

# Consultee Comment for planning application P/OUT/2023/01166

<b>Application Number</b>	<input type="text" value="P/OUT/2023/01166"/>
<b>Location</b>	<input type="text" value="Land To The South Of Ringwood Road Alderholt"/>
<b>Proposal</b>	<input type="text" value="Mixed use development of up to 1,700 dwellings including affordable housing and care provision; 10,000sqm of employment space in the form of a business park; village centre with associated retail, commercial, community and health facilities; open space including the provision of suitable alternative natural green space (SANG); biodiversity enhancements; solar array, and new roads, access arrangements and associated infrastructure (Outline Application with all matters reserved apart from access off Hillbury Road)"/>
<b>Case Officer</b>	<input type="text" value="Ursula Fay"/>
<b>Organisation</b>	<input type="text" value="National Highways"/>
<b>Name</b>	<input type="text" value="National Highways"/>
<b>Address</b>	<input type="text" value="Ash House Falcon Road Exeter EX2 7LB"/>
<b>Type of Comment</b>	<input type="text" value="Comment"/>
<b>Type</b>	<input type="text"/>
<b>Comments</b>	<input type="text" value="National Highways recommends that the application not be approved pending the submission of further information for our review and acceptance in respect of the traffic impact on the A31. Our detailed comments are in the attached NHPR form and we would be grateful if these could be drawn to the attention of the applicant and their agent."/>
<b>Received Date</b>	<input type="text" value="08/06/2023 09:22:17"/>
<b>Attachments</b>	<p>The following files have been uploaded: 2023-06-08 P_OUT_2023_01166 National HIghways planning response.pdf</p>



## National Highways Planning Response (NHPR 21-09) Formal Recommendation to an Application for Planning Permission

**From:** Regional Director, South West Operations Division, National Highways  
PlanningSW@nationalhighways.co.uk

**To:** Dorset Council  
FAO Ursula Fay

**CC:** transportplanning@dft.gov.uk  
spatialplanning@nationalhighways.co.uk

**Council's Reference:** P/OUT/2023/01166

**Location:** Land to the south Ringwood Road, Alderholt

**Proposal:** Mixed use development of up to 1,700 dwellings including affordable housing and care provision; 10,000sqm of employment space in the form of a business park; village centre with associated retail, commercial, community and health facilities; open space including the provision of suitable alternative natural green space (SANG); biodiversity enhancements; solar array, and new roads, access arrangements and associated infrastructure (Outline Application with all matters reserved apart from access off Hillbury Road)

**National Highways Ref:** NH/23/00971

Referring to the consultation of the planning application referenced above, in the vicinity of the A31 that forms part of the Strategic Road Network, notice is hereby given that National Highways' formal recommendation is that we:

- ~~a) offer no objection (see reasons at Annex A);~~
- ~~b) recommend that conditions should be attached to any planning permission that may be granted (see Annex A – National Highways recommended Planning Conditions & reasons);~~
- c) recommend that planning permission not be granted for a specified period (see reasons at Annex A);**
- ~~d) recommend that the application be refused (see reasons at Annex A)~~

Highways Act 1980 Section 175B is not relevant to this application.<sup>1</sup>

This represents National Highways' formal recommendation and is copied to the Department for Transport as per the terms of our Licence.

Should the Local Planning Authority not propose to determine the application in accordance with this recommendation they are required to consult the Secretary of State for Transport, as set out in the [Town and Country Planning \(Development Affecting Trunk Roads\) Direction 2018](#), via [transportplanning@dft.gov.uk](mailto:transportplanning@dft.gov.uk) and may not determine the application until the consultation process is complete.

The Local Planning Authority must also copy any consultation under the 2018 Direction to [Planningsw@nationalhighways.co.uk](mailto:Planningsw@nationalhighways.co.uk).

**Signature:** *G Gallacher*

**Date:** 08 June 2023

**Name:** Gaynor Gallacher

**Position:** Assistant Planning Manager

**National Highways:** Ash House, Falcon Road, Sowton Ind. Estate, Exeter EX2 7LB

**Email:** [Gaynor.Gallacher@nationalhighways.co.uk](mailto:Gaynor.Gallacher@nationalhighways.co.uk)

---

<sup>1</sup> Where relevant, further information will be provided within Annex A.

## **Annex A** National Highway's assessment of the proposed development

National Highways has been appointed by the Secretary of State for Transport as a strategic highway company under the provisions of the Infrastructure Act 2015 and is the highway authority, traffic authority and street authority for the Strategic Road Network (SRN). The SRN is a critical national asset and as such we work to ensure that it operates and is managed in the public interest, both in respect of current activities and needs as well as in providing effective stewardship of its long-term operation and integrity.

We have undertaken a review of the relevant documents supporting the planning application to ensure compliance with the current policies of the Secretary of State as set out in DfT Circular 01/2022 "The Strategic Road Network and the Delivery of Sustainable Development" and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), being advised on this matter by our consultants, WSP. This response represents our formal recommendations with regards to planning application reference P/OUT/2023/01166.

### **Reasons**

The outline planning application, with all matters reserved apart from access off Hillbury Road, is seeking consent for a mixed use development of up to 1,700 dwellings including affordable housing and care provision; 10,000sqm of employment space in the form of a business park; village centre with associated retail, commercial, community and health facilities; open space including the provision of suitable alternative natural green space (SANG); biodiversity enhancements; solar array, and new roads, access arrangements and associated infrastructure.

The development does not reflect a current allocation in the adopted East Dorset and Christchurch Local Plan (April 2014) and the status of the site within the emerging Dorset Council Local Plan is not yet understood.

National Highways were consulted at the pre-application stage during 2021. Our primary concern is in relation to the safe and efficient operation of the A31 trunk road, and in particular the A31/Verwood Road junction. It is in this context that our comments are made.

### **Assessment of Traffic Impact**

The outline application is supported by a Transport Assessment (TA), dated October 2022, prepared by Paul Basham Associates Ltd. Following our review of the document as submitted we make the following comments.

It should be noted that since the TA was written in October 2022, DfT Circular 02/2013 has been superseded by the new DfT Circular 01/2022 "The strategic road network and the delivery of sustainable development". We recommend that the applicant refers to the new DfT Circular within any updated assessment material.

When considering development of the scale proposed consideration should be given to the practical implementation of vision-led approaches including 'Vision and Validate', 'Decide and Provide' and 'Monitor and Manage' as per paragraph 15 of DfT Circular 01/2022. It is considered that any vision should appropriately seek to manage

the impacts on the SRN particularly in relation to managing unacceptable impacts upon highway safety.

### **Existing Conditions**

The TA summarises the existing conditions and states that “at present the majority of everyday needs are met by car travel to neighbouring settlements.” National Highways agrees with this summary, given Alderholt’s rural location and lack of facilities for residents.

### **Buses**

The TA sets out that there are currently no bus services in the vicinity of the site in the peak hours, but the number 97 bus operates every 2 hours between 09:34 & 13:42. This currently infrequent service would not be able to assist in reducing private car travel from the site during the busy weekday peak hours unless the hours of operation and frequency are significantly increased to cover the peak hours.

It is noted that the TA further states that discussions have taken place with a local bus operator, and it has been suggested that an hourly bus in each direction between Cranborne, Alderholt, Fordingbridge and Ringwood would be feasible. However, National Highways consider that for a development of this size and location a more frequent bus service should be considered by the applicant, particularly during the weekday peak hours.

### **Safety**

A review of PIA Data obtained from the CrashMap database for the five-year period from 1/1/17 to 31/12/21 has been provided within the TA. We note that the area the data covers does not include the entire extents of the A31 slip roads at the A31/B3081 Verwood Road Junction nor does it include a short distance along the A31 to allow for any weaving collisions at the merges/diverges at this junction. However, from our own review of Crashmap we note that there does not appear to be a material change in the number of identified collisions when this additional area is included.

The TA states in paragraphs 3.48, 3.49 and 3.50 that “*A further cluster of collisions occurred at the junction between the A31 eastbound on-slip and Verwood Road. At this point four collisions occurred which resulted in one serious casualty and nine slight casualties.*” “*The serious injury occurred when a vehicle which was waiting to turn right onto the on-bound slip road pulled out in front of an oncoming vehicle resulting in a head on collision, with the driver of one of the vehicles sustaining serious injuries.*” “*This and the other slight collisions all occurred in a similar manner. This suggests a potential safety issue with the design of the junction. This will be considered as part of the off-site highway works explored subsequently.*” This highlights the importance of ensuring that the proposed highways works are sufficient and suitable to accommodate predicted development traffic.

### **Trip Generation, Distribution and Assignment**

#### **Trip Generation**

We consider the residential trip generation (calculated from the trip generation presented in Table 4 of the TA) is low given the sites location and lack of current facilities, and should be revisited. As a guide, we would expect the two-way vehicle trip rate per dwelling to be circa 0.5 to 0.65 in the weekday peak hours, rather than in the range of 0.3 to 0.35 as presented.

### ***Internalisation***

National Highways has reviewed the *South Alderholt Strategic Sites, Alderholt, Trip Internalisation Report (Dated May 2022)* in Appendix L and note that the TA states that “*This methodology and proposed reductions have been discussed and agreed with Dorset Council, and as such are considered to be an acceptable basis to calculate the net trip generation of the Development.*”

However, National Highways requires that the applicant also undertake a robust sensitivity test for the A31/Verwood Road junction, that includes only minimal levels (5-10%), of internalisation of flows within the site.

### ***Multi Modal***

Table 5 in the TA shows that the development would result in 252 bus trips in the morning peak hour. There are currently no buses at this time and the TA has suggested increasing this to an hourly service as noted above. Given buses typically only have 50-70 seats depending on size, clarification is requested as to how this number of bus trips is to be achieved.

The reduction in car trips also appears to be overly optimistic given the East Dorset average of 88% car driver trips. We would request that further consideration be given to how realistic and achievable the predicted reduction is at this location.

### ***Trip Distribution***

National Highways consider the distribution to be appropriate and is accepted.

### ***Trip Assignment***

Assuming the opening year with development flows are correctly distributed as per the agreed distribution National Highways has no comments at this time on the trip assignment aspect of the TA.

### ***Strategic Modelling***

As the strategic model does not cover the Verwood Road/A31 junction, stand-alone junction operational assessments have been undertaken for the A31/Verwood Road Junction to ensure that any potential impact of the development on the SRN is understood. National Highways will require the model files for our review and acceptance as referenced under the Highway Capacity Analysis section below.

### ***Highway Impact methodology***

Traffic surveys undertaken in 2018 at the A31/Verwood Road junction have been utilised. Given this data is now circa 5 years old we request that the applicant demonstrates that the data remains representative or collects new survey data. In particular, consideration should be given to the potential for post-Covid impacts on traffic flows. If new surveys are to be undertaken at the A31/Verwood Road junction these surveys should be agreed in advance with National Highways. We would suggest that for robustness data is collected during the peak holiday traffic month of August.

### ***Assessment Scenarios***

The TA does not appear to have assessed the A31/Verwood Road junction for the development year of opening with full development traffic – which is the scenario now

required within DfT Circular 01/2022. An assessment of the junction therefore needs to be undertaken for a realistic opening year.

### ***Traffic Growth and Committed Development***

Subject to confirmation of the year of opening of the development, TEMPro growth factors will need to be updated for the growth periods if they are different to that already included in Table 9 of the TA. National Highways can then review these once this has been confirmed. The applicant also needs to confirm that the relevant planning authorities (to include in this case Dorset, New Forest District and Hampshire County Councils) have advised what, if any, committed developments need to be included in the assessment scenarios. As noted previously, the development site is not allocated and is coming forward in advance of the Dorset Local Plan Review.

### ***Traffic Flow Diagrams***

These are likely to require updating depending on the year of opening, traffic growth and any committed developments that need to be included as set out above.

### ***Highway Capacity Analysis***

National Highways will need the Junctions9 (and LinSig) modelling files to be provided along with any accompanying traffic flow spreadsheets and plans of existing and proposed layouts so that a thorough review of the stand-alone models for the A31/Verwood Road junction can be undertaken.

### **A31/Verwood Road Junction Mitigation**

In terms of the proposed layout at the A31/Verwood Road junction, National Highways will need to be satisfied that the proposed design is compliant with the standards set out within the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB). Whilst it is acknowledged that elements of the scheme will be within the local highway network extent and therefore for Dorset Council as the relevant local highway authority to agree, elements of the scheme also sit within National Highways operational boundary, and the overall scheme has the potential to impact directly on the safe and efficient operation of the SRN junction.

For any preliminary scheme design to be acceptable to National Highways, it will also need to be subject to a satisfactory Stage 1 Road Safety Audit process (in accordance with GG119) and accompanied by a Walking, Cycling and Horseriding Assessment and Review (in accordance with GG142). If Departures from Standard are identified as necessary, an application will need to be submitted and approved which will also need to be accompanied by a Road Safety Risk Assessment in accordance with GG 104. These steps will have to be satisfactorily completed prior to National Highways being able to make any positive recommendation to the planning authority. All DMRB standards referred to above can be accessed via the link here: [DMRB](#).

From our review of the A31/Verwood Road scheme design plan as provided in Appendix V of the TA, we make the following design comments for the applicant to consider and address.

1. Due to the lack of dimensions shown on the plan it is difficult to determine if the lane widths provided are appropriate and can suitably accommodate the movements of the Design Vehicle (16.5m Articulated truck) as laid down in the

DMRB (this standard is mandatory where the local road interfaces with the SRN).

2. The layout of the signal heads of the new signal-controlled junction are queried, as they may not be in the best locations to accommodate visibility approaching the new junction due to the number of left-hand curves present. This may result in the signal heads being slightly hidden around the inside of the bend. The signal head provided on the northern verge of Verwood Road also seems rather distant from the junction and may therefore not be noticed by drivers emerging from the southern section of Verwood Road.
3. It is noted that only a primary traffic signal head has been provided for traffic approaching from the east along Verwood Road. Should this signal head develop a fault, we will need to understand how traffic on this approach will be made aware of the signal state if the head is not illuminated. Paragraph 7.3.2 of CD123 states that a minimum of two signal heads should be visible from each approach arm and each stop line.
4. No details of forward visibility are shown on any of the approaches to the signal-controlled junction to ensure they meet the standards laid down in the CD 109 of the DMRB
5. The layout and width of the tactile paving provided on the southern arm of the B3081 Verwood Road is queried, as it seems to be excessively wide and the tactile paving does not appear to be in the correct form
6. The proposed new right turn lane to serve the slip road to the A31 has no dimensions provided to show that it is of a suitable width and length to cater for the Design Vehicle, so clarification is sought as to what criteria has been utilised to determine the length of this right turn facility.
7. The amount of stacking within the right turn slip road has been reduced, so further information will be required as in point 6 above.
8. The type of roadmarkings shown across the entrance to the A31 slip road appear to be of the wrong type and will require amendment.
9. It is noted that it is proposed to provide a 1m wide footway behind the signal head located on the northern verge of Verwood Road. This is considered to be too narrow for the safe use of pedestrians (for example users of wheelchairs or pushchairs) and consideration should be given to its widening.
10. It is noted that a maintenance bay has not been provided to allow for the safe maintenance of the signals installation.
11. The lane widths on the northbound approach of Verwood Road are queried given the left-hand curve, and lane widening may need to be applied as detailed in Table 5.10 of CD123 to take into account the swept paths of the Design Vehicle which may utilise the approach to the junction.

## **Summary**

National Highways has identified a number of issues with regards to the TA as currently presented which will need to be addressed by the applicant, and the associated modelling files will need to be provided for our review. A revised scheme design will also need to be provided to address design compliance issues as set out above, and before the scheme can progress to a Road Safety Audit.

Further information is therefore necessary to enable National Highways to fully understand the impact of the proposed development and associated highways mitigation on the safe and efficient operation of the SRN.



## **Recommendation**

National Highways recommends that Dorset Council do not grant planning permission for application reference P/OUT/2023/01166 for a period of 6 months from the date of this recommendation. This is to provide time for the applicant to undertake further assessment to enable National Highways to fully understand the impact of the development on the safe and efficient operation of the A31 and its junction with the B3081 Verwood Road, and thereby provide informed advice to the Local Planning Authority.