



ALFREDSON YORK
ASSOCIATES

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990

SECTION 78 APPEAL

BY

Dudsbury Homes (Southern) Ltd.

PLANNING APPLICATION FOR RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

Land at Alderholt Meadows, Alderholt

TOPIC PAPER ON EDUCATION MATTERS BETWEEN

JOHN POWELL LLB (Hons), OPERATIONS DIRECTOR, ALFREDSON YORK ASSOCIATES LTD.

AND Ed Denham OF DORSET COUNCIL

PUBLIC INQUIRY DATE: 25th JUNE 2024

PINS REF: APP/D1265/W/23/3336518

LPA REF: P/OUT/2023/01166

1. Introduction

1.1. Topic Paper

1.1.1. This Topic Paper has been prepared by Alfredson York Associates to provide the Inspector with a brief on Education matters and to update the Inspector on matters that have been agreed and those matters that remain in dispute.

1.1.2. This statement has been prepared for the appeal site at Alderholt Meadows, Alderholt for the forthcoming planning inquiry which commences on 25th June 2024.

1.2. Outline

1.2.1. Section 2 of this Statement provides a brief summary of the proposed approach to ~~on~~ Education mitigation, Section 3 sets out matters of fact in the numbers on roll of schools that either, or both, parties believe to be relevant, along with the Net Capacities and Published Admission Numbers where relevant.

1.2.2. Section 4 sets out matters where there is disagreement between the parties.

2. The Proposal

- 2.1. The current agreed position between the appellant and the Local Planning Authority is that the school numbers attending the existing first school in Alderholt, St. James', combined with the demand arising from the appeal scheme, would require a 2FE first school.

- 2.2. An Education Mitigation Strategy (EMS) (CDA92) has been submitted, intended to demonstrate that the current St James site is capable of accommodating such a school. The Appellant proposes that the works to this school would be provided as a contribution in kind,

- 2.3. Financial contributions would be made to any necessary expansions to Upper schools as a result of the impact of the appeal scheme.

3. Matters Agreed

3.1. The following paragraphs set out matters of fact upon which either, or both, of the parties will seek to rely. This section does not indicate acceptance of the positions adopted with regard to this data, but indicates that the data itself is agreed between the parties.

3.2. School and Pupil Numbers and Statistics

3.2.1. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) birth rate figures show the total annual births within Dorset is currently around its lowest level in the past nine years. Births specifically within the Alderholt area have also fallen marginally since a peak in 2017.

3.2.2. This is best illustrated by the table below:

Area	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Dorset	3,130	3,104	3,086	3,028	3,082	2,841	2,748	2,638	2,755
Alderholt	28	29	27	23	30	28	27	25	24
Current / Future School Year					2023 Year R				

3.2.3. Those children born in 2013 would now be in Year 3 and the 2019 births will be due to start primary school in September 2024.

3.2.4. The table below shows the numbers of pupils admitted into Reception at St James' First School in the period 2018 to 2023:

2023 September entry – 12

2022 September Entry – 13

2021 September Entry – 19

2020 September Entry – 12

2019 September Entry – 15

3.2.5. The table below sets out the January 2024 numbers on St James' First School and projections going forward without taking account of housing units being delivered by any local housing development.

Projections by Year Group for St James' Alderholt (First School)						
JAN	Reception	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Total
2024	13	13	18	16	12	73
2025	19	13	13	17	15	77
2026	14	19	13	12	16	75
2027	16	14	19	12	12	73
2028	13	16	14	18	12	73

3.2.6. Given the distances to other schools, both Dorset and Hampshire, St James' First School is the only school within a 2-mile radius that could be deemed suitable to receive children from the new development.

3.2.7. The LPA does not seek contributions for expansion of the Middle School provision, currently Cranborne Middle (Y5-8), due to existing capacity, but has indicated the need to provide a contribution to ensure sufficiency on the Upper School tier of the 3-tier system.

3.2.8. The table below shows existing combined projections for the two Upper Schools for East Dorset and the combined projections for those schools specifically the transition between Year 8 and Year 9 (12+ and 13+).

Combined Projection for East Dorset (Queen Elizabeth and Ferndown Upper) - based on existing children											
	JAN									Year 8	Year 9
4+		4+	5+	6+	7+	8+	9+	10+	11+	12+	13+
732	2022	652	631	663	668	680	750	755	668	628	668
711	2023	630	670	630	666	665	723	761	687	679	647
705	2024	642	644	676	631	663	712	730	683	680	673
753	2025	674	656	650	677	629	711	719	653	676	674
734	2026	658	689	662	652	674	672	718	643	647	670
734	2027	657	672	695	663	649	728	679	643	637	641
734	2028	658	671	678	697	660	691	735	607	637	631
738	2029	661	672	677	680	694	705	698	659	601	631

3.2.9. The combined Pupil Admissions Number of Queen Elizabeth School and Ferndown Upper School is 660.

3.2.10. These projections do not include existing housing developments with permissions nor others in the pipeline including the Alderholt Development.

3.2.11. The Council estimates that between 37 and 45 children per year group will be generated by the Alderholt Meadows Development depending on the number of qualifying units (2 bedroom and above).

3.2.12. The Appellant and the Council agree that contributions will be sought and provided to cover the costs of providing these additional places in the Upper School education sector and that such contributions are reasonable and necessary.

3.3. Dorset Council's Assessment of St. James' First School site area

3.3.1.DC has provided an assessment of the site area of St. James First School which shows the total site area at the school as being 1.1775ha (11,775m²).

3.4. Building Bulletin 103

3.4.1.DfE publishes a guidance for school site and building areas, Building Bulletin 103, and the parties agree that Building Bulletin 103 Annexes A and B set out the relevant calculations for built area and site area requirements for schools.

3.4.2.This calculation for the area of a school site is given in the table below:

Annex B: Site areas						
Recommended minimum site areas for all schools	Base area for any:		Area per pupil place for:			
	primary or special school	secondary or middle school	Nursery	Reception and Key Stage 1	Key Stage 2-4 & post-16	5 to 11 primary
1. Soft outdoor PE	-	6000	-	-	35	20
2. Hard outdoor PE	400	400	-	1.5	1.5	1.5
3. Soft informal and social area	600	600	2	2	2	2
4. Hard informal and social area	200	200	1	1	1	1
5. Habitat	0	0	0	0.5	0.5	0.5
Float	600	800	2	5	5	5
Minimum net site area	1800	8000	5	10	45	30
Non-net	350	2000	1	1	5	3.3
Minimum total site area	2000	9000	6	11	50	33.3
Recommended maximum site areas for new schools (minimum for existing schools where available)						
Maximum net site area	2000	9000	6	11	50	33.3
Maximum total site area	2400	11000	7.5	14	63	42

3.4.3.For a primary school the far-left column is the relevant column to use in calculating the site area.

3.4.4. However, a first school is not the same as a primary school, as it has fewer year groups of Key Stage 2 pupils (and Key Stage 2 pupils are the only pupils that require team game playing fields at first or primary level).

3.4.5. It is therefore important in calculating a first school area to break the pupils down by Nursery, Reception & Key Stage 1, and Key Stage 2, and calculate the area using the relevant columns for each.

3.4.6. It is also important to note that Building Bulletin 103 area guidance includes non-net area, which is the area for the school buildings, access and parking.

2FE First School

3.4.7. The table below shows the calculations for a 300 place (2FE) first school, and also includes an allowance for 56 place nursery provision on site:

BB 103 Optimum Required Outdoor Area - 2 FE First (300 pupils) and Nursery (56 pupils)	
Soft Outdoor PE	4200
Hard Outdoor PE	850
Soft Informal and Social Area	1312
Hard Informal and Social Area	556
Habitat	150
Float	2212
	9280
Non Net	1186
Min Gross (BB103) (TOTAL of Above areas)	10466
Max Gross (BB103)	12900

3.4.8. Building Bulletin 103 states that:

“The area of all-weather pitches can be counted twice for the purposes of both these guidelines and section 77 applications, as they can be used for significantly more than the seven hours a week assumed of grass pitches.”

3.4.9. The appellants maintain that the requisite site areas can be provided on the existing site using permissible mitigation such as a synthetic turf pitch (STP).

3.4.10. It is agreed, for the purposes of using the tables in these Annexes that the correct number of pupils for the capacity of the 2FE First School is 180 Reception and Key Stage 1 pupils and 120 Key Stage 2 pupils.

4. Matters Not Agreed

4.1. Site area

4.1.1. The appellant and Council dispute the appropriate formulaic calculation of site area, with particular regard to the use of synthetic turf pitches.

4.1.2. The appellant and the Council also dispute whether the other areas - including the soft informal social areas and the allocation of float - can be delivered as usable accessible space given the current layout and nature of the site.

4.1.3. The appellant and the Council dispute whether the footprint of the proposed building can be achieved, and whether additional site area may be taken up with the overall building footprint.

4.2. Other matters in dispute

4.2.1. Appropriate use of site area. The Appellant's position is that it is possible to deliver the relevant site areas within the existing school site. The Council disputes this use of a synthetic turf pitch and the use made of other areas of the site in delivering the necessary outdoor accessible areas..

4.2.2. The appellant's concept building design provides the required elements as per the Department for Education's design guide for such a school but utilises a 2-storey design to reduce the footprint. The Council disputes whether it is appropriate to have a 2-storey design if it can reasonably be avoided, but also, the appellant's concept design has KS1 classrooms on the second storey, whereas DFE exemplar designs have these classes on the ground floor with direct access to the outdoor play spaces.

4.2.3. The Council has indicated that it requires a full 360 place school on a site suitable for a 2FE primary school to be fully funded by the appellant. The appellant disputes that this meets the tests set out in the CIL regulations.

4.2.4. The Council remains concerned that should more detailed feasibility study confirm that the existing site can't accommodate the new larger school, then the opportunities to secure a school site at the heart of the combined new community, is lost.