

14. Policies and Proposals for Alderholt

Introduction

- 14.1. This Chapter of the East Dorset Local Plan sets out the particular policies and proposals which will apply to Alderholt during the period covered by the District Plan up to 2011. General land-use policies towards all development in East Dorset are contained in Chapter 6, and general transport proposals in Chapter 7. These apply to the Alderholt area as they do to the rest of the District.
- 14.2. The policies and proposals will be used as a basis for development briefs where these are required and for development control.

Character of the Area

- 14.3. The village of Alderholt lies in the north eastern part of the Plan area, adjoining the County boundary with Hampshire. The village is enclosed on its south-western, north-eastern and north-western sides by roads. To the south east the village terminates at farmland that runs between the Ringwood and Hillbury Roads.
- 14.4. The majority of the village is situated just below the 75 m (200 ft) contour on land that rises from the valleys of the River Avon and the Ashford Water. The highest part of the village is a ridge of land approximately 75m high that runs in a south-westerly direction from Broomfield Drive towards the Cross Roads Plantation.

Agriculture

- 14.5. Much of the area is farmland with extensive areas of woodland at Strouds Firs to the north-west of the village, and south of Warren Park Farm, which itself is to the south of the village.
- 14.6. The agricultural land quality in the vicinity of the village is generally poor to the north and west, being Grade 4 or 5 under the Ministry of Agriculture Classification. To the south and east the land is Grade 3. There is no land in Grades 1 or 2 which are generally considered to be important to protect.

Communications

- 14.7. The immediate area is poorly served by roads. There are no 'A' Class roads anywhere near the village. The village currently relies on the recently designated B3078 to connect it with Cranborne to the west and Fordingbridge to the north east. 'C' Class roads, which also serve a number of gravel workings, provide the connections to Ringwood to the south.

Development

- 14.8. The rate of development at Alderholt increased rapidly through the early 1980's, reaching a peak in 1986/87 when some 115 dwellings were completed. Since then the rate has fallen sharply with only 46 dwellings completed between 1990 and 1995.
- 14.9. The overwhelming majority of the dwellings in the village are modern and lie south of Station Road between Hillbury and Ringwood Roads. A few much older properties are

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scattered throughout the village with a small concentration of these around Pressey's Corner.

Population

- 14.10. The rapid development of the village has led to a corresponding increase in population. By 1991 the population had risen to 2,880 from the previous census in 1981 which showed only 1,710 persons resident. Alderholt has a slightly smaller proportion of people who are over retirement age than the average for East Dorset District.

Employment

- 14.11. There are no large scale employers in the village. The 1991 Census shows 1,303 residents of the parish aged over 16 who were in work, with a further 52 unemployed. More detailed information on the balance of local jobs and workers is available from the Census for Crane Ward (Alderholt, Cranborne and Edmondsham parishes combined). In 1991 there were 470 people employed within the Ward (some travelling in from outside), balanced against a total of 1,732 working local residents, giving a low "employment ratio" for the Ward (local jobs: local workers) of 0.27. Over 70% of the local workers travelled more than 5km to work. The largest group crossed the border to New Forest District (29% of commuters), 20% to Salisbury District, and many fewer to Bournemouth (8%), Poole (4%) and Christchurch (4%). Verwood with 4%, and Southampton with 3%, were other destinations.

Facilities

- 14.12. The main area for shops in the village are around the Halt at Daggons Road and Charing Cross, both of which have limited off-street parking. Shopping is largely limited to local convenience stores, with the exception of the Alderholt Surplus Stores, which provides a specialised service to a wide area. More substantial shopping facilities are available at Fordingbridge and Verwood, but the nearest larger centres are at Ringwood, Salisbury and Ferndown.
- 14.13. Within the village there is only one public sector school, which is St. James' First School in Park Lane. There are no Upper or Middle Schools, the children having to use schools at Cranborne, Verwood and Wimborne.
- 14.14. Alderholt has three churches within the settlement; St. James' which is situated to the west of the village on the Daggons Road, the Alderholt Congregational Church situated on Hillbury Road close to Pressey's Corner, and the Tabernacle Church in Camel Green Road. There are two other chapels in the parish outside the settlement.
- 14.15. There are three main buildings that serve the community for recreational and social functions. The first of these is the Alderholt Village Hall which is situated at the Charing Cross junction and comprises a main hall and small room with ancillary facilities and has an adjoining car park. This offers relatively limited space and facilities, in view of the present size of the settlement. Situated mid-way along the northern side of Station Road is the Alderholt Reading Room, which provides a hall and kitchen facilities with a small car park. West of the village on Daggons Road is the Old School which is now used by the Alderholt Youth Association, which includes the Youth Club, Venture Scouts, Cub Scouts, Beavers, Guides and Brownies. The Old School, which is leased from the East Dorset District Council, is administered by the Youth Association's Management Committee, made up of a representative from each of the member groups. It has a small car park to allow some parking clear of the highway. Access on foot or cycle is difficult: the Old School is at some distance from the main built up area and the road has no footway, is not lit and is unpleasant to cycle.

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- 14.16. The Alderholt Recreation Ground which is situated on the southern side of the village off Ringwood Road, is some 5.3 hectares (13 acres) in extent, and caters for football, rugby, tennis and cricket. There is a small pavilion and a separate Sports Club building. It also has a children's play area and a small car park. It is the only sizeable area of open space in the settlement that can cater for these organised sports. Alderholt is unique in the District in that it has a small bore rifle range. This is situated some distance to the south of the village where Hillbury and Ringwood Roads meet.

Conservation

- 14.17. Cranborne Common Site of Special Scientific Interest which is to the west and south west of the village comprises the most northerly heathland communities of Dorset. It is designated as an SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest) and is a proposed SPA (Special Protection Area) under the EC Birds Directive, and SAC (Special Area for Conservation) under the EC Habitats Directive, while parts are also proposed for designation under the Ramsar Convention for the protection of wetlands: these designations reflect its international importance. In addition there are substantial areas of lesser nature conservation importance around the village, particularly at Bonfire Hill and Strouds Firs. These have been designated as Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation.

Proposals

- 14.18. One of the main purposes of this chapter of the Local Plan is to make policies and proposals for land use, transportation and conservation in the Alderholt area within the framework set by the Structure Plan. Within the context of the structure plan objectives and taking into account the particular local characteristics of the Alderholt area, a number of key proposals can be identified.
- 14.19. Listed below, not in any order of significance, these are:
- the conservation of areas of natural history, archæological or historic interest, as well as those considered to be of special landscape value, and the improvement and protection of areas of special character within the settlement
 - encouragement for the maintenance of a high quality environment for residential areas, and a high standard of layout and design in all new developments
 - the definition of a policy area for the settlement within which infilling and redevelopment would be expected to continue
 - provision for traffic management, road improvements and facilities for cyclists and pedestrians
 - the protection of existing open space areas.
- 14.20. The policies and proposals which follow will be used as a basis for development briefs where these are required and, together with those in Chapter 6 and elsewhere in the Plan, will be used for development control.
- 14.21. There are no general pre-requisites for development in the Alderholt area. Housing development will be limited to infill and redevelopment within the defined village policy envelope. The level of growth which is expected to result will not require additional general infrastructure for the settlement. Developers will be expected to provide for particular pre-requisites for the development of their individual sites, including public open space, highways, footways and cyclepaths, street lighting, drainage, boundary treatment and landscaping within their sites and for adequate connections to the highway network. In the case of smaller developments, the requirement to provide public open space could be achieved by means of financial contribution towards provision off-site.

Housing

'Windfall' Sites

- 14.22. Whilst there are no specific proposals for further housing development in the village in the Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Structure Plan, it is envisaged that development will also continue on 'windfall' sites within the built-up area during the Plan period, including infilling and redevelopment with conventional and other more specialised forms of housing development. By their nature, the numbers of these sites arising are hard to forecast, depending as they do on the varied decisions of private landowners. The village has already undergone substantial expansion in recent years and further extensions to the village would be unlikely to add significantly to the local facilities while it would increase the pressures on local infrastructure, including the road network. The area of the village within which further development or redevelopment of land for housing may be permitted under Policy HODEV1 (para 6.159) is shown on the Proposals Map. Development on windfall sites will be permitted subject to the policies set out in Chapter 6.

14.23. Policy A1

Housing development in Alderholt will be permitted under Policy HODEV1 within the policy envelope defined on the Proposals Map.

Affordable Housing

- 14.24. In common with the rest of East Dorset, Alderholt is an area of relatively high house prices. It is likely that this will lead to a continuing need for 'affordable' housing for local people throughout the Plan period. Under Policy HODEV5 (para 6.188), the Planning Authority will seek to negotiate that a suitable proportion of housing on all larger sites, including 'windfall' sites, should be provided to meet this need, taking into account the housing situation at the time, and the character of the site.
- 14.25. The proportion of this type of housing on any individual site will be determined in the light of the need for affordable housing at the time of development and through negotiation with the intending developers. It will be a requirement that secure arrangements are made to ensure that the benefit of the affordable housing is enjoyed by successive as well as by initial occupiers.
- 14.26. However, it is likely that 'windfall' sites within the existing built up area of Alderholt will generally be small. There may be a further opportunity to provide some affordable housing as an exception to policy on land within or immediately adjoining the village policy envelope which would not normally be released for development. Guidance on this form of housing scheme is provided in Chapter 6, paragraphs 6.189 - 6.192 and Policy HODEV6.

Flats

- 14.27. The redevelopment of sites for flats has been a continuing issue in the District Plan area generally, and to a small extent in Alderholt. This has been particularly the case along Station Road and to the rear of Attwood Cottages. The Local Plan makes no specific proposals for the redevelopment of such sites in Alderholt but further policies on housing development generally are contained in Chapter 6. Policy for the control of specialist elderly persons' accommodation is set out separately in Chapter 6, Policy HODEV3 (para 6.167).

Industry and Employment

- 14.28. The informal Alderholt Village Plan of 1972 foresaw the redevelopment of the Alderholt Surplus Stores site for warehousing and light industry provided a satisfactory access was first established.
- 14.29. This site, which was formerly a brickworks, has a history of industrial and commercial activities spanning the 1950s, '60s and '70s. Currently the majority of the site is occupied by the Alderholt Surplus Stores which comprises mainly open storage with the main buildings towards the front of the site.
- 14.30. The site as identified in the Informal Village Plan has an area of approximately 3.4 hectares (8.4 acres) and is adjoined on its southern boundary by mainly residential property and on its northern boundary by a deer bank which is a scheduled Ancient Monument. The other boundaries are enclosed by woodland. In the centre of the site is the remnant of a large pond which over the years has been gradually filled. This pond and the area of land to the north west of it has been identified as an area of nature conservation interest.
- 14.31. Recognising its long history of industrial and commercial use and the constraints that surround it, it is considered that if this site were to be redeveloped it could be suitable for uses within Classes A1, A2 and B1⁸³ of the Town and Country Planning Use Classes Order 1987. These are such commercial and industrial uses as can be located close to residential properties without out detriment to their amenities. This could include a limited redevelopment for small seedbed workshop units and small office suites to provide local employment, similar to the successful scheme in Sixpenny Handley. Any development will be subject to the policies contained in Chapter 6 and elsewhere in this Plan.
- 14.32. Any development would have to provide for substantial landscaping and planting to all boundaries to screen and separate it from adjoining development and the countryside generally, including the areas of nature conservation and archaeological interest to the north and west. It would also need to be designed in such a way that the development would retain the pond, enhance its nature conservation value and provide for its long term protection. A prerequisite for the development will be the provision of a satisfactory access and suitable drainage scheme for the site. Taking account of these requirements, it is expected that only some 2 hectares (5 acres) of the site would be capable of development.

Open Space and Recreation

Playing Fields

- 14.33. The siting of the present Recreation Ground is important in helping to protect the area of countryside south of Alderholt from pressure for development, as well as to provide playing space for this large village. It is important that this facility should be retained for the benefit of the community. The plan envisages that this area would remain available for this purpose for the duration of the plan. Policy RCDEV1 (para 6.212) would apply to this area. Countryside policies would allow further open space to be provided on adjoining land if this were needed.

⁸³ A full description of these uses will be found within the Use Classes Order. Briefly summarised, Class A1 comprises shops, Class A2 financial and professional services provided to the public such as banks and building societies, and Class B1 offices, research or industrial processes of a kind that can be carried out in any residential area without damage to amenity.

Other Open Spaces

- 14.34. Many of the recent developments in the settlement have provided small amounts of incidental open space. These provide some limited opportunities for play close to residential areas. It is felt important that these should be retained for future use. Policy RCDEV1 (para 6.212) will apply to these areas which frequently lack the formal status of public open space.

Conservation and Countryside

- 14.35. There are major areas of nature conservation importance close to Alderholt, principally the Cranborne Common Site of Special Scientific Interest to the west of the village. Lowland heaths in Dorset have been much eroded by agricultural and urban development, and suffer from fragmentation as well as direct loss to their area. Similarly there are other areas of secondary nature conservation importance, including sites at Bonfire Hill, Strouds Firs and an area of land south of the old railway track at the end of Blackwater Grove. Chapter 6 provides policies for the protection of these and other, similarly valuable areas.

Transport

- 14.36. The guiding policies on highways and transportation are found within the general policies contained in Chapter 6. These guiding policies relate to cyclists, pedestrians, traffic management, heavy goods vehicles, environment and landscape, public transport, parking facilities and servicing. Appendix A sets out the road hierarchy for East Dorset in 2011.
- 14.37. Chapter 7 contains details of the 'Local Plan Road Improvement Programme' and details the major highway schemes, including trunk road schemes, which are proposed for the period up to 2011.
- 14.38. Two roads will be made up under the private street works programme. These are Camel Green Road and Hayters Way.
- 14.39. Although designs for an improvement to Pressey's Corner have been discussed locally, the Highway Authority has no proposals for a scheme in the period covered by the Local Plan.