



**LAND TO THE SOUTH OF RINGWOOD ROAD,  
ALDERHOLT**

**APP/D1265/W/23/3336518**

**Proof of Evidence**

May 2024

Dudsbury Homes (Southern) Ltd

MIXED USE SCHEME  
LAND TO THE SOUTH OF RINGWOOD ROAD  
ALDERHOLT

PROOF OF EVIDENCE

CONTROLLED DOCUMENT

<i>Document No:</i>	132.0001/POE/3	
<i>Status:</i>	Original	
	<i>Name</i>	<i>Date</i>
<i>Prepared by:</i>	James Rand	May 2024

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

### Qualifications & Experience

- 1.1 I, James Rand, have an Honours Degree in Geography and a Master's Degree in Transport Planning and Engineering, both from the University of Southampton. I am a member of the Chartered Institute of Highways & Transportation.
- 1.2 I am an Associate at Paul Basham Associates, and have worked in the industry for over 10 years. Whilst at Paul Basham Associates I have provided transport advice on a range of development proposals including large mixed-use schemes to private and public sector clients. Whilst on secondment to West Sussex County Council's highway development control team, I was responsible for preparing statutory consultation responses to planning applications.
- 1.3 The evidence which I have prepared and provided for this appeal (ref. APP/D1265/W/23/3336518) is given in accordance with my training, experience and CIHT's Code of Conduct. I can confirm that the opinions expressed are my true and professional ones.

### The Appeal

- 1.4 This Proof of Evidence (POE) has been prepared on behalf of Dudsbury Homes (Southern) Ltd in relation to an appeal against Dorset Council's decision to refuse planning application P/OUT/2023/01166 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 green space (SANG); biodiversity enhancements; solar array, and new roads, access arrangements and associated infrastructure (Outline Application with all matters reserved apart from access off Hillbury Road).'*
- 1.5 The planning application was refused by planning committee. Reasons for refusal 2 & 7 (CDA.76) relate to highways and transport matters. RFR 2 states:  
*'The proposed development would represent significant development contrary to the settlement hierarchy, which is intended to direct development to the most sustainable locations. While facilities and transport options are proposed, it has not been demonstrated that these would be successful and viable in the long-term. It has therefore not been demonstrated that the proposal would limit the need to travel and offer a genuine choice of transport modes. Contrary to Policy KS2 of the Christchurch and East Dorset Local Plan: Part 1, 2014, and to paragraphs 73 and 105 of the NPPF.'*

1.6 RFR 7 states:

*'The submitted Transport Assessment fails through the use of an unacceptable methodology and the inclusion of insufficient information to correctly identify the highways impacts arising from the proposal and how these could be mitigated. It has not been demonstrated that there would not be an unacceptable impact on highways safety, nor that residual cumulative impacts on the road network would not be severe. Contrary to Policy KS11 of the Christchurch and East Dorset Local Plan: Part 1, 2014, and to paragraph 111 of the NPPF.'*

1.7 Since the application was determined, the NPPF has been updated. Paragraphs 73, 105 and 111 have become 74, 109 and 115 respectively.

1.8 Since the application was determined, discussions with the highway authorities at Dorset Council, Hampshire County Council and National Highways have been ongoing. At the time of writing, a Transport topic paper is being prepared, through which matters covered by this proof may be agreed.

### **Scope of Evidence**

1.9 My evidence responds to transport related parts of reason for refusal 2, and in this respect should be read in conjunction with the proof of Mr Jacobs (CDG.9), which covers general planning matters. My evidence also responds to reason for refusal 7.

## 2. RFR 2

- 2.1 Many factors must be taken into account in the consideration of whether a location or development is sustainable. Whether a particular development is sustainable is dependent on the local context and type / scale of development. This is evident in the wording of the NPPF.
- 2.2 The NPPF para 109 sets out that significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. It acknowledges that opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary depending on the nature of the area.
- 2.3 This is reflected in para 114, requiring that appropriate opportunities to promote sustainable transport are taken up, given the type of development and its location. It also requires safe and suitable access to the site to be achieved for all users.
- 2.4 Para 116 requires applications to give priority to pedestrian and cycle movements within the scheme and neighbouring areas, and as far as possible to facilitate access to high quality public transport.
- 2.5 In determining whether a development or location is sufficiently sustainable, it is useful to consider the inverse. Based on the wording of the NPPF, an unsustainable development or location would, when compared to its urban or rural context:
- Have no or limited facilities such that travel is necessary to meet daily needs
  - Be excessively reliant on use of the private car
  - Have no or limited access to public transport

### Existing conditions

- 2.6 Alderholt currently has limited facilities and services. These are listed in para 2.4 of the SOCG (CDC1). As a result, residents have to travel to other settlements to meet many daily needs.
- 2.7 To travel to other settlements to meet daily needs, there is little choice but to drive. The closest town centres are Fordingbridge and Verwood (para 8.20 CDC1), which are approx. 3km and 6km distant respectively (para 2.1 CDC1). These are beyond reasonable walking distance. CIHT Planning for Walking (CDF15) lists the average length of pedestrian journeys as 1.37km.
- 2.8 Existing public transport in Alderholt is very limited, with one part time bus service (8.35 CDC1). There is no dedicated cycle infrastructure (8.34 CDC1), although ATC data shows some limited on-carriageway cycling on links to/from Alderholt (WCHAR para 2.16, appended to CDA.98). CIHT Planning for Cycling (CDF16) sets out 80% of cycle trips are less than 8km.

- 2.9 The lack of mode choice is evidenced by 2011 Census journey to work data that shows that for MSOA East Dorset 001 (in which Alderholt is located), 95% of commuting trips are by car (driver or passenger) (Table 14, TIR, appended to CDA.19). More broadly, only 1.1% of East Dorset residents commute by public transport (Core Strategy para 2.52, CDD.1).
- 2.10 Details of existing road conditions are set out in the TA and agreed to be an appropriate starting point (8.33 CDC1). Based on the analysis of the accident record in the TA and TAA (CDA.19 and CDA.98), the existing road network generally operates safely and, with the exception of an accident cluster at the A31 on slip, accidents are likely a result of driver error rather than deficiencies in the road layout.

#### Proposed Development

- 2.11 The proposed development would significantly improve the sustainability of Alderholt, through the provision of additional facilities that would reduce the need to travel. These facilities would be accessible via sustainable modes, with safe and suitable access provided to the development for all users, as a result of a permeable network of pedestrian connections and cycle improvements in neighbouring areas within Alderholt. The development would also provide a choice of modes for travel to other settlements through the provision of a bus service and improved cycle facilities to Fordingbridge.

#### *Need to travel*

- 2.12 The proposed development would provide non residential uses including 10,000sqm of employment space and 4,000sqm of Class E uses, indicatively including retail, food and drink, community/sports, medical and office. The phasing of these facilities is addressed in Mr Mound's evidence (CDG.13) and would be secured by planning condition.
- 2.13 These facilities would mean a much greater range of daily needs would be met within Alderholt, reducing the need for existing residents to travel to other settlements. The need for residents of the proposed development to travel to other settlements would also be reduced, compared to a purely residential scheme.
- 2.14 These points were agreed with Dorset Council at pre-app stage (Appendix J, CD.98). The TIR details the agreed reductions in trips outside of Alderholt arising from the provision of the additional facilities for various journey purposes. It is agreed that the additional facilities would result in less need to travel for employment, retail/personal business, leisure/recreation and social purposes.

- 2.15 As a result, it is considered the requirement of NPPF para 109 for development to limit the need to travel is met.
- 2.16 New residential development of a smaller scale to that proposed in Alderholt would be unlikely to be able to deliver the non-residential facilities proposed as part of the appeal scheme. Any contributions towards public transport would be of a significantly smaller scale, and unlikely to be sufficient to deliver a significantly improved service. Smaller scale residential development would therefore be much more likely to perpetuate existing unsustainable travel patterns.

*Choice of modes – walking & cycling in Alderholt*

- 2.17 The proposed development includes various points of access for pedestrians and cyclists, such that the development would form a permeable extension to the existing settlement. The connections are shown in the Access & Movement Parameter Plan (CDA.9). Stage 1 Road Safety Audits of the two main accesses have been undertaken, with no significant issues raised. On this basis, safe and suitable access to the site is achievable for pedestrians and cyclists (as well as vehicles).
- 2.18 The facilities would be within reasonable walking or cycling distance of the whole of Alderholt, as shown in Mr Worsfold's evidence (CDG.16). They are also adjacent to the development spine road, which would form part of the proposed bus route. Therefore, the facilities would not only reduce the need to travel outside of the settlement, but residents would also have a choice of sustainable modes to access them.
- 2.19 If existing or future residents decided to drive to the facilities provided by the proposed development, the highway impact would principally be contained to the proposed development. Any vehicle trips by existing residents would likely replace existing longer trips outside of the settlement, which would still represent an improvement by reducing distance travelled, in accordance with Policy LTP A-1 of Bournemouth, Poole & Dorset's Local Transport Plan (CDF.17).
- 2.20 In addition to the pedestrian and cyclist access points, a range of walking and cycling improvements are proposed in the areas neighbouring the development, as required by NPPF para 116. These include:
- Footway extension on Ringwood Road, to be delivered by S278
  - Footway extension on Hillbury Road, to be delivered by S278
  - Traffic calming and active travel corridor along old Ringwood Road alignment, to be delivered by S278
  - Advisory cycle lanes and removal of centre line on Ringwood Road & Station Road, to be delivered by S278
  - Funding to extend 30mph speed limit on Hillbury Road
  - Financial contributions to improve PROW in Hampshire & Dorset

2.21 NPPF para 116 references pedestrian and cycle movements within the scheme. Internal layout details do not form part of the outline planning application, however, a network of pedestrian and cycling routes within the site would be provided to meet policy requirements.

*Choice of modes – public transport*

- 2.22 The appellant will provide financial contributions to Dorset Council to facilitate improved bus services. The proposed contribution value is based on calculations provided by an operator for a Cranborne – Alderholt – Fordingbridge – Ringwood service that is half hourly in the peak period and hourly otherwise. At Dorset Council’s request (CDB.29), the contribution value is based on 7 years of support for the bus service. Mr Mound’s evidence (CDG.13) addresses and the phasing and delivery of the new service.
- 2.23 This would be a significant benefit in providing an alternative to the private car for trips outside of Alderholt. Existing and future residents would have a genuine choice of modes for trips to these locations, decreasing the existing reliance on the private car. This accords with the requirements of the NPPF, Local Plan Policy KS11 (CDD.1) and the LTP (CDF.17).
- 2.24 In particular, the indicative timetable is such that it would be possible for Alderholt residents to commute to Ringwood by public transport arriving before 9 and returning after 5. In addition, the bus service could be coordinated to facilitate connections to other services in Fordingbridge.
- 2.25 The financial contribution is sufficient to provide an appropriate level of service and meets the obligation tests. The route and timetable are indicative, but if Dorset Council retains any concerns, it could specify parameters as it sees fit when tendering for the service.
- 2.26 The appellant is willing to deliver bus stops in accordance with the Council’s standard design. Within the site, this would form part of the spine road design to be secured through reserved matters approval. Outside of the site, financial contributions can be secured through the S106 agreement.
- 2.27 The contribution calculations for public transport assume that the route would also meet additional need for pupil travel from the development to Cranborne Middle School. This is in keeping with policy PTS4 of the Dorset Passenger Transport Strategy (CDF.18), encouraging students to travel via public transport. The appellant is willing to provide separate financial contributions to facilitate upper school travel to QE School, Wimborne.



### *Choice of modes – cycling beyond Alderholt*

- 2.28 The multi modal forecast contained in the TAA (CDA.98) includes 27 and 33 external cycle trips generated by the development in the peaks. This represents 2-3% of the forecast external mode share and is in keeping with the existing cycling data for the area, which shows 2% of existing commuting trips in the area are via bicycle (Table 14 TIR, appended to CDA.19). As set out in the WCHAR (appended to CDA.98), there are 11 cyclists a day currently using the B3078, with no recorded accident history.
- 2.29 The forecast cycling trips are mostly associated with employment uses, either from the development to external employment areas or from other areas to the on-site employment.
- 2.30 An opportunity to provide an improved cycle connection to Fordingbridge has been identified. This is detailed in the TAA (CDA.98) but consists of financial contributions to improve and upgrade PROWs between Hillbury Road and the B3078, reduce the speed limit along the B3078, a section of shared footway/cycleway alongside the B3078, and finally to tie in to Ashford Road, which meets the criteria set out in LTN 1/20 for a route to be shared between cyclists and vehicles. The route between Alderholt and Fordingbridge would therefore avoid cycling on the B3078 carriageway. The scheme is subject to a Stage 1 Road Safety Audit, but I have no reason to doubt that a safe scheme can be delivered.
- 2.31 The plan of the proposed footway/cycleway alongside the B3078 shows a 3m width, with 0.5m safety margin, as per the recommended minimum width for shared routes set out in LTN 1/20 guidance (CDF.19). The guidance also sets out an absolute minimum width of 2m is acceptable at constraints, for up to 300 cycle users in peak hour. This is reflected within HCC's Technical Guidance 10 – Pedestrian & Cycle Facilities, which sets out a relevant absolute minimum width of 2m for constraints up to 100m long. On this basis it is considered a facility of suitable width is achievable alongside the B3078.
- 2.32 A financial contribution would be provided for the improvements to the PROW, which would consist of improved/widened surfacing, and removal/replacement of gates/stiles. The western part of the PROW is constrained in width, with the existing surface being approx. 0.5-1.1m in width, based on site measurements. With clearance of low level vegetation, widening to 2-2.5m appears achievable, with further width possible if boundary vegetation were pruned.
- 2.33 Based on the guidance in LTN 1/20 (CDF.19) and Sustrans' traffic free routes and greenways design guide (CDF.20), 2.5m is required for two moving cyclists to pass, 2.2m is required for a moving cyclist and a pedestrian to pass and at least 1.45m is required for a pedestrian and static cyclist to pass, based on standard bicycles.

- 2.34 The level of use, and therefore conflict between users, is likely to be relatively low. Based on ATC data, there are 2 cyclists in the peak periods along the B3078, that could use the improved PROW as an alternative. The approved facilities may increase this. The development forecast is c. 30 cyclists in each peak, predominantly for commuting. Not all of the cyclists would travel on this route but assuming half do, there would be a total 17 cyclists in the peaks, equivalent to 1 every 3.5 minutes. The highway code requires cyclists to give way to pedestrians on shared use cycle tracks and slow down and stop if necessary. The number of pedestrians using the route is not quantified, but observations suggest it is not high and in the weekday peak periods is not likely to be substantial.
- 2.35 The constrained part of the PROW is straight and therefore any opposing users would be able to see each other. In locations where there is restricted width, it is therefore unlikely that there would be a safety issue if a cyclist were to meet another user. The amenity of the route in these locations would be reduced as users slow or stop to negotiate the space but would still represent an improvement for cyclists compared to the alternative on-carriageway route. Although pedestrians would encounter cyclists where they currently do not, they would benefit from the improved and widened surface and removal/replacement of obstacles.
- 2.36 The proposed link would represent an improvement in terms of cyclist amenity compared to the existing situation and thereby promote sustainable transport. Given the peak forecast development cycle trips are predominantly associated with commuting, the cyclists are likely to be relatively confident. However, if on a given day a cyclist between Alderholt and Fordingbridge wished to use an alternative mode, they would still have the option of the bus service before resorting to the private car.

#### *Castleman Trailway*

- 2.37 Although remote from the development site, conditions for cyclists and pedestrians using the Castleman Trailway would also be improved as a result of the proposed development. The highway works at the Verwood Road / B3081 junction consist of signalisation and enable provision of signalised toucan crossings over Verwood Road and the B3081. This will improve non motorised user amenity, particularly for users of the Castleman Trailway which is interrupted by Verwood Road.

#### *Summary in relation to RFR2*

- 2.38 The existing settlement is not sustainable. It has limited facilities and services, and residents are reliant on use of the private car to access other settlements. Piecemeal residential development of lesser scale would perpetuate existing unsustainable travel patterns.

- 2.39 The proposed development would address these issues for existing and future residents. Facilities and services would be provided to meet daily needs, reducing the need for travel outside of Alderholt. These facilities would be accessible via sustainable modes. A permeable network of connections would be provided, and cycle improvements in neighbouring areas would promote sustainable transport. This would be supported by the implementation of the Travel Plan (CDA.20).
- 2.40 In addition, when travel outside of Alderholt is necessary, residents would have a choice of transport modes. An hourly bus service with half hourly service in the peaks would be delivered and allow a choice of modes to access Fordingbridge and Ringwood. In addition, improved cycle facilities between Alderholt and Fordingbridge would promote sustainable transport, particularly for commuters. The forecast mode share for proposed development movements within and outside Alderholt is contained in Table 1 of the TAA (CDA.98).
- 2.41 The proposed development would therefore comply with policy KS11 of the East Dorset Local Plan (CDD.1), in that it would 1) reduce the need to travel, 2) provide improved access to key services and facilities and 3) promote alternative modes of travel. The development is also aligned with Dorset's Local Transport Plan 3 (CDF.17), particularly key strategy measure 6 – reducing the need to travel, 8 – active travel and greener travel choices and 9 – public transport alternatives.
- 2.42 As is the case for nearly all residential development, the appeal scheme would generate external vehicle movements. However, planning policy does not require all trips to be possible via sustainable modes, nor does it set a threshold for acceptable proportions of trips by private car. Planning policy instead requires that opportunities have been taken up to promote sustainable travel that are appropriate in the local context. The reduced need to travel and choice of transport modes delivered by the development is such that it would comply with the requirements of paragraphs 109, 114 and 116 of the NPPF and align with the overall goals of the LTP and Policy KS11 of the Local Plan.

### 3. RFR 7

#### *Dorset Council*

- 3.1 The RFR refers to an unacceptable methodology and inclusion of insufficient information to identify highway impact and on this basis a failure to demonstrate the impact would not negatively impact safety and the residual cumulative impact would not be severe. These are references to the relevant tests set out in para 115 of the NPPF.
- 3.2 This is despite DC's highways consultation response (CDB.19) acknowledging, *"the traffic modelling undertaken by both the applicant and Dorset Council has shown that a development of 1700 homes is unlikely to have a significant impact on the local Dorset road network in terms of congestion."*
- 3.3 Moreover, the methodology to assess the highway impact of the proposed development was discussed and agreed with Dorset Council at pre-application stage. The matters expressly agreed at pre-app (TAA Appendix J, CDA.98) include:
- The methodology to quantify the amount of net vehicle trips generated by the proposed development
  - The assumptions to quantify internalisation and reductions in existing vehicle movements attributable to the non-residential uses
  - The proposed distribution of vehicle trips
  - TEMPRO growth factors
  - Extent of modelling assessment
- 3.4 Since the application was determined, it has come to light that DC consider that they did not agree the total people trip rates that form the starting point for the assessment set out in the TIR (appended to CDA.19). DC had ample opportunity to raise this matter through the reviews of several iterations of the TIR at pre-application stage, yet did not expressly do so until after the refusal of planning permission and after this appeal was made.
- 3.5 Moreover, in post determination discussions, DC's outstanding query as to whether the total people trip rates were derived from purely residential surveys has been resolved. On this basis, there is no outstanding query on the total people trip rates and are in fact appropriate. Therefore, the methodology was acceptable and sufficient information was therefore included to correctly identify the highway impacts.

- 3.6 The TA (CDA.19) was based on the proposals at the time, which included conversion of the education system from three to two tier. Since determination, a Transport Assessment Addendum (CDA.98) has been submitted, modelling the highway impact on the basis that the existing three-tier education system is retained. The TAA also includes sensitivity test modelling, with higher development vehicle trip generation. All of the modelled junctions within Dorset operate within capacity. This is further supported by the conclusions of Dorset's own microsimulation modelling (appended to CDA.19), which only forecasts small increases in journey times. As such, the evidence demonstrates that the residual cumulative impacts would not be severe.
- 3.7 The three tier education strategy results in higher external vehicle trip generation, compared to the two tier strategy, principally in the AM peak. The agreed extent of junction assessment remains appropriate, as trips dissipate as distance from the site increases. The differences to the two tier education strategy at junctions beyond the agreed scope are not significant, and additional junctions are covered by DC's microsim modelling, which forecasts no issues.

#### *National Highways*

- 3.8 The TA included analysis of the highway impact at the junction of Verwood Road / A31 eastbound slip roads. Dorset Council and National Highways are responsible for different parts of the junction. Modelling of the existing layout showed significant queues and delays, before development traffic is added, which results in further increases. A mitigation scheme was proposed in the form of signalisation of the A31 eastbound off slip and Verwood Road, with right turn lane onto the A31 eastbound on slip.
- 3.9 In post determination discussions, NH requested a sensitivity test be undertaken, with reduced levels of internalisation and using alternative base traffic flow data. As a result, the mitigation design evolved whilst addressing existing safety issues at the junction. The proposed scheme mitigates the highway impact and as such the residual cumulative impact would not be severe. Further details are provided in the TAA. NH and DC are satisfied the modelling and preliminary scheme design are appropriate.
- 3.10 The proposed scheme is subject to a Stage 1 Road Safety Audit, but regardless of this NH have confirmed that they 'are confident there is a reasonable prospect for a deliverable scheme to be agreed... to be secured by condition.' NH also confirm all matters in respect of the SRN to be resolved and do not expect to participate in the inquiry. NH's correspondence is attached at **Appendix A**.

- 3.11 The TA included modelling of the junction of Provost Street / High Street junction in Fordingbridge. Mitigation was proposed in the form of widening of the Provost Street approach, with consideration also given to the possibility of a one-way system on Provost Street and West Street.
- 3.12 Discussions since determination have been ongoing with HCC, to address matters raised in their consultation response (CDB.9). This relates to the inclusion of committed development and TEMPRO growth (despite this resulting in double counting), traffic distribution, use of sensitivity testing with higher vehicle trip rates and modelling of additional junctions in Fordingbridge.
- 3.13 The mitigation proposed at Provost Street / High Street in the TA mitigates the impact of the scheme at the junction such that the residual cumulative impact would not be severe. This is supported by the conclusions of Dorset Council's microsimulation modelling, which only forecasts small increases in journey times along the route between High Street and the B3078 on approach to Fordingbridge.
- 3.14 The alternative mitigation in the form of a one way system referenced in the TA has been further developed. The one way arrangement would collectively remove the need for vehicles to give way over the bridges on Church Street and West Street, and past on-street parking. The proposed mitigation schemes would necessitate an amendment to an approved active travel scheme on Shaftesbury Street. The effect of the amendment would be limited, requiring cyclists to rejoin the carriageway approximately 60m earlier in comparison to the approved plan.
- 3.15 The schemes are subject to Stage 1 Road Safety Audit, but I have no reason to doubt that safe schemes can be delivered. The modelling results are set out in the TAA but in summary, the residual cumulative impact at any one junction would not be severe for either mitigation option.

*Links*

- 3.16 The analysis in the TA shows existing roads function safely, with accidents attributable to driver error, rather than deficiencies in the highway layout. The TA's assessment of existing road conditions are agreed to be an appropriate starting point (8.33 CDC1). The development would predominantly generate cars with some larger vehicles consisting of buses and HGVs. The increase in large vehicle movements is not significant over existing (TAA, CDA.98). In correspondence, HCC consider it unlikely that the development and associated traffic generated will significantly worsen the highway safety of the surrounding highway network.

- 3.17 The TA included a review of the ability of vehicles to pass along links was undertaken, based on the existing widths derived from OS mapping. Widening was suggested in various locations within the public highway boundary, which is also based on OS mapping. OS mapping has a relative accuracy of +/- 1.1m at the 99% confidence level.
- 3.18 Highway works are commonly based on OS mapping at outline planning application stage, with the design developed at S278 stage. DC considered that the highway works were acceptable in principle at TA stage (CDB.29). To provide additional surety, a condition requiring the works to be reviewed based on a detailed survey was suggested in the TA. However, DC and HCC requested further detail and to that end a LIDAR survey accurate to 20mm was undertaken, and the proposed widening reviewed on this basis. This is detailed in the TAA.
- 3.19 As set out in the TAA (CDA.98), cars would be able to pass HGVs in most locations. In the few locations this is not possible, the distances are short, forward visibility is good and delays are likely to be marginal. This is further supported by Dorset's journey time analysis in their microsimulation modelling. The purpose of the widening is to aid the passing of vehicles and improve the existing situation, in the context of the additional vehicle movements the development would generate.
- 3.20 The widening is minor in any one location, and would not significantly change the existing highway layout, which operates safely. Given DC accepted the principle based on OS mapping, and that the information has since been updated based on a more accurate survey, it is considered that a suitable level of detail has been provided given the stage of the planning process. If the appeal were to be allowed, detailed design would be required as part of a S278 agreement at which point the design may evolve as is commonly the case. In the worst-case scenario that a section of proposed widening is not deliverable, the fallback position would be the existing road widths for which the accident record shows no inherent road safety issues.

*Summary in relation to RFR7*

- 3.21 The relevant tests in relation to highway impact in the NPPF are whether the residual cumulative impact of development would be severe, and whether there would be an unacceptable impact on road safety. Dorset Council acknowledge the modelling in the TA and their own strategic microsimulation modelling shows that a development of 1700 dwellings would not have a significant impact upon congestion. Dorset Council also acknowledge that the off-site highway works necessary to mitigate the impact of the development are acceptable in principle.

- 3.22 Using the process agreed with Dorset at pre-app stage, modelling shows that all of the junctions within Dorset would operate within capacity, such that the impact could not be said to be severe. This remains the case for the three tier education system and using sensitivity tests of higher trip rates.
- 3.23 National Highways are satisfied that all matters in respect of the Strategic Road Network will be resolved, accepting the preliminary scheme design and associated modelling for the proposed mitigation scheme at the A31/Verwood Road junction is appropriate. On this basis, the residual cumulative impact would not be severe.
- 3.24 Revised modelling has been undertaken in Hampshire, focused on junctions in Fordingbridge. The residual cumulative impact at any junction would not be severe. In addition to the mitigation proposed at Provost Street / High Street in the TA, the principle of a one way system referenced in the TA has been further developed. The arrangement would collectively remove the need for vehicles to give way over the bridges on Church Street and West Street, and past on-street parking. The proposed mitigation schemes are subject to Stage 1 Road Safety Audit, but I have no reason to doubt that safe mitigation schemes can be delivered.
- 3.25 The existing roads function safely, with accidents occurring due to driver error rather than deficiencies in the highway layout. HCC consider the development is unlikely to significantly worsen highway safety of the existing network. Widening of highway links on approach to Alderholt has been further developed since the TA. The proposals are now based on a LIDAR survey with a much higher degree of accuracy than the original OS mapping. The purpose of the widening is to aid the passing of vehicles and improve the existing situation, in the context of the additional vehicle movements the development would generate, which will predominantly be cars. The principle of the widening is accepted by DC, is minor in any one location and would not significantly change the existing highway layout. It is considered that a suitable level of detail has been provided to demonstrate the widening is deliverable, given the stage of the planning process.
- 3.26 It is therefore considered that it has been demonstrated that the residual cumulative impact of the development would not be severe, and the development would not have an unacceptable impact on road safety.



## 4. SUMMARY

- 4.1 The existing settlement is not sustainable. It has limited facilities and services, and residents are reliant on use of the private car to access other settlements. Piecemeal residential development of lesser scale would perpetuate existing unsustainable travel patterns.
- 4.2 The proposed development would address these issues for existing and future residents. Facilities and services would be provided to meet daily needs, reducing the need for travel outside of Alderholt. These facilities would be accessible via sustainable modes. A permeable network of connections would be provided, and cycle improvements in neighbouring areas would promote sustainable transport.
- 4.3 In addition, when travel outside of Alderholt is necessary, residents would have a choice of transport modes. An hourly bus service with half hourly service in the peaks would be delivered and allow a choice of modes to access Fordingbridge and Ringwood. In addition, improved cycle facilities between Alderholt and Fordingbridge would promote sustainable transport, particularly for commuters.
- 4.4 In this way, the proposed development would comply with the requirements of paragraphs 109, 114 and 116 of the NPPF and align with the overall goals of the LTP and Policy KS11 of the Local Plan.
- 4.5 In respect of highway impact, the evidence demonstrates that the cumulative residual impact would not be severe, for the Dorset, Hampshire or National Highways network. This is the case using either the methodology to calculate trip generation agreed at pre-app stage with Dorset Council, or using higher sensitivity trip rates. This conclusion is further evidenced by Dorset Council's microsimulation modelling, which DC consider shows the impact on congestion would not be significant.
- 4.6 I have no reason to doubt that safe junction mitigation and cycle schemes can be delivered, and Stage 1 Road Safety Audits are being undertaken. Regardless of the S1 RSA, NH are content that all matters in respect of the Strategic Road Network are resolved.
- 4.7 The existing network operates safely, with accidents attributable to driver error rather than inherent issues with the road layout. HCC accept that the development and associated traffic are unlikely to significantly worsen the existing highway safety of the highway network. DC consider the off-site highway works in the TA to be acceptable in principle and since then, the proposals have been refined using a more accurate base survey. The proposed link widening is minor in any one location and would not significantly change the existing highway layout, which functions safely. On this basis, the proposals would not have an unacceptable impact on road safety.

4.8 A transport topic paper is being prepared, and it is hoped that matters covered by this proof will be agreed. I would respectfully request that the inspector uphold the appeal in respect of highways & transport matters.

## Appendix A



Our ref: as yours  
Your ref: APP/D1265/W/23/3336518

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Via email: [holly.dutton@planninginspectorate.gov.uk](mailto:holly.dutton@planninginspectorate.gov.uk) 23 May 2024

Dear Ms Dutton

**Planning Appeal: APP/D1265/W/23/3336518**  
**Application: P/OUT/2023/01166**  
**Location: Land to the south of Ringwood Road, Alderholt**

**Outline Application with all matters reserved apart from access off Hillbury Road for: 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 green space (SANG); biodiversity enhancements; solar array, and new roads, access arrangements and associated infrastructure**

National Highways provided an initial position statement for the Inspector in respect of the above appeal on 6 March 2024. This advised that National Highways wished to be considered as an Interested Party and set out those matters on which agreement was still to be reached in respect of the traffic impact of the development on the strategic road network (SRN). In this case the SRN comprises the A31 trunk road and specifically the junction with the B3081 Verwood Road.

National Highways and the appellant's consultants have continued to maintain a constructive dialogue and National Highways is now able to advise that the assessment of traffic impact and associated modelling developed by the appellant in respect of the SRN has been agreed.

This assessment has identified that a scheme of works at the A31 / B3081 Verwood Road junction is necessary to address an adverse development traffic impact on the SRN and associated local highway network which would otherwise be considered unacceptable or severe (in safety and capacity terms) in accordance with the NPPF.

The appellant has provided a preliminary design for a scheme of works which National Highways considers complies with the standards set out in the DMRB insofar as the SRN elements of the scheme are concerned. Both National Highways and Dorset Council (represented by their consultants Entran) have confirmed that the scheme design is sufficient to enable it to progress to a Stage 1 Road Safety Audit (RSA), and both parties have signed the required RSA Brief as the overseeing organisations for our respective highway networks.

Whilst it is acknowledged that the RSA process remains to be completed at this time (and that a Walking, Cycling and Horse-Riding Assessment and Review will also need to be completed), National Highways is confident that there is a reasonable prospect for a deliverable scheme to be agreed which we would expect to be secured by planning condition should the Inspector be minded to uphold the appeal. This condition would require the scheme to be implemented, generally in accordance with the agreed preliminary design, in advance of the occupation of the development. The appellant would be expected to subsequently enter into an appropriate legal agreement with the relevant highways authorities to agree the detailed design and delivery of the scheme.

National Highways will continue to work with both the appellant and Dorset Council (as represented by Entran) to contribute to their Statement of Common Ground. With publication of the most recent work undertaken by the appellant's consultants we expect we will be able to update our formal response on this application, to a recommendation that conditions should be attached to any permission. With this the case, all matters in respect of the SRN would be resolved in advance of the appeal hearings and National Highways is not therefore expecting to be represented or participate in the hearings.

Should the Inspector have any questions for us or require clarification on any matters relating to the SRN in the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact me via [planningsw@nationalhighways.co.uk](mailto:planningsw@nationalhighways.co.uk).

Yours sincerely

*Lisa McCaffrey*

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South West Operations – Planning and Development

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