

APP REF: P/OUT/2023/01166

ADDRESS: Land to the south of Ringwood Road, Alderholt

APPLICANT: Dudsbury Homes (Southern) Ltd

DESCRIPTION: 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).

CASE OFFICER: Ursula Fay

URBAN DESIGN OFFICER COMMENTS

SUPPORT	
SUPPORT SUBJECT TO CONDITION(S)	
UNABLE TO SUPPORT	x
NO OBJECTION	
REQUEST FOR FURTHER INFORMATION	
OTHER / PRE-APP	
NO COMMENT TO MAKE	
HAS PRE-APPLICATION DISCUSSION TAKEN PLACE WITH YOU?	

Site Description and Context: Alderholt lies to the northeast of the county, adjoining the boundary with Hampshire on its eastern side. The village itself is enclosed by roads to its north, east and west; to the south there are open fields and the village's recreation grounds and sports and social club. Alderholt's growth has predominately been during the late 20th century and the village now has a population of around 3000. Local facilities include a convenience store, vets, GP practice, first school, churches, allotments and various sports pitches and buildings that are used for social and community functions. Due to its proximity to larger settlements and limited bus service, car dependency is high.

The proposal site consists of a number of fields to the south and west of Alderholt, land is currently in agricultural use and includes a number of hedgerows and small copses. The majority of the proposal would extend the village westwards of Ringwood Road, with a smaller portion sitting between Ringwood Road and Hillbury Road, both these roads are rural in their character, lined with trees and mature hedgerows with no footpaths or street lighting adjoining the site's boundaries.

The proposed development site is not allocated for development as part of the adopted East Dorset Local Plan and although there is consideration given to whether a larger allocation could feature in the new Dorset wide local plan, this document currently bears little weight.

Summary: While the application is for outline only, parameter plans, a Design and Access Statement and Design Code have been submitted as part of the application. The Design and Access Statement does set out a vision for delivering a high-quality development but needs to be more expansive in its detail. The overall identity of the place needs to be more clearly defined and should be based on creating a community that is fully integrated with Alderholt and has sustainability running as a central thread through every aspect of the scheme's design. This vision should be supported by a Design Code which in its current form does not include sufficient information, to the level of detail required, to secure a commitment to achieving a well-designed place.

The proposal: The application includes proposals for up to 1,700 dwellings – more than doubling the existing population of Alderholt. Also included as part of the proposals are: 10,000m² business park, a local centre including retail uses, health facilities, pub/restaurant, cafes, care provision, solar array, parks and play spaces and a SANG.

Comments on proposal: (Comments given notwithstanding the principle policy objection to the proposal)

Vision and Identity: Currently while the Design and Access Statement includes aspirations to 'preserve the strong connection with the local vernacular of Alderholt', character precedents shown as part of the Design Code include small historic villages with varying urban morphologies while illustrative streetscenes show more of an urban village typology.

Further consideration should seek to rationalise a clear vision and identity for the development. This should be based on a clear analysis of the site's location and the need for any new settlement to physically and socially integrate with Alderholt whilst also considering the opportunity to create a new character that responds to the climate emergency, particularly in relation to encouraging a modal shift in movement patterns and ensuring that layout, landscape and design mitigates the impacts of climate change.

Energy and Sustainability: Proposals should be supported by an energy hierarchy that demonstrates how sustainability runs as a thread through every scale of the scheme's design evolution. Information should be included on how wind, sun, slope and landform has influenced the layout and how solar gain is maximised through density, house design type and orientation. It should also be demonstrated how the use of integrated and multifunctional SuDs and tree planting will contribute to mitigating the effects of climate change.

Access and Movement: Within the context of the climate emergency, the Environment Act and recent Government publications including Gear Change and LTN1/20, creating a modal shift in movement patterns should be a driving factor in the identity and design of any new development. Within the scheme, street hierarchies should give walking and cycling the highest priority, access into the development must be functional and attractive for walkers and cyclists and routes that extend beyond the site must also offer safe and attractive routes into Alderholt along Ringwood Road and Hillbury Road in particular. This approach would also support the social integration of the new community and ensure that the facilities proposed are well-used and accessible to existing and new residents.

Due to the significant increase in the number of houses in the vicinity, the character and function of Ringwood Road and Hillbury Road will fundamentally change, plans to re-design these roads to make them more pedestrian and cyclist friendly and encourage short trips to be made by more active forms of travel is therefore supported from a design perspective - however, it will be crucial to involve officers from the sustainable travel team in detailed design negotiations.

Land Use: The village square forms a central part of the vision for the new development creating a 'heart' to Alderholt Meadows where people can meet, pass time and access services all within a 15 minute walk of their home. While the location of the square is central to the new development, for those towards the north of Alderholt, it is less accessible. Further consideration should be given to ensure integration of this new community and tools such as Space Syntax are useful in understanding how the design of new spaces can support economic and social activity as well as ensuring integration of users. Consideration may then be given as to whether the local centre is in the right location to best serve both the new community and the existing residents of Alderholt.

Depending on the use class, employment should be fully integrated throughout the scheme rather than being in a single location on the edge of the scheme where it is more remote from other uses within the site and offers little support to the local centre.

Although play provision and open spaces are well dispersed throughout the site, there is a reliance on LAPs which often offer limited play value. Parks should include fewer, but larger play spaces that include equipped provision as well as more natural and creative opportunities for play. The proposed LEAP is adjacent to an existing provision and is remote from uses that would offer natural surveillance - consideration should instead be given to expanding the existing provision and integrating it into the site. Although the Open Space Study suggests that the addition of a MUGA would be appropriate in Alderholt, this provision tends to be primarily used by older males therefore consideration should be given as to how the design of this space provides facilities for teenage girls as well.

Density: Density parameter plans currently show neighbourhood densities varying between 30 and 33 dph. While the DAS expands on this suggesting a wider variety across the site, there is no detail in the Design Code or parameter plans that secures this. As such, density offers little variation and does not contribute to the formation of distinct character areas.

Design Code: Paragraph 129 of the NPPF states:

‘..... all guides and codes should be based on effective community engagement and reflect local aspirations for the development of their area, taking into account the guidance contained in the National Design Guide and the National Model Design Code. These national documents should be used to guide decisions on applications in the absence of locally produced design guides or design codes.’

Currently the Design Code is missing key components, it is overly general in its detail and wording and indicative illustrations and sketches do not fix design parameters sufficiently to ensure design consistency across the site. There is an expectation that design codes are binary in their content, setting rules by which the development should accord with. The Design Code should include chapters that cover in detail the characteristics of well design places, in accordance with the National Design Guide and National Model Design Code. The issues that should be covered are outlined in the table below and should follow the ‘Urban extension’ column as this is most relevant to the scale of the proposal. Each chapter should be presented concisely and accurately with supporting visuals that clearly illustrate how the different elements will be incorporated into the scheme.

If the design code covers...	URBAN EXTN.	MIDL SITE	SMALL SITES
Context			
C.1.i Character Types	**	**	**
C.1.ii Site Context	**	**	**
C.1.iii Site Assessment	**	**	**
C.2.i Historic Assessment	**	**	**
C.2.ii Heritage Assets	**	**	**
Movement			
M.1.i Street Network	**	**	**
M.1.ii Public Transport	**	**	**
M.1.iii Street Hierarchy	**	**	**
M.2.i Walking + Cycling	**	**	**
M.2.ii Junction+Crossings	**	**	**
M.2.iii Inclusive Streets	**	**	**
M.3.i Car Parking	**	**	**
M.3.ii Cycle Parking	**	**	**
M.3.iii Services + Utilities	**	**	**
Nature			
N.1.i Network of Spaces	**	**	**
N.1.ii OS Provision	**	**	**
N.1.iii Design	**	**	**
N.2.i Working with Water	**	**	**
N.2.ii SUDS	**	**	**
N.2.iii Flood Risk	**	**	**
N.3.i Net Gain	**	**	**
N.3.ii Biodiversity	**	**	**
N.3.iii Street Trees	**	**	**
Built Form			
B.1.i Density	**	**	**
B.1.ii Whether Buildings Join	**	**	**
B.1.iii Types and Forms	**	**	**
B.2.i Blocks	**	**	**
B.2.ii Building Line	**	**	**
B.2.iii Height	**	**	**
Identity			
I.1.i Local Character	**	**	**
I.1.ii Legibility	**	**	**
I.1.iii Masterplanning	**	**	**
I.2.i Design of buildings	**	**	**
Public Space			
P.1.i Primary	**	**	**
P.1.ii Local+Secondary	**	**	**
P.1.iii Tertiary	**	**	**
P.2.i Meeting Places	**	**	**
P.2.ii Multi-functional	**	**	**
P.2.iii Home Zones	**	**	**
P.3.i Secured by Design	**	**	**
P.3.ii Counter Terrorism	**	**	**
Uses			
U.1.i Efficient Land Use	+	+	+
U.1.ii Mix	**	**	**
U.1.iii Active Frontage	**	**	**
U.2.i Housing for All	+	+	+
If the design code covers...			
U.2.ii Type	+	+	+
U.3.i Schools	**	**	**
U.3.ii Community Facilities	**	**	**
U.3.iii Local Services	**	**	**
Homes and Buildings			
H.1.i Space Standards	+	+	+
H.1.ii Accessibility	+	+	+
H.2.i Light, Aspect, Priv.	+	+	+
H.2.ii Security	+	+	+
H.2.iii Gardens+Balconies	+	+	+
Resources			
R.1.i Energy Hierarchy	+	+	+
R.1.ii Energy Efficiency	+	+	+
R.1.iii Nhood Energy	+	+	+
R.2.i Embodied Energy	+	+	+
R.2.ii Construction	+	+	+
R.2.iii MMC	+	+	+
R.2.iv Water	+	+	+
Lifespan			
L.1.i Management Plan	+	+	+
L.1.ii Participation	+	+	+
L.1.iii Community	+	+	+

** Issues that you would expect to be covered in a code
 + Issues that may be covered elsewhere and so not included in the code

The Design Code should give a clear set of criteria specific to each character area, typical street sections should include maximum and minimum dimensions for front gardens, footways, cycle paths, verges and carriageways and include details such as parking provision, street trees and other landscaping. Building heights should be determined in metres as well as storeys.

Pedestrians and cyclists should be clearly prioritised within the street hierarchy and the detailed design of key routes - streets should be compliant with LTN1/20.

Illustrative examples of house types should be supported by clear rules that guide development across the site and contributes to the formation of distinct character areas – the indicative house types currently provided do not secure any design certainty as part of any future development of the site.

Policy consideration: The site is unallocated and is contrary to policy HE2 in the Christchurch and East Dorset Local Plan part 1 - Core Strategy and saved policy A1 of the East Dorset Local Plan.

Any design code submitted in support of the application should also follow the format set out in the National Model Design Code as supported in paragraph 129 of the NPPF.

OFFICER: Sophie Duke

TITLE: Senior Urban Designer

DATE: 28/04/2023