a full assessment of the works diversionary/protectionary works required can be determined.
- 2.22 An indicative electrical point of connection (POC) for the site has been provided by SSEN - this is at the Verwood Primary Substation c. 6.1km from the site. SSEN have also given an indication of the costs required to bring a new connection to the site. An indicative water point of connection has also been provided by Bournemouth Water, a trunk main located c. 286m north-west in Daggons Road/Station Road.

Technical Assessments

- 2.23 In developing proposals for Alderholt Meadows, Dudsbury Homes has engaged suitably qualified and experienced consultants to provide detailed assessment of the site, its constraints, and its development potential across a wide range of areas. Technical reports

have been produced as supporting documents to this application, and in most cases, have produced chapters for the Environmental Statement (ES). Key points from the Technical Assessments are considered in the Planning Considerations Chapter.

3. Indicative scheme design

Design Principles

3.1 Dudson Homes has worked with Scott Worsfold Architects (SWA) to produce an indicative masterplan for the Alderholt Meadows site. Despite this being an outline application, the applicant's intention has been to clearly demonstrate the ability of the site to provide an attractive and high-quality mixed development which will significantly enhance Alderholt as a settlement and lead to its self-containment, thus improving its sustainability as a place to live.

3.2 The indicative master plan has been developed through an iterative process, taking account of the technical assessments, most of which are part of the accompanying Environmental Statement. Others, such as the Energy and Sustainability Report are submitted as planning application documents and form part of the underlying work that has led to the current masterplan.

3.3 The design principles of the masterplan are found in the DAS, being:

- Preserve the strong connection with the local vernacular architecture of Alderholt
- Build in the principles of sustainable development from the outset to create a long lasting and valued neighbourhood capable of change over time
- Create parcels of development in a strong landscape framework that provides a network of green infrastructure
- Create a strong sense of place, character and identity by ensuring development is of the highest quality
- Vary the grain across the site, with all elements set as a series of character areas, creating intimate groups that are travelled and experienced within a narrative. All will form a direct connect and design-led housing promotion that should join the character of Alderholt. All should unite visually and join the craft and detail evident within the wider setting
- Enhance accessibility by all modes for all residents and visitors by establishing a clear and safe network of interlinked roads, lanes, shared surfaces, courtyards, landscaped spaces, and pedestrian routes; all with clear and legible access to public and private amenity accessible to all

- Preserve existing site characteristics, such as important trees, hedgerows, habitats and key views/vistas, to form a place that has context, character and narrative
- Create a variety of open spaces and walking routes to cater for play, accessibility & exploration, as a setting for the development
- Provide sustainable urban drainage measures
- Create a varied scale, ranging from 2, 2 ½ & 3 storey forms filtering down to 1, 1 ½ storey more subservient buildings, all with traditionally pitched roofs. A varied scale that has a synergy with the heights and extent seen in the existing village. A variety in scale and architectural treatment will create a character that possesses hierarchy
- Urban design which avoids a mundane and repetitious treatment of garaging/house designs which are each serviced (estate like and with monotony) from the principal access
- The use of mews courts and rear serviced courts, that contain parking and residential feature, shall be utilised to avoid an over dominance of the car & garaging within the character of place and street scene settings. Avoid the pattern of garage/house as a dominant street scene feature. The guidance within CABE/DETR – DB32, Places Streets and Movement, & Better Places to Live is still worthy of reference and should be used

Design Evolution Process

- 3.4 Dudson Homes aims to create a characterful place inspired by local vernacular architecture and draws on best practice urban design. The creation of a varied and beautiful place to live and work forms the heart of the applicant’s brief. Appraising the site, the local context, local heritage and wider landscape setting set the context for a locally inspired approach that has led to an analysis and understanding of constraints and opportunities which has informed the indicative masterplan.

The Indicative Masterplan

- 3.5 Underpinning the masterplan is the desire to deliver not only a beautiful place but one that is connected and set within its landscape. To be able to provide facilities that will serve residents’ day to day needs and offer employment opportunities within the village. All iterations of the masterplan have focused on the need to create a village centre, one that

could be accessed by all, firstly on foot and then by bicycle. The centre will provide retail and commercial opportunities, health services and space for outdoor markets and events. The centre will provide the denser part of the development and affords the opportunity for a care home and flatted development catering for both young and old alike.

- 3.6 The indicative masterplan creates a place with a clear identity, one that has a centre where people can mingle and enjoy time, and where substantial areas of greenspace provide opportunities for outdoor leisure and recreation. The creation of a series of neighbourhoods knitted together by footpath and cycleway links that make connections back into the existing village promote the concept of the 15-minute neighbourhood.
- 3.7 A 2-hectare business park is planned next to the main site entrance off Hillbury Road. Up to 1,700 homes providing for needs of local people and to support economic growth with a significant number of affordable homes to enable those who can't afford their own home an opportunity to have a place of their own can be accommodated.
- 3.8 Over 50 hectares of land is set aside for greenspace, whether this is in the form of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG), formal and informal recreation and amenity greenspace all of which have integrated biodiversity enhancements to improve the opportunity for wildlife to thrive.
- 3.9 The indicative masterplan does not provide for additional education facilities. Through extensive dialogue with them, St. James' First School wishes to stay where it is and expand on its current site and provide facilities to accommodate children of Primary school age. Therefore, Dudsbury Homes would support this ambition through contributions to education rather than identify a new school site within the application site. This is also the case for secondary education where contributions would be made to deliver improvements at The Burgate School in Fordingbridge to enable children to transfer direct from St. James' at age 11.

Indicative layout

- 3.10 The indicative layout shows a development comprising:
- 1,700 units of residential accommodation, with an indicative average mix of unit sizes as follows:
 - 323 x 1-bedroom units

- 561 x 2-bedroom units
- 510 x 3-bedroom unit
- 255 x 4-bedroom unit
- 51 x 5-bedroom unit
- 595 of these dwellings will be affordable housing. The average percentage (35%) by bed number is below, the final distribution to be determined:
 - 113 x 1-bedroom unit
 - 196 x 2-bedroom unit
 - 179 x 3-bedroom unit
 - 89 x 4-bedroom unit
 - 18 x 5-bedroom unit
- An 80-bed care home is included within the 1700 total unit figure
- 10,000sqm of employment floorspace set within a business park setting
- A village centre comprising retail, health, office and community space totalling circa 4,000sqm of floorspace
- 19 hectares of open space comprised of extension to the Alderholt recreation ground, play space, active sports space, amenity greenspace, natural and semi-natural greenspace and allotments
- 51 hectares of SANG to the north, west and south east of the application site
- A 6.4-hectare site for a solar array
- New access in the form of a roundabout off Hillbury Road to connect with a new route crossing Ringwood Road and re-joining at a point at the northern part of the road within the application boundary
- Closure of that part of Ringwood Road within the application site to through traffic. Access to properties and facilities will remain with the road downgraded to a 'quiet' lane and safe route for pedestrians and cyclists
- Pumping station and associated SUDs ponds

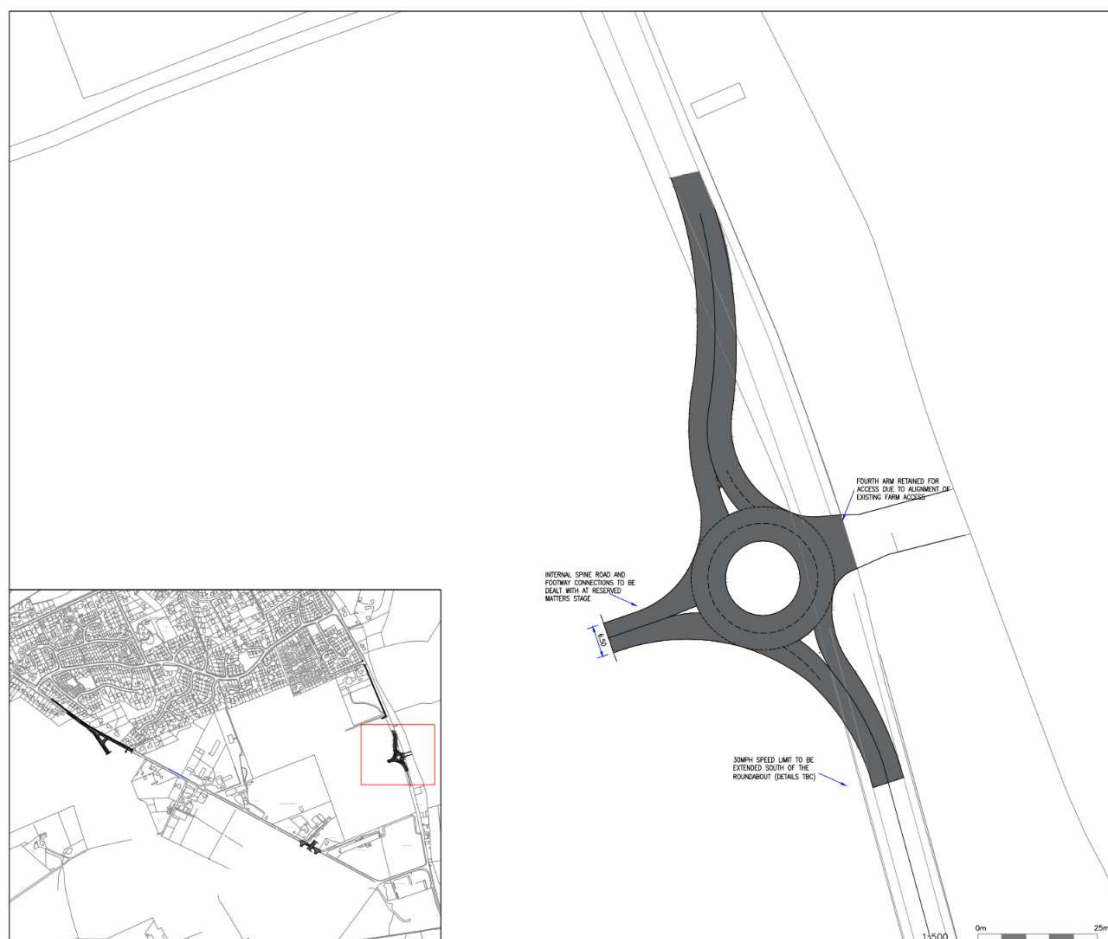
- 3.11 The detail of the indicative layout is shown in Figure 2 and within the Design and Access Statement produced by SWA Architects.
- 3.12 The Approach to Site Layout creates an enlarged public greenspace to the north of the existing recreation ground, creating a green focus to what would become the geographical centre of Alderholt. This greenspace can provide both formal and informal space. Greenspace links are provided throughout the layout to facilitate access to open spaces for both the proposed dwellings but also for the existing residents of Alderholt.
- 3.13 To the south of the central greenspace the site is dissected by the primary access route through the site. This passes through the new village centre which lies to the west of the existing Ringwood Road. The residential areas feed off the primary access route through the site. They are arranged in neighbourhoods, each provided with its own focal greenspace, structured in such a way to be both distinct as a neighbourhood but part of a cohesive whole.
- 3.14 The employment area or business park is located to the east of the site adjacent Hillbury Road with convenient access off a new junction serving the site and maintaining access to the fields to the east of Hillbury Road.
- 3.15 The layout prioritises walking and cycling and the primary access road is designed to accommodate public transport.

Site Access Proposals

- 3.16 Whilst the application is in outline, detailed permission is sought for the primary access into the site and the creation of the roundabout junction on Hillbury Road, Figure 3.1. The roundabout has been designed to accommodate the proposed level and type of traffic anticipated whilst ensuring that the design is sympathetic to its surroundings and not overly engineered.
- 3.17 The access will take the form of a four-arm roundabout, with Hillbury Road forming the northern and southern arms, the new development spine road forming the western arm and an existing farm access forming the eastern arm. The three main arms all have deflection and widening on the approach to ensure sufficient capacity and manoeuvrability of large vehicles, whilst ensuring some residual capacity is retained for future growth within the area.

- 3.18 The site access is currently located within a 40mph speed limit. However, as part of this junction work the intention is to extend the 30mph speed limit south along Hillbury Road to include the access roundabout.

Figure 3.1: Access drawing for which detailed permission is sought



- 3.19 For the other points of access, detailed consent is not being sought. However, design work has been undertaken to ensure that the proposed transport network shown on the indicative masterplan can be delivered. The other point of vehicular access to the development would be provided via Ringwood Road which would be diverted southwards to become the main spine road of the development. The existing alignment would form the minor arm of a priority junction. Due to the proposed alignment of the internal spine road an additional connection would be provided to assist vehicles turning right from the spine road into the existing Ringwood Road, and vice versa. This is also shown on Figure 6 above.

4. Relevant Planning Policy Context

- 4.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) requires that planning applications should be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Section 38(3) of the 2004 Act states that the development plan comprises development plan documents and any neighbourhood plan.
- 4.2 The relevant development plan documents are set out below, as they apply to the Alderholt Meadows site. It is also appropriate however to set the context of relevant national planning policy.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- 4.3 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2021 sets out the primary statements of Government planning policy. From the outset, the NPPF establishes that the role of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, which the framework at paragraph 8 defines as having three elements:

Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives):

a) an economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;

b) a social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities’ health, social and cultural well-being; and

c) an environmental objective – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.

- 4.4 Paragraph 11 of the NPPF sets a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which, in the case of decision-taking, concludes that development proposals which accord with an up-to-date development plan should be approved without delay:

For decision-taking this means:

c) approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or

d) *where there are no relevant plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:*

i. *the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or*

ii. *any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.*

- 4.5 Chapter 4 of the NPPF sets out the national policy approach to decision making with paragraph 38 requiring local planning authorities to approach decision making in a positive and creative way, working proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area and seeking to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.
- 4.6 Chapter 5 states that one of the Government’s key objectives for planning is to “significantly boost the supply of homes”, and the Framework recognises that a sufficient amount and variety of land needs to come forward where it is needed (paragraph 60). Paragraphs 64 and 65 set out the approach to affordable housing requirements and that at least 10% of the homes coming forward to be available for home ownership.
- 4.7 Paragraphs 74-77 require local planning authorities to maintain a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites at all times. The National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) provides more detail on how a five-year supply can be maintained and how this is assessed.
- 4.8 Paragraph 70 recognises the promotion of sustainable development in rural areas should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. Planning policies should identify opportunities for villages to grow and thrive, especially where they support local services. For groups of smaller settlements, development in one village may support services in those nearby.
- 4.9 Chapter 6 of the NPPF places significant weight on the need to support economic growth and productivity. In respect of the rural economy, paragraph 84 states:

Planning policies and decisions should enable:

a) the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings;

b) the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses;

c) sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments which respect the character of the countryside; and

d) the retention and development of accessible local services and community facilities, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.

- 4.10 Paragraph 85 states that both planning policies and decisions should recognise that sites to meet local business and community needs in rural areas may have to be found adjacent to or beyond existing settlements, and in locations not well served by public transport. It also states that opportunities are exploited to make a location more sustainable with sites physically well-related to existing settlements encouraged where suitable opportunities exist.
- 4.11 Chapter 8 promotes healthy and safe communities. Emphasis is on creating places that create social inaction through mixed use development, strong neighbourhood centres, layouts that allow for pedestrian and cycle connections and active streets. Places that are safe and enhance community life with high quality public spaces, and support healthy lifestyles with provision of green infrastructure, sports facilities, local shops and allotments and layouts that encourage walking and cycling (paragraph 92).
- 4.12 Paragraph 93 emphasises the need to provide social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments. Paragraph 95 identifies the need to ensure a sufficient choice of school places and that local planning authorities should take a proactive, positive and collaborative approach to meeting this requirement while encouraging development that will widen the choice in education.
- 4.13 Paragraphs 98-103 address open space and recreation and the importance of access to networks of high-quality open spaces for sport and physical activity and that this is important for the health and well-being of communities. It can provide wider benefits for nature and support efforts to address climate change.
- 4.14 Chapter 9 promotes sustainable transport and that it should be considered at the earliest stage of development proposals. Impacts of development need to be assessed with opportunities for walking, cycling and public transport accommodated. Significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable. Development proposals should take opportunities to promote sustainable transport; have safe and suitable access to the site for all users; the design of streets, parking areas and other transport elements reflects current national guidance; and any significant impacts

from the development on the transport network in terms of capacity and congestion, or on highway safety can be cost effectively mitigated to an acceptable degree.

- 4.15 Paragraph 111 states that development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe. Paragraph 112 then goes on to state:

a) give priority first to pedestrian and cycle movements, both within the scheme and with neighbouring areas; and second – so far as possible – to facilitating access to high quality public transport, with layouts that maximise the catchment area for bus or other public transport services, and appropriate facilities that encourage public transport use;

b) address the needs of people with disabilities and reduced mobility in relation to all modes of transport;

c) create places that are safe, secure and attractive – which minimise the scope for conflicts between pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles, avoid unnecessary street clutter, and respond to local character and design standards;

d) allow for the efficient delivery of goods, and access by service and emergency vehicles; and

e) be designed to enable charging of plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles in safe, accessible and convenient locations.

- 4.16 The effective use of land, in both urban and rural areas, is also an important policy objective of the NPPF at Chapter 11. Paragraph 120 of the framework sets out the Government's policy position:

Planning policies and decisions should:

a) encourage multiple benefits from both urban and rural land, including through mixed use schemes and taking opportunities to achieve net environmental gains – such as developments that would enable new habitat creation or improve public access to the countryside;

b) recognise that some undeveloped land can perform many functions, such as for wildlife, recreation, flood risk mitigation, cooling/shading, carbon storage or food production;

c) give substantial weight to the value of using suitable brownfield land within settlements for homes and other identified needs, and support appropriate opportunities to remediate despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated or unstable land;

d) promote and support the development of under-utilised land and buildings, especially if this would help to meet identified needs for housing where land supply is constrained and available sites could be used more effectively (for example converting space above shops, and building on or above service yards, car parks, lock-ups and railway infrastructure)⁴⁵; and

e) support opportunities to use the airspace above existing residential and commercial premises for new homes. In particular, they should allow upward extensions where the development would be consistent with the prevailing height and form of neighbouring properties and the overall street scene, is well designed (including complying with any local design policies and standards), and can maintain safe access and egress for occupiers.

4.17 Paragraph 124 addresses the need to accommodate different types of housing and other forms of development, as well as market availability and viability. Paragraph 125 advocates area-based character assessments, design guides and codes and masterplans can be used to help ensure that land is used efficiently while also creating beautiful and sustainable places.

4.18 Chapter 12 then discusses achieving well-designed places with paragraph 126 stating:

The creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.

4.19 Chapter 14 concerns itself with climate change, flooding and coastal change. Specific importance is given to the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate. Planning should shape places in ways that contribute to, amongst others, reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and supporting renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure.

4.20 Chapter 15 addresses the need to conserve and enhance the natural environment. Paragraph 179 seeks the protection and enhancement of biodiversity and geodiversity and seeking opportunities to secure measurable net gains for biodiversity.

The Local Development Plan

4.21 The adopted development plan for the area covering Alderholt consists of the Christchurch and East Dorset Local Plan Part 1 Core Strategy 2013-2028 (2014) and the saved policies of the East Dorset Local Plan 2002. It also includes the Bournemouth Dorset and Poole Minerals Strategy 2014.

Christchurch and East Dorset Local Plan 2014

4.22 The Christchurch and East Dorset Local Plan is the principal document for determining planning applications within the area covered by the former East Dorset District Council together with that of the former Christchurch Borough Council. Adopted in 2014 the Local Plan is over five years old and therefore some of its policies may be out of date. However, the plan is the starting point for considering development proposals. The Plan is a Part 1 local plan and therefore its policies are by nature more strategic rather than development management orientated.

4.23 A lengthy Core Strategy Vision opens with the following paragraph:

The natural environment of Christchurch and East Dorset and their historic and thriving towns and villages are, and will continue to be, the most important assets for the area. The quality of this special environment will be secured sustaining the growth of the local economy, and the welfare of its local communities, rather than being used as a reason to turn our back on growth which can be achieved sustainably.

4.24 It continues by identifying the important landscape and biodiversity of the area and the need to adapt to a changing climate. It sets out an approach to delivering housing, in part, through urban extensions, but importantly it also recognises the need to continue to deliver housing in the area's towns and villages.

4.25 The Local Plan has seven strategic objectives which are:

- Objective 1 To Manage and Safeguard the Natural Environment of Christchurch and East Dorset
- Objective 2 To Maintain and Improve the Character of the Towns and Villages, and to Create Vibrant Local Centres
- Objective 3 To Adapt to the Challenges of Climate Change
- Objective 4 To Enable the Mixed Economy of Christchurch and East Dorset to Grow, and to Develop New Employment Sectors
- Objective 5 To Deliver a Suitable, Affordable and Sustainable Range of Housing to Provide for Local Needs
- Objective 6 To Reduce the Need for Our Communities to Travel, and to do so More Easily by a Range of Travel Choices

impacts is provided which will be achieved through measures identified with a transport assessment or statement, including contributions to modelling work; new or improved public transport, pedestrian and cycle routes; travel plans and works to the highway. Development should be in accessible locations well linked to existing communities by walking, cycling and public transport with development designed to provide safe, permeable layouts; safe access onto the transport network; and safe movement of development related trips.

- 4.30 Policy KS9 Parking Provision requires adequate vehicle and cycle parking to be provided including for those with disabilities. The supporting text highlights that under provision can lead to inappropriate parking on streets, footways and verges causing highway safety and unsightly environments.
- 4.31 Policy ME1 Safeguarding Biodiversity and Geodiversity aims to protect, maintain and enhance the condition of all types of nature conservation sites, habitats and species within their ecological networks. The supporting text to the policy outlines the quality of the natural environment and that significant areas are protected by national and international legislation and that future growth can take place without damaging these important assets.
- 4.32 Policy ME2 deals with Protection of the Dorset Heathlands. One of the highest protected designations in this part of Dorset the policy sets out the approach to development. Any residential development between 400m and 5km of protected heathland needs to provide mitigation through a range of measures with greater detail being set out within a supplementary planning document. One of the key mitigations is the provision of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG).
- 4.33 Policy ME3 Sustainable Development Standards for New Development seeks to improve the sustainability credentials of development by encouraging higher standards through the incorporation of carbon reduction and water and energy efficiency measures.
- 4.34 Policy ME4 Renewable Energy Provision for Residential and Non-Residential Developments seeks the incorporation of renewable technology to reduce carbon emissions and should be provided on-site.
- 4.35 Policy ME5 Sources of Renewable Energy supports the provision of facilities to generate renewable energy but this policy also seeks to safeguard any adverse impacts of such development.

- 4.36 Policy ME6 Flood Management, Mitigation and Defence outlines the application of the sequential and exceptions tests as set out in the NPPF. It requires development to demonstrate that flood risk does not increase as a result of the development and that post development run-off should be managed using Sustainable Urban Drainage systems (SUDs).
- 4.37 Policy HE1 Valuing and Conserving our Historic Environment recognises that Heritage Assets are an irreplaceable resource and need to be conserved and where appropriate enhanced and that they have a wider importance locally to the social, cultural and economic environment.
- 4.38 Policy HE2 Design of New Development seeks high quality new development that reflects local distinctiveness. It sets out the range of matters that need to be considered including layout, scale, landscaping and visual impact.
- 4.39 Policy HE3 Landscaping Quality aims to maintain the landscape character of areas and consider setting, natural features, cultural, historical and heritage value, views and visual amenity and tranquillity.
- 4.40 Policy HE4 Open Space Provision sets out open space standards expected to be met by development as set out below.

Open space type	Recommended accessibility standard (straight line distance).	Recommended quantity standard (hectares per 1000 population)	Recommended quantity standard (square metres per person)	Total recommended provision
Recreation Grounds & Public Gardens (includes parks)	450m	0.5 ha	5.0 sq m	3.75 ha per 1000 population / 37.5 sq m per person
Amenity Green Space	450m	0.5 ha	5.0 sq m	
Natural & Semi-natural Green Space	600m	1.0 ha	10.0 sq m	
Active (outdoor) Sports Space	600m	1.25 ha	12.5 sq m	
Children & Young People's Space	450m	0.25 ha	2.5 sq m	
Allotments	600m	0.25ha	2.5 sq m	

- 4.41 Policy LN1 The Size and Type of New Dwellings requires both market and affordable housing to reflect current and projected local housing needs identified in the latest SHMA. All new housing is required to be built to minimum living space standards.
- 4.42 Policy LN2 Design, Layout and Density of New Housing Development seeks the efficient use of land through maximising density to a level acceptable to the locality with 30dph being an

informal target. For greenfield sites, derived density should be subject to a master planning exercise.

- 4.43 Policy LN3 Provision of Affordable Housing sets targets for residential development. For greenfield residential development provision of up to 50% of all units as affordable housing is sought. Proposals where lower levels of affordable housing are proposed must be accompanied by clear and robust evidence that will be subject to verification. The mix of affordable housing will be subject to negotiation and agreement. Tenure split should normally allow for 30% intermediate housing with the remainder being affordable rented or social rented. Affordable housing for schemes of over 15 units should be on-site and 10% of all affordable homes should be planned for households requiring specially adapted or supported housing.
- 4.44 Policy LN6 Housing and Accommodation Proposals for Vulnerable People separates C2 provision from non C2 residential proposals for older and vulnerable people. For C2 proposals they will not be subject to requirements of Policy LN3 but requires that Dorset Council and NHS Dorset health and social care services have been consulted and impacts upon their services considered and mitigated. For non C2 proposals Policy LN3 applies.
- 4.45 Policy LN7 Community Facilities and Services requires provision of services and facilities to support the existing and future population growth with focus on the larger settlements but also in areas where travel is restricted to the car. The preference is for the clustering of services and facilities.
- 4.46 Policy PC5 Shops and Community Facilities in Local Centres and Villages sets out that proposals which improve the provision of shops to meet people's day to day needs, leisure uses and facilities for local communities will be supported.

East Dorset Local Plan 2002 (Saved Policies)

- 4.47 There are a number of saved policies from the 2002 local plan which are relevant to the Alderholt Meadows planning application. These are:
- HODEV2 Form of Development which lists criteria to be considered where new housing is being planned
 - LTDEV1 Lighting which lists criteria to be applied when designing external lighting

- TEDEV3 Local Cabling which requires underground ducting for telecommunications cables
- DES2 Location in Relation to Other Land Uses seeks the prevention of unacceptable impacts in terms of noise, smell, safety, health, lighting, disturbance, traffic or other pollution
- DES6 Landscaping requires indigenous species as part of schemes in rural areas and edge of settlements
- DES7 Trees seeks the protection of trees and sets out criteria to be followed
- DES11 Design of Roads, Cycle and Pedestrian Routes should respect or enhance their surroundings
- A1 Alderholt defines a settlement boundary for Alderholt within which housing is supported

Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Minerals Strategy 2014

4.48 The Minerals Strategy was adopted in May 2014. It sets out the vision, objectives, spatial strategy and policy framework for minerals development across both Dorset and Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council areas. Policy SG1 Mineral Safeguarding Area applies as the application site is in the area covered by the policy. In such areas proposals for non-mineral development will be resisted unless it can be demonstrated that the sterilisation of proven mineral resources will not occur and that the development would not pose a serious hindrance to future mineral development in the vicinity. Where this cannot be demonstrated and where there is a clear and demonstrable need for the non-mineral development, prior extraction will be sought where practicable.

Supplementary Planning Documents/Guidance

4.49 There are a number of relevant supplementary planning documents that apply to the Alderholt/East Dorset area. These are:

- Dorset Heathland Planning Framework 2020-25. This sets out the approach to residential development within 400m to 5km of protected heathland sites
- Dorset Heathland Interim Air Quality Strategy 2020-25. This sets out the approach to protecting the Dorset Heathlands from air quality effects

- Christchurch and East Dorset Housing and Affordable Housing 2018. The implementation of policy for affordable housing
- Developer Contributions for NHS Infrastructure 2020. Collection of funds through CIL to support services across Dorset and BCP Council areas
- Waste Storage, Collection and Management Guidance Note for Residential Development 2020. Requirements to inform design to enable access for waste vehicles
- East Dorset Landscape Character Assessment 2008. Last character assessment for East Dorset area
- Flood Risk groundwater and sustainable drainage 2005
- Design Requirements for Landscaping and Residential Area 2007
- Nature Conservation and the Planning process in East Dorset 2009

Emerging Dorset Local Plan

- 4.50 The emerging Dorset Local Plan is at an early stage in its production. The most recent publication is the Reg.18 document issued for consultation in January 2021. No further progress has been made and the next stage is not timetabled for publication until summer 2024.
- 4.51 The document contains a section on Alderholt and offers up two alternative options for Alderholt, one of small-scale growth, and the second, more significant growth of which option 1 would form an early phase. The emerging plan recognises the relatively unconstrained nature of Alderholt and the issues that development would need to address.

5. Planning Considerations

Principle of Development

- 5.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) requires that planning applications should be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Section 38(3) of the 2004 Act states that the development plan comprises development plan documents and any neighbourhood plan.
- 5.2 The site at Alderholt Meadows is unallocated and sits outside the settlement boundary of Alderholt as drawn and saved by policy A1 of the East Dorset Local Plan 2002. The most recent Local Plan, Christchurch and East Dorset Core Strategy 2014, is over five years old and has not been reviewed.
- 5.3 Dorset Council came into existence in April 2019 and determined that they would not continue with reviews of individual local plans for the former boroughs and districts, except for the Purbeck area which was sufficiently advanced in its plan making process. A single local plan was to be produced with adoption targeted for April 2023. To date only a Reg. 18 Issues and Options document has been produced (January 2021) and further progress has been delayed with an anticipated adoption of a new local plan, at the earliest, in spring 2026.
- 5.4 The Christchurch and East Dorset Core Strategy 2014 is considerably over five years old, and its housing requirement is out of date (Policy KS4). The allocations within the Plan as far as they relate to East Dorset are progressing or have been through the planning system and are being built out or will be in the very near future. Therefore, there is a policy vacuum approaching where it is highly likely that the lack of an up-to-date local plan will seriously undermine the delivery of much needed housing in eastern Dorset, and for that matter the rest of Dorset. The area of the former East Dorset Council will soon become wholly reliant on windfall development to meet housing needs.
- 5.5 Alderholt is recognised as a Rural Service Centre and one of the largest villages in not only eastern Dorset, but the whole of the Dorset Council area. It has a population circa 3,000 and is only 3km from Fordingbridge in Hampshire with a population of circa 6,000. The settlement boundary for Alderholt derived from the 2002 local plan and carried forward through the 2014 Core Strategy has not been reviewed (Policy KS2). Therefore, the settlement boundary for Alderholt is now out of date and carries limited weight in decision-making (Policy A1 saved local plan).

- 5.6 Policies of the development plan are supportive of growth in Rural Service Centres, seek to make locations more sustainable by meeting people’s everyday needs and look to promote development in the larger settlements to support both existing and future residents (Policy LN7). In an Authority area that has significant environmental and policy constraints Alderholt is relatively free of such restrictions and where they do exist, they are capable of mitigation.
- 5.7 The emerging local plan identified Alderholt as a potential growth option within the Reg. 18 consultation document. It proposed two scenarios, one was small scale growth of 300 dwellings, the other was a transformational level of growth capable of delivering a range of services and facilities to meet day to day needs and make Alderholt a more sustainable settlement. No further progress has been made with the local plan, but it indicates a direction of travel and the opportunity that exists at Alderholt.

Mixed Use Development

- 5.8 The proposal at Alderholt Meadows will bring forward up to 1,700 new homes together with a range of supporting services including the creation of a vilage centre with shops, cafes and commercial activities together with medical and community facilities. The proposal will also deliver a 2-hectare business park providing significant local employment opportunities for new and existing businesses.
- 5.9 Not only will the scheme deliver a range of housing to help meet both current and future needs but the delivery of supporting services and facilities will enable Alderholt to grow organically and sustainably and transform itself into a sustainable settlement. The masterplanning underpinning the planning application has been particular in evolving an indicative layout that incorporates infrastructure elements and ensuring that the pattern and form of development integrates into the wider landscape. It seeks to create a place that is legible, permeable and provides services and facilities within a 15-minute walk of all new homes, including most of the existing properties in Alderholt.

Housing and Affordable Housing

- 5.10 Up to 1,700 homes are proposed at Alderholt Meadows. The mix of homes proposed has been determined using the most recent evidence provided within the Dorset and BCP Local Housing Needs Assessment November 2021.
- 5.11 The current adopted Local Plan disaggregated requirement for East Dorset is 317 homes per annum. The Housing Needs Assessment undertakes the local housing need calculation in

November 2021 and produces a capped figure of 455 homes per annum. This has not been updated to a 2022 calculation although normally there is very little difference from year to year. The uncapped need for East Dorset is 516 homes per annum. The standard method calculation of local housing need is therefore considerably higher than the extant local plan is planning for.

5.12 Affordable housing policy is currently determined by policy LN3 of the Core Strategy 2014, the most recent statement on provision of affordable housing in East Dorset. The policy requires the provision of up to 50% affordable housing. Where lower levels are proposed these are to be supported by viability statements. The Local Plan policy is now over 8 years old from adoption and the market has changed significantly over the intervening years. The Housing Needs Assessment 2021 identifies a notable need for affordable housing across BCP and Dorset and stresses that it is an important and pressing issue in both authorities. This is reinforced by 3,529 people registered on the housing waiting list in December 2022, with a further 2,399 having submitted applications and awaiting eligibility checks. Data from The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities' Affordable Housing supply statistics, Table 1008c Total additional affordable dwellings provided by local authority area – Completions records that for the past three years, the years data is available for Dorset as a whole, there were 206, 167 and 196 properties delivered. Clearly, only scratching the surface of the need within the DC area.

5.13 The Housing Needs Assessment does not itself suggest an affordable housing target recognising that the amount of affordable housing delivered will be limited to the amount that can be viably provided. The Reg. 18 Dorset Local Plan Issues and Options document (January 2021) suggested an affordable housing figure of between 30% and 40% subject to more detailed viability work. The outline planning application for Alderholt Meadows is offering 35% affordable housing and this offer is supported by a high-level viability appraisal. This offer equates to 595 of the 1,700 homes being affordable with 25% of the 35% being first homes and the remainder split 70/30 in favour of social rent. This is a significant affordable housing offer which will also lead to a balanced and mixed community among the 1,700 homes proposed.

Viability

5.14 The supporting viability appraisal has been compiled using guidance from the online National Planning Policy Guidance and regard to case law. The NPPF requires viability to be

measured against the Benchmark Land Value (BLV), established on the basis of the existing use value (EUV) plus a premium for the landowner. This is the approach adopted for Alderholt Meadows. The proposed development will include both social and construction infrastructure to ensure the development is deliverable, accessible and sustainable. Overall, the development can support 35% affordable housing comprising 25% (149) of all affordable housing as First Homes; 52% (312) of the remainder as affordable rent; and 23% (134) for shared ownership. 10% (60) will be provided for households requiring specially adapted or supported housing. The Notional Housing Mix is shown below in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1 Notional Housing Mix

Plot Units		House Type	Size	No.	Tenure No.	Mkt AH Split	AH Tenure Split	AR SO Split
1700	MARKET HOUSING	1 Bed Flat/Care Unit	500	80	1105	65%		
		2 Bed Flat	675	60				
		FOG	700	21				
		2 Bed Ter/Sem	675	165				
		2 Bed Ter/Sem	750	165				
		3 Bed Ter/Sem	825	85				
		3 Bed Ter/Sem	900	85				
		3 Bed Ter/Sem (2.5 storey)	1050	82				
		3 Bed Det	1000	80				
		3 Bed Det	1100	40				
		4 Bed Det	1150	95				
		4 Bed Det	1300	65				
		4 Bed Det	1450	31				
		5 Bed Det	1600	30				
		5 Bed Det	1750	21				
	FIRST HOMES	1 Bed Flat	500	46	149		25%	
		2 Bed Flat	675	20				
		2 Bed Ter/Sem	750	20				
		3 Bed Ter/Sem	900	43				
		4 Bed Det	1150	20				
	AFFORDABLE RENT	1 Bed Flat/Care Unit	538	150	312	35%	52%	70%
		AR 2BF	700	50				
		AR 2BH	807	25				
		AR 3BH	969	60				
		AR 4BH	1,130	27				
	SHARED OWNERSHIP	SO 1BF	538	47	134		23%	30%
		SO 2BF	700	10				
		SO 2BH	807	25				
SO 3BH		969	35					
		SO 4BH	1,130	17				
		Total All Units		1700	100%			
		Market Housing		1105	65%			
		First Homes		149	9%			
		Affordable (AR and SO)		446	26%			
						100%	1,700	

Transport

- 5.15 The assessment of transport impacts has been carried out in accordance with an agreed methodology with Dorset Council as Local Highway Authority. Pre-application discussions have also been undertaken with Hampshire County Council Highways team as well as

meetings with National Highways in respect of impacts on the trunk road network. Key to these meetings are agreement to discount the trip generation by virtue of the provision of a range of services and facilities to meet people's day to day needs and delivering a self-sustaining settlement.

- 5.16 Both the NPPF and local plan policy require the impacts of transport to be assessed and demonstrated that there will be no significant effects. This has been undertaken and the results of agreed survey requirements demonstrate that the transport impacts can be accommodated and that where mitigation is required this can be delivered.
- 5.17 The accompanying Transport Assessment demonstrates that for the five agreed junctions where capacity analysis was undertaken, three would operate within capacity while the other two, Provost Street in Fordingbridge and the A31 Off-slip Verwood Road Junction, would be over capacity without mitigation. Schemes have therefore been designed to mitigate the impact which indicate that mitigation is achievable and deliverable.
- 5.18 Road links in to and out of Alderholt have also been assessed to establish areas requiring improvement to enable two-way traffic flow. Locations have been identified where widening would facilitate two-way movement and it is proposed that a review is undertaken at detailed design stage and that this can be secured by way of a planning condition. It is also proposed that a priority working arrangement is put in place at one location on the Fordingbridge Road.
- 5.19 The scale of development proposed will generate an increase in travel demand by all main modes of travel. To accommodate this a range of measures have been incorporated into the proposals. The underlying structure of the masterplan has been designed to facilitate walking and cycling connecting into existing routes and reducing the need to use the car to move around the settlement. Financial contributions to be agreed will be made towards improvements at Provost Street in Fordingbridge and the A31 Off-slip Verwood Road.
- 5.20 A Travel Plan has been prepared and is submitted as an application document which proposes a range of measures to reduce travel needs. Overall, the proposed development is consistent with both Dorset and Hampshire Council's Local Transport Plans in that it reduces the need to travel by providing facilities that are accessible by active travel reducing reliance of the car. It accords with the NPPF requirements to limit significant impacts of development.

Ecology

- 5.21 There are several important ecological matters that have informed the planning application. Their consideration has led to measures being set out in an Impact Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy where likely significant effects are predicted. No adverse residual effects are forecast following implementation of the measures. The strategy includes the provision of:
- New and enhanced habitats for Nightjar within the SANG and green infrastructure network
 - A Lighting Strategy
 - A Strategy for Nutrient Neutrality with respect to the River Avon SAC
 - A Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP)
 - A Drainage (SuDS) Strategy
 - CIL (s106) contribution to the Dorset Heathlands Interim Air Quality Strategy (IAQS)
 - Bespoke SANG; and
 - Financial contribution to the Dorset Heathlands SPD for Strategic Access Management and Monitoring (SAMM)
- 5.23 Alderholt Meadows sits within 5km of internationally protected heathland and therefore is subject to policies of the local plan (Policy ME2) and the operation of the Dorset Heathland Planning Framework. This framework requires suitable mitigation to be provided to offset any adverse effects from recreational pressure created from residents of new homes on protected sites. Given that no development is proposed within 400m of protected sites, albeit that the application boundary does extend within this zone, the outline application makes provision for 51 hectares of SANG at a rate of 13 hectares per 1000 population. The Dorset Heathland Planning Framework does not have a specific target figure for SANG provision. Rather the criteria are based on qualitative measures including the ability to provide walking routes of 2.3-2.5 km in length.
- 5.24 In addition to the SANG infrastructure provision, payment for Strategic Access Management and Monitoring will be provided through s106. This will allow for funding of measures on the heathland to ensure improvement to the condition of the site.
- 5.25 Air pollution has also been considered and its potential effects on protected sites for both operational and construction phases. It has been informed by the transport assessment and air quality work undertaken for the planning application. Modelling of NO_x, NH₃ and N

deposition has identified that for NH₃ and N deposition effects cannot be ruled out and therefore mitigation is required. Financial contributions are collected from CIL chargeable development or s106 ensuring development will not contribute to adverse air quality effects on the integrity of the Dorset Heathlands SAC/SPA in combination with other plans and projects.

- 5.26 The potential effects of the loss of off-site supporting habitat have also been assessed i.e. habitat that supports the SPA bird populations outside of the designated SPA boundary. Woodlark, Hen Harrier and Merlin were not recorded during surveys and only a single Dartford Warbler call was recorded. Nightjar were recorded foraging across the western and northern fields. The location of the foraging is proposed as SANG and will be enhanced through the Landscape and Ecological Improvement Strategies. However, there is some potential for light spill from the development and therefore mitigation is proposed to reduce the impact of this. The conclusion is that the proposed development would not result in the loss of off-site supporting habitat potentially used for foraging nightjar while habitat enhancement and creation together with other green infrastructure would increase the suitability of off-site foraging habitat.
- 5.27 The final consideration under Ecology is Hydrological Change. The planning application site lies within the catchment of the River Avon SAC, Avon Valley SPA and Ramsar site. Water Quantity is not considered to be an issue that would result in a significant effect on the Avon sites. Water pollution though is identified as a potential threat to the qualifying features with existing elevated levels of nutrient phosphorus arising from anthropogenic sources preventing the achievement of water quality targets across much of the catchment.
- 5.28 A nutrient budget has therefore been calculated based on Natural England's latest guidance and using survey data to inform current land uses. Under the current wastewater permitting regime the net effect of wastewater discharge plus a 20% buffer arising from the development indicates an outline liability of 228.87kg/year. The proposed development will utilise SUDs regimes for drainage purposes which will also remove phosphorus entering the Avon sites, and research indicates a 37% reduction using this method. The residual nutrient liability will be met by a proportionate in-perpetuity nutrient off-setting solution secured by means of a Grampian condition or suitable planning obligation. The actual quantum of mitigation will be determined at subsequent planning stages. Consequently, the proposed

development is not considered likely to generate a significant water quality effect on the Avon sites.

Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA)

- 5.29 Given the proximity of the application site to the Dorset Heaths SAC and Dorset Heathlands SPA and Ramsar Site, as well as being within 5km of the River Avon SAC, Avon Valley SPA and Ramsar, and the New Forest SAC, SPA and Ramsar it will be necessary for Dorset Council as Competent Authority under the Habitats Regulations to carry out a Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA). If it is likely to have a significant effect, either alone or in combination, on any of the aforementioned sites, then an Appropriate Assessment (AA) will need to be carried out. Technical Appendix 9.2 to the ES provides the information necessary to enable Dorset Council to undertake both HRA and AA.
- 5.30 Consideration has been given to the potential for likely significant effects to arise, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, in relation to loss of offsite supporting habitat (habitat within the site and beyond the designated site boundary that plays a role in supporting qualifying SPA species); hydrological change; air pollution; and increased recreational pressure and other urban effects. Where likely significant effects are predicted or cannot be confidently precluded measures have been set out as part of the Impact Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy. Consequently, no adverse residual effects on the integrity of any international site are predicted to remain following implementation of these measures. It is therefore considered that Dorset Council can confidently conclude, as a result of the AA, that there will be no adverse effect on the integrity of any internationally designated site resulting from the proposed development at Alderholt Meadows.
- 5.31 Table 5.2 below provides a summary of the impact pathways considered; the conclusion of the screening stage assessment for each; and includes a summary of the impact avoidance and mitigation strategy that is proposed to address the potential for likely significant effects.

Table 5.2: Summary of Information for HRA

Report Section	Impact Pathway	Scoping					Screening Stage Conclusion (ex. mitigation)	Impact Avoidance and Mitigation Measures Proposed to Ensure No Adverse Effect (alone and in combination)
		Dorset Heaths SAC	Dorset Heathlands SPA	Dorset Heathlands Ramsar	River Avon SAC/Avon Valley SPA/Ramsar	New Forest SAC/SPA/Ramsar		
5	Loss of offsite supporting habitat	OUT	IN	OUT	OUT	OUT	LSE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New and enhanced habitats within SANG and GI network • Lighting Strategy
6	Hydrological change	OUT	OUT	OUT	IN	OUT	LSE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategy for nutrient neutrality • CEMP • SuDS Strategy
7	Air pollution	IN	IN	IN	OUT	OUT	LSE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CEMP • CIL contribution to Dorset Heathlands IAQS
8	Increased recreational pressure	IN	IN	IN	OUT	IN	LSE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bespoke SANG provision • Contribution to SAMM via Dorset Heathlands SPD

Biodiversity Net Gain

- 5.32 The NPPF at paragraph 174d sets out the requirement to provide net gains for biodiversity. It does not state a threshold or figure for what the net gain should be. The Environment Act 2021 requires a 10% net gain in biodiversity units above the baseline to be achieved, however, this element of the Act has not yet come into force with it likely to be implemented in late 2023. The extant Development Plan is too old to address this issue whilst the emerging Dorset Local Plan Reg. 18 Issue and Options document proposed a 10% net gain.
- 5.33 Good practice guidance from CIEEM as well as British Standard 92021) BS 8683:2021 have informed the BNG calculation which has been undertaken using the latest metric from Natural England, Biodiversity Metric 3.1. The metric requires the assessment of three metric categories, Habitats, Hedgerows and Ditches and Streams. A score for each is produced and these are not combinable into a single score.
- 5.34 To calculate the metric the baseline position has been established for each metric type. The proposals taken from the ecological management and enhancement plan are then calculated and the overall change between the two positions recorded. For all three types the proposal

developed was designed to follow the mitigation hierarchy of Avoidance; Mitigation/minimisation; creation; and Enhancement, and the output from the metric is:

- Increase in Habitat units of +13.16% above baseline
- Increase in Hedgerow units of +10.74% above baseline
- Increase in Ditch units of +69.80% above baseline

5.35 The proposal for Alderholt Meadows has measures to secure significant biodiversity improvements and these form part of the application's compelling arguments for approval. The metric scores demonstrate a significant uplift in biodiversity net gain can be achieved thereby meeting the requirements of national (NPPF) and local policy (ME2).

Landscape

5.36 A full landscape and visual assessment has been undertaken which considers the landscape character of the area and the impact of development on viewpoints and public rights of way. There are no statutory or non-statutory landscape designations within the application site. In the wider landscape context, there are environmental designations that have some relevance to landscape and visual matters including Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire AONB and the New Forest National Park, and these have been considered in this context.

5.37 Analysis identified constraints and opportunities which have informed the masterplan and subsequently led to a landscape mitigation strategy which has subsequently been incorporated into the final indicative masterplan. Two character areas have been identified as landscape receptors, namely Ringwood Hurn Landscape Character Area and Ringwood Forest Character Area. The resulting assessment concludes a minor adverse effect on the Ringwood Hurn area and a minor to negligible effect on the Ringwood Forest area.

5.38 Fifteen viewpoints and receptors have been identified to assess the visual effects of the indicative masterplan. The sensitivity of each has been categorised and then the potential effect at Year 1 and Year 15 of completed development. Further, following receipt of the Council's Scoping Opinion Report the potential visibility of the proposed development from the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB was also assessed through the ZTV and site visits and it was concluded that there would be no visibility or visual impacts. The overall outcome is that no significant visual effects will result from the proposed development.

5.39 The physical landscape impacts that will give rise to perceived changes in landscape character are generally limited to some loss of vegetation within the site to achieve access and the changes to the land use associated with the proposed development. The landscape strategy aims to retain and enhance many of the characteristic elements and features of the area, including the pattern and scale of hedgerows and the existing trees, while enhanced planting within the areas proposed as SANG will significantly enhance biodiversity. Furthermore, the development has been planned to ensure that from each of the identified viewpoints and receptors, residential development and the landscape framework within which it is located, is laid out to create a strong sense of place that respects the existing landscape character thus meeting the requirements of policies HE3, DES6 and DES7.

Air Quality

5.40 To establish the baseline conditions at and around the application site information has been taken from a review of both Dorset Council and New Forest District Council's Air Quality Updating and Screening Assessment and Progress Reports. Established models and procedures were used to assess likely significant air quality effects and these were informed by consultation with DC. These comprised a qualitative assessment of the likely effects during the construction stage, identification of potentially sensitive receptors, review of traffic data, modelling of dispersion of pollutant emissions and their effect, comparison of predicted air pollutant concentrations, determination of the effects of the completed and operational proposed development and identification of mitigation measures.

5.41 The main likely effects on local air quality during construction relate to nuisance dust and exhaust emissions from construction vehicles and plant. A range of measures to minimise these impacts would be set out within a Construction Environmental Management Plan, which can be subject to a planning condition, and implemented throughout the construction phase. The effects are not significant. Construction plant emissions would not have a significant effect on local air quality during the construction of the proposed development.

5.42 A detailed modelling exercise has been undertaken to assess likely effects on local air quality associated with changes to road traffic from the proposed development. The modelling indicates levels of nitrogen dioxide and particulates would not exceed nationally accepted limits at any of the nearby residential properties or within the proposed development in 2041. It is concluded that the effect of the proposed development on levels of nitrogen

dioxide and particulates would not be significant and therefore comply with saved policy DES2.

Flood Risk and Drainage

- 5.43 There are multiple watercourses located on or within close proximity to the application site, as well as many lakes or ponds. Within the site there are several drains that flow to two ponds south of the site. These ponds then flow to Hammer Brook which eventually flows to the River Avon (an Environment Agency main river), south east of the site. Sleep Brook flows from north to south on the east of the site and runs into Hammer Brook.
- 5.44 Environment Agency flood maps identify the site to be in Flood Zone 1 but that Sleep Brook to the west of the site is susceptible to flooding associated with Flood Zones 2 and 3. However, the extents of these zones remain within the confines of the watercourse corridor which lies outside of the application site.
- 5.45 The size of the application site is such that the developable area has been split into four catchments, each with individual discharge rate restrictions and outfall locations. The surface water runoff within each catchment will discharge into attenuation structures via swales located around the site. The attenuation structure volumes and areas are based on a 1.9m deep pond with a 1.5m water level (with 400mm freeboard) and 1 in 3 batters to store water up to and including the 1 in 100 year + 45% climate change event. This outline planning stage caters for the 1 in 100 year plus climate change and urban creep event without the benefit of potential additional possible SuDS measures that could be introduced at detailed design.
- 5.46 The foul water strategy includes a proposed on-site pumping station in the south east of the site which will then discharge water towards the existing sewage pumping station on Sandleheath Road. Upgrades to the existing infrastructure downstream of the sewage pumping station will be required and Wessex Water have confirmed that this will be feasible. The applicant has also considered whether an on-site package treatment works could provide a suitable solution for foul sewage and this option continues to be explored. The drainage strategy will not increase flood risk from any source on or off the site and is considered appropriate for the proposed development and meeting the requirements of policy ME2.

Heritage and Archaeology

- 5.47 A desk based Historic Environment Assessment has been undertaken to understand the potential for impacts on Heritage and Archaeological assets. A study area with a 1km radius was established to capture any important assets that may be affected by the development. While Scheduled Ancient Monuments and Listed Buildings are present, the application site is not considered to fall within an aspect of their settings that meaningfully contributes to an understanding or appreciation of their significance.
- 5.48 From an archaeological perspective the site holds potential for at least medieval and post-medieval agricultural and industrial remains associated with small scale extractions. The Pleistocene terrace deposits mapped within the site are considered to have Palaeolithic potential and may hold important palaeoenvironmental remains. While there is a general paucity for Iron Age to early medieval remains within the Study Area, and prehistoric activity appears to largely focus on the area to the east of Hillbury Road, archaeological remains from such periods cannot be precluded.
- 5.49 Following engagement with Dorset Council’s archaeologist a geophysical survey was commissioned and undertaken in August and October 2022. The results from this are contained in the detailed Gradiometer Survey Report November 2022 and submitted as a Technical Appendix to the ES. The survey has not highlighted any substantial presence of anomalies that can be confidently interpreted as archaeology, however, there are several possible archaeological anomalies. In the south of the application site two concentrations of weak ditch-like anomalies have been identified, while in the north of the site there is possible evidence for a medieval trackway. Additionally, numerous pit-like features have been identified across the site and whilst their origin is unknown the possibility for archaeological finds cannot be discounted. It is anticipated that trial trenching will be a condition of any outline consent granted, but as far as policy is concerned, the proposed development complies with policy HE1 of the local plan.

Energy, Sustainability and Climate Change

- 5.50 Alderholt Meadows aims to set an exemplary level of sustainability. Recognising the need to reach net zero carbon emissions to address the Climate Emergency that Dorset Council are signed up to, the proposed development has adopted a holistic approach to sustainable design, incorporating architectural, environmental and energy strategies embedded with sustainable principles to create a unique proposal.

- 5.51 Seeking a significant reduction in carbon it is estimated that a 69% on the notional Part L 2021 Building Regulations could be achieved by reducing energy demand by adopting the London Energy Transformation Initiative (LETI) Climate Emergency Design Code. The proposed development would follow a fabric first approach. Energy efficiency will be achieved by supplying heating and hot water through low carbon electric heat generation which could be in the form of Ground Source Heat Pump systems with buildings connected to a shared ground loop array.
- 5.52 The proposed development will include measures to prevent overheating to be climate resilient while features such as SUDs will address potential increased risks from flooding. The application also identifies an area of the application site for a solar array to harness renewable energy aiming to meet a net zero balance in terms of operational energy. Battery energy storage systems are also being explored alongside the solar array for storage of surplus energy and this will evolve through the detailed planning and design stages. The application site will accommodate EV charging as required by Building regulations. The proposals fully accord with national policy and go considerably beyond local policy (ME3, M4 and ME5) introduced in 2014.

Lighting

- 5.53 The proposed development will require lighting for the purposes of safety, security and amenity during the hours of darkness. Lighting associated with the proposed development can be applied sensitively to ensure that the potential for obtrusive light is suitably minimised in accordance with the predetermined obtrusive light limits for the relevant Environmental Zone complying with saved local plan policy LTDEV1. This can be achieved through the implementation of a carefully planned and implemented Lighting Strategy informed by relevant standards and guidance.
- 5.54 The Lighting Strategy outlines a suitable approach to apply to the lighting design at the detailed design phase. The aim of the strategy is to outline a minimally obtrusive approach to lighting, which is functional, compliant with minimum standards and to ensure sensitivity to both the potentially sensitive local environment and potentially sensitive human receptors.
- 5.55 Permanent lighting is proposed for the Spine Road, Hillbury Road roundabout and approach, Ringwood Road junction, residential roads, dwelling front and rears and the employment area. The appropriate luminaire specification for the different areas and their functions

minimises the light spill while of a sufficient level to provide functional lighting requirements. Within the Lighting Strategy different luminaires are proposed that accord with the function and overall design ethos for Alderholt Meadows.

Education

- 5.56 Education in Dorset currently operates under a three-tier system of First, Middle and Upper Schools. Alderholt has a First School which is significantly under subscribed. Children from St James' First School transfer to Cranborne Middle School, about 7km away (4.5 miles). For Upper School, pupils have the choice of either Queen Elizabeth School in Wimborne or Ferndown Upper School, 24km (14.8 miles) and 18.5km (11.6 miles) respectively from Alderholt. The closest secondary school to Alderholt is The Burgate School in Fordingbridge only 3km (5miles) away.
- 5.57 Over many years discussions have taken place with St. James First School about future plans and the impacts of 1,700 new homes on their aspirations. Early iterations of the masterplan included provision for a new first school however the current indicative masterplan does not make provision for a new school. This is because St James' First School wishes to stay on its existing site and expand its operation with the aim of becoming a Primary School in its current location. The planning application rather than making space within the application site will seek to fund improvements to St James First School most likely through s106 agreement.
- 5.58 As part of the strategy for delivering a self-sustaining settlement discussion has taken place with The Burgate School and an opportunity for children from St James' First School to transfer there rather than travel to Ferndown or Wimborne. This would save significant time and enable children to more readily participate in out of hours school clubs bringing significant benefit to their well-being as well as the improved sustainability from reduced journey times. It is appreciated that St James and Burgate Schools lie in different Local Education Authority areas, however, from a sustainability perspective and for the betterment of school children it is considered that the administrative boundary should not be seen as a hindrance to enabling children to attend their local school. It is accepted that the addition of 1,700 homes will generate a significant contribution to education provision which will be funded through s106 agreement.

Minerals

- 5.59 The site lies within a Minerals Safeguarding Area identified on the Policies Map of the adopted Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Minerals Strategy (2014). Whilst detailed site investigation work to establish precise information on the minerals has not been carried out, British Geological Survey (BGS) mapping and the presence of commercial mineral extraction operations to the south (Bleak Hill Quarry) as well as an identified “preferred area” extension to the north of that site, confirm that there is a strong likelihood of mineral presence.
- 5.60 However, it is notable that the BGS mapping confirms that this development site lies at the edge of the much wider deposit of sand and gravel and is therefore likely to be more variable in quality, depth and extent than the areas already identified for commercial extraction. Policy SG1 of the adopted Minerals Strategy suggests that where development may sterilise minerals, prior extraction where possible should be considered, and where it would not leave the site incapable of the non-mineral use.
- 5.61 The reasonable likelihood of minerals underlying this site in part at least, provides a relatively unique opportunity for this development. The proposal in very broad terms includes the construction of 1,700 homes. The construction of a typical new house requires on average around 200 tonnes of aggregates and associated mineral products, from the foundations through to the roof tiles. This is applicable to any development and is the reason why a steady and adequate supply of minerals is required by government to facilitate meeting the well-established need for housing.
- 5.62 If a very conservative assumption is made that each of the 1,700 homes planned in this development required 60 tonnes of the sand and gravel that is predicted to be available within the development, then just over 100,000 tonnes could be sourced on site making the proposal self-sustaining for the supply of this mineral. However, there are additional aspects such as construction of other features of the development and new roads that would raise this figure and an estimated 200,000 tonnes of sand and gravel may be needed.
- 5.63 The site could meet the sand and gravel requirements of the development proposed. The application boundary extends to 122ha and although as noted not all this area will include viable sand and gravel and some areas are constrained for other reasons, the extent is more than sufficiently expansive to allow for pre-extraction on that scale. Providing aggregates

required from within the development will significantly reduce the HGV movements associated with the construction phase, in addition to ensuring those minerals are not sterilised, and significantly conserving 200,000 tonnes of consented reserves elsewhere .

- 5.64 Furthermore, the process of pre-extraction offers a secondary but equally significant and unique opportunity for this development. Extraction of sand and gravel will leave a lowered ground surface. The development of the homes and associated infrastructure has the potential to generate significant amounts of “muck shift” which are the soils and clays generated as surplus materials to the foundations and other landscaping works.
- 5.65 Rather than be hauled to a disposal point off site, they can be placed directly into the voids created by sand and gravel extraction. Not only will this again significantly reduce HGV movements in the local area it will also ensure that providing the sand and gravel direct from the site to the development doesn’t result in a landform which would compromise that development. The overall masterplan and Landscape Strategy and Ecological Mitigation and Enhancement Plan identify several water bodies for biodiversity enhancement. Prior extraction of minerals provides an enhanced opportunity for water bodies to be used to manage phosphate associated with the development.
- 5.66 It is acknowledged that a further planning application is likely to be deemed necessary to enable the removal of the minerals, but this has not been submitted ahead of a decision to consent the wider development contained in the outline application. Agreement on the Indicative Masterplan through the grant of outline consent will enable a phasing strategy to be identified for the removal of the minerals and the restoration of the land as the development proceeds.
- 5.67 In order to ensure impact is minimised a phasing that aligns with the delivery of the proposed development will be drawn up and the necessary mass balance calculations made based on the approved Masterplan. Submission of the sand and gravel removal proposal before this has been done would probably result in several alterations and iterations as the primary development was settled. Furthermore, planning applications for the removal of sand and gravel tend to take considerably longer to be determined than those for outline residential and mixed uses and the deliverability of this scheme could be impacted. Submission of the extraction application after grant of outline will be in parallel with gaining approval for what is expected to be an extensive number of reserved matters.

- 5.68 It is noted that a hybrid application at Crossways (WD/D/16/000378) for residential and employment land also falls within a mineral safeguarding area and has proposed that an amount of minerals within the development land will be extracted before building commences. Although a mineral application was submitted for the site, the residential hybrid application was in June 2022 discussed by Dorset’s Western Area Planning Committee where it resolved to delegate authority to grant without a decision being made on the mineral’s application.
- 5.69 That application is subject to a very straightforward planning condition that could be adapted to use in this circumstance at Alderholt, *‘Prior to the commencement of the development a Phasing Plan for the entirety of the development shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Phasing Plan shall make provision for extraction of the mineral interest in accordance with a scheme to be first approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority from the area outlined in red on the Site Location Plan, Drwg no. 22-1126 LP.01 Rev A, prior to the commencement of any development the subject of this outline planning permission within that same area.’*

Planning Benefits

- 5.70 The outline application has significant planning benefits that will help meet local needs and contribute to sustainable development objectives. The NPPF sets out that sustainable development has three objectives: social, economic and environmental. The planning application at Alderholt will address these key objectives and will deliver the following benefits:

Social Benefits

- Delivery of up to 1,700 dwellings to meet the significant housing need in Dorset and particularly the eastern part of the Dorset Council area
- 35%, equivalent to 595 dwellings of affordable housing, to contribute to the severe housing need in Dorset and the increasing unaffordability of housing particularly in eastern Dorset
- The provision of a range of housing to meet the needs of young people, families and elderly persons
- The provision of an 80-bed care home to contribute to the needs of an ageing population

- Investment in local schools to enable the long-term viability of St James' First School in Alderholt and for local children to attend their local secondary school rather than travelling to schools that entail a 45 minute bus journey in each direction
- A dedicated medical facility providing healthcare services in Alderholt reducing the need for residents to travel to other locations
- A village centre that will create a focus for Alderholt where the community can come together and utilise the village square for events and festivals
- Provision of retail and commercial space enabling residents to meet their daily needs without travelling to other locations
- The delivery of significant areas of open space, formal, informal and SANG provision that provides direct access from all the proposed neighbours including play areas for different age groups
- An extension to Alderholt recreation ground that will provide a major greenspace at the heart of Alderholt accessible to existing and proposed residents
- Dedicated cycle and footpath network throughout the site prioritising access over motor vehicles and designed to link to routes outside the site. Enhanced active travel options will encourage healthy lifestyles and safe movement around the development site.
- A new funded bus service Monday to Saturdays providing an hourly return service to Cranborne, Fordingbridge and Ringwood. This service will also connect with other services at Fordingbridge and Ringwood to locations further afield
- Provision of allotments and community orchards enabling residents to come together and grow food locally
- High speed broadband to all homes and business and community facilities providing reliable and future proofed access to digital technology
- Residents will benefit from a beautifully designed and considered development that puts community at the heart of its design and one that embraces the latest technology to reduce the effects of climate change. The development will provide residents with day-to-day services on their doorstep, reducing their need to travel and helping Alderholt to become a self-sustaining settlement.

Economic Benefits

- The development will deliver short term economic opportunities through the construction of the development site. Longer term the housing will provide homes for the local workforce, much required to support economic growth in Dorset
- The creation of a 2-hectare business park delivering 10,000sqm of employment space both supporting employment in Alderholt but also contributing to Dorset's economic growth.
- Job opportunities within the retail and commercial space in the village centre, including that generated by the Alderholt Meadows Estate Office and the long-term management of the development site
- The establishment of a management company to look after the open spaces and community elements of the development site which will generate an economic footprint from service charges that will be managed by the company to the benefit of Alderholt
- Investment in education services will support the workers of the future by enabling them to have access to local schools where they can learn and thrive within their community
- The new residents will provide spending power and patronage of those existing services and facilities in Alderholt enabling their long-term sustainability
- The provision of a care home providing local job opportunities and service opportunities for local companies
- The provision of high-speed broadband to all properties with the opportunity for this to be extended to existing residents
- Significant s106 contributions to a range of infrastructure improving the lives of existing and future residents

Environmental Benefits

- The creation of new habitat supporting wildlife and significantly enhancing biodiversity
- Large areas of SANG and public open space will be created and enhanced by planting supporting wildlife and biodiversity enhancements

- Measures for buildings to include features such as bird boxes and bee bricks to support local wildlife
- The use of sustainable drainage features and management of water to provide environmental and landscape enhancements together with new habitats supporting increased biodiversity
- Associated information with SANG provision to make residents and visitors alike aware of their purpose and the importance of wildlife
- A network of open spaces throughout the development accessible for those on foot and by bike
- The provision of a solar array providing clean, local renewable energy and helping to meet net zero targets
- Housing to a minimum Part L of the building regulations, adopting a fabric first approach thus minimising the need to generate energy sources
- The use of the available mineral resource that may exist on site to help build infrastructure and buildings minimising the need to import materials and reducing HGV movements through the construction phase. Mineral extraction will also provide an opportunity to create wetland features to support water management and biodiversity enhancement

6. Planning Obligations

6.1 The outline planning application with access in detail is made by Dudsbury Homes (Southern) Ltd. The applicant will enter into a s106 agreement with the local planning authority (Dorset Council) to secure appropriate planning obligations that meet the statutory tests set out in Regulation 122 of the CIL Regulations 2010 (as amended).

6.2 The actual financial sums, triggers and precise wording of obligations are to be agreed through the application process. The statutory requirements of Regulation 122 require obligations to be:

- a) Necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms
- b) Directly related to the development; and
- c) Fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.

6.3 It is envisaged that the planning obligations will be discussed with Dorset Council in the context of their most up to date position on infrastructure funding and will include:

Phased delivery

- Mechanisms and triggers to secure payment of financial contributions and delivery of on-site infrastructure

Transport (subject to consideration against the TA)

- Contribution towards off-site works
- Contribution towards public transport

Affordable Housing

- Secure the provision of 35% affordable housing of the total housing and phasing of delivery

Education

- Contribution towards education provision across all school years from early years to Year 13

Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG)

- Secure in perpetuity SANG provision

- Contributions to Strategic Access Management and Monitoring

Air Quality

- Contributions to Dorset Heathlands Air Quality Strategy

Foul Water

- Contributions to upgrading of foul water network

Open Space, Sport and Recreation

- Secure provision of open space and sports provision on-site
- Contributions to off-site sports provision

Healthcare

- On-site provision of medical facilities

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

- 6.3 Any planning obligations sought under Section 106 should not seek provision of infrastructure which is to be sought through payment of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). This is set out in the appropriate regulations and avoids double charging an applicant for the same piece of infrastructure.
- 6.4 The former East Dorset District Council introduced CIL in January 2017. It remains the appropriate charging schedule following the creation of Dorset Council in 2019. The charging schedule identifies that residential on sites of 40 or more dwellings where on-site SANGs is required is zero rated; Care homes and extra care and housing for vulnerable people are both charged at £40 per sqm; and convenience retail is chargeable at £110 per sqm. Given the application is in outline there is no requirement to complete CIL forms until Reserved Matters applications are submitted.

7. Conclusion

- 7.1 The proposed development at Alderholt Meadows offers a unique and outstanding opportunity to contribute to the delivery of an exemplary 21st century extension to one of Dorset's largest villages. In so doing, the proposal will deliver services and facilities, homes, employment, access to open space in a beautifully planned development that addresses the challenges of today, for tomorrow, by addressing climate change and biodiversity loss.
- 7.2 The delivery of the proposal will secure Alderholt's ability to be self-sustaining and delivering much needed market and affordable housing that provided elsewhere would have adverse impacts on sustainable development objectives. Designed to deliver a range of services and facilities within a 15-minute walk of every home within the application site, and most of those existing properties in Alderholt, offers an exemplary approach to planning for sustainable settlements.
- 7.3 The Christchurch and East Dorset Core Strategy Local Plan 2014 is over five years old. Significant change has occurred since it was adopted not least around the issues of climate and biodiversity emergencies. Dorset Council's emerging local plan has been delayed and is some years from setting out a framework for planning in Dorset. Meanwhile the housing need in Dorset grows together with the inability to afford a home. Alderholt Meadows provides a solution to meeting a significant housing need in Dorset in a way that secures the sustainable future of Alderholt in a timely manner.
- 7.4 The indicative masterplan demonstrates how the proposals within the application are capable of being met with applied focus on delivering a beautiful development. Extensive technical work has been undertaken to demonstrate the ability for delivery. The scale of the development has required an Environmental Statement to be produced which demonstrates clearly that the proposal with the proposed mitigation will not harm the environment and indeed will deliver significant improvements and substantial biodiversity net gain.
- 7.5 This Planning Statement has demonstrated that it complies with the direction of travel of national policy and the objective of government to significantly boost housing supply while delivering beautiful places to live. Local development plan policies have been complied with and where this is not the case in terms of the principle of development, it is shown that this policy is out date and that the considerable benefits of the scheme weigh in its favour making a compelling case for its approval.