



Dorset Council Local Plan



Alderholt 2021 Consultation Summary of Responses

January 2023



Dorset
Council

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1. Alderholt

1.1. Introduction

Introduction

Many respondents commented generally on proposals for growth at Alderholt expressing views both on draft Policy ALD1: Small-scale expansion on land north of Ringwood Road and in relation to Option 2: Significant expansion of Alderholt, as discussed in paragraphs 18.4.12 to 18.4.14.

This section first sets out some general comments made in response to the consultation followed by expressions of support, both for the options outlined in the draft Local Plan and for development on specific parcels of land. This is followed by a summary of the key objections to growth and suggestions for alternative approaches, levels of growth and locations for growth. This section also includes a summary of the wide variety of issues raised both in relation to the current situation and in relation to the growth options for Alderholt.

1.2. Consultation

General comments in response to the consultation

Public response

- A number of respondents commented that growth at Alderholt is 'a stupid idea' and one respondent felt that 'to anyone with any sense, this is the most ridiculous idea I have ever heard'. Others thought that the proposals for Alderholt were 'a total nightmare', which would create problems for everyone.
- Some felt that the Council was 'completely clueless as to what people want' arguing that those who had chosen to live in Alderholt had not 'voted' for their community to be changed beyond recognition.
- A number of respondents felt that the opposition to development from residents should inhibit the expansion of Alderholt, arguing that the lack of public support and the concern and outrage of local people may inhibit the deliverability of significant growth.
- The plan was seen by some as being extremely damaging, ill-thought out 'unsustainable' and a waste of money. The views were expressed that: the Council and Government do not listen; the purpose of the options was to enable the Council to 'tick the box of umpteen thousand houses built'; and profits were being put before public opinion. It was also argued that growth would result in higher council tax to pay for the additional roads and services.
- Some respondents felt there was a lack of strategic thinking underpinning the proposals and felt that planners had looked at a map, seen some space and, out of desperation, said 'let's build there' without visiting the area or understanding the day-to-day pressures.
- There were also concerns about the consultation being held during the Covid-19 pandemic, the lack of face-to-face meetings in the village and the usability of the online form.
- It was argued that the consultation was ineligible because residents were not informed in a reasonable way during the pandemic. Others felt that it would be unfair not to extend the consultation, because so many people were unaware of the proposals in the pandemic.

2. Question 1: What level of growth should take place at Alderholt?

Objections to both options and / or for no growth

Alderholt Parish Council

- Neither of the 2 options in the consultation document is sustainable, deliverable or required and we should request that an option “3” be considered where future development during the period of the plan is limited to those houses already planned with any further approved infill within the existing village envelope;
- Reference to attached report produced in response to the East Dorset Local Plan Review – February 2020 - which contains background information supporting this rejection of both options 1 and 2.

Action4Alderholt

- Action4Alderholt objected to both options, which were considered to be unsustainable, unrealistic, undeliverable or unnecessary. They argued that most local services for Alderholt are based outside Dorset and that the village is unusually remote from employment opportunities and post-First School education. The group considered that in transport and climate emergency terms, it is the wrong place to put housing growth.

Ellingham, Harbridge & Ibsley PC

- Ellingham, Harbridge & Ibsley PC considered growth unnecessary because Dorset could reach its overall target without any additional housing in Alderholt.
- The PC felt that neither of the two options would be sustainable or deliverable and was also concerned that the consequential impact on their adjoining Parish with its surrounding rural area would be ‘immense and unacceptable’.

Fordingbridge TC

- Fordingbridge TC felt that there was no justification for any expansion in Alderholt and that the Dorset allocation of new houses could be met in far more suitable locations.

Hampshire County Council (HCC) as Local Highway Authority

- HCC stated that Alderholt is not an accessible location and has very poor transport connections, with no rail station or commercially run bus routes.
- HCC was concerned that even the 300 dwellings (under Option 1) would increase traffic on Hampshire’s road network at Harbridge Drove and B3078. They considered that more information on trip distribution would be needed to determine how even low levels of growth could meet national and local sustainable development and carbon reduction policies.
- To address the impacts of significant growth on the New Forest District Council area (including Fordingbridge), paragraph 18.2.5 of the draft local plan refers to ‘enhanced links to Fordingbridge, nearby towns and employment centres by public transport and cycling’. HCC considered that the scope for improvements for cyclists on the B3078 needed to be properly assessed, along with evidence provided that passenger transport can become commercially viable.
- HCC made the point that the significant expansion of Alderholt would not be supported by key Hampshire policies, including: The Hampshire Vision 2050, which (amongst other things)

identifies the changing climate as the most important driver for change in Hampshire; the emerging Local Transport Plan (LTP4) which supports the Hampshire Vision 2050 and proposes ‘a carbon neutral and resilient transport system designed around people’. Its guiding principles are to significantly reduce dependency on the private car and create a high-quality transport system that puts people first; and Hampshire’s Climate Change Strategy (2020-2025). This seeks a reduction in transport-related carbon emissions to net zero (neutrality) by 2050 and a resilient transport network.

- As Local Highway Authority, HCC objected to any proposal that assumes a level of development adjacent to Alderholt within the New Forest District Council area.
- As (adjacent) Local Highway Authority HCC objected to significant expansion at Alderholt due to the absence of evidence on: the demand and deliverability of a new town centre; the market for employment; and the impacts on the highway network and the adjacent areas in the New Forest.

New Forest District Council (NFDC)

- NFDC stated that Dorset Council should identify the likely impacts on the NFDC area, including Fordingbridge (for both development options) and set out how they would either be avoided or appropriately mitigated (and how such mitigation could be viably delivered). This should include, for example, impacts on the road network (and junctions) and the impacts of extra traffic on air quality and human health.
- Paragraph 18.4.3 states it is likely that strategic growth in this location would require further land within the NFDC area, but NFDC were concerned that no information was given about the purpose for, or the extent of, the land that would be needed. There were also concerns about whether such land would be deliverable, suitable or available.
- For reasons of its location, NFDC had significant concerns about whether significant expansion at Alderholt could deliver a sustainable form of development. NFDC felt that Dorset Council must ensure that any adverse impacts arising from its development strategy on communities, infrastructure and the environment beyond Dorset’s boundaries would be fully addressed and mitigated.

Developers/Landowners/Agents

- One developer argued that a higher level of growth was needed and objected on the basis that neither option represented the level of development, which is necessary and could be realistically delivered at Alderholt.

Public response

- Some respondents were opposed to any development and others objected to both options, which were considered to be unsustainable, unrealistic, undeliverable or unnecessary.
- There were concerns that the growth was only being proposed in order to meet the Government’s housing ‘quota’ for Dorset.
- Many respondents considered growth unnecessary because Dorset could reach its overall target without any additional housing in Alderholt.
- Many respondents felt that the number of houses proposed far exceeds the number of houses Alderholt needs.
- Options 1 and 2 were considered to be an excessive share of Dorset’s total requirement. It was argued that on the basis of past rates, there should be about 12.6% growth, or 150 new homes over 20 years in the village. It was also pointed out that more homes than this were already in the pipeline.

- Some felt that both options were unrealistic and others felt that a fully funded plan to provide infrastructure was needed.
- Many respondents felt that either option would ‘destroy the village’ and turn it into a ‘dormitory wasteland’. Others did not want Alderholt to be turned into a town.
- A few respondents also raised the issue of the Covid-19 pandemic. It was argued that building would not protect the health of local people as Alderholt had had low infection rates, which would be jeopardised if building took place and green spaces were lost.
- Some respondents were concerned that Alderholt had already outgrown the infrastructure and services that currently exist.
- There was concern that both options would be too large for Alderholt and that the village should not be expanded to provide housing that is not needed by the local population.
- There were also concerns about deliverability and fears the proposed development may not be completed due to funding problems or a lack of infrastructure.
- Respondents also pointed to existing planning permissions not being built out and difficulties in providing SANGs on current schemes as reasons why deliverability could be a problem for both proposed growth options.

Different approaches for growth

Developers/Landowners/Agents

- A developer suggested that the strategic approach to the growth at Alderholt should focus on developing areas contiguous to the existing settlement first, to avoid isolated pockets of development.
- Another developer suggested that the Local Plan should set a housing target for Alderholt, including but not limited to Option 1, so that further sites could be identified through the Neighbourhood Plan process, which could provide employment and community facilities as well as additional housing.
- Developers also suggested that Alderholt’s Neighbourhood Plan should identify sites for not less than 500 dwellings for the plan period.

Ellingham, Harbridge and Ibsley PC

- Ellingham, Harbridge and Ibsley PC argued for small-scale infilling to meet local needs.

Public response

- One respondent stated a preference for wind turbines or solar panels, rather than houses, on the proposed development land.
- The approach to growth should be informed by local parish councils, rather than being developer-led.
- One respondent argued that the size of growth at Alderholt should be determined based on evidence of the number of additional households required to support the additional facilities that are needed, such as a GP surgery, enlarged schools, community centre, land and space for employment, high-speed broadband, public open space and public transport etc. It was felt that this evidence should be used to underpin a spatial local plan policy, followed by a masterplan, which would be subject to further public consultation and the input of residents, after the adoption of the local plan. It was also argued that this should be done now, to prevent piecemeal development in the low hundreds taking place every 5- 10 years, without any enhancements to the area or for its people.

- A few respondents argued that there should be no further allocations until the existing permissions had been built out, so that the impact of another 200-300+ people on the village could be assessed.
- There were concerns that uncontrolled growth could ‘destroy the ethos of the village’ and it was felt that what was needed was ‘a little at a time’ to make sure that growth did not affect the social structure of the area.
- A number of respondents felt that the approach to growth should be re-thought after the Covid-19 pandemic, arguing that we need villages and smaller communities surrounded by open spaces and with fresh air. It was considered that small functioning villages should have lower, natural, paced growth and that any plans should be designed to have the flexibility to cope with an uncertain future caused by the pandemic, such as increased van and lorry home deliveries.

A number of different approaches to growth at Alderholt were suggested including:

- less growth than is being proposed.
- proportionate, managed growth to meet a demand.
- appropriate, proportional growth, which reflects the over-arching values from wider policy.
- growth related to the amenities and road capacity currently available.
- housing to meet the needs of the local population.
- organic growth to suit local needs.
- low-cost housing for local residents that maintains village life.
- minor growth that fits with the village aesthetic and suits the limited infrastructure availability.
- small scale housing growth only.
- small-scale growth to retain local rural character.
- small-scale growth, which retains heathlands and wildlife.
- very small-scale expansion, which does not impact greatly on the village.
- infilling within the existing village.
- development only on brownfield sites within the village.
- the site next to the Churchill Arms, which already has planning permission for about 100 new homes, should be the only major development in the village.

Alternative levels of growth

Godshill PC

- Godshill PC stated that growth at Alderholt should be just enough to cover purely local need, which would be met from existing permissions, according to the 2017 housing need survey.

Public response

- A number of respondents quantified how much growth should take place in Alderholt. This ranged between 300 homes to 50 or fewer.
- In terms of percentage growth, between 20 and (less than) 10% was suggested.

The different suggestions are listed below:

- There should be no more than 20% growth over 20 years.
- Growth should be organic and within the low hundreds within the next 15 years.
- There should be small-scale growth of no more than 300 homes over the plan period, which should be sufficient to encourage investment in infrastructure.

- There should be no more than 300 homes, including the 192 already approved (i.e., up to 108 more).
- There should be fewer than 300 dwellings and only small-scale development.
- There should only be permission granted for up to 100 new homes on top of the 192 already granted (i.e., 292 in total).
- Alderholt could cope with approximately 250 additional properties.
- One respondent argued that 247 homes would be a proportionate allocation of the housing need in Dorset, based on population. It was argued that as planning permission has already been granted for at least 137 houses in the village, that this level of local housing need is already largely satisfied.
- About 15 homes per year have been delivered recently, mostly on minor sites. Over the plan period, this level of organic growth would be in the order of 225 homes.
- 225 homes would represent a proportionate allocation based on the population of the village. This figure was based on a report commissioned by Alderholt PC in February 2020, which suggested around 15 dwellings per annum (or 225 over a 15-year period).
- There should be fewer than 200 new homes, all of which should be realistically affordable to allow the children of the village the opportunity to remain should they wish.
- 150 to 200 dwellings would be more appropriate and reflect Alderholt's position in the settlement hierarchy (Tier 3).
- Development should be limited to 170 new homes comprising the 140 that already have permission, together with a further 30 infill dwellings within the village envelope to meet the need for affordable housing.
- An increase in the village's housing stock of 151 would be a sustainable rate of growth. This represents 12.6% growth above the 1,200 homes already in the village, matching the 12.6% growth in population forecast in Dorset between 2021 to 2041.
- 10% growth would be large, but if in keeping would have a small impact on village life.
- Growth should be less than 10%, which would be more than adequate for a small village.
- There should be around 100 – 150 homes provided, including 50 or so affordable homes to meet local needs.
- Alderholt could only cope with 100 new homes maximum, due to the poor road network and lack of infrastructure.
- Would support an increase of around 190 houses, but no more.
- 100 homes could be supported, however Alderholt is not suitable for mass development.
- There should be small-scale growth of no more than 50 houses. Even 50 more homes would increase traffic, water pollution and put pressure on Fordingbridge's doctor's surgery.
- Solely affordable housing and windfalls should be permitted resulting in only tens of new properties being built, reflecting a survey carried out by Alderholt PC indicating less than 10 families require housing in the village.

Different locations for growth

Public response

- A number of respondents felt that there must be better alternatives for growth and some argued that other areas of Dorset (or elsewhere) would be more suitable for development, but often no alternative locations were suggested.

A number of different approaches to the location of growth were suggested, such as:

- Creating a new garden city elsewhere in Dorset or building a new garden town near the Bournemouth / Christchurch / Poole conurbation.
- Creating new villages and towns rather than ruining existing ones (i.e. Alderholt). It was argued that any new town should be developed on 'a blank canvas' rather than on a community of 1,084 householders.
- Locating development at larger existing towns with better facilities and better infrastructure, which do not necessitate cross-County boundary co-operation.
- Locating growth where there are good / sustainable transport links and local employment, for example in locations adjacent to the A338 or A354 and / or at towns with rail links.
- Locating growth on brownfield sites in cities and towns first.
- Spreading housing growth proportionately around the County to match demand (unlike Option 2 which respondents felt disproportionately focused growth at Alderholt).
- Spreading development across nearby communities (Cranborne for example).
- Expanding towns and villages that want expanding and leaving alone those that are opposed to growth.
- Developing elsewhere where there would be fewer objections.

A number of different specific locations were suggested, which are summarised below.

- One respondent argued that a nearby caravan park would be much more suitable for development.
- Poole and Bournemouth were highlighted as alternative locations for growth. It was suggested that the south coast could be revived through town centre regeneration, where budgets should be spent on making these deprived areas vibrant again.
- Other respondents noted that there are larger urban areas, which are more suitable for growth (including Salisbury, Bournemouth, Poole, Ferndown, Wimborne, Upton and the Parley / Longham area), which are only a short distance (less than 15 miles) away from Alderholt.
- Some respondents felt that growth at Dorchester, Crossways, Weymouth and / or Blandford, Gillingham and Shaftesbury would be more sustainable and / or viable and cause less environmental impact.
- Others noted that the road system around Verwood is well developed and better able to cope with increased traffic.
- One respondent suggested that a new village or town should be built in an undeveloped area without local opposition, which would not cause disruption, such land at Horton, between Cranborne and Wimborne.
- Another respondent noted that 90% of Lincolnshire is countryside and argued that a few more houses there would be better than destroying the countryside in Dorset.

3. Support for growth at Alderholt

3.1. General support for growth at Alderholt

Cawdor Construction Developments Ltd (CCDL)

- CCDL raised no objection to a degree of growth at Alderholt to help improve its self-containment, but argued that the Council must be realistic and concede that Alderholt's location means that residents would need to travel further afield to reach higher-order facilities and services.

- CCDL also made the point that large-scale growth at Alderholt is inherently less sustainable than growth in and around Wimborne and Colehill.

Developers/Landowners/Agents

- One developer stated that Alderholt has the potential for significant expansion to provide a sustainable settlement.
- Another developer commented that Alderholt is defined in the currently adopted local plan as a rural service centre, making it a sustainable settlement capable of accommodating housing growth. It was also noted that the draft Dorset Local Plan identifies Alderholt as a larger more sustainable village (in Tier 3 of the settlement hierarchy).
- A developer felt that Alderholt would be an appropriate place to look to for strategic level growth, as the village could be transformed into a small town supported by the facilities and services at nearby Verwood (4.3 km away), Fordingbridge (3.6 km) and Ringwood.
- A developer welcomed the recognition in the Local Plan that Alderholt is relatively unconstrained and represents an opportunity for future development. The allocation of land at Alderholt for housing was supported in the light of the absence of constraints.
- Developers argued that because the land surrounding Alderholt is not sensitive in environmental or landscape terms, it should be prioritised for development over Green Belt release. However, developers also argued that growth at Alderholt and Green Belt release would both be needed to fully meet the assessed housing need in Dorset from the Government's standard methodology.
- Support was received from a number of developers promoting both Option 1 and Option 2, as well as a number of specific sites, which formed all or part of the option sites identified in the draft Local Plan.
- One developer supported the allocation of a significant quantum of land to form a strategic allocation at Alderholt for up to 1,000 dwellings (Option 2), but felt that the infrastructure proposed to go with it was not realistic.

Public response

- Some respondents accepted that some development at Alderholt is needed and others felt that some additional housing is both necessary and desirable.
- One respondent was in agreement with the allocation of land at Alderholt for a new town and another asked why can't a green village, maybe even a town, be created around the existing village of Alderholt?

3.2. Support for Option 1 Small-scale expansion on land north of Ringwood Road

Support for Option 1

Dorset Wildlife Trust (DWT)

- DWT expressed a preference for Option 1, rather than Option 2, but only if it is possible to identify an area of SANG that will avoid adverse impacts on heathland, avoid impacts on the River Avon SAC, avoid / mitigate impacts on priority habitats and protected species and provide net biodiversity gain.

RAW Planning Ltd on behalf of Gascoyne Estates

- Option 1 was supported by Gascoyne Estates, who also objected to the scale of development under Option 2.

RSPB

- In terms of environmental risk, RSPB would prefer adoption of Policy ALD1 in the plan, as they consider this to be ‘the least-worst option for the natural environment’.

Wyatt Homes

- Option 1 was considered the most suitable approach by Wyatt Homes because it was considered that a higher level of growth (i.e., Option 2) could not be delivered with certainty. It was also argued that Option 2 would not contribute to meeting existing and shorter-term housing needs.

Public response

- A number of comments were made in support of Option 1, including from local residents.
- Some felt that this would be a manageable and viable expansion and that the current infrastructure and roads could just about cope with that level of growth. In some cases, the proposed improvements to the recreational and sports facilities were welcomed.
- In many cases support was only given on the basis that Option 1 was the ‘maximum that should be considered.’ It was felt that 300 homes were ‘enough for the village’, or ‘tolerable’ for a variety of reasons including: the location of the village; the lack of services; and inadequate infrastructure, including narrow roads in the area.
- It was also argued that under Option 1, any development should be restricted to inside the triangle formed by Station, Hillbury and Ringwood Roads.
- Some respondents considered Option 1 to be ‘a significant increase’, but felt under this option Alderholt would remain a village and retain its character without the environment being damaged.
- Some support for Option 1 was conditional on the delivery of affordable housing and infrastructure.
- A few respondents felt that Alderholt would be suitable for development, as it has good access to A31 and employment in Bournemouth, and is surrounded by poor quality land.
- Some accepted that the village needed to accommodate a certain level of new housing, and argued that the proposed 300 new homes along with those already approved and yet to be built, would be sufficient development.
- Accept that we have to have some building.

3.3. Support for Option 2: Significant Expansion of Alderholt

Support for Option 2

Developers/Landowners/Agents

- Support for Option 2 came mainly from developers who felt that to not undertake large-scale growth would be a ‘missed opportunity’, which would fail to take advantage of the relatively unconstrained nature of Alderholt.
- They suggested that Option 2 would create an enlarged, sustainable settlement, which could accommodate some of the overspill from neighbouring authorities whilst also contributing towards the housing requirement for South Eastern Dorset.

- Developers also argued that Option 2 would address some of the problems in the village, such as the lack of facilities, poor roads and the need to out-commute for schools and shops.

Highwood Homes

- Highwood Homes argued that Option 2 would deliver housing and supporting infrastructure resulting in an enlarged, sustainable settlement in a location that is optimum for dealing with overspill from adjacent neighbouring authorities whilst also contributing towards the housing requirement for the South Eastern Dorset functional area in a sustainable way.
- It was also noted that, given NPPF requirements, sustainable growth at Alderholt could be delivered without the need to amend existing Green Belt boundaries.
- It was felt that ahead of the next stage of Local Plan consultation, further evidence gathering should be undertaken sufficient to justify the drafting of strategic policies (and ideally site allocation policies) that would facilitate the delivery of ‘significant expansion’ of Alderholt and supporting infrastructure.

Tanner and Tilley on behalf of Jim Mclwain

- The expansion envisioned in Option 2 was supported.
- It was felt that additional houses and facilities would enable the village to become more sustainable and offer a greater degree of services.
- It was stated that the pandemic had impacted upon the notion of sustainability and that more home-working, less commuting, and the growth in online retailing had increased the inherent sustainability of Alderholt.
- It was argued that both options for expansion should have to meet the same criteria that Alderholt Nursery has in terms of pedestrian access to the centre of the village.

Public response

- There was some limited support for Option 2 from the public.
- A few felt that the proposed location was a good site, not under pressure from surrounding infrastructure, easily accessible and a desirable area. Others only supported Option 2 subject to the provision of supporting infrastructure.

4. Support for sites within Options 1 & 2

Support for development south and west of Alderholt (LA/ALDE/007)

Intelligent Land on behalf of Dudsbury Homes

- One developer (Dudsbury Homes) stated that at least 120 hectares of land mainly to the south and west of Alderholt has the potential to transform the village into an exemplar settlement of at least 1,700 homes. It was argued that the provision of homes, jobs and supporting infrastructure would enable Alderholt to become self-sustaining by meeting its needs locally.
- It was pointed out that Alderholt is the least constrained area in the former East Dorset District being both outside the South East Dorset Green Belt and not within an AONB. The developer viewed Alderholt as both a natural and logical opportunity for growth, especially in view of significant Green Belt releases already committed around Wimborne and in the light of concerns about further impacts of growth on the A31 trunk road.
- It was pointed out that the former East Dorset District Council’s ‘Issues and Options’ consultation document proposed a minimum of 1,000 homes at Alderholt, with a view to transforming the village into a self-sustaining settlement.

- The developer prepared (and updated) a masterplan based on ‘garden village principles’ so that a development of homes, workplaces, a public square and significant areas of green open spaces could be knitted into its countryside setting and enrich the biodiversity of the local area. The approach was based on neighbourhoods that encouraged walking and cycling; an active and healthy lifestyle; and services and facilities that minimised travel to other locations. The document ‘A new Vision for Alderholt, creating the 21st Century Garden Village’ was appended to the developer’s representation.
- The developer expressed support for Option 2 in recognition of: the heavily constrained nature of South Eastern Dorset and New Forest District; the limited opportunities available to Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council and New Forest District Council to meet their high housing needs and growth requirements; the implications cramming development into existing settlements has for people’s quality of life; the implications of the Covid-19 pandemic; the unsustainable nature of continued piecemeal development on the outskirts of settlements; and the need for suitable non-Green Belt sites to be considered ahead of any Green Belt release.
- The developer’s view was that Alderholt is the only option in the South Eastern Dorset Functional Area to offer a sustainable community without having to start from the beginning. This could contribute both to the needs of the functional area and to the needs of existing and future residents of Alderholt. It was argued that delivery could be undertaken ‘at pace’ (i.e., within the first five years of the plan).
- The developer considered that concerns about the accessibility of Alderholt as a location for growth were ‘largely unfounded’, given the proximity of: Fordingbridge less than 2 miles away; Sandheath which offers various employment opportunities; and the higher order settlements of Verwood and Ringwood, only 5 and 6 miles away respectively.
- It was argued that growth would facilitate improvements to the limited bus service to and from Alderholt noting that a new ‘bus hub’ on the A338 is planned as part of the growth of Fordingbridge in the draft Local Plan.
- The developer supported the proposed railway on the former railway line between Alderholt and Fordingbridge.
- It was also argued that highway capacity ‘is more than adequate with low levels of traffic operating in and around Alderholt’, noting that growth forecasts suggest the existing network could support around 2,000 additional homes without the need for significant transport improvements.
- The developer argued that proposed growth would reduce the need to travel with the provision of a range of services and facilities including: a village square with cafes, shops and pub; a new community hall; a new two-form entry school; a doctor’s surgery and supporting health facilities; an enterprise hub providing workspace and business support functions; employment land; the significant expansion of the recreation ground; significant areas of new open spaces with walking and cycling links; biodiversity improvements by enriching and creating new habitats; a bespoke waste water treatment plant that strips out phosphates and nitrates to acceptable levels; and renewable energy solutions (e.g. a solar farm).
- It was also stated that opportunities for growth beyond 1,700 homes (on other landholdings) are ‘actively under consideration’.
- The developer argued that in order to accord with national planning policy, development at Alderholt should come before any Green Belt release elsewhere, as Dorset Council needs to consider all reasonable options before concluding that exceptional circumstances exist to justify changes to Green Belt boundaries.

- The developer recognised that even with significant expansion at Alderholt, there is likely to be the need for some Green Belt release elsewhere in Dorset.

Support for development at Cromwell Cottage (LA/ALDE/003)

Cromwell Cottage owners

- Cromwell Cottage was put forward by the owner as a suitable site as part of the 'call for sites' in 2016 and was subsequently featured in East Dorset District Council's draft planning policy for Alderholt.
- The more recent SHLAA agrees this area is suitable, subject to a masterplan.
- It was pointed out that East Dorset District Council's main witness at the planning appeal for 'the Gladman site' directly opposite identified that land in the vicinity, including Cromwell Cottage, would represent the next logical step for development at Alderholt.
- It was argued that development of Cromwell Cottage would result in a compact layout, taking advantage of the existing infrastructure including shops etc. and that it would have a minimal wider visual impact.

Support for development at Cross Farm (LA/ALDE/004)

Highwood Group

- Highwood Group supported the inclusion of Land at Cross Farm, which lies to the northeast of Alderholt, in the draft Local Plan.
- The developer's view was that this area could be brought forward either through an amended Option 1 or as part of Option 2, although Option 2 was considered preferable.
- It was argued that the site could be delivered without having to release Green Belt land elsewhere and because of the infrastructure benefits that would arise.
- The promoters and developers of the site stated that they were keen to explore opportunities to provide infrastructure, especially the delivery of pedestrian and cycle connections to the proposed Trailway, which runs along the northern boundary of the site, as well as improvements to local travel infrastructure.
- The developer argued that Cross Farm would be better located than Option 1, which lies to the south of the village. It was argued that Cross Farm would be well integrated with the existing village, accessible to facilities (such as the Co-op and a primary school) and to the existing bus route to higher order facilities in Fordingbridge.
- It was also argued that Cross Farm is further from the Dorset Heathlands SPA sites to the south-west of Alderholt, than Option 1.
- It was also argued that Cross Farm would offer scope for road improvements to the B3078 around Pressey's Corner.
- There is an opportunity to provide onsite public open space alongside housing, which together with the trailway and links to the rights of way network could provide for outdoor recreation and exercise.
- Developers made the point that land at Cross Farm is visually contained in the wider landscape due to the presence of woodland (to the west), the tree-covered railway embankment to the north and existing housing to the south and east.

Support for development at Stroud Firs (LA/ALDE/o16)

RAW Planning Ltd on behalf of Gascoyne Estates

- Gascoyne Estates noted that land at Stroud Firs was submitted to the SHLAA and was included as part of the proposed significant expansion of Alderholt under Option 2. The estate considers that a 1.4 hectare site within Stroud Firs is suitable for the development of c. 60 dwellings in a unique woodland setting, which would be accessible to all and would be screened from view to retain the existing character and appearance of the village.
- Gascoyne Estates has prepared the 'Land at Stroud Firs, Alderholt Development Framework Document', which shows how this area could deliver a suitable and sustainable development, alongside provision of a SANG. It also sets out the benefits related to drainage, biodiversity and the potential to assist with the provision of a Trailway between Alderholt and Fordingbridge (draft Policy ALD2: Trailway at Alderholt).
- Gascoyne Estates have undertaken a number of studies of the site looking at: trees, drainage, highways, ecology and heritage, which have established that 1.4 hectares within the wider site is suitable for development.
- They argue that development here would have a central location within the settlement, maintain the character of the village, offer a uniquely wooded and tranquil location for new housing, enable biodiversity enhancements and provide a SANG, and improve drainage and reduce flood risk elsewhere.
- They consider that the baseline evidence demonstrates that land at Stroud Firs can be allocated as part of the Local Plan.

Support for development at Pugs Field (LA/ALDE/o11) and Crossroads (LA/ALDE/o10)

NJ & JA Thorne

- The promoters of these sites pointed out that Pugs Field (Daggons Road) and Crossroads (adjacent to Blackwater Grove) were included within the East Dorset Local Plan Review: Options consultation document.
- The developers considered that these areas should be included within the settlement boundary as either site would assist Dorset Council in meeting its housing allocation, where there is currently a significant shortfall across the region.
- It was stated that either site could be developed in isolation and neither is dependent on the other or on any additional or third party land to be brought forward.
- Both (or either) site could be developed at an early stage to bring forward new and affordable homes as soon as planning permission is granted.
- It was stated that some of the land at Crossroads could be considered for self-build housing.
- Option 2 to significantly expand Alderholt was supported and if this progresses, it was stated that these sites should comprise the first stage of any development, as they are located close to the village centre. The land at Crossroads could be developed in phases: area 1 from the outset and area 2 at a later date, if the solar farm that current occupies area 2 becomes redundant.
- The developer felt that if large-scale development proceeds, there should be at least one (or two) electric vehicle charging points per residential or commercial property. The possibility of using local electricity produced by the adjacent solar farm should be explored. It was argued that solar PV and thermal systems should be a requirement of any new housing at Alderholt with some small-scale carbon neutral developments, designed to be in keeping with the wider area.

- It was pointed out that both sites adjoin existing residential properties within the village envelope. Development would not create an isolated parcel of housing development away from the existing village boundary, allowing the village to expand sympathetically without having a detrimental effect on the surrounding area.
- It was also stated that the development of these sites would strengthen the village by boosting the availability of housing sites.
- Additional housing would also boost the number of people using the village shops, other local amenities and the village school, which would make it more sustainable.
- There are already public services and local utilities infrastructure close by in the public highway. Development of these sites could be connected into these with minimum disruption and cost. The developer suggested that an early approach should be made to utility providers to ensure due consideration is given to the rollout of any local fibre network. Section 106 money from the developers should be used to fund the rollout of super-fast broadband so it is available to all residents, not just the new properties in order to enable working from home and therefore reducing people's carbon footprint.
- It was stated that both sites comprise low quality agricultural land, so development would not result in fertile or productive land being taken out of production.
- Both sites are predominately more than 400 metres from any SSSI, so the developer argued that the impact should be minimal. Any land within 400 metres could be managed sensitively either through sensitive planting or the management of paths and trails to keep users away from more sensitive areas.
- Up to 10 acres of woodland adjacent to the sites could be brought forward as SANG land, if required to reduce the pressures on the heath, and other sensitive areas. SANG management plans should be drafted detailing measures, to mitigate pressure on sensitive areas, such as fencing, planting and signage and to promote their use.
- It was also pointed out that both sites adjoin the public highway and it was claimed that their development would not significantly increase local traffic, nor pose a hazard to highway users.

Support for the development of land north of Alderholt Chapel, Hillbury Road (LA/ALDE/o13)

Chapman Lilly on behalf of CR Acquisitions

- A developer pointed out that the site is flat with few constraints and well connected to the village centre by existing footpaths.
- It is adjacent to existing residential development and from a townscape perspective, represents the next logical stage in the evolution of Alderholt.
- The developer felt that the site could deliver about 50 units, with lower density development around the outer edge and medium density in the centre.
- The site has a self-contained nature and is not reliant upon additional land parcels to be delivered.
- There are opportunities for connections through to adjacent land parcels, so their delivery would not be prejudiced.
- The SHLAA says that the site is suitable for development, subject to a policy change through a local plan allocation. The developer confirmed that the site is both deliverable and developable and presents an opportunity for sustainable development as an allocation in the emerging plan.

Support for the development of land at Blackwater Grove (LA/ALDE/009)

Ken Parke on behalf of Commercial Freeholds Limited

- The developer noted that this site is located outside Alderholt's defined settlement boundary on the western edge of the village, but argued that as adjoining residential development wraps around its north, east and western edges, housing here would not project out into the countryside.
- It was also pointed out that this site is outside the Green Belt, is 'white land' and is not subject to any landscape or other protected designations.
- It was argued that the site is not prominent in the wider landscape and its development would not have a noticeable impact upon the street scene or character of the area.
- The 3.7 hectare site is close to existing services and facilities within the settlement and the developer felt that it is best suited for medium density family housing. It could provide 70 to 100 houses with a proportion of affordable housing (subject to viability) at between 19 and 27 dwellings per hectare.
- There are no issues with access into the site as vehicular access is from Blackwater Close and a separate pedestrian entrance is on Ringwood Road.
- The site is disused and has been left vacant in anticipation of development.
- The substantial trees at the south-western corner of the site would be retained and there is sufficient space to accommodate additional buffers and soft boundary treatments.
- The developer stated that there are no significant physical constraints to the site, it is not located within an area of flood risk and there is no evidence of surface water drainage issues on or adjacent to the site.
- It was pointed out that the site was identified as an 'area of search' by the former East Dorset District Council in their 2018 Options Consultation and has been promoted at every stage of local plan preparation as an available and deliverable land parcel.
- It was stated that the site could be brought forward in isolation, as part of a smaller-scale development at Alderholt, or as part of more significant growth. Any development could be phased if appropriate.
- Areas within the site would be given over to public open space, but the developer recognised that engagement with neighbouring landowners would be required in order to deliver a SANG.

Support for the development of land at Infield House Daggons Road (LA/ALDE/006)

Greenslade Taylor Young on behalf of Macra Ltd

- The landowner and our client would be happy to release the site 'Land South of Daggons Road, Alderholt, Nr. Fordingbridge, Dorset SP6 3DL', to help meet development needs. The land is suitable, available, and deliverable.
- The site has good connections to the highway and is well-related to the village.

4.1. Omission sites

Support for an 'omission site' - Alderholt Nursery (LA/ALDE/002)

Tanner and Tilley on behalf of Jim McIlwain

- It was noted that Option 1 requires some moderate allocations to provide 300 new homes. It was felt that this should include Alderholt Nursery, on the northern side of Ringwood Road, as it could deliver at least 21 homes (net) in the short term, is vacant and ready to be developed.
- Although the site was not included in the Local Plan consultation document, it was promoted in previous Local Plan representations and previous calls for sites.
- An outline planning application is now being considered and the only outstanding matters to be resolved relate to the provision of SANGs and the (legal) securing of an all-weather footpath to access the village centre.
- It was argued that the Council could not justify allocating any of the option sites without allocating the land at Alderholt Nursery. It was also argued that the Council should not prevent this site from obtaining planning permission on the basis of the lack of a footpath, which was being discussed with the Parish Council.
- It was argued that the site is well located in terms of access and travel with access to key services and facilities in the village. There is easy accessibility from the site to the village centre and a suitable vehicular access has been modelled by highways consultants.
- The site is highly self-contained. The existing hedging could be retained or removed and replaced / enhanced with other boundary treatments.
- There is a full ecological appraisal, and the Council's ecologist has raised no concerns.
- Trees on the site have been assessed and evaluated and it was considered that they would not inhibit development.
- The site does not contain and is not near any listed buildings.
- The site is within Flood Zone 1 and considered to be at low risk of flooding.

5. Objections to growth at Alderholt

Objections to the principle of growth at Alderholt and to the options outlined in the draft Local Plan were many and varied and are summarised below.

5.1. Objections to growth at Alderholt

Objections to past development and existing allocations / permissions

Amphibian and Reptile Conservation

- Amphibian and Reptile Conservation stated that Alderholt has become a target for inappropriate development and argued that Section 18.1 of the Plan should identify which policies will be implemented to redress this.

East Dorset Environment Partnership (EDEP)

- EDEP stated that the section on Alderholt should quantify concerns about the impacts of approved growth in settlements in New Forest District (including Fordingbridge).

Public response

- Some respondents felt that Alderholt had suffered from overdevelopment in the 1970s, 1980s and 2000s and felt that the current mixed developments did not harmonise.
- It was noted that infilling adds housing without the extra infrastructure that is needed.
- It was also stated that recent small-scale house building in big gardens and on unwanted plots had increased traffic.
- The permissions granted for 192 houses were considered by some to be ‘way more than is sustainable’ as they would place a strain on existing facilities and test roads and transport links ‘to the limit’.
- It was stated that all the 192 houses with permission are over 1.5 km from the shop, so people would not walk or cycle there.
- It was considered unlikely that infrastructure could be expanded to accommodate these consents and that their construction would be ‘noisy, dusty and damaging to the existing roads and environment’.
- There was also concern that the location of the consent on Ringwood Road opposite the well-established riding stables was unsuitable.

5.2. ‘Third Option’: no development above existing permissions

‘Third Option’: no development above existing permissions

Action4Alderholt

- Action4Alderholt felt that there should be a ‘third option’, which is no further expansion above the homes already with planning permission in the village, together with limited infilling within the existing village envelope. It was noted that this was the approach agreed in the currently adopted Local Plan covering the former East Dorset area.
- Action4Alderholt stated that ‘Option 3’ would limit growth to no more than 30%.

Alderholt PC

- Alderholt PC felt that there should be a ‘third option’, which is no further expansion above the homes already with planning permission in the village, together with limited infilling within the existing village envelope. It was noted that this was the approach agreed in the currently adopted Local Plan covering the former East Dorset area.
- Alderholt PC argued that this (together with limited infilling) would satisfy local demand, as borne out by the 2017 village survey.
- Alderholt PC also argued that the development of existing consents with limited infilling would reflect the village’s status as a ‘tier 3’ settlement in the draft Local Plan.

Ellingham, Harbridge & Ibsley PC

- Ellingham, Harbridge & Ibsley PC felt that there should be a ‘third option’, which is no further expansion above the homes already with planning permission in the village, together with limited infilling within the existing village envelope. It was noted that this was the approach agreed in the currently adopted Local Plan covering the former East Dorset area.
- Ellingham, Harbridge and Ibsley PC argued that this (together with limited infilling) would satisfy local demand, as borne out by the 2017 village survey.

Public response

- Some respondents felt that there should be a 'third option', which is no further expansion above the homes already with planning permission in the village, together with limited infilling within the existing village envelope. It was noted that this was the approach agreed in the currently adopted Local Plan covering the former East Dorset area.
- Other respondents felt that the 'third option' should also allow small (1 to 10 dwelling) rural exception sites for affordable housing on the edge of the village.
- Some argued that there should be no further development until the sites that already had planning permission had been developed. Most respondents argued that there was 'planning' for 192 extra homes (considered to be 15% to 18% growth for the village).
- Others provided different figures, such as 150 dwellings, 154+ dwellings, or 200+ homes.
- Respondents noted that there were existing consents for housing on land by the Churchill Arms (also known as the Surplus Stores site) and by the recreation ground.
- It was argued that this increase on current levels of housing would 'be enough' and / or a 'fair share' of the overall growth proposed in the Dorset Local Plan.
- Some respondents argued that building out existing permissions (together with limited infilling) would satisfy local demand, as borne out by the 2017 village survey.
- Some respondents felt that the existing consents would be enough to meet local demand and that any more would spoil village life. However, there were also concerns that even this level of growth would add to congestion on village roads.
- Others felt that village life would be shattered with any growth above existing permissions or that it would have an unavoidable negative impact on the village, residents and surrounding areas.

Taking account of existing permissions

Public response

- Some respondents did not think that development should be limited to existing permissions, but felt that they should be taken into account when determining how many houses should be built at Alderholt. Others argued that any existing permissions should form part of any new allocation for the village.
- Some respondents argued that taking account of the existing consents for 192 new homes meant that in reality, the choice is not between 300 (Option 1) or 3,000 (Option 2) new homes, but between 526 or 3,226 new homes.
- One respondent worried that the '100 homes already approved' could, with more speculative development, become '1,000 homes, all with no infrastructure'.

Growth at Tier 3 settlements / Alderholt

RAW Planning Ltd on behalf of Gascoyne Estates

- Gascoyne Estates noted that development at Tier 3 villages is generally limited to windfall and infilling within settlement boundaries and questioned why this principle of limited growth was being dismissed at Alderholt, in favour of major transformatory growth.

6. Objections to Option 1 Small-scale expansion on land north of Ringwood Road

A wide range of issues were raised specifically relating to the option 1 small-scale expansion on land north of Ringwood Road. Please note that many more general issues that would apply to both options 1 & 2 have been summarised within the Option 2 section further on within the report.

6.1. Option 1: Development Strategy

Objections to Option 1

Action4Alderholt

- Action4Alderholt argued that Option 1 plus existing approvals would see the village grow by 50% (or around 1,500 extra people). They also argued that Option 1 would make Alderholt the largest commuter village in the UK.
- Option 1 would result in Alderholt taking the largest percentage expansion in Dorset.
- Action4Alderholt were concerned that Option 1 (together with existing consents) came with little additional infrastructure and would not be sustainable.
- Action4Alderholt felt that Option 1 needed to be mitigated by: phasing so employment and infrastructure are provided first; improvements to the B3078 between Alderholt and Fordingbridge; a 20mph limit; additional pavements within parts of the village such as Ringwood Road; and further road safety measures on all commuter routes around the village.

Alderholt PC

- Alderholt PC were concerned that the 300 houses envisaged under Option 1, plus the existing 192 permissions (and further infilling) would result in around 500 new homes in the village, which was considered to be too much.
- Option 1 would be disproportionate, given that Lytchett Matravers will only have 200 more houses and the major town of Weymouth would only have 550 more.
- Alderholt PC were concerned that Option 1 (together with existing consents) came with little additional infrastructure and would not be sustainable.

Amphibian and Reptile Conservation

- Amphibian and Reptile Conservation queried why 300 homes were being proposed when Appendix 2 of the Plan sets out a neighbourhood plan housing requirement of 192 homes up to 2038.

Developers/Landowners/Agents

- A developer suggested that Option 1 should be deleted in favour of alternative sites, as this limited number of dwellings would not help to ensure that Alderholt becomes a sustainable settlement. It was argued that it would be unlikely to attract new businesses and occupants would be likely to commute for employment, resulting in them not using local facilities.
- It was also suggested that Option 1 underplays the ability of Alderholt to support new development having regard to the lack of significant constraints and its location outside the Green Belt. It was felt that the village could have an important role in meeting longer term growth needs as the pressure on the Green Belt increases.

- Another developer suggested that land north of Alderholt Chapel, Hillbury Road, with capacity for about 50 new homes, should be included within Option 1, as it is in a single ownership and could be delivered within 5 years. The developer considered that the site could be deliverable as part of Option 1, as well as forming a component part of Option 2.

Ellingham, Harbridge and Ibsley PC

- Ellingham, Harbridge and Ibsley PC were concerned that the 300 houses envisaged under Option 1, plus the existing 192 permissions (and further infilling) would result in around 500 new homes in the village, which was considered to be too much.

RAW Planning Ltd on behalf of Gascoyne Estates

- Gascoyne Estates noted that housing growth of 300 homes equated to an increase of the housing stock by 22%, which did not equate to 'small scale growth'. They argued that this level of provision without any additional services or facilities would exacerbate the existing dormitory function of the village.

Public response

- Many respondents were concerned that the 300 houses envisaged under Option 1, plus the existing 192 permissions (and further infilling) would result in around 500 new homes in the village, which was considered to be too much.
- It was felt that this level of development was not needed to meet the Council's targets.
- Some respondents questioned whether 300 houses under Option 1 were necessary. This was felt to be disproportionate and more than required to meet 'organic' levels of growth.
- There were concerns that 300 new homes plus existing consents would take place without any improvements to the village's roads or other forms of transport and would generate 'over 650 new commuters (40% increase), with nearly 400 of them travelling over 20km to work'. It was felt that this would go against the principles in the plan to minimise the impact of climate change, to reduce distances travelled and to minimise energy use.
- Others argued that this level of growth would be against the Government's ambitions for carbon neutrality.
- One respondent argued that Option 1 proposed 300 houses in a conspicuous location as you approach the village at the furthest point from existing infrastructure. This appeared to have been selected on the basis of only a desk-based assessment, as its location was considered to be 'spatially wrong and incompatible in isolation'. This respondent felt that Option 1 would deliver no benefits for the area and that it should be discounted.
- Respondents raised concerns about the scale of Option 1, irrespective of existing planning permissions. It was argued that 300 homes would be too many and would begin to erode the character of Alderholt as a village.
- Others were concerned about the inadequacy of the roads and the strain 300 more homes would put on limited local services and facilities.
- A few felt that Option 1 should only be implemented if the proposed 'third option' was not available.

Objections to the location and design of Option 1

Action4Alderholt

- Action4Alderholt was concerned that Option 1 would make the shape of the village more elongated making it hard to locate future amenities / community activities.

Developers/Landowners/Agents

- A developer pointed out that Option 1 could not be delivered without reliance on a SANG extending onto other land outside the Ringwood Road / Hillbury Road area.

RAW Planning Ltd on behalf of Gascoyne Estates

- Gascoyne Estates argued that the proposal would erode the open countryside to the south of the village. They also noted that the SANG would be located at the southernmost point of the village and not within easy walking distance for all residents.

Public response

- Concerns were raised about the specific location of Option 1 to the south-east of the village. It was felt that development here would result in a greater reliance on car use to access amenities (local shop, school, surgery, pub, village hall or church) as it is too far from these facilities for walking.
- One respondent argued that any new housing under Option 1 must be on land within walking distance of the existing facilities in order to contribute to their viability. Another suggestion was for a shop to be incorporated into the development to reduce car journeys within the village.
- There was a concern that Option 1 would not integrate new residents into the community, but would create a separate ‘annexe-type’ development with the risk of creating an ‘us and them’ situation.
- With the difficult employment conditions in Alderholt there was a concern that the extra 300 homes would put additional strain on the community, potentially giving rise to issues such as an increased need for food banks, amongst other impacts on health and wellbeing.

Alternative locations suggested for Option 1

Public response

- A few respondents suggested different locations for growth, as an alternative to Option 1. It was suggested that development should be near the pub and shop in the Charing Cross area. More specifically it was suggested that a section of wasteland behind the Churchill Arms could be built on.
- It was also suggested by some respondents that the SANG for Option 1 should be wholly within the Ringwood Road and Hillbury Road triangle and should not extend beyond that.

6.2. Option 1: The Environment and Climate Change

Option 1: Climate change

Alderholt PC

- Both options 1 & 2 contravene Dorset’s own climate control and toxic emissions regulations.

Public response

- Many people argued that both options would be detrimental to the climate and ecological emergency, both nationally and in Dorset.

Option 1: Loss of countryside

Public response

- There were concerns about Option 1, which it was argued would ‘decimate green fields and the environment’.

Option 1: Wildlife sites and species

Amphibian and Reptile Conservation

- Amphibian and Reptile Conservation specifically objected to Option 1 on the basis that most of the allocation is ‘higher potential ecological network’ and because the Hawthorn Nursey site supports bats and reptiles. Their view was that Option 1 would not comply with biodiversity sustainability assessment objectives and so should be removed from the plan. If retained, they argued that Policy ALD1 should: seek the retention of hedgerows which form ecological corridors; require new native and appropriate tree / hedgerow planting, which should link to the existing habitat network; and should also seek to preserve the role of the landscape.

East Dorset Environment Partnership (EDEP)

- EDEP noted that the land identified as ALD1 in the LUC landscape and heritage assessment supports an exceptional reptile population as well as foraging and commuting corridors for 8 species of bat. EDEP noted that both groups of protected species depend on suitable habitat at a landscape scale. They also argued that any additional disruption to bat foraging and commuting habitat and breeding habitat for Grass Snake should be avoided.

Alderholt Parish Council

- The land north of Station Road houses several protected species and should not be made available for development;
- The area identified as ALD1 includes the Bonfire Hill SSSI and is adjacent to land that in a recent survey for PA 3/21/0046 has shown foraging and commuting corridors for 8 species of bat and supports an exceptional reptile population.

Public response

- It was argued that there needs to be fuller consideration of the impacts on animal habitats, including badger setts and bat colonies and assurances should be provided that wildlife habitats would be protected.
- It was also argued that Option 1 would ‘decimate wildlife’.

Option 1: SANG provision

Natural England

- In Section 18.4, Natural England objected to the text relating to Option 1, due to a lack of information. They sought more detail on the minimum size of the SANG required and stated that this should be shown on the Policies Map.
- In relation to draft Policy ALD1: Small-scale expansion on land north of Ringwood Road (Option 1), Natural England stated that criterion II should be expanded to include a requirement to provide and manage in perpetuity a SANG of a minimum size to avoid the adverse effects from the new homes on European sites. They made the point that the location of the SANG should be described in the policy and shown on the Policies Map.

Dorset Wildlife Trust (DWT)

- DWT were concerned that draft Policy ALD1 omits the need for a SANG and the avoidance of impacts on the River Avon SAC. They considered it to be essential to undertake ecological surveys / assessments to inform decisions on the viability of proposals and felt that draft Policy ALD1 would also need to reference the need to retain and protect any key features identified by ecological surveys including hedgerows and trees.

Amphibian and Reptile Conservation

- It was also argued that Policy ALD1 should refer to the requirement for a SANG.

East Dorset Environment Partnership (EDEP)

- EDEP argued that the LUC guidance for the site should be included in the policy. The policy should require the provision of a SANG, designed to the specifications set out in paragraph 18.4.10., as an absolute minimum.

Public response

- Respondents pointed to the need for extensive areas of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspaces (SANGs) to mitigate against adverse recreational impacts on the internationally important and protected Dorset and New Forest heathlands.

Option 1: Biodiversity Net Gain

Natural England

- Opportunities for biodiversity enhancement on the site should be considered at the earliest stage and used to inform the structure of the development in order to deliver the minimum 10% net gain required.'

Option 1: Flooding

Public response

- A number of respondents stated that land earmarked for Option 1 often floods.
- In particular, attention was drawn to the Ringwood Road / Hillbury Road junction, which was flooded since the latter part of 2020 into 2021. It was noted that Ringwood Road near the Option 1 site floods several times a year and could be impassable for '2-4 weeks at a time'. There was concern that these existing flooding problems had not been rectified.

6.3. Option 1: Housing

Option 1: Housing Need

Public response

- Others argued that Dorset Council's housing target could be met elsewhere in the County without losing the village of Alderholt, although a few thought that Option 1 (only) might be needed.

Option 1: Affordable housing

Public response

- Given the problems with delivery, some respondents felt that early priority should be given to the provision of social and affordable housing as part of Option 1.
- The point was also made that small, well-built affordable homes to meet the needs of the village would require less land than is proposed under Option 1.
- A few respondents expressed support for small (1 to 10 dwelling) rural exception sites for affordable housing.

6.4. Option 1: Economy

Option 1 Employment land & Jobs

Public response

- There were concerns there was no indication of how many jobs could be created on the proposed 0.25 hectares of employment land under Option 1.
- Some respondents felt that the small amount of employment land in Option 1 would do little to mitigate the need for many working people in the village to commute.
- Others felt that early priority should be given to employment under Option 1.
- Others just supported the creation of ‘a small number of permanent jobs’.

6.5. Option 1: Community Infrastructure

Option 1: Lack of infrastructure

Public response

- Some respondents objected to Option 1 on the basis of a lack of infrastructure, such as poor roads, a lack of public transport, few facilities and little employment.
- Others felt that more improvements to facilities and infrastructure were needed to make Option 1 viable and that the proposed improvements to the recreation spaces in the village were not enough.
- Others objected to Option 1 due to the lack of infrastructure, noting that there are no plans to improve infrastructure with this option.

Option 1: Improvements sought to utilities

Wessex Water

- In relation to Option 1, Wessex Water noted that the foul sewer network in Alderholt drains to a pumping station on the Sandleheath Road, where flows are pumped to a single 200mm diameter sewer to Fordingbridge sewage treatment works. Their view was that the addition of 300 dwellings would require moderate improvements to this network.

Option 1: Sport and recreation

Sport England

- We are concerned about the impact of housing Option 1 adjacent to the recreation ground off Ringwood Road. There is a real possibility of ball strike from the cricket square. We draw your attention to the East Meon High Court case attached.

Public response

- There were also concerns that Option 1 would significantly diminish the rurality of the adjacent recreation ground. Some respondents felt that the idea of building houses facing the recreation ground would be ludicrous, as people further away complain about the noise. Concern was also expressed about having houses directly overlooking a park with young children playing in it.

6.6. Option 1: Highways

Option 1: General concerns about the existing roads

Hampshire County Council (HCC) as Local Highway Authority

- HCC was concerned that even the 300 dwellings (under Option 1) would increase traffic on Hampshire's road network at Harbridge Drive and B3078. They considered that more information on trip distribution would be needed to determine how even low levels of growth could meet national and local sustainable development and carbon reduction policies.

Option 1: Additional traffic

Public response

- Many respondents were concerned about the 'devastating effect' of additional traffic generated by growth. A report commissioned by Alderholt PC in February 2020 suggested that Option 1 (300 dwellings) would mean another 350+ cars and 1,000 dwellings would mean 1,200 or more. Other respondents suggested that Option 1 would generate 600 - 1,200 cars and Option 2 would generate 4,500 - 12,000 cars at peak times.
- Whilst most respondents were concerned about the traffic generated by Option 2, some also felt that the inadequate roads in the area would not be able to cope with the additional traffic generated by Option 1.
- There was concern that Option 1 would lead to increased congestion at the amenities and increased car journeys along residential roads (notably Birchwood and Earlswood Drives).

Option 1: Traffic calming / cycle and pedestrian routes

Public response

- One other comment was that Option 1 needs more mitigation to avoid more car movement, such as pedestrian routes and traffic calming (20 mph limit) in places.
- One respondent also argued for the provision of cycle and walking routes to Moors Valley Country Park, the New Forest and Cranborne Chase in association with Option 1.

Option 1: Need to improve transport infrastructure

Public response

- Some respondents felt that Option 1 would need improved roads to and from the village.

- One respondent argued that Option 1 plus the 192 houses already with planning permission should be a sufficient level of growth to justify improvements to roads out of the village.
- Many respondents noted that the proposals for growth would result in more cars on the roads, which they felt could not be accommodated, with either Option 1 or 2.

Option 1: Public transport

Go South Coast Buses

- Go South Coast Buses supported Option 1 for small scale expansion, noting that Alderholt is currently not accessible by public transport and is unsustainable as it stands.
- The company argued that any new development would not warrant diversion of existing bus services (including the X3 service) due to current and future planned routing and for operational reasons: Alderholt was considered to be too far off the track for existing public transport.

6.7. Option 1: Delivery

Option 1: Phasing

Action4Alderholt

- Action4Alderholt felt that Option 1 needed to be mitigated by: phasing so employment and infrastructure are provided first.

Public response

- It was felt that Option 1 needs careful phasing to avoid piecemeal development. Others argued that there was no evidence that the 300 homes proposed under Option 1 would increase the delivery of housing or meet local needs.

7. Objections to Option 2: Significant Expansion of Alderholt

A wide range of issues was raised in relation to the options for growth at Alderholt. The main points relating to these issues are outlined below. Please note that many of the issues raised would also apply to Option 1.

7.1. Option 2: Development Strategy

Objections to Option 2

Alderholt Parish Council

- The level of funding required to supply the infrastructure for option 2 renders this development unaffordable and unsustainable - impact it would have on Fordingbridge is not just “likely” but indisputable;
- Believe that the vision of self-containment for Alderholt is unrealistic.

New Forest District Council (NFDC)

- NFDC had significant concerns regarding the proposals for Alderholt, especially the suggestion that it would be an appropriate location for major growth given the lack of supporting evidence or investigation.

New Forest National Park Authority (NFNPA)

- Although the figure of around 300 dwellings is given for Option 1, not even an indicative figure is given for the strategic development under Option 2. NFNPA felt that a 'high level' estimate should be provided to allow consultees to comment more fully.

Ellingham, Harbridge and Ibsley PC

- Ellingham, Harbridge and Ibsley PC considered Option 2 to be 'totally unsustainable given the infrastructure improvements, essential services and additional employment required'.
- The PC were concerned that there was no feasibility study to accompany Option 2.

Historic England

- Historic England objected to Option 2 due to concerns about possible impacts on a length of scheduled deer park bank, which is also at risk.

Cranborne Chase AONB Team

- Unlikely to support major development at Alderholt.

Go South Coast Buses

- Go South Coast Buses questioned whether the development would be developed with 'garden village' principles and felt that the proposals were 'far from the vision of the founding fathers and more a marketing gimmick'. The company suggested looking at the Area Action Plan (AAP) for the Cotswolds Garden Village in Oxfordshire.

Nexus Planning on behalf of Hallam Land Management (HLM)

- HLM objected to Alderholt as a potential location for 'transformational growth', noting that the village has a limited range of facilities, particularly education facilities and that the village is in an isolated location, served only by minor roads.
- It was pointed out that the nearest major settlement, Bournemouth, is a 28-minute drive away (outside peak travel times) and that future travel modes would be limited to the provision of a bus service. It was argued that strategic development at Alderholt would not cause a shift in commuting patterns.

Turley on behalf of Wyatt Homes

- Although Alderholt is identified as Tier 3 'larger village' within the settlement hierarchy, Wyatt Homes noted that Alderholt has very few existing services, little employment and is not well connected to other higher tier settlements. They were concerned that the proposals for larger-scale growth at Alderholt would not be consistent with the settlement hierarchy.
- It was argued that to make Option 2 sustainable the development would need to be accompanied by sufficient new infrastructure, employment and connectivity, that would be capable of delivering a sustainable transformation of that settlement. It was also noted that the level of infrastructure requirements would involve a great deal of funding.

RAW Planning Ltd on behalf of Gascoyne Estates

- Gascoyne Estates argued that the 'relatively unconstrained' nature of Alderholt is an unsatisfactory justification for its potential to be transformed from a village to a town. They also felt that it was not clear why the Council considers Alderholt to be a potentially suitable location for 'transformational growth', since no assessment to establish this appears to have taken place.

Developers/Landowners/Agents

- One developer argued that Alderholt is not a suitable location for significant expansion and another felt that Option 2 is neither realistic nor achievable.
- In contrast, another developer argued that the infrastructure needed to support significant growth at Alderholt would require a strategic urban extension or new settlement of ‘multiple thousand dwellings’ to be viable. It was suggested that even 1,000 dwellings would not provide a sufficient population to justify the provision of multiple schools, or to sustain a new ‘town centre’ with significant retail provision and new leisure facilities.

Public response

- One respondent expressed concern that there was no vision for the future role of Alderholt in Dorset and the wider region, which was considered to be critical to determine future land use policy in the village.
- Some felt that expansion at Alderholt was inappropriate because of its geographical position ‘in the sticks’, isolated from key centres of employment, civic and commercial amenities.
- The public used many different terms to describe Option 2 including: ‘like a fantasy in a planner’s dream’, ‘wholly inappropriate’, ‘completely unrealistic’, ‘completely ridiculous’, ‘ludicrous’, ‘not feasible’ and ‘absolutely mad’.
- One of the main concerns of respondents was the scale of the proposed growth, as large-scale development was considered to be ‘excessive, unnecessary and impractical’.
- There were concerns that if Option 2 takes place, it would essentially mean that Fordingbridge in time would merge with Alderholt and Verwood.
- It was argued that Option 2 should be scrapped as it bears no real-world connection to the actual level of demand because the amount of housing proposed for Dorset overall is far in excess of the need based on ONS figures.
- It was also pointed out that the previous option of 1,000 houses at Alderholt was rejected by residents and objected to by Hampshire CC and MP Simon Hoare 2 years ago.
- Option 2 was considered to be ‘completely disproportionate for a rural area’ with ‘no logical rationale for significant expansion.’
- There were also concerns that Option 2 would be meeting needs from outside Dorset.
- It was felt that Option 2 would destroy the beauty of the village, which is found in its small size and the surrounding countryside.
- Some respondents felt that Option 2 would fail the tests of economic, social, environmental and community sustainability and did not meet the NPPF objective of locating large developments close to major transport routes.
- It was suggested that 3,000 houses under Option 2 would ‘quadruple the number of houses in the village’ and since Option 2 is 10 times larger than Option 1, it would probably lead to far more than 10 times the problems.
- Others suggested that after existing planning permissions are taken into account Option 2 ‘represents 50% growth at Alderholt’.
- It was argued that 3,000 houses would increase the population of Alderholt to around 12,000: comparable to the towns of Gillingham, Blandford, Bridport and Verwood.
- The point was made that these towns all have better links to A roads (and in Gillingham’s case a rail link), commercial areas bringing jobs, adequate shopping facilities and education.
- A few respondents noted the other small towns nearby, namely Fordingbridge, Verwood and Ringwood and felt that another one, so close to the Hampshire border, would not be sustainable or desirable.

- It was felt that the village could not support the level of growth proposed, as Alderholt is a remote rural village with poor links, limited local facilities (such as one shop, a primary school and limited health care arrangements) and little infrastructure to accommodate growth.
- It was argued that significant expansion would ruin the village and result in a town with no centre and no employment.
- Some respondents felt that it was unlikely that a new village / town centre would materialise and flourish under Option 2, as that notion seems to ignore past and current trends, including the impact on high streets from online shopping.
- It was also felt that it would not be possible, or viable, to deliver the infrastructure required to support growth including, roads, water supply and the sewerage systems etc.
- There were concerns that there were only vague promises that the infrastructure needed would be provided and it was felt that the cost of necessary road and transport improvements could not be funded by developers. Even if they could be delivered, there was concern that significant road improvements would have environmental impacts and produce far higher levels of traffic, with associated air and noise pollution. There was also concern about the impact of road improvements to link Alderholt to the A338.
- Other infrastructure improvements sought to support Option 2 included: new green space; 2 new schools; a shopping centre; a youth centre; a doctors surgery / hospital; a police station and a fire station.
- Some were concerned that Option 2 would not provide enough jobs for the amount of housing proposed resulting in more commuting and a huge carbon footprint for the village.
- Some respondents argued that Option 2 was a 'paper tiger' to try and persuade people that Option 1 is more acceptable.
- There were concerns that Option 2 was not specific enough making it difficult for people to make comments. The lack of detail on infrastructure (including: road improvements, public transport, schooling, health care, shopping and leisure facilities) was a particular concern.
- Some queried how the construction of 3,000 new homes would be funded. Viability was raised as an issue both because of the timescale required to deliver infrastructure and in view of the many requirements, including the need for SANGs and affordable housing in addition to the level of service expansion needed.
- Others were concerned about the complications of cross-border working with Hampshire County Council and New Forest District Council, especially in relation to road improvements and dealing with increased sewerage volumes.
- One respondent felt that the proposals for Option 2 should be re-issued for public consultation and that no proposal should be adopted until a clear strategy had been agreed with Hampshire County Council.

Green Belt

Developers/Landowners/Agents

- Developers noted that growth at Alderholt could be delivered without the need to amend existing Green Belt boundaries.

East Dorset Environment Partnership (EDEP)

- EDEP was concerned that Alderholt had become a target for inappropriate development due to its location outside the Green Belt.

Public response

- One respondent stated that it was unfortunate that Alderholt lies just outside the Green Belt, as it makes the village subject to a 'land grab' to meet increased housing demands.
- Local residents felt that the Green Belt should not be used to displace growth to more remote locations, such as Alderholt, which lack both employment and services.
- It was argued that 'jumping' the Green Belt and developing land beyond it negated its purpose of preventing the outward drift of development resulting in less sustainable commuting patterns and increased congestion.

Impact on Station Yard area

Public response

- There were specific concerns from residents at Station Yard, where the woodlands either side form part of Option 2 and some of the properties are located on the disused railway, which is proposed for use as a trailway. Living in between these two areas, the concerns of residents were about how the proposals would affect their outlook and their ability to walk in the woods. Although Station Yard is a private driveway, walkers and cyclists wander into this area and there are concerns this would increase if any houses were built. Residents felt that the local plan should make it clear what measures would be put in place to stop this.
- There was also a specific objection to development at Station Yard and in the vicinity of the disused railway line (as part of Option 2) due to impacts on wildlife.

Objections to the design of Option 2

Public response

- There were a limited number of objections to the design of Option 2.
- Some respondents argued that some areas proposed for growth, such as areas of woodland, a solar farm and allotments were not suitable for development. Consequently, they questioned whether there was sufficient land available to develop Option 2.
- Others felt that it would not be possible to integrate Option 2 with the existing Alderholt layout and that the separation of new and older housing would have a negative impact on community relations.
- Others were concerned that 3,000 homes with many more people would result in overcrowding with houses being built 'cheek-by-jowl', without garages and with narrow roadways.
- There were also concerns that the proposed 'village neighbourhoods' would be 'ghettos' or 'gated communities'.
- There was a concern that Option 2 simply aimed to increase the size of the village around the existing recreation ground. It was argued that a better approach would be for areas of green space to be provided between new developments.
- One respondent objected to the proposed central public square, which was considered to be 'a thing of the past' which would become 'frequented by the unfortunates of society'.

Concern about impacts on Hampshire & Wiltshire

Hampshire County Council (HCC) as Local Highway Authority

- As (adjacent) Local Highway Authority HCC objected to significant expansion at Alderholt due to the absence of evidence on the impacts on the highway network and the adjacent areas in the New Forest.

New Forest District Council (NFDC)

- NFDC felt that the scale of growth under Option 2 needed to be quantified and there needed to be certainty about the infrastructure required (including mitigation of impacts on surrounding areas) to feasibly and viably support it. For example, secondary school capacity is likely to be an issue if expansion in Alderholt relies on education capacity at Burgate School. NFDC felt that the lack of information and clarity about possible intentions at Alderholt created significant issues for them in trying to respond to the consultation.

Alderholt PC

- Alderholt PC referred to the 2020-2026 New Forest District Council Future Plan, which states that facilities are at capacity.

Ellingham, Harbridge & Ibsley PC

- Ellingham, Harbridge & Ibsley PC felt that the infrastructure needed both sides of the Dorset / Hampshire border to support growth at Alderholt would not be forthcoming.

Godshill PC

- Godshill PC felt that Hampshire taxpayers, including those in the New Forest National Park, should not be expected to pay for good, safe road links to the A31 and A338 in order to serve developments in Dorset.

Public response

- A number of respondents noted that Alderholt's location on the border with Hampshire and Wiltshire would require co-operation between the different councils and felt that this would make significant expansion here significantly more complicated than in other locations in Dorset, such as on the edges of Wimborne or Upton, which already have existing infrastructure in place.
- Some respondents argued that the Hampshire and New Forest Councils would not be interested in working in partnership with Dorset Council and were concerned that they would not co-operate with Dorset to improve roads in the area.
- There was concern that there is little detail in the draft local plan on how Dorset Council will work with neighbouring councils to address cross-boundary issues, including road improvements, which are needed to deal with the additional traffic on local roads.
- One respondent argued that if Option 2 is taken forward, then Alderholt parish should be transferred to Hampshire, since much of the shopping, educational, recreational and health needs of the village are met by Fordingbridge and Ringwood.
- Some respondents noted that some infrastructure improvements would be needed outside Dorset (i.e., in Hampshire or Wiltshire). It was argued that it would be difficult to obtain any help from Hampshire County or New Forest District due to their commitments to the planned expansion of Fordingbridge and Ringwood.
- Some respondents were concerned that any major development would run the risk of Dorset Council funding infrastructure and amenity improvements, whilst neighbouring councils would benefit from the increase in economic activity. Others were concerned that Dorset Council was trying to pass its infrastructure obligations onto Hampshire County / New Forest District.
- One respondent argued that an initial feasibility study and project plan should have been produced to consider the issues of: Hampshire and New Forest Councils working together with Dorset Council: the demand for this scale of development in this area within the next 15 years; the likelihood of development funding the necessary infrastructure and services improvements;

the possibility of Government financial support; and the sustainability of development given the urgent need to reduce transport emissions.

Concern about impacts on Fordingbridge

New Forest District Council (NFDC)

- Development at Alderholt has the potential to have a significant impact on Fordingbridge and NFDC wished to see these impacts carefully considered and addressed.

Fordingbridge TC

- Fordingbridge TC was concerned that little thought had been given to the impact of the increase in traffic from Alderholt on already crowded roads in the town, which are often narrow with narrow pavements.

Alderholt Parish Council (PC)

- The PC (and a number of other respondents) pointed out that Fordingbridge Town Council (TC) is against any major development in Alderholt, as there are already plans for 1,700 new homes at Fordingbridge.
- The PC (and a number of other respondents) pointed out that New Forest District Council (NFDC) is against any major development in Alderholt. It was highlighted that NFDC currently has a 6.1-year housing land supply and has just adopted a new local plan in July 2020, including large scale development at Fordingbridge. For those reasons, several respondents felt it unlikely that NFDC would make any land available (in New Forest District) for the expansion of Alderholt.

Godshill PC

- Godshill PC felt that further growth at Alderholt (either Option 1 or Option 2) would put even more pressure on services in Fordingbridge (and Ringwood), which were 'barely able to support their own populations'. It was argued that the higher level of services and facilities in these towns would attract Alderholt's enlarged population.

East Dorset Environment Partnership (EDEP)

- In relation to paragraph 18.2.2. EDEP expressed the view that the impact on Fordingbridge of significant growth of Alderholt is not just 'likely' as suggested but indisputable. EDEP argued that significant growth would be damaging to the road system and would increase noise and air pollution through the town.

Hampshire County Council (HCC) Library Service

- HCC pointed out that significant growth at Alderholt would be likely to put pressure on the small library at Fordingbridge, potentially beyond the level for which it is resourced. The Library Service has sought further discussions with Dorset Council regarding the mitigation needed to overcome the challenges associated with significant expansion at Alderholt.

Public response

- A number of respondents were concerned about the impact of development already proposed at Fordingbridge (1,700 homes). It was felt that this would put pressure on services and infrastructure in the town (including schools and the GP surgery), which are already under pressure and used by residents of Alderholt.
- In contrast, a few respondents argued that additional development in Alderholt would help to support Fordingbridge, which has seen a decline in shops in recent years. One respondent felt that the significant expansion of Fordingbridge offered hope for the shops there, but was also

concerned that an expanded Alderholt could only serve to give some support to existing retailing and would be insufficient to encourage new retail developments.

- Another respondent felt that new schools, shops and a doctors surgery in a large-scale development of Alderholt would relieve the pressure on these services in Fordingbridge, but was concerned that such a large-scale development could not be sustained.
- A few respondents felt that no consideration has been given to the impacts on Alderholt of developments planned in neighbouring counties (including at Fordingbridge).
- One respondent felt that the interactions between Alderholt, Fordingbridge and Verwood had not been explored in enough depth.
- A number of respondents felt that further growth at Alderholt (either Option 1 or Option 2) would put even more pressure on services in Fordingbridge (and Ringwood), which were 'barely able to support their own populations'. It was argued that the higher level of services and facilities in these towns would attract Alderholt's enlarged population.
- Due to their commitment to enlarge Fordingbridge, there was concern that there would be no help from Hampshire County Council or New Forest District Council to improve infrastructure in or serving Alderholt.
- There was also a more general concern that duplicating the provision of services, such as schools, shops and healthcare and better transport links at Alderholt, when it was very close to the existing towns of Fordingbridge and Ringwood, was short-sighted.
- There were also concerns about the impact of large-scale development on nearby Fordingbridge, where significant development is already proposed.

Concern about impacts on Rockbourne

Rockbourne PC

- Rockbourne PC was concerned about the detrimental impact of more development at Alderholt from additional traffic passing through Rockbourne and causing increased damage and pollution to the 'bourne', which runs alongside the road.

Concern about impacts on Godshill

Godshill PC

- As a Conservation Area within a National Park and on the B3078, Godshill PC felt that the priceless tranquillity of their village should not be sacrificed further (as a result of extra traffic) to fulfil Dorset's housing quotas.

Concern about impacts on Ellingham, Harbridge & Ibsley

Ellingham, Harbridge & Ibsley PC

- Ellingham, Harbridge & Ibsley PC was concerned that large-scale development at Alderholt would be deleterious to local conservation areas, such as Harbridge Conservation Area.

7.2. Option 2: The Environment and Climate Change

Option 2: Climate Change

Hampshire County Council (HCC) as Local Highway Authority

- Approach is against Hampshire's Climate Change Strategy (2020-2025). This seeks a reduction in transport-related carbon emissions to net zero (neutrality) by 2050 and a resilient transport network.

Public response

- One respondent stated that growth needed to contribute to the sustainability of the village community and needs to minimise its impact on climate change. It was argued that climate change would be given ever greater weight in the future, making it a major factor in decision making by 2023.
- Many people argued that both options would be detrimental to the climate and ecological emergency, both nationally and in Dorset.
- Respondents sought clarity on how Option 2 would help to achieve net zero carbon in real terms by 2050, especially in terms of transport and the provision of energy and utilities infrastructure.
- A few respondents argued that any new buildings at Alderholt should not use fossil fuels, but should be designed to include heat pumps and to have 'super insulation'.
- It was felt that the necessary road improvements to support development at Alderholt would be in direct contradiction to the Council's climate emergency strategy.
- Concern with increased Carbon Footprint that the Alderholt Development would bring.
- It was suggested that Alderholt has 1.3 workers per household of which 80.4% commute, 60% of them travelling over 20 km to work. Assuming one commute to Salisbury and one to Bournemouth, one respondent suggested that as a guide to give an indication, each dwelling would generate 261 commutes a year of 16,182 miles using 1,471 litres of fuel. For Options 1 and 2, 441,300 litres or 4,413,000 litres of fuel would be used per year respectively. Based on an average of 129g / km by a single car, it was estimated that 10,078,386 kg of CO₂ would be generated per year by Option 2. Since 28% of greenhouse gases are caused by the transport sector, it was argued that growth at Alderholt would not reduce distances travelled or minimise the impact of climate change.

Option 2: Loss of countryside / Green spaces / Alderholt Common

Public response

- It was felt that growth would have a negative impact on the environment and result in the destruction of the surrounding countryside. It was pointed out that the proposed developments would be outside the current village envelope.
- There was concern about the loss of fields, green spaces and woodlands in the local area, some of which are used for walking, dog walking and riding. It was felt that the use of these areas had a positive impact on mental health and should be preserved for the future.
- There were concerns both about Option 1, which it was argued would 'decimate green fields and the environment' as well as Option 2, which would result in the loss of Alderholt Common.
- It was argued that building on open land close to where people live and have access to, would be in contravention of Natural England guidelines.

- There were also concerns about development on woodland sites, which it was argued would be 'seriously detrimental to the fabric of village life'. More specifically there were concerns about cutting down the wooded area behind the village hall to provide housing as some of the trees are very old and their loss would have a detrimental effect on ozone.
- There were concerns about the loss of agricultural and paddock land, which would be detrimental to farming. It was argued that farmland should not be given over to housing because since the UK left the EU it can only produce 60% of the food it consumes.
- A few respondents stated that they were unable to expand their farming enterprises, because local farmers were selling their land to developers instead of to other farmers / smallholders to retain in agricultural use.
- One respondent claimed that the land proposed for development on Hillbury Road is common land and was of the view that it 'requires protection, not devastation'.

Option 2: Loss of Allotments

Public response

- More specifically, there was a concern over the loss of the allotments site, which was given in perpetuity and is not available for development.

Option 2: Green infrastructure

Environment Agency

- We are pleased to see that green space would be incorporated into the site. This should include areas of wildlife habitat, and seek to link up any existing green corridors. Wetland features in the site should be considered if appropriate.

Option 2: Wildlife sites and species

Natural England

- In relation to Option 2, Natural England was sceptical that such a significant expansion could be accommodated without harming significant wildlife interests. They recommended that any assessment of the feasibility of the proposal would need to include:
 - An assessment of the biodiversity interests, also looking at the potential for habitat restoration. Any allocation would need to protect and enhance biodiversity interests, including SNCIs, priority habitats and habitats used by foraging nightjars from nearby heathlands. This work should be undertaken at the feasibility stage and used to inform any development proposals;
 - A strategic approach to SANG provision to ensure that SANGs and other green infrastructure are provided to fully mitigate recreational impacts on surrounding heathland Habitats sites; and
 - Options for ensuring any scheme can secure phosphorus neutrality in relation to the River Avon Habitats Sites.

Dorset Wildlife Trust (DWT)

- DWT argued that SNCIs in the area need to be referenced in paragraph 18.3.6, along with the internationally important habitats that may be affected by development.
- DWT noted that almost the whole area proposed for major expansion is identified as Higher Potential Ecological Network. It was argued that the impacts on the whole natural environment needed to be fully assessed to inform such a major proposed expansion.

- DWT were concerned about the potential impacts from Option 2 on a number of Sites of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCl) in the area including: Bonfire Hill identified as dry heath and known to support protected reptile species. DWT also note that surveys for planning application PA3/21/0046/FUL have shown that the land adjacent to this SNCl is important for reptiles and foraging / commuting bats; Strouds Firs Meadows identified as semi-improved neutral grassland; Highwood identified as deciduous woodland with grassland / scrub; Draggons Road identified as damp mixed woodland on acid soil, wet heath and surrounding scrub; Alderholt Heath, identified as wet heath with a pond containing pillwort; and Sleepbrook Farm, identified as unimproved marshy grassland with a small area of carr woodland.

Amphibian and Reptile Conservation

- Amphibian and Reptile Conservation argued that Section 18.2 The Vision needed to refer to the Dorset and New Forest Heaths, River Avon SAC, SNCl, ecosystem networks, etc and should also set out how these would be protected / enhanced with any development scheme.
- Amphibian and Reptile Conservation argued that isolating Bonfire Hill Site of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCl) from the wider landscape would not comply with environmental policies, as this area supports an exceptional reptile population including Adders and Slow Worms, newts and bats.
- Option 2 would not comply with biodiversity sustainability assessment objectives so should be removed from the plan. They also noted that much of the land in Option 2 is either existing or higher potential ecological network and any allocations should not be taken forward until it has been surveyed.

East Dorset Environment Partnership (EDEP)

- EDEP noted that the protected species surveys for the adjacent former Hawthorns Nursery site identified 10 species of bat using the land for foraging and commuting, and recorded low numbers of adult and juvenile Grass Snakes, indicating breeding on the application site or adjacent land.
- EDEP noted that the draft SPD on Mitigation for Recreational Impacts on New Forest European Sites includes a specification for recreational walking routes. They suggested that this should be considered to reduce the damaging impact of 'too much' recreational pressure on other habitats that has happened during lockdown.
- Given the lack of any indication of how net gains in biodiversity would be achieved, EDEP argued that both options should be removed from the Local Plan.
- EDEP commented that other land within the Option 2 area is either existing ecological network or higher potential ecological network and should not be taken forward through the Local Plan process without survey. EDEP objected to taking forward any land for development, which had been identified as Higher Potential Ecological Network without further survey work.

RSPB

- RSPB supported the requirement for any new development to ensure that there are no adverse impacts on internationally important habitats, as stated in paragraph 18.3.6.
- RSPB sought more precision in describing the spatial relationship of Alderholt to the Dorset heathlands and the New Forest heathlands: 'close enough' was considered to be an inadequate description, due to the proximity.
- RSPB argued that any spatial policies for Alderholt should require implementation of effective mitigation measures to avoid cumulative adverse impacts on National Site Network sites, including the Dorset Heathland and the River Avon SAC.

The Woodland Trust

- High Wood, which is north of the B3078, is a plantation on an ancient woodland site, which the Woodland Trust argue could be restored with careful management. The Trust advocated a minimum 50 metre buffer between development and this ancient woodland site, including through the construction phase.

New Forest District Council (NFDC)

- Paragraph 18.3.6 recognises that there should be no adverse impacts on internationally important habitats nearby. NFDC consider that it will be essential that any adverse impacts from additional recreational pressure on protected heathlands, both in Dorset and in the New Forest, are avoided. NFDC argued that the Local Plan must put in place measures to fully mitigate the recreational impacts on the New Forest Natura 2000 sites. They also noted that no such arrangements are currently in place.

New Forest National Park Authority (NFNPA)

- NFNPA welcomed recognition in paragraph 18.1.1 that Alderholt lies, ‘...close enough to internationally important heathlands in Dorset and the New Forest (in Hampshire) for increased recreational use from development to potentially have an adverse impact’. NFNPA stated that this is reflected in the latest research into recreational use of the New Forest SPA, SAC and Ramsar sites, which shows that 75% of day visitors to the New Forest live within about 14 km, extending into Dorset. NFNPA argued that Alderholt is well within this zone of influence and potential impacts on the New Forest’s habitats from development here will need to be fully considered through an appropriate assessment. If necessary, legally secured mitigation measures will need to be put in place by Dorset Council as the competent authority under the Habitats Regulations. The NPA felt that there is likely to be a need for extensive areas of attractive informal recreation land within easy walking distance of development (SANGs), as well as potentially contributions towards on-site visitor management within the New Forest’s protected heathlands.
- NFNPA felt that Figure 3.4 should acknowledge that there are internationally designated wildlife sites in close proximity to the Dorset Local Plan area which will potentially be impacted by development within Dorset, including the New Forest SAC, SPA and Ramsar designations.

Alderholt Parish Council

- The land north of Station Road houses several protected species and should not be made available for development.

Developers/Landowners/Agents

- A developer made the point that Options 1 and 2 to the south, west and south-west of the village are much closer to the Dorset Heathlands SPA than Cross Farm, being in the north-east of the settlement.

Public response

- There were concerns that the development proposed at Alderholt could not be achieved due to the numerous wildlife sites in the area (such as the River Avon Special Area of Conservation (SAC), the Avon Valley Ramsar site, Cranborne Common SSSI and other local sites) and the presence of mineral extraction sites to the south in Hampshire.
- It was argued that there needs to be fuller consideration of the impacts on animal habitats, including badger setts and bat colonies and assurances should be provided that wildlife habitats would be protected.

- A few respondents argued that a comprehensive plan to enhance local ecology would be required to offset the impacts of growth. There were concerns in relation to both options.
- One respondent argued that any development should allow for migratory routes from Ringwood Road to Hillbury Road both across the lands associated with the recreation ground and to the north through Stroud Firs.
- A few respondents expressed concern about the impacts of any road widening in association with the options, which 'would destroy miles of ancient hedgerows, ancient deciduous trees, and the wildlife they support including birds, hedgehogs, field and dormouse'.
- A number of respondents pointed to the concerns of Wessex Water on this issue and stated that the proposals would be against their advice.
- There were concerns about the impacts on the New Forest, which was considered to be 'a priceless gem that should be protected and not built over'. It was argued that development would need onsite measures to mitigate the increasing erosion and additional fire risk in the New Forest. Recreational impacts were also seen as a problem, which would 'harm the eco-structure of The New Forest' and exacerbate problems, such as 'tourists and drivers leaving litter and killing the ponies, donkeys and cattle.'
- A few respondents highlighted the 'huge demand' housing would place on local chalk streams, such as the Rivers Avon, Stour, Test, Itchen and Frome. These were identified as unique ecosystems fed by subterranean aquifers, where the demand for drinking water 'drains the very lifeblood from these rivers, destroying these ecosystems'.
- The internationally important wildlife sites in the area are also designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and concern was expressed about the 'devastating impact' development would have on these areas, including Cranborne Common SSSI, where there were concerns that the existing level of footfall is already causing damage to the heathland and there are concerns with dog walkers disturbing ground nesting birds. It was felt that this SSSI (south of Daggons Road) should be preserved as a wildlife habitat so the bats and snakes that are regularly seen there can continue to thrive.
- The importance of a number of other sites for wildlife was highlighted.
- It was stated that land at Bonfire Hill is a Site of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI) that supports an exceptional reptile population including Adders and Slow Worms, newts and bats. It is adjacent to land that has foraging and commuting corridors for 8 species of bat.
- There were concerns about removing woodland north of the B3078 (Daggons Road and Station Road), which would be detrimental to the character of the village, take away an area popular for exercise, and reduce the availability of local natural environment for wildlife. It was stated that the land north of the B3078 supports several protected species, including roosting bats, owls and badgers.
- It was stated that Stroud Firs, which is north of the B3078, supports significant wildlife.
- It was stated that the wooded area behind the village hall, which is north of the B3078, supports deer, foxes etc.
- It was stated that the greenfield site behind the Reading Rooms supports grasses interspersed with meadow flowers, both perennials and annuals and clouds of insects. It was argued that this meadow should be preserved and should not be lost as has been the case with 90% of all flower meadows since the end of the Second World War.
- It was stated that deer, foxes and numerous different types of birds are seen around Sleepy Hollow, Station Yard. There were concerns that house building and the increased volume of people on the proposed railway would result in the loss of wildlife in this area.

- There were concerns that if roads have to be widened, it will decrease wildlife habitat and damage the pollinators that use these verges.
- There was concern about the impact of development and traffic on species in the local area including tawny and barn owls, bats, cuckoo, birds of prey, deer, foxes, badgers (and their setts) and small mammals.
- It was stated that the land proposed for development on Hillbury Road is home to rare species and many animals such as snakes, lizards and newts.
- It was stated that Dorset Environmental Records Centre has lists of many vulnerable species – some so vulnerable that they cannot be publicly named – living in close proximity to Alderholt.
- A number of respondents raised concerns about tree loss, as a result of development. It was pointed out that well-established woodland was an ecosystem that could not be replaced and that mature trees, even if replanted, would take years to grow back. It was argued that removing significant trees would not help to reduce carbon and would cause soil erosion, which would be grossly irresponsible in a climate crisis. There were also concerns about the loss of ‘oxygen producing’ trees, including 500 new Oak trees growing on one area of heathland.
- It was felt that the area proposed for Option 2 is not suitable, because it is surrounded by forest and heathlands, linking to Ringwood Forest. These areas were considered to be vital for local wildlife and needed to be protected.
- It was argued that ‘the huge environmental impact of Option 2 would be terrible for animals and trees / plants’.

Option 2: Biodiversity Net Gain

Natural England

- Opportunities for biodiversity enhancement on the site should be considered at the earliest stage and used to inform the structure of the development in order to deliver the minimum 10% net gain required.’

Option 2: SANG Provision

Natural England

- In Section 18.3, Natural England supported the text that sought to address recreational impacts on internationally important heathlands in the Alderholt area (paragraph 18.3.6), but sought a strengthening of the wording to recognise that the provision of SANGs will be required.

RSPB

- They were also concerned that the distances between development and heathland sites would be likely to reduce with additional significant housing and would require SANGs to mitigate any impacts of additional recreational pressure arising from new housing.

East Dorset Environment Partnership (EDEP)

- EDEP argued that the probability that similar levels of SANG provision would be required by NFDC must be taken into consideration in any proposals for the larger-scale development of the village.

Alderholt Parish Council

- Requirement for extensive areas of SANG to mitigate against adverse impacts on the Dorset and New Forest protected heathlands.

Public response

- Respondents pointed to the need for extensive areas of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspaces (SANGs) to mitigate against adverse recreational impacts on the internationally important and protected Dorset and New Forest heathlands.
- Some respondents felt that there will be impacts on these important heathlands despite the provision of SANGs, which would not have the same appeal as walking on heathland. New residents could not be required to use new SANGs and it was thought likely they would still use nearby sites like Cranborne Common, which would result in adverse impacts on the Dorset Heathlands.
- Others argued that the residents of the new development would not use any local SANG, but would flock to nearby beaches to 'get out of the town' that had been created.
- The difficulties in finding suitable locations for SANGs, as evidenced by the difficulties Penny Farthing Homes have had in relation to the site with planning permission for housing on Ringwood Road was pointed out.

Option 2: Phosphates in the River Avon SAC

Natural England

- They sought the deletion of the reference to the OFWAT 2024 price review, which may reduce the requirements needed to achieve neutrality, but would not remove the need for mitigation. In the absence of a strategic solution to address the phosphorus neutrality issue, they suggested that the final sentence of paragraph 18.3.7 should make it clear that the onus is on the developer to secure this.
- They welcomed the text in paragraph 18.3.7 about the need to achieve phosphorus neutrality in the River Avon, but pointed out that the text should refer to both the River Avon SAC and Ramsar sites. They pointed out that the requirement is currently for phosphorus, rather than nitrogen neutrality.
- A further bullet was recommended to set out the need for development to achieve phosphorus neutrality and secure a biodiversity net gain as follows: 'The development should be at least phosphorus neutral and provide high quality multifunctional SuDS designed and appropriately maintained to achieve a high level of attenuation of urban silt and phosphorus.'

RSPB

- RSPB welcomed the recognition of the environmental sensitivities of the location, notably its proximity to the River Avon SAC, in paragraphs 18.1.2, 18.3.6 and 18.3.7.
- RSPB welcomed acknowledgement of the potential water quality impacts on the River Avon SAC in paragraph 18.3.7.
- RSPB noted that the River Avon flows into Christchurch Harbour SSSI and that there is evidence that this site is functionally-linked to coastal SPAs along the south coast of England including Poole Harbour. RSPB felt that the potential eutrophication impacts on Christchurch Harbour should be recognised in the supporting text.
- RSPB argued that the Council should require mitigation to ensure nitrate and phosphate neutrality should it propose any development at Alderholt. This is because the River Avon is a freshwater ecosystem which is sensitive to phosphate pollution.

Alderholt Parish Council

- Impact on the catchment of the River Avon Special Area of Conservation - the potential eutrophication of the river by increased phosphate levels;

Ellingham, Harbridge & Ibsley PC

- Ellingham, Harbridge & Ibsley PC pointed out that Alderholt lies within the catchment of the River Avon SAC and that any development must be 'phosphate and nitrogen neutral'.

Godshill PC

- Godshill PC pointed out that Alderholt lies within the catchment of the River Avon SAC and that any development must be 'phosphate and nitrogen neutral'. The PC argued that Alderholt should have its own sewage works within Dorset, away from the Avon Valley.

New Forest District Council (NFDC)

- It was also suggested that NFDC and Dorset Council need to co-operate on the cross-boundary issues of phosphates in the River Avon SAC and the potential impact of air pollution from traffic on heathland sites. Dorset Council should prepare an air quality evidence base and NFDC would welcome joint working on this matter.

Intelligent Land on behalf of Dudsbury Homes

- A bespoke waste water treatment plant that strips out phosphates and nitrates to acceptable levels.

Public response

- A number of respondents pointed out that Alderholt lies within the catchment of the River Avon SAC and that any development must be 'phosphate and nitrogen neutral'.
- It was stated that the main sewage high pressure drainage feeds into the Fordingbridge treatment plant, which then discharges into the river. There was concern that pressure on the plant in Fordingbridge would lead to increased levels of phosphates and nitrates in the river.

Option 2: AONB / New Forest National Park / New Forest area

New Forest National Park Authority (NFNPA)

- NFNPA felt that the proximity of the New Forest National Park to Dorset, should be recognised and it should be shown in relevant figures and diagrams in the Local Plan, including on the Policies Map.
- They also argued that the Local Plan should set out the Council's legal 'duty of regard' to National Parks, which recognises that the delivery of their statutory purposes rests with a range of relevant bodies and also acknowledges that decisions made outside National Parks can impact on them. This should be recognised in the section on the South Eastern Dorset Functional Area, which outlines the main environmental constraints in South East Dorset, but not the New Forest National Park and the range of internationally designated sites within it.
- NFNPA also felt that Policy ENV4 could include a criterion recognising that under the 'duty of regard' the proximity of the New Forest National Park and its setting may need to be factored into Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments (LVIAs). This should also be recognised in Policy COM11 relating to wind energy developments.
- NFNPA also stated that the additional wording protecting the setting of National Parks included in the proposed changes to the NPPF (January 2021) is also relevant to the preparation of the Local Plan.

Cranborne Chase AONB Team

- Concern with potential impact on the AONB through increased pressures, and associated traffic contributing to a loss of tranquillity and physical damage to the narrow lanes.

Amphibian and Reptile Conservation

- Amphibian and Reptile Conservation recognised that the impact on the New Forest District Council area would be significant and that large-scale development at Alderholt would not help with self-sustainment.

East Dorset Environment Partnership (EDEP)

- EDEP were concerned with the potential impacts of development on the New Forest and increased livestock casualties from more traffic.

Godshill PC

- Godshill PC was concerned about the impact of commuting traffic as well as increased recreational use on the New Forest National Park.
- It was pointed out that development in north-eastern Dorset had increased commuter and business traffic to and from Southampton and is a major reason for accidents involving Forest livestock.

Public response

- Some respondents felt that growth would put strain on the nearby Cranborne Chase AONB and New Forest National Park. There was a concern that the increased population from Option 2 would massively increase the footfall in the National Park and AONB.
- There were also concerns that necessary road improvements to support development would have an adverse impact on the New Forest National Park and surrounding countryside.

Option 2: Heritage

Historic England

- Historic England objected to the inclusion of the proposed allocations north of Alderholt, which form part of Option 2. They noted that they were omitted from the East Dorset and Purbeck Landscape and Heritage Study Stage 1 Report and were not covered in the Stage 2 report either.
- There is a scheduled length of deer park bank and ditch located to the north of Alderholt, which is on Historic England's Heritage at Risk Register 2020. It was argued that its significance and setting would be affected by the proposed allocations under Option 2, especially north of the old railway line. However, Historic England felt that sensitive development could offer an opportunity to secure its conservation and enhancement and its removal from the Heritage at Risk Register.
- They felt that a heritage impact assessment and a masterplan would be needed to understand the suitability and capacity of this site for development, to develop appropriate mitigation measures and to determine the need for specific policy criteria to protect the significance and setting of the scheduled length of deer park bank and ditch.

Option 2: Flooding

Environment Agency

- Flood risk Modelling of the ordinary watercourses may be required in the SFRA in order to better understand current and future flood risk. There is potential surface water flooding within the site.

Public response

- One respondent claimed that ‘we have extreme flooding in some areas in Alderholt the minute it rains’. Others identified the high water table as an issue locally, which caused surface water flooding on roads and surrounding land, especially where soakaways had not been fully excavated to alleviate flooding issues.
- It was suggested that there are significant issues with drainage in the fields surrounding the village and that the area proposed for development is ‘very boggy marsh land’, which may be liable to flooding.
- One respondent stated that all the old ditches in the village drain to Stroud Firs.
- It was also pointed out that the local recreation ground is flooded for ‘much of the year’, requiring ‘major drainage works’.
- There was concern that some of the roads into the village currently flood, with water flowing from the fields proposed for development onto the roads. More specifically, it was stated that the road to Fordingbridge frequently floods, because it has no drainage. It was also noted that when Harbridge floods, traffic has to go through Fordingbridge or Ringwood to get to the A338.
- There were concerns that any housebuilding would cause an excess of flood water, including from faster run-off, that would be disastrous. It was argued that concreting / tarmacking / building over very wet ground with natural bogs would create problems in the future as it would decrease the natural vegetation’s sponge effect and increase flooding. Others were concerned that the existing drains would not be able to cope with significant expansion.
- In particular attention was drawn to the ditches draining into Stroud Firs, which is very damp. It was argued that the removal of trees from development sites would increase water levels in the Stroud Firs area, requiring very significant drainage work.
- It was claimed that ‘the safe expansion of the sewage system is impossible, which increases the surety of flooding’.

7.3. Option 2: Housing

Option 2: Lack of need / demand for more housing

Action4Alderholt

- Action4Alderholt pointed to the ‘sluggish’ housing market in the village and highlighted the historic slow pace of development, raising concerns that any new proposals for growth would drag on piecemeal for many years, with no community benefits and with the character and quality of life of the village being gradually eroded.

East Dorset Environment Partnership (EDEP)

- EDEP were concerned that the levels of housing proposed would attract wealthier buyers from outside the area rather than meet local need.
- EDEP felt that a unified approach (with NFDC) was required in relation to the assumed occupancy rates for new homes. The ratios suggested were: 1 bedroom = 1.4 people; 2 bedrooms = 2.1 people; 3 bedrooms = 3 people; and 4 bedrooms = 3.75 people.

Public response

- A number of respondents felt that there would be little demand for new homes in Alderholt as there were ‘no local jobs, no public transport and no facilities’.

- Others felt that no one would want to live in Alderholt due to: schools being a long bus / car ride away; there being no capacity at the local health centre, no local retail facilities or takeaways; and because of a lack of money in the area.
- As the cost of commuting is likely to increase in the future, there was a concern that this could lead to negative equity resulting in residents becoming ‘trapped’ in the village. This prospect may deter those considering a move to Alderholt.
- It was questioned whether there would be demand for the scale of development proposed under Option 2, given the poor roads and few amenities in the area. Others felt that there would not be demand without the infrastructure being put in place first.
- There was a concern that the failure to deliver infrastructure would reduce demand, resulting in a sizeable proportion of the homes planned not being built. It was felt that this could have a knock-on effect so that Dorset would fail to achieve its housing numbers, leaving the County open to speculative developers.
- Some respondents felt that the homes were only being proposed ‘to satisfy the local planning quota’. It was suggested that Dorset Council should work with the Government to reduce the overall housing allocation for Dorset.
- A number of respondents noted that builders have yet to start work on many of the houses with planning permission in Alderholt, raising the issue of whether there was demand even for these houses. It was noted that no building had taken place on one site with permission for 10 years.
- Other respondents noted that homes in the village can be up for sale for a long time, raising concerns that any new houses may be difficult to sell.
- A few respondents pointed to the large number of empty homes in UK (estimated at 500,000 to 650,000) and the 250,000 second homes in England, arguing that building more unaffordable homes would not improve the housing crisis. One respondent felt that Council Tax penalties should be introduced.
- Others felt that the Council should look again at local needs from the results of the census and from a proper analysis of the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, which may show there is no demand for either option.
- One respondent recognised that Option 2 would serve the conurbation in the South-eastern Dorset Functional Area, but was concerned that its location on the periphery of the Dorset Council area would attract migrant retirees, second homeowners and holiday lets.

Option 2: Unmet housing need from adjoining areas

Hampshire County Council (HCC) as Local Highway Authority

- HCC objected to any of the proposals that are justified on the basis of addressing an unmet housing need from the New Forest District Council area, which has a current, adopted Local Plan that fully meets their housing need and there is presently no anticipation of unmet housing need in the area.

New Forest District Council (NFDC)

- NFDC has an adopted Local Plan (July 2020), which addresses its housing needs to 2036. NFDC stated that there is currently no issue of ‘unmet’ housing needs from New Forest District and any such reference (i.e., in paragraph 18.3.3) should be deleted from future versions of Dorset’s Local Plan.

New Forest National Park Authority (NFNPA)

- NFNPA stated that there is a modest level of undersupply in the adopted New Forest National Park Local Plan (460 dwellings to 2036) against the objectively assessed need. NFNPA also stated that it is working with the Partnership for South Hampshire and aims to resolve the issue of unmet housing need through sub-regional work focused on South Hampshire. At this point NFNPA is unable to quantify the unmet need (if any) from the National Park area that will need to be planned for.

RAW Planning Ltd on behalf of Gascoyne Estates

- Gascoyne Estates argued that growth at Alderholt was not needed to meet the 'unmet need' from adjoining authorities, particularly in the New Forest, because as of 1 April 2020, New Forest District Council had a 6.1-year supply of housing including a major allocation at nearby Fordingbridge.

Public response

- It was felt that it should not be the responsibility of Dorset Council to deliver some of the unmet need from adjoining authorities. It was also argued that a large development at Alderholt would not ease housing need in neighbouring Hampshire.
- Many pointed to the new houses already approved or proposed in Fordingbridge, Verwood and Ringwood (including homes allocated in the recently adopted Local Plan for New Forest District, which runs until 2036) raising doubts over whether the area could sustain hundreds more. Some felt that there should be no further development at Alderholt until it could be shown there is further demand for additional housing. Others argued that permissions should be given to other developers if house builders are not prepared to proceed.

Option 2: Affordable housing

Public response

- A number of respondents expressed support for the provision of 'a percentage' of affordable housing. Others felt that any such provision should be 'small-scale'.
- The need for low-cost starter homes and homes for rent, particularly for local first-time buyers and young families was recognised, as such provision would help to keep the village alive and guard against Alderholt becoming a community of mainly older people.
- It was thought that affordable housing should not result in 'thousands of rabbit hutch houses with tiny green spaces'.
- Respondents were concerned that affordable housing provision would not be truly affordable, especially for first time buyers.
- It was also noted that affordable housing is often dropped from schemes or reduced by developers on grounds of cost.
- There was concern that low-cost or social housing has not been delivered in recent developments and that there was no affordable housing provision with the 192 homes that already have permission. Attention was drawn to the Surplus Stores site, where promises of affordable housing were reneged on, because infrastructure requirements made the provision of affordable housing un-economic for developers.

7.4. Option 2: Economy

Option 2: Employment land and jobs

Ellingham, Harbridge and Ibsley PC

- Ellingham, Harbridge and Ibsley PC argued that significant growth in employment could not be achieved at Alderholt and that housing development there would not generate sufficient jobs to make the proposal sustainable.

Public response

- Many respondents pointed to the lack of employment opportunities in Alderholt (including small and medium sized employers). However, one respondent commented that Alderholt has some great local businesses, which could be expanded and encouraged more.
- Some respondents supported the provision of more employment land so that more residents could work in the village, reducing the pressure on highways from commuting.
- Others felt that there should be no major expansion without significant investment in jobs. It was argued that an eco-industrial estate could be created.
- A few respondents felt that there were sufficient links to Ringwood, Fordingbridge, Salisbury, Bournemouth and beyond to provide sufficient employment for those in the village and others argued that there was no need to bring new employment into the area just to make a development sustainable.
- Some respondents thought it unlikely that businesses would want to set up in Alderholt, especially since Covid. Others thought that there were not the entrepreneurial skills, natural resources or telecoms / transport infrastructure to deliver business growth in Alderholt.
- Others pointed out that the local plan does not quantify the expected number and distribution by sector, skill type and pay level of jobs to be provided.
- Some felt there would not be sufficient space for the level of new commercial development required and raised concerns that as new commercial land was located on the outskirts of the village, it would be away from homes.
- It was argued that significant infrastructure improvements would be needed to attract employers to Alderholt.
- Other respondents felt it more likely that any jobs created would be low skilled and poorly paid, so the workers would not be able to afford to purchase the new properties being built in the village. It was also argued that additional employment opportunities of that nature would be of little benefit to current residents, for similar reasons.
- A few respondents expressed the view that the expectations of landowners to achieve housing value for their land was preventing local businesses, such as Alderholt Motors, from expanding.
- Several respondents were concerned about the impact of growth on local rural businesses (for example, the riding stables), which would be adversely affected by increased traffic and road safety risks, also affecting their viability.
- There were also concerns that the draft Local Plan did not set out how much commercial land would be required for the 3,000 houses in Option 2.
- Many respondents argued that significant growth in employment could not be achieved at Alderholt and that housing development there would not generate sufficient jobs to make the proposal sustainable.
- A few respondents doubted whether sufficient local employment could be created for 3,000 new residents under Option 2.

- It was felt that it should be clear how much employment land would be provided under Option 2. It was suggested that at least 2.5 hectares would be required.
- One respondent estimated that Alderholt would need 4,000 to 6,000 jobs (under Option 2) and another suggested that at least one new job should be created for every new home.

Option 2: Increased commuting to jobs

Public response

- Many felt that the village is relatively remote from other sources of employment, such as Salisbury, Southampton and Bournemouth / Poole, with poor road and no train or bus links. The point was made that this situation meant that many current residents travel long distances to work.
- In the event that new jobs were not created at Alderholt, there were concerns that employment opportunities in nearby Fordingbridge, Ringwood, Verwood and Wimborne Minster would be unlikely to sustain an influx of economically active people into the village. There were concerns that the lack of jobs would result in an increase in out-commuting, which the village would be unable to cope with. It was argued that in such circumstances, the high level of additional traffic would require road improvements.
- One respondent was concerned that house-building underway at Fordingbridge would reduce opportunities for local employment resulting in greater commuter distances to find employment, in areas such as Bournemouth, Southampton and Salisbury.
- Some did not trust the council or developers to create local jobs and others felt that neither the provision of additional employment land nor the provision of new facilities would negate the number of car journeys locals would have to make. This is because public transport is infrequent and there are no alternatives.
- In the event that new businesses were attracted to the village (which many thought was unlikely), there were concerns that there would be a need for workers to commute in from outside to support these businesses generating additional traffic.

Option 2: Shops / retail provision

Alderholt Parish Council

- Only two retail outlets in the village - Development in Alderholt would require significant new retail premises selling a wide range of merchandise.

Public response

- Respondents noted that Alderholt has few amenities (i.e., two shops – a Co-op convenience store (not a supermarket) and a second-hand children's wear shop (Nearly New Beginnings), the garage, a public house, a sports and social club and Wolvercroft Nurseries).
- Some questioned whether the draft Local Plan should describe Alderholt as having 'shops', as it only has two. One respondent noted that 'you can't buy a pair of socks in Alderholt'.
- Given the size of the existing Co-op, there was concern that the store would become oversubscribed with growth.
- Other respondents made the point that growth would require significant new retail premises.
- Some respondents felt that current trends and the evolving state of town centres due to the move to on-line shopping, makes it impossible to plan retail outlet requirements with any certainty. Others felt it was unlikely that any retail business will want to open given the changing retail landscape.

- Some argued that a new village / town centre would not materialise and flourish in the light of past trends (i.e., the past loss of shops from Alderholt) and without support for local businesses.

Tourism

Public response

- One respondent argued that growth at Alderholt would destroy Dorset's tourism business. Another argued that Alderholt could build in its existing tourism economy, being a green hub for people visiting the area.

7.5. Option 2: Community Infrastructure

Option 2: Lack of infrastructure

Public response

- Many respondents felt that Alderholt has already expanded beyond the capacity of the roads and other infrastructure and that the village could not accommodate the levels of development proposed in either option.
- Others felt that the proposals for Alderholt were being put forward with little attention to the broader social, environmental, economic and leisure implications.
- It was argued that the pressure on services would hit all communities in the wider area, including Damerham, Whitsbury, Woodgreen, Breamore and many more.
- Concerns were also raised about utilities.
- It was noted that the power supply fluctuates and is prone to failure, requiring an over-arching plan to ensure that these problems would not continue. As an example, it was stated that a transformer fire caused by excessive load cut off the electricity supply for nearly a month in 2019.
- It was stated that there are sewage problems in the Augustus Park residential area in Fordingbridge and there were concerns that the pumping station at Alderholt and the sewage works at Fordingbridge may not have capacity.
- A wide range of views were expressed about the infrastructure in Alderholt that needs improving. Some respondents made the comment that all infrastructure needs improving. Others highlighted the need for improvements to different types of infrastructure including:
 - Roads within and beyond the village;
 - public transport (in particular bus services);
 - safe walking / cycling routes;
 - businesses (i.e., employment land);
 - new shops, including food shopping;
 - education, including primary and secondary provision (and school transport to access it);
 - emergency services, including a police station and a fire station;
 - health facilities, including a doctor's surgery, a dental practice and a cottage hospital with minor injuries unit;
 - leisure facilities;
 - facilities (including a community centre) for families, teenagers, the elderly, those less able or disabled, vulnerable people and people on the poverty line;
 - communications, including broadband and mobile phone services;
 - water supply. Low water pressure was identified as an issue in the village;
 - gas and electricity supply;

- drainage, including drainage to alleviate flooding; and
- sewerage infrastructure.
- Several respondents expressed the view that infrastructure should be improved before any development in the area was approved and that any development before such improvements would be ‘a disaster’.
- Others were concerned that improvements to infrastructure would not come until after expansion had taken place, which would be too late.

Option 2: The need for improvements to infrastructure

Fordingbridge TC

- Fordingbridge TC stated that considerable highways improvements would be needed as well as enhancement of school, employment, retail and community facilities in Alderholt to offset the additional burden on the facilities and roads in Fordingbridge.

Public response

- Many of these comments were made in relation to Option 2 and the point was made that if Alderholt is to be significantly expanded, then it needs all the facilities of a town.
- Some respondents were concerned that it was not clear what improvements would be made with Option 2. Others felt that there was no feasible way to deliver the infrastructure needed to support Option 2.
- Many respondents felt that the roads and infrastructure in the Alderholt area are not adequate, even without further growth. It was argued that there had been no investment for 50 years and no improvements to infrastructure for 36 years.
- The point was made that the roads in the village are inadequate, narrow and in some cases still unadopted, making it difficult for vehicles, including emergency vehicles, to pass. It was felt that unless this infrastructure is improved, these issues would impact a greater number of people.
- Some respondents noted that no infrastructure is planned to support the increase in the village population from the 192 homes with permission.
- Most concerns related to the lack of current infrastructure and to the significant new infrastructure needed to support Option 2, including roads, schools, healthcare (doctors), shops (including food shopping), amenities, leisure facilities, public transport and utilities, such as water, sewage and internet connections.
- It was considered that if Alderholt were to be significantly expanded (under Option 2) then it would need all the facilities of a town. However, it was felt that there was no feasible way to deliver the infrastructure needed.
- It was felt that any development would put a large strain on local services and that infrastructure improvements would be needed on every level.
- It was felt that utilities would require a complete overhaul to support major growth.
- It was felt that any major expansion should be conditional on significant investment in infrastructure.

Option 2: Healthcare

Alderholt Parish Council

- Local Health provision would be required – capacity issues at nearby doctors.
- Would only get a doctor’s surgery when the population exceeds 20,000 – concern with impact of largescale development on current local surgeries.

- Obtaining any help from Hampshire County Council or New Forest District Council would be highly unlikely due to their commitment to their own plans to enlarge Fordingbridge.

Public response

- It was stated that there is only an outreach part-time doctor's surgery and no dentist in Alderholt. The local doctors' surgery is already at capacity and there were concerns that it would be overwhelmed if the village increased in size. This would also result in a degradation in support to those currently using the surgery.
- It was pointed out that most residents receive their primary health care in Fordingbridge (or Cranborne) and secondary health care in Salisbury. There were concerns that Salisbury Hospital may not be in a position to cope with the additional demand from Option 2 and it is not clear how any upgrades would be funded.
- It was noted that emergency services in Hampshire were provided by the South Central Ambulance Trust, whereas Alderholt is served by Great Western Ambulance Trust.
- There were concerns that doctors / dentist surgeries in Fordingbridge and health care in the wider area would be oversubscribed with the growth already planned at Fordingbridge and Wimborne. It was felt that these facilities would not be able to cope with the impact of extra housing in Alderholt.
- There were concerns about the health and safety of new residents as the nearest doctors and dentists in Hampshire and the nearest hospital in Wiltshire all have to be accessed along very poor roads, which also have to be used by any emergency vehicles coming to Alderholt.
- The responses highlighted the need for additional local healthcare provision. Some respondents argued that the outreach part-time surgery would need to open more than just one morning a week. Others were concerned that Alderholt would not be provided with its own surgery unless the population exceeded 20,000, which was considered to be the minimum requirement for a new surgery.
- There were concerns that current and new families in Alderholt would have to compete for existing services until new health facilities are built.
- It was noted that Fordingbridge and Cranborne surgeries have difficulty in getting doctors and it was felt that Fordingbridge surgery could not cope with the planned growth in the town (including the Whitsbury Road development, which is under construction) let alone the extra pressure from growth at Alderholt. There was concern that this surgery may close its doors to new out of county (i.e., non-Hampshire) patients and that pressure on the surgeries from significant expansion at Alderholt could cost lives.

Option 2: Education

Hampshire County Council (HCC) as (neighbouring) Local Education Authority

- HCC recognises that if sufficient additional primary school places are provided at Alderholt as part of any development, then there is unlikely to be additional pressure on Fordingbridge primary schools. However, if new primary school places are not provided at Alderholt, then there could be a significant impact on primary school places in Fordingbridge.
- The Burgate School (in Hampshire) is the secondary school of choice for residents of Alderholt, but it is nearly full, so may need to be expanded to take pupils from major growth at Alderholt. HCC's view was that either such an expansion would need to be funded by the development at Alderholt and paid to HCC, or Dorset Council would need to expand its own secondary schools.

Alderholt Parish Council

- New schools at all tiers would be required – pupils from Alderholt are currently bused to Burgate, Wimborne and Cranborne.
- Burgate schools in Hampshire are likely to be oversubscribed as the development in Fordingbridge takes place.

Public response

- It was noted that there is one small First School and no secondary school in Alderholt.
- It was stated that the school at Alderholt does not have capacity and has already been expanded to the limits of its site.
- It was stated that Cranborne Middle School provides a good alternative to faith-based schools and it was argued that the middle school in Cranborne could be extended to serve Alderholt, if development occurs there.
- It was also noted that many children in the village receive their education in Hampshire or Wiltshire, with pupils being bused to Burgate School (in Fordingbridge), Queen Elizabeth Secondary School (in Wimborne) or Verwood, which some respondents considered to be ‘an environmental disaster’. It was stated that Burgate School and Queen Elizabeth Secondary School are already full. Burgate’s capacity is under further pressure from local development in Whitsbury Road, Fordingbridge.
- There were concerns about the implications of proposed growth in the wider area on education provision. It was argued that the schools in Fordingbridge and Wimborne would become oversubscribed as a result of the growth already proposed in those towns. It was felt that the increased demand for middle / upper school places in these towns would potentially preclude Alderholt pupils from attending. As a result, there was a concern that Alderholt children may have to travel further afield to be educated, possibly to Ferndown.
- It was noted that there are no shelters at the side of the road for youngsters waiting for school buses.
- Many respondents felt that proposed growth at Alderholt would exacerbate the current situation and considered that new schools at all tiers (i.e., lower, middle and upper) would be needed.
- A few respondents were concerned about additional provision in the village. It was argued that the enlarged population at Alderholt would be too small to provide sufficient children for three new schools. The village survey showed an average occupancy rate of 2.2, which calculates as 880 children of school age.
- There was also a concern that new schooling provision in Alderholt would see old school sites elsewhere being sold off for housing, resulting in children from other towns and villages being bused into Alderholt.
- Some respondents felt that it was unlikely that new schooling across all the tiers could be provided, given the length of time the Council has been trying to provide an upper school in Verwood. Others thought it would be unlikely that new upper schools would be provided in both Alderholt and Verwood, as it would not be cost effective.
- There was a concern that even with significant development at Alderholt, many children would still need to attend schools elsewhere, resulting in an increase in traffic, either by car or school bus.
- There was a particular concern with more pupils attending secondary schools elsewhere in Dorset (and Hampshire), which would increase traffic on the narrow country roads across a wide area.

- There was a further concern that any new schools would not be built until after the new houses had been constructed, so that families moving into the village would have to compete for spaces in existing schools in the short to medium term.
- It may require more children above Key Stage 1 to be bused to schools outside the village.

Option 2: Sport and recreation

Public response

- Some respondents felt that the provision of a network of open space for Alderholt is already overdue. It was pointed out that local forest car parks are already full on weekends and it was considered that access to outdoor locations can be difficult.
- In relation to Option 2 one respondent argued that recreational green spaces should split up the development, rather than be located on the edge.
- Some respondents supported proposed improvements to public outdoor space, including to the current recreation field and also sought other improvements, such as better access to Drove End Plantation, which is currently accessed along a 60 mph road with no pavements.
- Others viewed the proposed enhancements of recreation and leisure facilities at Alderholt with suspicion because of the high parking costs now charged at Moors Valley Country Park, which excluded some people resulting in it mostly being used by middle /upper income earners.

Option 2: Loss of community facilities (pub / riding school)

Public response

- One respondent stated that Hall & Woodhouse wanted to sell the village pub for housing, despite there being plenty of demand for a good pub / restaurant in the local area.
- Another respondent was concerned that the riding stable on the Ringwood Road would have to close, as the extra traffic would make its position unfeasible.

Option 2: Increased crime

Public response

- A few respondents felt that Alderholt already has a crime problem with burglaries, speeding and anti-social behaviour on the increase.
- It was noted that there is no local police station or regular police presence in the village, which one respondent felt 'left us vulnerable recently to very high levels of crime'.
- There was a concern that doubling the population in the village would lead to an increase in crime exacerbating problems of litter, vandalism, burglaries and theft, including dog theft.
- One respondent felt that the increase in crime associated with growth would mean that 'it will not be safe for children in and around Alderholt'.
- Others were concerned that without the provision of facilities for young people, there would be more problems with drugs and petty crime.

Option 2: Loss of village character / quality of life of residents

RAW Planning Ltd on behalf of Gascoyne Estates

- Gascoyne Estates argued that Alderholt did not need to become a town, in view of changing patterns of work and life with more people working from home due to Covid-19, shopping being done online and electric cars becoming more commonplace.

Public response

- A number of respondents felt that growth would spoil Alderholt's identity, village character, rural feel and community spirit.
- A few felt that Alderholt is part of the gateway to the New Forest and the West Country.
- Most respondents wanted the established character of the village to be preserved.
- One respondent felt that Alderholt had been developed to the point of a 'no-man's land' - not small or characterful enough to be a village, but not large enough to adequately provide for residents. Another argued that the village is nothing more than sea of concrete, a run-down, overblown dilapidated personalized car park for commuters.
- Many people felt that with growth Alderholt would no longer be a village, but a small town or a 'dormitory settlement'. They did not wish to live in a town or for Alderholt to become 'the next Verwood or Ferndown'.
- Many residents stated that they had chosen to live in a village, even with the 'downsides of the inconvenient location' and they did not want 'enhanced infrastructure and services'.
- A few were concerned about the expansion of Alderholt resulting in a merger with Fordingbridge.
- It was felt that growth would adversely affect residents' quality of life and some residents were concerned about the impact of development on views from their homes and on property values, particularly during construction.
- One respondent was concerned that an increase in building density (from about 16.5 dwellings per hectare to 30 dwellings per hectare) would change the character of the village from rural to suburban.
- It was argued that many families would leave the village if Option 2 was built.
- One respondent stated that they would have to move because they could not take the stress of building at the bottom of their garden.
- One respondent argued that the new homes are unlikely to be occupied by local people, being far more attractive to people retiring to Dorset from the home counties. There were concerns that large numbers of incomers, from areas with higher housing prices and income levels, would drive housing costs up to a level that could not be supported by local pay levels. It was argued that meeting the needs of residents of other areas, at the expense of the needs of local people would not contribute to the sustainability of the area.
- Some felt that major expansion would feel unsafe and would be unfair to current residents.
- Others were concerned that growth would exacerbate problems of traffic, pollution, litter, nuisance, noise and crime.
- One respondent argued that the lack of facilities in the new development would result in young people turning to crime.
- Another argued that villages should be kept as they are, as smaller populations are more resilient to pandemics.
- There were concerns about the impact of development during the construction phase and the disturbance and disruption this would cause to the existing population.
- Some respondents asked about compensation for: noise; air pollution; congestion; the impact on the rural nature of the area; and the detrimental impact on property values.
- New residents will have no affinity to the place, and be miles away from where they want to be, with all the associated social problems that can bring.
- Large scale housing estates for car based living will have detrimental effects on the village and environment.

7.6. Option 2: Minerals & Waste

Option 2: Minerals

Hampshire County Council (HCC) as Minerals and Waste Authority

- HCC noted that the southern extent of Option 2 lies within the safeguarded buffer zone of the Bleak Hill Quarry site. Policy 16 of the Hampshire Minerals and Waste Plan (2013) (HMWP) seeks to protect such sites from pressures, which may impact their ability to continue operating.
- HCC asked for this safeguarded mineral site to be given the necessary consideration if or when the feasibility of significant expansion of Alderholt is assessed in more detail.
- HCC also noted that any policy for an expanded settlement at Alderholt would need to include appropriate mitigation measures to enable the quarry to continue to operate.
- HCC pointed out that land both in Hampshire and Dorset which could form part of an expanded settlement at Alderholt is potentially underlain by viable minerals. On that basis, HCC suggested that any site allocations in the Alderholt area should be accompanied by a Minerals Resource Assessment to ensure that minerals are not unnecessarily sterilised by future development.

Public response

- There was concern that the land around Alderholt is constrained by natural mineral rights, as shown in the Dorset Minerals Plan.

Option 2: Waste

Hampshire County Council (HCC) Waste Disposal Authority

- HCC pointed out that many Dorset residents use the Somerley Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC), as it is only 6 miles from Alderholt and closer than the nearest recycling centre within Dorset, which is over 14 miles away in Wimborne. HCC stated that it cannot be assumed that there will be sufficient capacity at the Somerley HWRC to manage the bulky waste produced by the additional housing.

Public response

- Waste collection services.

7.7. Option 2: Highways

Option 2: General concerns about the existing roads

Hampshire County Council (HCC) as Local Highway Authority

- HCC stated that Alderholt is not an accessible location and has very poor transport connections, with no rail station or commercially run bus routes.
- HCC was concerned that even the 300 dwellings (under Option 1) would increase traffic on Hampshire's road network at Harbridge Drove and B3078. They considered that more information on trip distribution would be needed to determine how even low levels of growth could meet national and local sustainable development and carbon reduction policies.
- HCC made the point that the significant expansion of Alderholt would not be supported by key Hampshire policies, including: The Hampshire Vision 2050, which (amongst other things) identifies the changing climate as the most important driver for change in Hampshire; the emerging Local Transport Plan (LTP4) which supports the Hampshire Vision 2050 and proposes 'a

carbon neutral and resilient transport system designed around people'. It's guiding principles are to significantly reduce dependency on the private car and create a high-quality transport system that puts people first; and Hampshire's Climate Change Strategy (2020-2025). This seeks a reduction in transport-related carbon emissions to net zero (neutrality) by 2050 and a resilient transport network.

- As Local Highway Authority, HCC objected to any proposal that assumes a level of development adjacent to Alderholt within the New Forest District Council area.
- As (adjacent) Local Highway Authority HCC objected to significant expansion at Alderholt due to the absence of evidence on the impacts on the highway network and the adjacent areas in the New Forest.

Public response

- The roads in the local area were considered to be narrow and unsuited for the level of traffic currently experienced, with the network already being clogged during commuter periods.
- One respondent noted that Alderholt is used as a short cut to avoid queues in Ringwood, with some people driving through Fordingbridge and the village, rather than queuing in traffic on the A31.
- Travel links to Bournemouth, Salisbury and Southampton would need to be improved as most new households would work or go to school outside the local area.
- It was felt that existing 'country roads' would not lend themselves to a massive expansion of houses. They had been neglected, with no major investment over the last 20 years, resulting in more potholes and minor flooding, due to the erosion of banks, lack of maintenance of ditches etc.
- It was felt that the roads were not safe for pedestrians, cyclists or horse riders, especially in the winter.
- Some respondents were concerned that deer on the roads would lead to more accidents with increased traffic.
- One respondent considered that the safe speed on local roads is only about 20 to 30 mph, which meant longer commuting times to surrounding towns.
- In the absence of any improvements, some respondents felt that speed restrictions along all roads surrounding Alderholt should be reduced to 30 mph.

Option 2: Specific concerns about particular roads in the area

Alderholt Parish Council

- Route 1. B3078. Route 2. Verwood. Route 3. Harbridge/Ringwood. Route 4. Sandleheath - Correspondence from Dorset Council Highways noted that funding will be limited, hence that no provision for major Road links is currently under consideration.
- Hampshire Council likewise have no plans for any future improvement scheme to the B3078.
- Route 1. B3078:
 - This road is of a rural nature, narrow with many places reduced to single width only;
 - Two difficult 90 degree bends exist within Alderholt, along with dangerous narrows towards Fordingbridge;
 - Throughout the route to Fordingbridge narrow conditions exist, with numerous extreme restrictions throughout the historic Town's listed buildings;
 - B3078 route to Cranborne likewise has many narrow road widths, acute bends, single vehicle passage type streets with much negotiating around numerous parked vehicles at any time of the day or night;

- Route 2. Alderholt/Verwood route which commences direction at Cripplestyle is a rural type road with two 90 degree bends, plus many narrow single width areas.
- Route 3. Village route via Harbridge towards Ringwood is extremely rural enduring many traffic side lane junctions with poor visibility and narrow single track sections.
- Route 4. This route north towards Sandleheath has restrictive bridges (Old railway Bridge and Mill Bridge). Railway Bridge height restriction and the Mill Bridge width and weight, the route throughout has many narrows, blind bends of rural nature making it unsuitable for increase traffic.

Public response

- **The A338** - This is very twisty and narrow in places and has many accidents. People try and avoid it putting pressure on local roads.
- **Hillbury Road** - There is no speed limit along Hillbury Road, which encourages dangerous driving and speeding.
- **Ringwood Road** – This has major problems at both ends. At the northern end (Charing Cross) there are parking issues around the shop. At the southern end there is a sharp bend and a flooding issue that Dorset Council have not managed to solve over many years of trying.
- **The B3078 (general)** - The B3078 is of a rural nature and narrow in places with difficult bends in Alderholt making it a ‘nightmare for pedestrians and cyclists’. In places the backs are supported by vertical paving slabs, which can break and fall into the road causing an obstruction.
- **The B3078 to Fordingbridge** – The B3078 to Fordingbridge is narrow and dangerous with numerous width restrictions, which would be difficult to improve, such as at Pressey’s Corner and as the road heads down into the Avon Valley. There is only room for one-way flow where there are dangerous pinch points and more traffic on this section, particularly lorries, would raise serious safety issues, as it is impossible to provide a pavement or cycle track. The B3078 is narrow, steep and winding as it enters Fordingbridge and there is also a pinch point on the bridge entering the town. The junction with Fordingbridge High Street is awkward and congested and the High Street itself is inadequate to cater for significant increases in peak traffic flow. All these sections of the B3078 in the historic parts of Fordingbridge, will also come under pressure from developments already planned or underway in the town.
- **The B3078 to Cranborne** - In the direction of Cranborne the B3078 is narrow with acute bends and has a natural restriction adjacent to the watercress farm. In places, there is only room for a one-way flow of traffic. The B3078 through Cranborne is a narrow, single carriageway thoroughfare that would not cope with the increase in traffic from expansion at Alderholt. It is hazardous due to residents cars parked.
- **Harbridge Drove / Somerley Road** - The route south towards Ringwood is used as a rat run for traffic trying to avoid the A338. It is very rural with many junctions with poor visibility making it dangerous, especially in winter. It is a country lane with narrow single-track sections, where it is not wide enough to accommodate two passing vehicles and other road users. It is in a poor state of repair with crumbling edges and many potholes, partly due to use by HGVs and dumper trucks from the local quarries (including the Harmer Warren Quarry) / gravel extraction sites, which makes it dangerous for cyclists. HGVs use this road day and night and there have been a number of serious accidents resulting in fatalities. Trees have fallen and decayed surfaces have led to cars coming off the road, especially when flooded. It also has a difficult angled junction with the B3081 near the southern edge of Ringwood Forest. The road is in Hampshire, so would require investment from them to upgrade it, but there has been a lack of communication between Hampshire and Dorset over who should improve the road.

- **The route north through Sandleheath and Rockbourne** – The section of road to Sandleheath has restrictive bridges (Old Railway Bridge has a height restriction and Mill Bridge has a width and weight restriction), many narrows, blind bends with a bottleneck at Alderholt Mill and has flooding issues, all of which make it unsuitable for increased traffic. This route is used as a cut through by much of the traffic to Salisbury avoiding the A338 and Fordingbridge. It emerges onto the A354 south of Coombe Bissett in Wiltshire, where there is a difficult junction with poor lines of sight. The road through Rockbourne is narrow, constrained by its proximity to the stream and cottages very close to the road, and is 'in an appalling condition'. Vehicles travelling in opposite directions occasionally get jammed together due to the inadequate width of the road.
- **The road to Verwood** - This route (Batterley Drove and Edmonsham Road) is rural with two 90-degree bends (Batterley Drove) and narrow single width sections. These country lanes often flood and are dangerous in winter months.
- **Kent Lane** - The C192 Kent Lane links Alderholt to the A338 and onto Ringwood. It has two weak bridges and large sections of single track road, where there is only room for one-way flow in places. It has no speed limit, no pavements and is full of potholes, which Hampshire Council refuse to repair. Although it is a major route out of the village, Kent Lane was not included in the traffic survey for Alderholt (where cameras were set up around the village). Past growth at Alderholt has already had a detrimental impact on Kent Lane, which used to be a quiet rural byway, but is now a rat run used by Alderholt residents cutting through to the A338. It is unsuitable for present traffic levels, let alone any increase from further growth at Alderholt. When the River Avon floods across the road between Harbridge House and the A338, traffic must turn around causing even more congestion in Kent Lane. Also, any increase in traffic on Kent Lane would endanger walkers on the section of the Avon Valley Way that uses this road.

Option 2: Additional traffic

Public response

- A number of issues with existing levels of traffic were identified, including high levels of car ownership and the narrow roads in the area. It was stated that traffic studies show that 'rush hour' traffic is already at barely tolerable limits.
- Respondents noted that through traffic, including commercial traffic to and from employment sites, was a problem. Heavy congestion during peak hours on the M27, A31 and the A338 resulted in some people driving through Fordingbridge and Alderholt to avoid the queues.
- It was noted that the 30 mph speed limit in the village is not observed even on small bridges and blind corners, putting tractors, horse riders, pedestrians and cyclists in danger.
- Environmental damage and hazards to health from tyre rubber particles, car and lorry exhausts (including diesel particulates), were of concern.
- There were concerns about the combined traffic impacts of possible significant development of Alderholt with planned development in Fordingbridge.
- Many of the concerns were based on the lack of employment in the village, requiring new residents to commute to work in places such as Bournemouth or Salisbury for better salaries and / or to better their career prospects.
- It was suggested that the increase in commuting to work from Alderholt would cause severe traffic jams (made worse by caravans / HGVs / tractors with their trailers of hay bales and animals) with the possibility of tailbacks from Cranborne and Fordingbridge through Alderholt.
- One respondent was also concerned that the time spent commuting from Alderholt would reduce the amount of time parents of school age children could spend at work, also reducing their employability and their earnings potential.

- There were concerns that the roads would not be able to accommodate the additional traffic from development, which: would cause constant problems in the narrow lanes; result in more accidents; increase air pollution causing an increase in asthma-related disease; increase noise pollution; and shake the shallow foundations of older Victorian houses in Hillbury Road.
- The impact of extra traffic from Alderholt causing increased congestion, noise and air pollution in Verwood, Cranborne, Sandleheath, Rockbourne, Harbridge and Fordingbridge was raised as an issue.

Option 2: Lorries, including mineral extraction lorries

Alderholt Parish Council

- If mineral extraction at Purple Haze is approved, there will be increased HGV pressure on this inadequate local road system.

Ellingham, Harbridge & Ibsley PC

- Ellingham, Harbridge & Ibsley PC felt that the road network could not cope with the lorry traffic from nearby mineral permissions.

East Dorset Environment Partnership (EDEP)

- EDEP stated that the section on Alderholt should quantify concerns about the inadequacy of the current road system and increased HGV pressure on the roads if mineral extraction at Purple Haze is approved.

Public response

- A number of respondents raised the issue of lorries and / or HGV traffic in the area.
- It was noted that local roads had not been upgraded to accommodate larger lorries, which can be up to 44 tonnes and up to 2.6 metres wide.
- There was concern that growth would result in a significant increase in the number of HGV movements, putting further pressures on roads.
- Others were concerned that proposed mineral extraction at nearby Purple Haze would further increase HGV traffic.
- There were also concerns that sat-navs add to the problem by directing large lorries through Alderholt.
- It was stated that the narrow and inadequate road system made it 'virtually impossible' for HGVs to pass side by side, resulting in damage. Specific issues identified include: congestion on Bowerwood Hill; collisions with the railway bridge in Sandleheath Road; aggregate lorries overturning sideways through the Somerley Estate; and difficulties with passing parked vehicles in Castle Street, Cranborne.

Option 2: Need to improve local roads

Alderholt PC

- Alderholt PC argued that major roads improvements would be required to link to the A338 at Harbridge, the A31 at Ringwood and on the B3078 towards Cranborne and down to Verwood. It was also noted by the PC that any road improvements would require work in collaboration with Hampshire County Council.

Ellingham, Harbridge & Ibsley PC

- Ellingham, Harbridge & Ibsley PC stated that the existing road network is already oversubscribed, in a poor state of repair, narrow in places and incapable of handling existing traffic let alone the traffic from Options 1 or 2.
- The PC was concerned that growth would have a huge impact on the rural nature of the villages and hamlets through which alternative routes might be planned.
- The PC also felt that any new link road to the A338 over the river or southwards towards the A31 would affect Ellingham, Harbridge & Ibsley Parish.

Fordingbridge TC

- Fordingbridge TC noted that the road from Alderholt to Fordingbridge is so narrow to be almost single tracked in places. The TC was concerned that development at Alderholt would further impact this road, Ashford Road, Station Road and the road network in the centre of Fordingbridge.
- The TC also noted that the proposals for housing at Fordingbridge in the NFDC Local Plan, which are likely to be built in the next five years, will have an impact on local roads.
- They were concerned that either proposal in Alderholt would have a further significant adverse impact on the roads in Fordingbridge.
- The TC was concerned that the roundabout in Fordingbridge would be operating beyond its capacity in the future prior to the proposed new developments in Fordingbridge and any further development of Alderholt taking place, based on work undertaken by Hampshire County Council.

New Forest District Council (NFDC)

- NFDC was concerned that there is little information on the potential impacts on the highways network and on Fordingbridge. It was noted that no transport assessment work has yet been published and is needed. It should identify and assess the impacts on the road and transport network and appropriate mitigation measures. NFDC considered that development in Alderholt should fund all necessary traffic management measures in Fordingbridge and on affected rural roads in Hampshire. The development at Alderholt should only be considered acceptable if satisfactory mitigation measures (including in Hampshire) can be identified, funded and implemented.

Rockbourne PC

- Rockbourne PC argued that the proposed developments at Alderholt have not considered the impact of increased traffic on the road network beyond the village, such as the road through Rockbourne and on the adjacent winterbourne stream, which is an internationally important habitat.
- It was noted that the road through Rockbourne is used as a 'rat-run' to and from Salisbury, is narrow, unmarked and in poor condition with potholes, edge-breaks and edge-drops.
- It was also noted that there is heavy congestion at drop-off and pick-up times outside the Western Downland School when, on occasion, the road is impassable with gridlocked traffic.
- An associated concern was the impact on the winterbourne, known as Sweatfords Water or the Bourne, which is an important aquatic habitat that runs parallel to the road. It already suffers bank erosion from vehicles.
- Rockbourne PC was concerned about the increased traffic problems from proposed growth at Alderholt, including: increased road degradation from large agricultural vehicles, online shopping

delivery vans and lorries and additional commuter traffic; and more erosion, further incidents of collapse of the riverbank and more pollution of The Bourne from road run-off.

- The PC also requested that the Highways Agency should be consulted on proposed development at Alderholt, in order to assess the scheme fully.

Public response

- Respondents noted that all the routes around Alderholt are rural lanes with only three 'B roads' in and out of the village. The roads are rural, narrow with no pavements and in disrepair with many potholes that need refilling. They are considered to be busy and hazardous especially in winter when they are prone to flooding and not gritted.
- It was considered that the local roads were only just coping without any additional housing and that better roads were needed now. One respondent stated that 'you removed our railway, so we now rely exclusively on the roads'.
- Many respondents noted that the proposals for growth would result in more cars on the roads, which they felt could not be accommodated, with either Option 1 or 2.
- There were concerns that additional growth without any improvements would make travelling in and out of Alderholt more dangerous, cause more pollution and result in bottlenecks, especially in Fordingbridge. It was felt that 'without better roads there will be road-traffic misery'.
- There were also concerns that during the construction phase, building site traffic including heavy plant, could not be accommodated on the local roads. As a result, many respondents argued that road improvements should be prioritised and carried out before development takes place.
- They noted that improvements in and beyond Alderholt would be needed and argued that they would be very expensive.
- Others were more concerned about the impacts of Option 2, especially at various 'pinch points' that cause delays and which would become much worse with significant expansion.
- One respondent argued that local roads will never be improved or widened enough to support Option 2.
- The lack of a detailed transport infrastructure plan for Alderholt was queried.
- A variety of roads were specifically suggested for improvement, including:
 - upgrading of the A338 to stop the traffic jams that already occur;
 - major improvements to road links to the A338 at Harbridge (including an alternative route over the River Avon to the A338) and to the A31 at Ringwood in collaboration with Hampshire;
 - major alterations to the junction on the A31 west of Ringwood to address the issue of insufficient capacity;
 - various improvements to the B3078 towards Fordingbridge including, improvements to narrow sections approaching up Bowerwood Road by Lakewood House, which are easily blocked by HGVs approaching; and to Fordingbridge High Street, which is inadequate to cater for increases in peak traffic flow;
 - major improvements to the B3078 towards Cranborne and all the way to Wimborne;
 - improvements to the roads to Verwood (Batterley Drove and Edmonsham Road); and
 - the re-routing of, or major work to, the Somerley Road: to remove the sharp bends and very narrow section of roads, including those south towards Harbridge; and to remove the undulations and elevation changes around the entrance to the quarry; and
 - the provision of street lighting and pavements along Hillbury Road and improvements to the junction of Hillbury Road and Ringwood Road, which is prone to flooding.
- It was noted that many road improvements would require collaboration with Hampshire County Council.

- It was reported that Dorset Council Highways Section had said there is no funding for major road links.
- Some respondents were concerned that major upgrades to the roads would involve a multitude of environmental issues.
- Others pointed to the need for the compulsory purchase of land and property to upgrade roads, which would not be popular.

Option 2: Delivery of road improvements

Ellingham, Harbridge & Ibsley PC

- Ellingham, Harbridge & Ibsley PC (and other respondents) stated that there are no plans by Dorset or Hampshire councils to improve the road network in this area.
- The PC also felt that improvements needed to the road network would be unachievable.

Public response

- A number of respondents were unclear about how road improvements would be delivered and felt that there was a lack of detail in the local plan on this issue.
- Some thought it was unlikely that the roads into Alderholt would be improved to support Option 2. Others were concerned that past promises of road improvements were never delivered.
- One respondent felt that there was no prospect of any major improvements to the B3078 and that a bypass for the town of Fordingbridge (including a bridge over the river to the A338) would not be forthcoming.
- Another respondent could not see how Station Road in Alderholt could be improved.
- Some respondents raised the issue of funding and were concerned that improvements would not be funded, either by local councils or developers.
- Others pointed out that development at Alderholt would have significant impacts on roads in Hampshire and that collaboration with Hampshire County Council as Highways Authority was needed.
- It was felt that improvements needed to the road network would be unachievable, which one respondent felt would inhibit significant expansion at Alderholt.
- Some respondents pointed to the need for Wiltshire, Hampshire and New Forest Councils to have a co-ordinated approach to road improvements, but felt it was unlikely that these Councils would improve nearby roads for Dorset's benefit.

Option 2: Need for road improvements before construction starts

Public response

- Many respondents argued that road improvements must be delivered before any construction takes place.
- Others specified that particular roads (including Hillbury Road and the route south to Ringwood) must be improved before any construction takes place.

Option 2: Traffic calming / cycle and pedestrian routes

Fordingbridge TC

- Fordingbridge TC felt that under either option better cycle and pedestrian links between Alderholt and Fordingbridge would be necessary, such as the proposed Alderholt Trailway.

Public response

- Many respondents noted that cycling and walking on the narrow country roads in the area is hazardous and it was felt that a network of pedestrian and cycle links was already overdue.
- Cycle links to Verwood and Ringwood were also sought.
- Some respondents felt that cycling is mostly for leisure purposes (noting that it can cause damage to heathland and to the New Forest) and is not a solution for commuting, shopping, hospital visits, nightlife, etc.
- It was pointed out that there is no safe option to walk to Fordingbridge and within the village there are no safe paths to the church, the recreation ground or to the main access to Ringwood Forest on Harbridge Drove.
- Both Hillbury and Ringwood Road do not have pedestrian walkways and Hillbury Road is unlit. It was felt that walking on these roads could be 'life-threatening' and that 'with any population increase, fatalities would be almost inevitable'.
- It was pointed out that there is poor access for mothers with prams and the elderly with mobility scooters in and around the village.
- One respondent reported that Dorset Council's Highways Section had stated that it would not be possible to install pedestrian pavements along Ringwood Road, so any pedestrian access would need to be through the recreation ground linking to Birchwood and Alderholt Drives. There was a concern that this would increase walking distances to facilities in the village as these are less direct routes.

Option 2: Parking

Public response

- A few respondents raised parking as an issue expressing concern that cars park on the pavements in Alderholt now, because there is nowhere else for them to park.

Option 2: Public transport

Go South Coast Buses

- The company stated that a larger allocation of around 5,000 homes could support bus services, in the longer term.
- They also stated that public transport operators should be included in discussions about growth at Alderholt from the start.

South Western Railway

- Limited expansion at this location - as the text notes it is very difficult to provide good sustainable transport options here given it is away from the main A338 bus corridor and some distance from a rail station.
- Need for very high frequency bus service to Salisbury and Bournemouth with direct connections to rail stations - unlikely that this would be commercially viable beyond initial developer contributions unless there is a very high level of development.

Alderholt Parish Council

- Requirement for an 18 hour per day regular bus service to Fordingbridge and Ringwood seven days per week.

East Dorset Environment Partnership (EDEP)

- EDEP was concerned that public transport would be used less in the future due to the need to socially distance.

Developers/Landowners/Agents

- A developer suggested that the No. 97 bus route could benefit from an increase in users from new development in Alderholt (and potentially from developer contributions arising from new development).

Public response

- A number of respondents felt that the local plan did not recognise that Alderholt has no, or very limited, public transport (train or bus) services. It was considered that this situation made car ownership and car use a necessity. It was also felt that a significant switch to public transport, which climate change necessitates, would not be realistic for Alderholt.
- There is no rail service and a few respondents made the point that Alderholt 'is never likely to get one'. A few people felt that the railway link to Salisbury should be reopened.
- It was stated that local bus services were 'few and far between' or 'virtually non-existent'. It was pointed out that there are no regular bus routes to Bournemouth, Fordingbridge, Poole, Ringwood, Salisbury and beyond.
- It was stated that there is a limited community bus service funded by 3 or 4 other villages, but this 3-day per week bus service only runs outside normal travel-to-work hours. Consequently, the bus does not marry up with Fordingbridge or Ringwood at times that would permit people to travel for work or education. It was argued that in practice, this meant that there is no public transport for workers or young people in education.
- It was stated that in order to get to Fordingbridge to catch a bus, a car is required to get there. This is because there are no suitable pavements, cycle routes or trailways to Fordingbridge and cycling or walking on the narrow country roads is potentially hazardous.
- It was stated that 'taxis have to be bribed to come out here'.
- Some respondents felt that public transport should be improved with immediate effect to reduce car ownership.
- One respondent argued that families without public transport would become isolated, potentially resulting in vandalism from bored youngsters.
- There were different views of the level of bus service that should be provided. Some argued that a regular community bus service to Fordingbridge, Ringwood and Verwood should be provided, whereas others argued that an 18-hour per day service to Fordingbridge & Ringwood seven days a week would be required to make Alderholt sustainable.
- Alderholt was considered to be relatively remote from larger towns with employment and services, as there were none within 15-minutes' drive. As there are many potential destinations for commuter journeys, it was felt that this would make the provision of improved public transport for commuters impractical.
- One option suggested was to divert the X3 bus service from Salisbury to Bournemouth (via Fordingbridge and Ringwood) through Alderholt, but there were concerns that this would make it unattractive to current users because it would add significantly to their journey time. There were also concerns that this would not be attractive to bus operators as it would require additional buses and drivers to maintain the existing schedule.
- Another suggestion was to provide a shuttle bus service between Alderholt and Fordingbridge to link with the X3 service, but it was felt that this would be unattractive, except for those working in Fordingbridge.

- There were concerns that the road network is not suitable for increased buses to and from Alderholt to support growth. Any new bus service would need to navigate the hazards on the narrow local roads unless major improvements were carried out.
- It was felt that public transport improvements (with Option 2) were unlikely to be delivered and one respondent thought that the provision of public transport to Fordingbridge would not be a priority.
- One respondent argued that public transport connections from Alderholt to the SE Dorset conurbation would be inadequate to mitigate the impacts of all the additional traffic on already struggling local roads.
- Concerns were also raised about a proposed public transport hub near the A338 to serve the Alderholt / Fordingbridge area (as mentioned in paragraph 18.4.14). It was argued that such a hub would cause damage to the Avon Valley / New Forest area and would not mitigate the effect of extra traffic on the roads between Alderholt and Fordingbridge or in the surrounding villages.
- Need for sustainable travel links, cycle routes, buses (electric ones), car shares.

8. Question 2: What improvements would be needed to improve the self-containment of the settlement?

8.1. Self-containment

'self-sustaining' or 'self-contained'

Alderholt PC

- Alderholt PC and many other respondents argued that it would be unrealistic to try and make an enlarged Alderholt 'self-sustaining' or 'self-contained'.
- Alderholt PC considered that any growth at Alderholt would be in contravention of the local plan's 'strategic priorities' (pages 27 and 28 - Vol 1). The key concern was additional car travel from this 'remote village' which would 'blow a hole in the Council's efforts to address the climate emergency'.
- Most residents of working age need to travel long distances to their employment which is often not only outside the village but, usually, outside the county - should not be developing housing to suit employers in neighbouring Counties.
- There are more sustainable areas totally within Dorset that would be less expensive, kinder to the environment and closer to established infrastructure – Dorchester and Crossways.
- Both options 1 & 2 contravene Dorset's own climate control and toxic emissions regulations.

Amphibian and Reptile Conservation

- Amphibian and Reptile Conservation argued that it would be unrealistic to try and make an enlarged Alderholt 'self-sustaining' or 'self-contained'.

East Dorset Environment Partnership (EDEP)

- EDEP was concerned that it would be unrealistic to seek self-containment for Alderholt due to the inadequate and narrow road system in the area. EDEP noted that nearby Verwood (which is a larger settlement) is not self-contained.

- EDEP were concerned that there was a lack of evidence of how the proposals at Alderholt would reduce the need to travel. EDEP felt that development at Alderholt should be required to comply with Policy COM7, to create a safe, efficient and low carbon transport network.
- EDEP felt that the total carbon footprint of the development must be assessed, including: the land take to widen roads; soil, carbon and biodiversity loss; and the use of resources.

RAW Planning Ltd on behalf of Gascoyne Estates

- Gascoyne Estates argued that Option 2 would be contrary to paragraph 79 of the NPPF, as it would not result in sustainable development. They felt that the expectation that Option 2 would create all services and employment opportunities to support significant expansion was unrealistic.

Ellingham, Harbridge & Ibsley PC

- Ellingham, Harbridge & Ibsley PC argued that it would be unrealistic to try and make an enlarged Alderholt 'self-sustaining' or 'self-contained'.

Fordingbridge TC

- Fordingbridge TC was concerned that both the NFDC and draft Dorset Local Plans suggest that Fordingbridge and Alderholt are self-contained, however they felt that neither have the necessary employment opportunities or shop and leisure facilities to be self-contained.

Godshill PC

- Godshill PC argued that it would be unrealistic to try and make an enlarged Alderholt 'self-sustaining' or 'self-contained'.

New Forest National Park Authority (NFNPA)

- NFNPA agrees with the statement in the draft Local Plan that significant growth at Alderholt would need to ensure that the new settlement would be self-contained to reduce the need for car-based trips from what is currently a relatively unsustainable location.

South Western Railway

- It is not realistic to assume that it can be relatively self contained by providing some employment opportunities. The reality is that there will be extensive trips to the BCP area, Salisbury and Ringwood by car.
- It is an unsustainable location from a transport point of view.

Public response

- Some respondents felt that any additional growth at Alderholt would not be sustainable.
- Some were concerned about the limited potential for employment growth, which would increase traffic.
- Others were concerned about the loss of habitats.
- There were concerns about the impacts of additional commuting to access health (and other) services and education in nearby towns.
- Others pointed to the toxic emissions associated with additional car travel, arguing that growth would result in a reduction in air quality.
- Some felt that the development would simply be a large housing estate.
- Many thought it would become a dormitory town with not enough shops and few local jobs, like Verwood or a soulless 'new town' like Milton Keynes.

- One developer argued that self-containment could not be achieved given the proximity of Fordingbridge.
- It was stated that most residents need a car or public transport to access employment, education and services and it was felt that improved schooling, medical, broadband, recreational and shopping provision would be required to make Alderholt more self-contained.
- It was felt that expanding Alderholt into a sizeable town to satisfy a county housing quota would be unsustainable and misconceived and that the necessary infrastructure needed to improve self-containment would not be delivered.
- One respondent argued that the sustainability of Alderholt relies on the viability of community facilities such as the Co-op, Post Office, the Churchill Arms and the village hall.
- A few respondents pointed out that Alderholt used to be more self-contained, but was now less so, because it had lost facilities in the past with needs now being met in the nearby towns of Fordingbridge, Ringwood and Verwood. It was pointed out that facilities such as butchers, hairdressers, estate agents, paper shop, pet supplies, tea rooms, post office, surplus store, undertakers and petrol station had all been lost, raising doubts over whether such uses could ever be re-established to make Alderholt more self-contained in the future.
- Some respondents pointed to nearby Verwood as an example of how a large community had developed in recent years with a lack of facilities and high levels of car travel.
- Other respondents argued that the environmental impact of the necessary infrastructure improvements (particularly roads) would be 'unsustainable and beyond economic justification'.
- Some respondents pointed out that Fordingbridge is too far to walk or cycle to, so most trips there would be made by car. Others argued that an average round trip of 2km would be required from either development option to shop for groceries at the Co-op store within Alderholt itself. It was felt that such trips would always be made by car, which would increase pollution.
- Suggestion of creation of a "green" town, Dorset example to the rest of the south west. Sustainable green development. Zero carbon houses vertical gardens, sustainable transport.
- There was also a concern that no sustainability assessment of Option 2 had been done. It was felt that an unbiased sustainability appraisal should be produced involving local people.
- Many respondents argued that the impacts of development would have a negative impact on the environment making 'mass expansion' entirely unsuitable. Particular environmental concerns included additional traffic, pollution and the loss of greenfield spaces.
- Many respondents sought assurances that the environment would be protected.
- Some respondents felt that Alderholt should not be expanded just because the land around the village is environmentally 'unconstrained'.
- Others argued that Alderholt is not 'relatively unconstrained' as stated in the draft Local Plan. They pointed out that the village is constrained by issues such as the poor road network, and a lack of public transport, utility infrastructure and employment opportunities.

8.2. Infrastructure improvements

- A summary of the many different infrastructure improvements (and specific items) sought in the responses to the consultation is set out below.

Improvements sought to housing and community facilities

Public response

- Better provision of affordable housing.
- Sheltered housing and residential / nursing accommodation (for an ageing population).
- New or expanded schools (up to and including A-levels). Specific upgrades were suggested for: Alderholt's first school; Cranborne's middle school; and Queen Elizabeth Secondary School in Wimborne.
- Reconsideration of middle and upper school catchments.
- Additional pre-school facilities.
- A centre to the new 'town', or a village square with amenities for shopping, eating etc.
- A town hall.
- A library.
- A police station (or an increased police presence).
- A fire station.
- Ambulance services.
- Leisure facilities (including for families, teenagers and the older community).
- A leisure / recreation centre with outdoor and indoor courts / gym / bowling / exercise classes and a swimming pool (or a stand-alone swimming pool).
- Another social meeting place to encourage community support for residents.
- A community centre for young families, teenagers, the elderly and disabled.
- Facilities for those less able, vulnerable or on the poverty line.
- Youth centres (as youth provision is non-existent for teenagers).
- More infrastructure for children.

Improvements sought to health facilities

Public response

- A doctor's surgery (and / or a health / medical centre).
- A dispensary / pharmacy and / or a chemist.
- Dentists / a dental surgery.
- A hospital (or cottage hospital with minor injuries unit).
- Health facilities for families, teenagers and the older community.
- Community health care.

Environmental measures and improvements to recreational facilities

Public response

- Eco-buildings.
- Low impact eco-homes, with solar panels, heat pumps and electric car charging points.
- Homes designed to enable working from home.
- Expanded public recreation areas.
- The upgrading of the current recreation ground.
- Covered and open-air recreation areas.
- Dog walking spaces (away from play areas).
- Larger-scale open spaces within developments (to reduce the need to find accessible open space around the village).

- Acoustic fencing, or other noise-reducing methods, to protect residents on Hillbury Road and other through-routes from unpleasant disturbance.
- Allotments.
- Tree planting.
- Protection of existing significant habitats.
- Nature parks.

Improvements sought to support the economy

Public response

- Facilities for businesses.
- Low cost industrial sites for manufacturing and industry.
- Jobs / employment opportunities and / or business space to create employment opportunities.
- Major incentives to employers to locate businesses in such an inconvenient location.
- Increased opportunities for young people.
- A shopping centre (or range of new / affordable shops).
- A supermarket or cheap supermarkets like Aldi or Lidl.
- Food shops (including a butcher and a greengrocer).
- Hairdresser.
- Banking facilities (there is not even a bank in Fordingbridge).
- Entertainment, including a cinema.
- Public houses.
- Restaurants.

Improvements sought to transport infrastructure

Public response

- Better access, including links to local towns.
- One respondent suggested dual carriageways linking Alderholt with Fordingbridge, Verwood and the A31. Another respondent suggested turning the A338 from Ringwood to Salisbury into a dual carriageway with a dual carriageway spur to Alderholt.
- A bypass for Fordingbridge (if not flattened when the A338 is turned into a dual carriageway).
- Significant improvements to the local road network, including road widening.
- One respondent suggested a need for a completely new road system from all four directions of entry to Alderholt with a ring road to take through traffic outside the village.
- A by-pass for Cranborne (as it would be impossible to improve the road situation in the village).
- Improvements to the quality (and safety) of roads, including road drainage (to resolve flooding issues).
- Improved highway maintenance.
- Speed restrictions on all roads surrounding the village, including reducing 40 mph limits to 30 mph, with increased speed cameras on Ringwood, Hillbury and Station Road.
- Traffic calming / control on the roads.
- Improved road signage.
- Additional car parking spaces in Fordingbridge to cope with increased traffic from an expanded Alderholt.
- Parking areas in Alderholt for churches and other venues.
- Off-road parking for two cars for every home.

- Regulations to control the additional vehicles that new residents would bring.
- More road lighting (as some roads do not have streetlights).
- More pavements (as some roads do not have pedestrian pavements).
- Public transport.
- A better / regular / affordable bus service, including links to the X3 service in Fordingbridge (although one respondent argued that improved bus services would cause pollution and damage already fragile roads).
- Coaches or trams to all working hubs.
- Reinstatement of the railway line and station.
- Rail links to London (as in most of Dorset's large towns) and Salisbury.

Improvements sought to pedestrian and cycle routes

Public response

- Footpaths linking Alderholt with Fordingbridge and Verwood.
- More and safer footpaths in Alderholt, including footpaths down Ringwood, Station and Hillbury Roads.
- Safe cycling routes in Alderholt, including cycleways down Ringwood, Station and Hillbury Roads.
- A safe cycle route on the trailway to Fordingbridge.
- Safe cycleways linking Alderholt with Fordingbridge, Verwood and the A31.
- Bridleways and measures for the safety of horses and riders.

Improvements sought to utilities

Alderholt Parish Council

- Service provision would require upgrading - water supply and drainage, and better gas and electric supply.
- Alderholt currently enjoys poor broadband connection and mobile phone signal.
- Understand Wessex Water are very concerned about the Fordingbridge developments currently underway which will create maximum capacity on the sewage plant system.

Wessex Water

- Wessex Water considered that under Option 2 the expansion of the sewage treatment works at Fordingbridge would be required, together with a new dedicated connection serving the development.
- Wessex Water sought further discussion with Dorset Council to consider feasibility and investment.

Public response

- Water supply (the water supply system suffers from low water pressure and frequent leaks).
- Drainage (already at breaking point with drainage in the south of the village resulting in frequent flooding). Some areas have no mains drainage.
- Sewerage infrastructure (already at breaking point). One respondent stated that septic tanks would not work in some places due to the high water table.
- Several respondents argued that the sewage treatment plant in Fordingbridge is reaching capacity due to the building in the area and raised concerns that if the plant fails, the effluent will go into the River Avon causing immense environmental impacts.

- One respondent also noted that the sewage pump in Alderholt had had issues when the electricity went down.
- Gas (parts of the village have no mains gas).
- Electricity (there are regular power cuts).
- The power lines running through the sites proposed for development would make construction difficult. There were also concerns that moving the power lines could have an unacceptable impact on residents.
- Communications.
- Better broadband (there are poor internet speeds, connections are limited to a few providers, no fibre is available and according to BT a fast service cannot be provided to parts of Alderholt).
- A satellite to improve internet speeds.
- Better mobile phone coverage.

Impact of improved infrastructure

Public response

- A few respondents were concerned about the impact infrastructure improvements would have on Alderholt. They felt that it would change the village out of all recognition and would destroy its character.
- Others were concerned that better facilities in Alderholt would not make the new 'town' self-contained, as it would attract people in from other places with inadequate services. For example, it was suggested that a new school at Alderholt would see children being bused in from Verwood, West Moors and Fordingbridge.
- Concern with impact on local towns like Verwood and Fordingbridge;
- If you built schools here that would have an impact on schools like Cranborne middle school, who in the past have said they would not be viable without Alderholt children.
- If you build a supermarket here that will impact on Morrison's in Verwood and bring people here from outside so more traffic on roads that already can't cope.

9. Question 3: What factors may inhibit the deliverability of the significant expansion of Alderholt?

Infrastructure delivery

Ellingham, Harbridge & Ibsley PC

- Ellingham, Harbridge & Ibsley PC was concerned that improved infrastructure may not be forthcoming and others were concerned that there may not be agreement and / or financial support from neighbouring councils, including Hampshire County and New Forest District.

Godshill PC

- Godshill PC argued that all infrastructure improvements should be in place before the construction period and that a large fund should be set aside to ensure that facilities are provided and are not reneged on by developers because of financial viability.

Public response

- Some respondents argued that the Council should make a stronger commitment to investment in infrastructure, including roads and community facilities. Others felt there was a lack of

clarity about the plans to improve infrastructure and were concerned that any such plans would be 'over-promised and under-delivered'.

- A few respondents argued that the authorities would pay lip service to providing infrastructure as a sweetener to make the proposed housing palatable to local people.
- Others were concerned that the infrastructure to support growth would not come until five years after expansion, which would be too late.
- It was felt that there was 'an unrealistic expectation' that developers would provide the infrastructure needed to facilitate growth.
- It was argued that the financial and environmental costs related to expansion at Alderholt would make the development unviable.
- One respondent argued that the necessary improvements in infrastructure could only be financed by developers raising the price of new properties beyond market value, which would make it highly unlikely that there would be the necessary finance to deliver the infrastructure required.
- Respondents pointed to other nearby areas that had seen significant growth (including Wimborne and Verwood) and noted that they had only limited road or transport improvements and few additional services or facilities provided. The failure to deliver an upper school in Verwood, was highlighted as an example.
- There was a concern that no assessment of infrastructure requirements had been undertaken, which took account of the development planned at both Alderholt and Fordingbridge.
- The cost of providing essential infrastructure had not been worked out.
- Some respondents felt that the cost of the infrastructure needed to support Option 2 would be unaffordable.
- One respondent was concerned that contributions from developers may be diverted to cover Council budget shortfalls as the country grapples with the economic fall-out of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Deliverability / viability

Dorset Wildlife Trust (DWT)

- DWT were concerned that the significant expansion of Alderholt may not be deliverable due to: an inability to make the expansion sustainable; an inability to identify areas suitable for SANG provision; and the potential impacts on the Ecological Network in the area

Action4Alderholt

- Action4Alderholt argued that there is no evidence of sufficient demand for Option 2 within the plan period and that there would not be sufficient time to plan for Option 2 to be included in the 2023 local plan.

Ellingham, Harbridge and Ibsley PC

- The PC were concerned that there was no feasibility study to accompany Option 2.

Pegasus Group on behalf of Persimmon

- Persimmon were concerned that there was a lack of evidence to confirm the deliverability of Option 2, which was felt to be important if the Council decided to take the site forward.
- Given the uncertainties, Persimmon felt that the Council should be cautious in relying on this strategy option to meet its housing needs.

Turley on behalf of Wyatt Homes

- Wyatt Homes felt that Option 2 could not be delivered with any degree of certainty, noting that it would require a very high level of work and co-ordination and collaboration with New Forest District Council, which had just adopted a new local plan.
- It was noted that with Option 2, much of the growth would be out of the plan period, that there was a need to identify a SANG of over 7 hectares in size, that there are multiple land ownerships and that securing the support from New Forest District Council would be needed.

Public response

- There were also concerns that no initial project planning had been undertaken for Option 2 to give an idea of the timescale for developing it and that no viability assessment had been undertaken. It was suggested that an unbiased viability assessment involving local people should be produced.
- Some respondents were concerned that allocating new development sites would discourage the delivery of schemes already with permission close to the heart of the village.
- Some argued that there would be little chance that Option 2 would be delivered, which would make the local plan unsound.
- Others felt that Dorset Council should be sceptical of developers' claims that Option 2 would be viable and deliverable, expressing the view that 'the industry always says that'.

10. ALD2 - Trailway at Alderholt

Support for the trailway

Fordingbridge TC

- Fordingbridge TC commented that the trailway from Alderholt could potentially offer an alternative to car travel to Fordingbridge.

Natural England

- Natural England supported Policy ALD2, which aims to provide a trailway between Alderholt and Fordingbridge.

Environment Agency

- We support the aim to investigate the feasibility of a trailway between Fordingbridge and Alderholt.

Tanner and Tilley on behalf of Jim McIlwain

- They were pleased to see the Council investing in bringing the disused railway line into use and increasing the connectivity between Alderholt and Fordingbridge. They felt that this would further strengthen the position of the village and increase its overall sustainability.

Intelligent Land on behalf of Dudsbury Homes

- The developer supported the proposed trailway on the former railway line between Alderholt and Fordingbridge.

Highwood Group

- Cross Farm (LA/ALDE/004) lies adjacent to the proposed trailway (Policy ALD2) and offers an opportunity to integrate with it and with other pedestrian and cycle routes in the village.

RAW Planning Ltd on behalf of Gascoyne Estates

- Gascoyne Estates has prepared the 'Land at Stroud Firs, Alderholt Development Framework Document'. Land at Stroud Firs (LA/ALDE/016) has the potential to assist with the provision of a Trailway between Alderholt and Fordingbridge (draft Policy ALD2: Trailway at Alderholt).

Public response

- Many respondents felt that creating a trailway along the old railway line at Alderholt was a good idea in principle. Some supported it, but only with Option 1, whereas others were only in favour if significant development at Alderholt had to take place.
- Some respondents felt that the creation of the trailway should not be dependent on major growth and others felt it should have been created years ago.
- A few respondents argued that the line should be re-instated as a railway to access Salisbury and the South West.
- The point was made that a 'trailway' already existed to the north of Fordingbridge from Burgate Cross to Breamore and North Charford, which is a public right of way based on the old railway track bed.
- It was also stated that Fordingbridge TC and NFDC are planning to add a further link (section already in use) into Fordingbridge, thus bringing it to the County boundary with Dorset.
- It was argued that creating the link from Alderholt to Fordingbridge is a sensible and prime duty for Dorset to serve the communities of East Dorset.
- Some respondents noted that the creation of the trailway would be in line with the Council's stance on climate change and would be a recreational facility that would encourage people out of their cars.
- It was felt that a safe route for walking and cycling would benefit the village and would provide better links between communities.
- Others felt that the trailway would boost tourism, attract recreational visitors from the New Forest area, and create job opportunities.

Extensions to the trailway

Public response

- Some respondents argued that the trailway should be extended to link Fordingbridge and Verwood and to give access to Ringwood Forest, the New Forest and the Castleman Trailway into Poole.
- An additional 'commuter route' to the other end of Verwood (via Plumbly Wood to Ebblake Industrial Estate) was also suggested.

Objections to the trailway

Public response

- Some respondents were opposed to the idea of the trailway, arguing it was 'a ridiculous idea' that should not be used as 'a sweetener for wrecking the village with housebuilding'.
- Others argued that it would do little to reduce traffic from an expanded Alderholt and that it would not greatly improve connectivity as it only links to Fordingbridge, which has limited facilities.
- At Alderholt there were some concerns that a continuous flow of people, dog walkers and cyclists would destroy the peace and tranquillity for neighbouring properties.

- Some felt that the local plan should show greater commitment to the scheme, not just to a feasibility study.

Cost / value for money

Public response

- A number of respondents were concerned about the cost and value for money.
- Some argued that the proposal was a 'triviality' and that money should be used to improve existing infrastructure instead.
- Others felt that investigating feasibility would be a waste of money and that the project would be 'an expensive red herring', arguing that the cost of reclaiming and developing the railway would not be worth the expense.

Land ownership / development

East Dorset Environment Partnership

- The Partnership commented that the former railway line is in multiple land ownerships and feared that it would offer little scope for restoration as a railway.

Public response

- A number of respondents pointed out that parts of the old railway line are now in private hands and that some sections, especially at Fordingbridge, had been built on, or were proposed for development.
- Some respondents felt that private owners would not wish to sell given the small returns and huge inconvenience. Others felt that a different route may be needed in places, due to parts of the old track bed not being available.

Usability / lack of demand

Public response

- A number of respondents questioned the need for the railway noting that it would not be suitable for most trips to Fordingbridge and in any event many people use their own transport to visit the town.
- It was noted that there are already plenty of walks in the area without creating an expensive new railway and that it is already possible to walk to Fordingbridge cross country.
- It was felt that the railway would essentially be 'a rural track', which would only be used seasonally or in good weather and by a limited number of people.

Wildlife

Public response

- There were concerns about the impact of the proposed railway on wildlife. Some habitats, including the woodland near Station Yard, could be lost.
- There were also concerns about the impacts on species, including badgers, which have setts along the Alderholt section, and deer, foxes and birds, which visit gardens at Station Yard and which may disappear with the constant flow of people.

Heritage

Historic England

- Historic England felt that a heritage assessment should be undertaken to inform the creation of the trailway (Policy ALD2). This should also highlight any heritage assets or interesting features that could be interpreted to offer trailway users' appreciation and enjoyment of the surrounding historic environment.

Facilities / design

Public response

- The need for the trailway to link into existing and future developments was noted in a number of responses. It was considered important to create pedestrian and cycle connections to the trailway both at Alderholt and in Fordingbridge.
- A few respondents argued that the area between the old railway line and Station Road should not be developed for housing, but should be used as a leisure area or park with football pitches.
- The need for safe pedestrian/cycle paths crossing Station Road in Alderholt was highlighted.
- The need for cycle parking and hitching rails for horses in Fordingbridge was also noted.
- Some respondents felt that the trailway would need to have lighting for safe evening and winter use.
- Others argued there should be no access for horses or motorised bikes and that rubbish bins should be provided to prevent litter.

Commuting / shopping

Public response

- A number of respondents argued that the trailway would not be used for commuting or shopping, but only for recreational purposes. Only a few Alderholt residents work in Fordingbridge and most only use the town for local shopping.
- It was felt that walkers or cyclists would not be prepared to carry heavy shopping back to Alderholt along the trailway. As a result, it was considered that the trailway would not decrease the use of cars to reach Fordingbridge.
- One respondent noted the need for workplaces in Fordingbridge to have adequate changing facilities, in order for the trailway to be used by commuters.
- Others argued that the trailway would not negate the need for public transport for commuters / shoppers.

Deliverability

Public response

- A number of respondents were concerned about deliverability, arguing that the scheme would be unworkable or unachievable.
- Some respondents argued that the proposal should not have been included in the draft local plan without a feasibility assessment having been carried out.
- Others argued for the Council to pledge to act upon the findings of the feasibility study and to give a timeframe for delivery.
- Others were concerned about funding, the need to use compulsory purchase powers, and the need for commitment from Hampshire County Council.