



HIGHWOOD

LAND AT CROSS FARM ALDERHOLT

VISION STATEMENT

MAY 2023

ALDERHOLT NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN



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HIGHWOOD STATEMENT OF EXPERIENCE

1. INTRODUCTION

This statement has been prepared by Highwood to demonstrate how future development at **Land at Cross Farm, Alderholt** can help Alderholt Parish Council meet their stated Vision and Objectives for the village, to be delivered through a new **Alderholt Neighbourhood Plan**.

This statement explains how development at Land at Cross Farm can deliver:

- Open market housing
- Affordable housing
- Employment work-space
- Public open space
- Linkages to the existing public rights of way network
- Part of the proposed new Alderholt to Fordingbridge Trailway.



Development of Land at Cross Farm would deliver these much needed amenities through a modest extension of the village, that would protect and retain Alderholt's character, its compact form and links to the former railway and surrounding countryside.

Unlike much of Dorset, the site does not fall within the Green Belt or AONB.

The site is visually and physically well-contained within the surrounding landscape and village.

Woodland is situated to the west and southwest, existing development (housing primarily) is to the southeast and east and a strong, mature tree belt along a raised disused railway embankment is to the north and northwest. The intrinsic beauty and the enjoyment of the countryside and approach to Alderholt from the north would be maintained.

Land at Cross Farm would meet anticipated housing needs for the village, provide opportunities for local employment, of a form compatible with the nature of the village and existing transport infrastructure.

Safe and attractive walking (and cycling) routes would be provided and the site is uniquely placed to re-use the former railway for recreation and potential future connection to Fordingbridge.

Images Left: Highwood Schemes



2. ABOUT HIGHWOOD

Highwood was founded over 30 years ago as a privately-owned company with a commitment to acquire land selectively, build sensitively and sustainably whilst setting benchmarked standards of design and construction.

Since 1987, the company has delivered an extensive portfolio of distinctive and responsible housing and care home projects that are underpinned by sustainable development.

Our founding directors each have their own area of specialist expertise, including land acquisition, planning and the delivery of large-scale sites. All are still actively involved in our day-to-day operations.

From open market housing to exclusive developments and luxury care homes, Highwood continues to break new ground in property. Our operational reach extends across the south coast of England.



"We are a privately-owned company and what sets us apart is our unwavering commitment to buying land for new homes development selectively and to built on it sensitively and sustainably."

**- NIGEL MEEK,
GROUP CHAIRMAN**



A recent accolade has seen us crowned Housebuilder of the Year at the 2019 South Coast Property Awards and marks our ascendancy over the regional property market.

Our new community at North Stoneham Park in Eastleigh borough was Highly Commended by BRE at the international 2019 BREEAM Awards following certification as 'Excellent' under the BREEAM Communities scheme.

This is all success that's built on quality and measured by reputation.



3. LOCATION

Land at Cross Farm is located on the north-eastern edge of the village of Alderholt in Dorset (previously East Dorset prior to local authority re-organisation in 2019), close to the administrative boundary with Hampshire and the New Forest.

Unlike much of Dorset, the site does not fall within the Green Belt or AONB.

The site comprises an area of approximately 6.3 hectares of existing paddocks and fields contained in the wider landscape by existing development to the south (Station Road)

and east (Hillbury Road), a mature and established tree belt along the course of a raised disused railway embankment to the north, and woodland to the west.

The site includes part of the disused railway embankment which offers opportunity for improved pedestrian and cycle linkages as part of any development.

Existing access to the site is gained via Sandleheath Road, through a complex of existing farm buildings. A potential new access is to be provided to Station Road.

THE SITE IS IDEALLY LOCATED, ON THE EDGE OF THE EXISTING SETTLEMENT OF ALDERHOLT - OUTSIDE OF THE GREEN BELT AND IN A CONTEXT THAT IS WELL CONTAINED, NOT CONSTRAINED BY AONB OR OTHER LANDSCAPE DESIGNATIONS



Key Strategy map for the South Eastern Dorset Functional Area

Dorset Council

<p>Functional Areas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> South Eastern Dorset Northern Dorset Dorset Council Boundary 	<p>Settlement Hierarchy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tier 1 Tier 2 Tier 3 South East Dorset Conurbation built up area 	<p>Broad locations for development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Housing we are consulting on different levels of growth for these settlements Employment (Ha) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Roads Rail/Stations Rivers Green Belt AONB Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
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Image: Extract from Dorset Local Plan consultation, January 2021 showing constraints across South Eastern Dorset Functional Area and relationship of Alderholt close to the boundary with New Forest district.

4. PLANNING BACKGROUND

BACKGROUND

The site is located within the Dorset council area (formerly East Dorset, prior to the merging of the Dorset districts in 2019), close to the boundary with Hampshire.

The adopted Christchurch and East Dorset Local Plan Part 1 – Core Strategy, 2014 shows the site as being in countryside, but contiguous with the existing ‘policy area’ for Alderholt.

Development on the site would represent a rational extension to the existing settlement.

Whilst much of the rest of the district is covered by Green Belt / AONB / SPA / Ramsar constraints, the site is outside of any such designation.

There are no Listed Buildings or Conservation Areas nearby.

EAST DORSET LOCAL PLAN

Until April 2019 Christchurch Borough Council and East Dorset District Council were working on a joint review of their Local Plan. All the evidence generated by that process has been built upon to inform an emerging Dorset Council Local Plan covering the whole of Dorset.

A draft plan consulted on in 2018 proposed options to accommodate a minimum 1,000 homes to the south and west of Alderholt along with supporting infrastructure such as employment, retail, health, community, education, and public open space.

Land at Cross Farm was not promoted as part of that process (prior to Highwood’s involvement), but a submission was made through a ‘call for sites’ exercise undertaken in 2019, which informed the 2019 Dorset SHLAA.

DORSET SHLAA

The council’s site assessment for Land at Cross Farm as contained within the SHLAA concluded that,

“The site is relatively well screened and adjoins built development.

This site could form an extension of the existing development fronting Station Road.

There is a large area of surface water flooding at the north eastern end of the site.

A suitable site subject to policy change.”

The council’s SHLAA assessment noted surface water flood risk at the site.

However, for reasons set out later in this document, surface water is not a constraint to achieving development at the site.

DORSET COUNCIL LOCAL PLAN

Consultation on Options for the emerging local plan took place in January 2021. Highwood submitted representations promoting the site under the consultation.



“A SUITABLE SITE, SUBJECT TO POLICY CHANGE”
DORSET SHLAA

ALDERHOLT NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Alderholt is a ‘designated neighbourhood area’ and the Parish Council have commenced preparation of a new Neighbourhood Plan.

The new plan will look to address local needs for housing, and potentially some employment land, if found to be feasible.

A set of draft Neighbourhood Plan vision and objectives have been prepared and these are set out in Section 5 below.

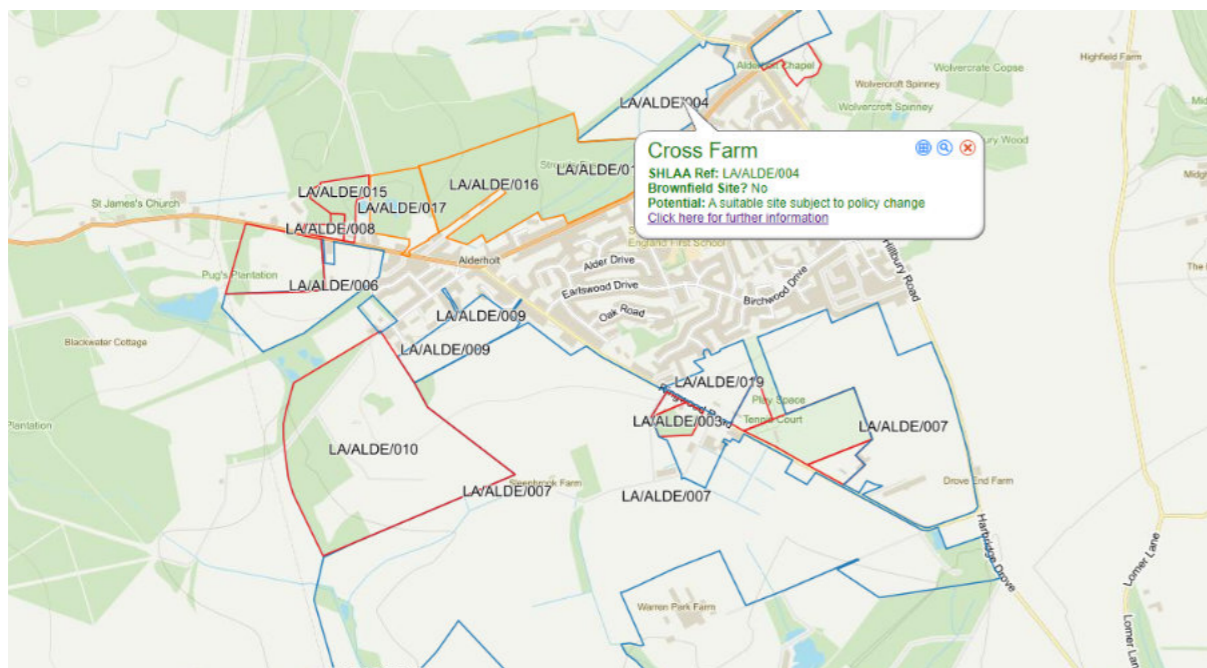


Image: Screen-grab of Dorset SHLAA 2021 Online Mapping with Cross Farm Assessment Summary

5. PLAN VISION AND OBJECTIVES

ALDERHOLT NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN - VISION AND OBJECTIVES

“Our vision is to ensure that Alderholt remains a village with the essential amenities and facilities that enables residents and visitors to enjoy the beautiful countryside whilst being part of an active and friendly community in a peaceful rural setting”

“From this vision, we then set out the objectives to achieve this:

- Protect and retain the character of the village: its uniqueness on the edge of Dorset, its compact form and quiet nature, its links to the former railway, historic buildings and the surrounding countryside.
- Reinforce the sense of a village centre / High Street.
- Protect and strengthen the highly valued amenities and community facilities that provide its residents with a strong sense of connection and community, allowing them and newcomers to be active, develop and thrive.
- Identify suitable sites for the level of development required to meet the anticipated need for housing, as well as providing opportunities for some local employment, that would be compatible with the nature of our village and limited road access.
- Ensure there are safe and attractive walking and cycling routes around the village, and support the project to re-use the former railway for recreation and onward connection to Fordingbridge.
- Protect the intrinsic beauty and enjoyment of the countryside and approaches to Alderholt.
- Protect and strengthen the more isolated settlements - Cripplestyle, Daggons and Crendell and the wider countryside from inappropriate development ensuring its rural nature and the extensive biodiversity of our parish is enhanced.”

6. THE CASE FOR CROSS FARM

Land at Cross Farm Alderholt represents an opportunity to deliver development to meet the Parish Council’s vision and objectives.

The site can be well-integrated with the existing village in a location that is accessible to existing settlement facilities, (e.g. within 700m of the Co-op and primary school/nursery and Village Hall). Being located in the northeast of the settlement, the site is also within 2.5km of facilities provided in nearby Fordingbridge.

Development at Cross Farm will improve and integrate pedestrian and cycle linkages to the proposed Alderholt-Fordingbridge Trailway from the existing village.

Provision of onsite public open space / SANG combined with integrated connections with the Trailway and wider rights of way network which cross the site represent an excellent provision for day-to-day outdoor recreation and exercise.

The No. 97 bus route (Ringwood-Verwood-Cranborne-Fordingbridge), run by Dorset Community Transport passes the site with stops within 100m in Hillbury Road just south of the Alderholt Chapel. This limited service could benefit from an increased catchment population along its route (and developer contributions) to improve its viability and frequency).

Proposals for Cross Farm include a serviced employment hub, with 8-10 flexible units for local businesses to utilise. Supporting infrastructure and home design will facilitate working from home. All of which will help minimise demand for out-commuting.



The site is visually contained in the wider landscape (on all boundaries) due to the presence of woodland (to the west) and a raised disused railway embankment, covered in dense mature trees to the north.



To the south and east, the site is viewed from within the existing townscape, with existing housing along both boundaries.

The Dorset Heathlands SPA is located SW of the settlement of Alderholt, meaning that alternative sites in the south, west and southwest of the village are much closer to the SPA than Cross Farm, being in the northeast of the settlement.



Development at Cross Farm is closer to the School, nursery, shops, post office, existing bus route and to higher order facilities in Fordingbridge than the identified Option 1 sites in the south of Alderholt. It would therefore be a better option for the anticipated level of growth.

A PROVEN DELIVERY RECORD

Highwood has proven expertise in delivering exemplar new landscape-led communities and a commitment to responsible and sustainable development.

Our proposals will provide suitable, high-quality accommodation for the young, families and the elderly, with sustainability at the core including energy and water-efficient homes, electric charging points for cars and provision of home offices.

Full details of our proposals for the site are set out in the following sections.

A portfolio of our recent relevant development experience is provided in Appendix 1.

7. HIGHWOOD COMMITMENTS

HIGHWOOD COMMITMENTS

WE WILL:

CONSULT THE LOCAL COMMUNITY AT AN EARLY STAGE ON THE LAYOUT, APPEARANCE AND DESIGN OF THE DEVELOPMENT AND PUBLIC OPEN SPACES, BUILDING UPON WORK ALREADY UNDERTAKEN ON TECHNICAL ASPECTS SUCH AS ACCESS, DRAINAGE, LANDSCAPE AND ECOLOGY (ETC)

PROVIDE POLICY COMPLIANT (CURRENTLY 35%) AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND NOT LOOK TO NEGOTIATE THIS DOWN ON VIABILITY GROUNDS AS OTHER DEVELOPERS HAVE DONE ELSEWHERE IN ALDERHOLT

INCLUDE AS PART OF THE PROPOSALS CONNECTIONS TO THE EXISTING PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY NETWORK, INCLUDING POTENTIAL TO PROVIDE A FIRST STAGE SECTION OF THE PROPOSED ALDERHOLT-FORDINGBRIDGE TRAILWAY

PROVIDE A BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN OF AT LEAST 10%

CONTINUE TO PROPERLY ENGAGE AND WORK WITH THE LOCAL COMMUNITY THROUGHOUT THE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

8. SITE & SURROUNDINGS

The site currently comprises a collection of paddocks and fields with an associated complex of existing farm buildings to the north east. Existing trees and hedges are present along some of the field boundaries. Existing site access is from Sandleheath Road to the northeast.

The site is visually contained in the wider landscape due to the presence of woodland (to the west) and a raised disused railway embankment, covered in dense mature trees to the north.



Photo 1 - Aerial view looking SE from NW of the site - see how enclosed the site is due to existing mature trees, existing development and village beyond.



Photo 2 - Aerial view looking W from E of the site - existing farm buildings in foreground and woodland beyond. Village and Station Road to left of picture. Tree belt to right.



Photo 3 - View from Sandleheath Road to the north looking back at the dismantled railway and mature trees with site situated behind. The approach to the village, its character, will not be affected in this view as the site is hidden behind at a lower level than the embankment and trees.



Photo 4 - View from Sandleheath Road looking southwest across site with development beyond and in foreground.

The site is relatively flat which further helps visual containment in wider landscape and townscape terms.

Existing village development comprising a mix of one and two storey buildings is located to the east (Hillbury Road) and south (Station Road) of the site.

Only localised glimpsed views between properties of the site are achievable when viewed from these roads, with views taken within a surrounding suburban context.



Photo 4 - Aerial view from W looking E along the course of the proposed Trailway on disused railway. Site to right of tree belt.



Photo 5 - View from Station Road with glimpsed views only of site behind existing homes.



Photo 6 - View along Station Road taken from close to the junction with Hillbury Road. Site is situated behind landscaping and homes on right of picture.



Photo 7 - View from the corner of Hillbury and Station Road looking towards Cross Farm, demonstrating that the site is well contained in townscape terms



Photo 8 - View across interior of existing site looking west



Photo 9 - View of existing farm buildings off Sandleheath Road



Photo 10 - View from within the site looking at existing dwellings in Station Road situated along the southern boundary of the site



Photo 11 - View from within existing farm buildings yard



Photo 12 - View of southwestern corner of site from site interior

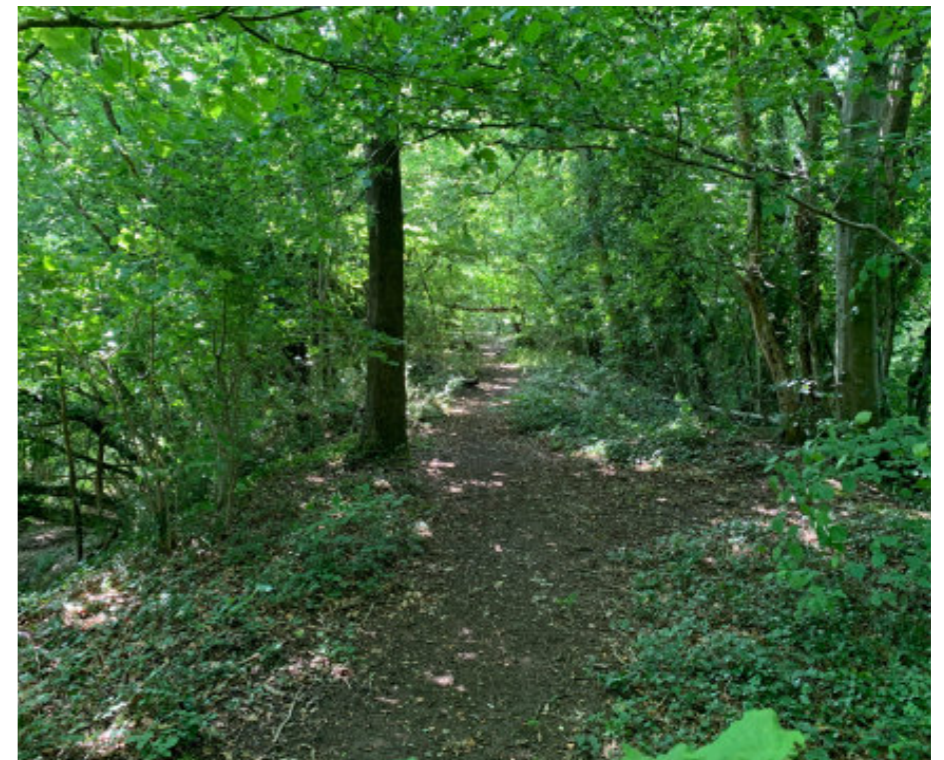


Photo 13 - View of existing footpath within woodland glade

9. LOCAL FACILITIES

CONVENIENCE

The site is situated conveniently close to existing shops, services and facilities within Alderholt, including the school, nursery, shops and post office.

LINKS TO FORDINGBRIDGE

Due to Cross Farm’s location on the northeastern edge of the village, the site is better situated than other development options to the south and west of Alderholt in terms of access to the neighbouring town of Fordingbridge, approximately 2.5km to the northeast.

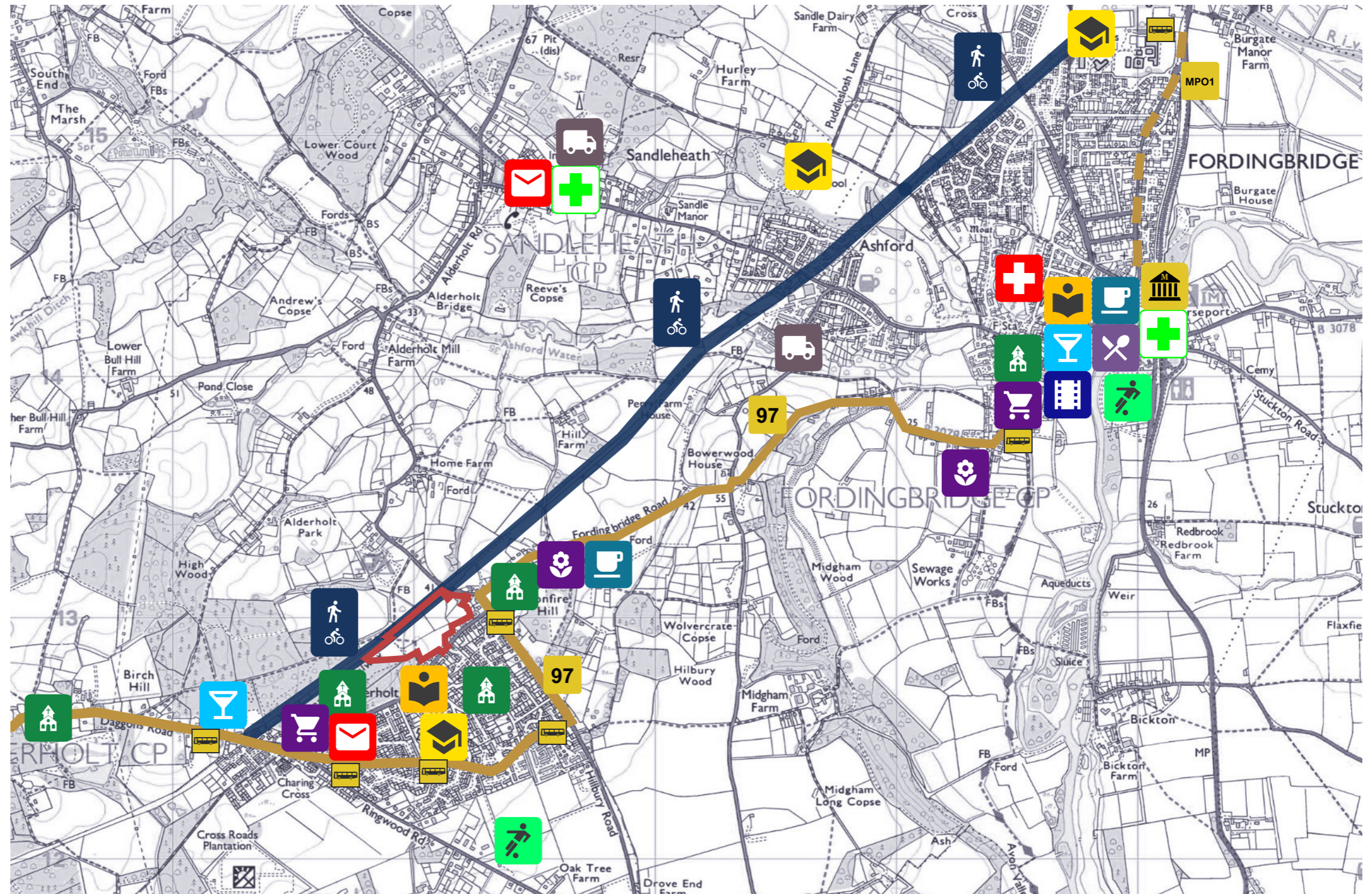
Fordingbridge has a range of additional shops, services, employment areas and facilities including healthcare, cinema, museum, shops, restaurants etc .

BUSES

The site is located along the route of the existing (limited) Bus Service 97 which runs to and from Fordingbridge and Verwood. New development has the potential to contribute towards making this route more frequent and viable. School buses serve Burgate School in the mornings and afternoons from the nearest stop, in Hillbury Road.

TRAILWAY

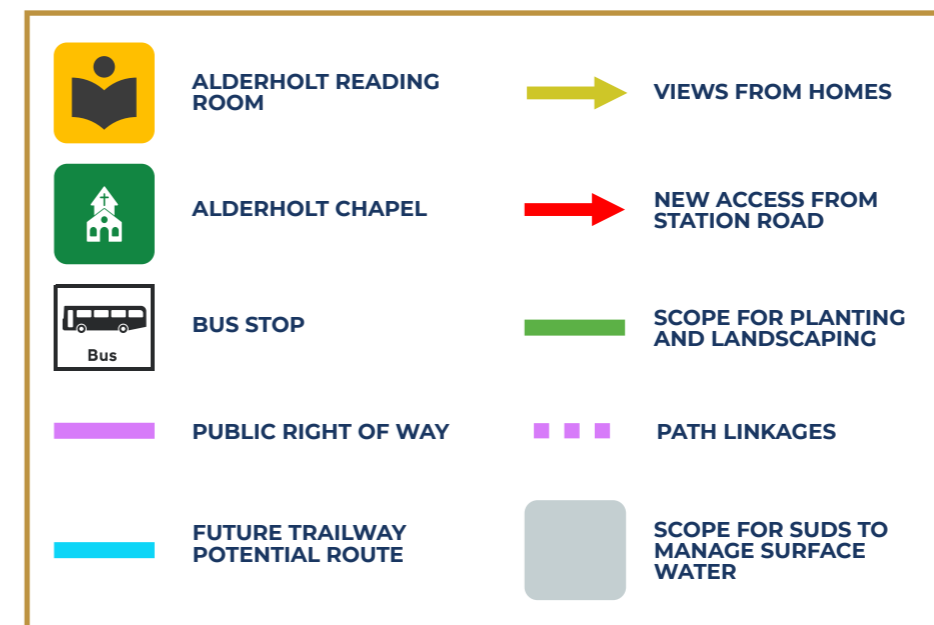
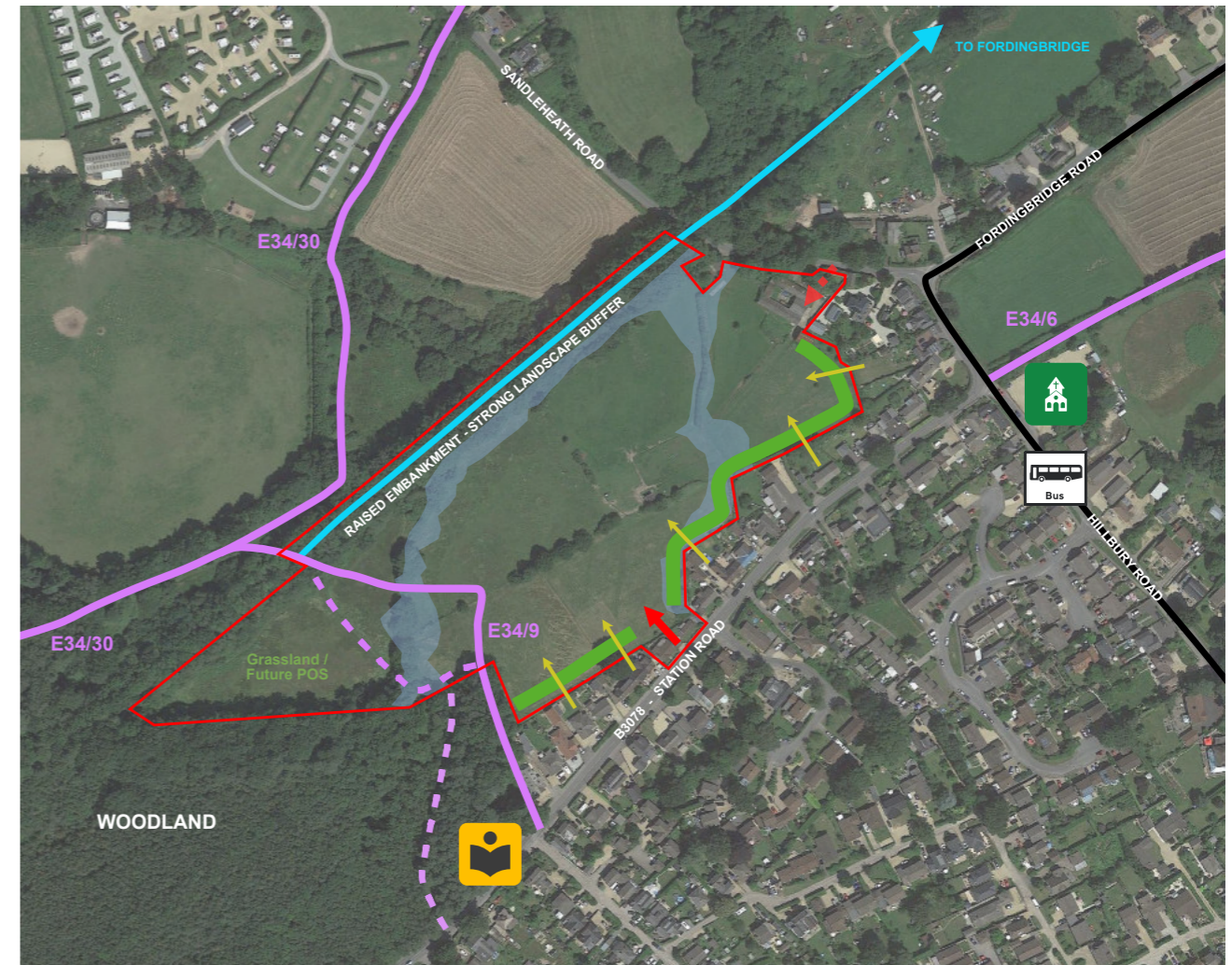
The blue line shown on the plan right, shows the route of the potential Alderholt Trailway - a potential sustainable link between Alderholt and Fordingbridge - benefiting walkers, cyclists, horse riders and others - improving access to Fordingbridge’s facilities for Alderholt residents.



10. CONSTRAINTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

The diagram illustrates the site opportunities and constraints.

- A well-contained site with strong planted boundaries to the north and woodland to the west. Adjoining development to the south and east.
- A site that can be easily connected and integrated with existing roads, footways, paths and potential future railway.
- Existing Public Rights of Way to be retained with pedestrian / cyclist linkages to surrounding countryside and village to be enhanced.
- Gateway to the new potential Alderholt - Fordingbridge Trailway to be provided for the whole community.
- Proposed new access under our control to be gained off Station Road.
- Existing trees and hedgerows form natural features and will be retained.
- The extensive woodland and mature screen along the railway embankment screen the site in the wider landscape to the west and north giving the site an attractive setting and backdrop.
- Surface water considerations to be taken into account as per the Odyssey Flood Risk and Drainage Strategy technical note (see following Section 11)
- Surface water to be attenuated on site prior to being discharged to the existing culverts and watercourse at an agreed discharge rate which will provide betterment to the existing 'green field' scenario.
- Adoption of SUDS across the site
- Need to provide appropriate transition of development with landscaping enhancements to protect the amenities of neighbouring residents.
- Grassland / POS opportunity in west
- SANGS required to mitigate effects of development upon Dorset Heathlands SPA.
- A focus on design and landscape quality in scheme formulation.



11. FLOOD RISK AND DRAINAGE

FLOOD RISK AND DRAINAGE

Odyssey consulting engineers have undertaken a full Flood Risk and Technical Drainage Assessment of the site and this has been submitted to the Council for review under separate cover.

It assesses flood risk from all potential sources (sea, rivers, surface flow, groundwater, reservoirs etc).

The report demonstrates that flood risk and drainage factors do not preclude development at the site and will result in betterment to the existing scenario.

FLOOD RISK FROM RIVERS

The site falls wholly within Environment Agency Flood Zone 1, meaning that it is, 'land assessed as having less than a 1 in 1,000 annual probability of river or sea flooding (<0.1%)'.



Other Highwood drainage schemes



SURFACE WATER FLOOD RISK

The EA RoFSW mapping (see left) shows that there are pluvial (surface water) flow routes on site.

Odyssey reviewed the topography of the site and identified that the EA map did not take account of the watercourses or culverts that exist in the locality.

A detailed direct rainfall hydraulic model was created to determine risk, illustrated on the plan, right.

Surface water will be attenuated on site prior to being discharged to the existing culverts and watercourse at an agreed discharge rate which will provide betterment to the existing 'green field' scenario.



Image above: The site falls within Flood Zone 1 meaning it has a less than 1:1000 annual chance of fluvial flood.

Image below: The Odyssey model takes account of the topography of the site, the existence of a watercourse and culverts. Revised surface water flow areas shown. (Modelled 1 in 100 year + 40% Climate Change Maximum Pluvial Flood Depth)

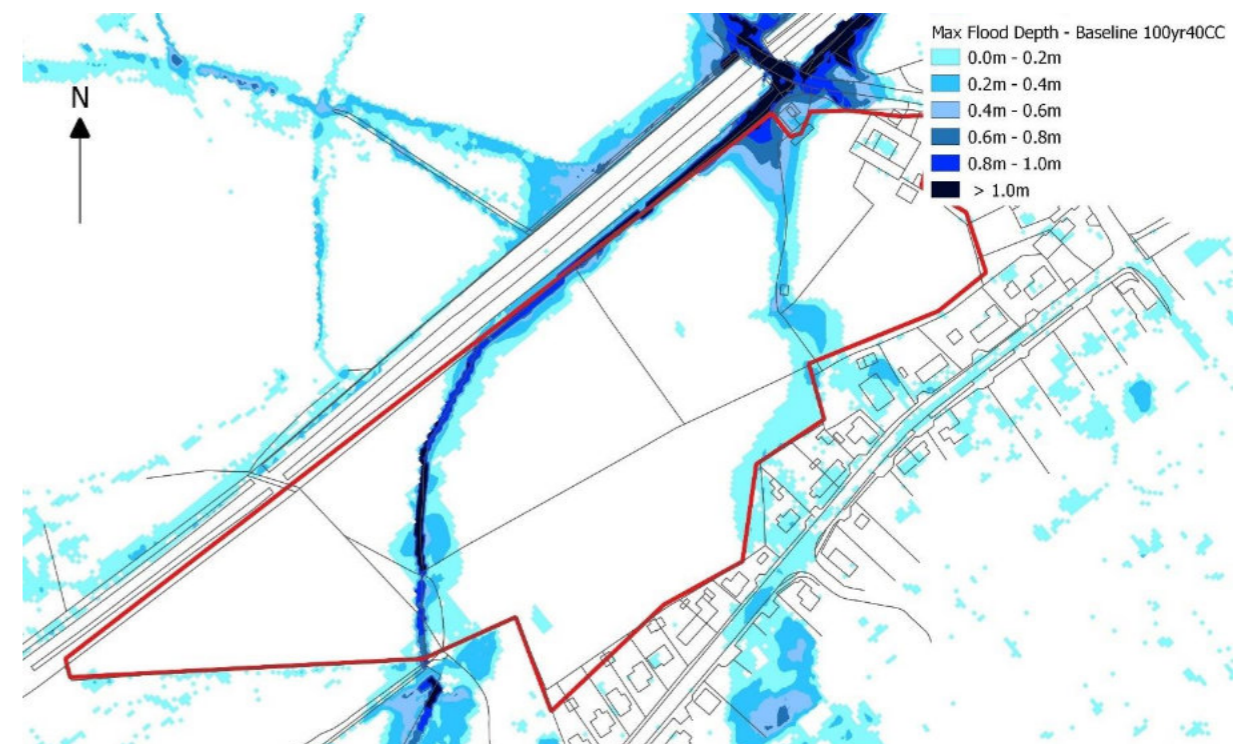


Image above: Environment Agency RoFSW map which does not take account of site topography, or watercourses and culverts in the locality.

12. CONCEPT SITE PLAN



This well contained site represents an opportunity to provide new homes within a backdrop of retained trees and verdant edges, making the most of existing natural features.

With a proposed site access from Station Road, the arrival experience will create a vista to a group of retained trees around which an attractive area of open green space will form a central focus for the development.

Site circulation along tree lined streets will radiate from this central green, creating a permeable and legible site layout with contained development parcels set within a strong landscape framework.

Interconnected and attractive Public Open Spaces will make the most of existing natural features and ecology corridors.

Existing public rights of way will be retained and new pedestrian connections will be created along desire lines to interconnect with surrounding streets and countryside.

Landscaped green buffers provided to protect the amenities of existing neighbouring residents.

- **79 homes including Affordable Homes (of at least policy-compliant AH %)**
- **Flexible Employment Space**
- **Public Open Space / SANGS**
- **Trailway / Cycleway / Footpath Connections**

13. DELIVERY AND BENEFITS

DELIVERY, VIABILITY AND LOCAL PLAN SUCCESS

Highwood have the site under option and are promoting the development with the full agreement of landowners. We have a strong track record in the planning, design, construction and delivery of large-scale housing projects across the south of England, working closely with our various delivery partners.

OPEN MARKET AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING

The site can deliver circa 79 new homes of a range of mix and type to contribute towards Alderholt’s local housing needs.

Affordable Homes will be provided in accordance with Dorset’s emerging Policy HOUS2 (currently 30%-40% provision).



ALDERHOLT TRAILWAY

The site is uniquely placed to be able to deliver a first phase of the Alderholt to Fordingbridge Trailway, an aspiration under Policy ALD2.

Linkages will be provided to the new trailway into the site to the south and with the existing PRoW network to the north.



BALANCING OF PHOSPHATES & NITRATES

Highwood have secured land located adjacent to the River Avon with a local landowner and are formulating a scheme to mitigate the effects of development at Cross Farm in terms of nitrate and phosphates use – an issue that affects the Avon catchment.



EMPLOYMENT AT CROSS FARM

Proposals for Cross Farm include:

- a bespoke, serviced employment hub, with 8-10 flexible units for local businesses to utilise, including meeting rooms, shared networking facilities.
- Flexible space within new homes to accommodate modern ‘home working’ practices. and/or the option of an external outbuilding for use as a study/office.

Provision of employment on site (and/or elsewhere in the village under Growth Option 2) will help minimise demand for out-commuting, a feature of Alderholt currently.



KEY FEATURES OF SERVICED OFFICES:

- Fully serviced, modern office space
- Circa 8-10 flexible small offices
- Ready to use facilities
- Flexible terms for let: hours, days, weeks – dedicated desks or hot desks
- Personalised workspace to meet need
- Meeting rooms, break out spaces and networking areas
- Open to whole community, meeting an existing shortfall in provision across Alderholt and wider catchment
- Co-working potential between users
- High speed Wi-Fi and phones
- Shared kitchen and other facilities

14. SUSTAINABILITY

CARBON NEUTRALITY



DEMONSTRATING CLIMATE LEADERSHIP:

The development design will incorporate a sustainability strategy which is flexible and fit for the future including a range of measures ensuring it is resilient to impacts of climate change, and reduces carbon emissions.

At this stage, the measures set out below are proposed, but we will monitor responses to the current local plan consultation and any change to Dorset planning policy to bring forward a policy-compliant scheme.



FUTURE HOMES AND BREEAM STANDARDS:

All stand-alone homes will be designed to meet the stringent requirements of the Future Homes Standard which currently goes much beyond building regulation requirements. This may require an improved thermal performance of the building fabric; committing to an all-electric heating system; or the use of other renewable/low carbon technologies such as Air Source Heat Pumps, Solar Thermal; or incorporation of solar photovoltaics on the roof.

Non-residential development will be assessed using BREEAM methodology, with an anticipated target to achieve 'Excellent'.



NET ZERO READY:

Our new schemes built from 2030 onward will aim to achieve Net Zero Ready status. This means meeting the requirements of the Future Homes Standard and offsetting any residual carbon associated with the construction of these homes.



EMBODIED CARBON:

The embodied carbon of the development will be calculated and reduced where possible through design. From 2030, the residual carbon will be offset (using a best approach referred to as 'twinning' which requires purchase of carbon offsets plus a tree planting scheme accredited by the Woodland Carbon Code). We will aim to provide new planting on site where possible initially to offset the total embodied carbon.

PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND LOW CARBON INFRASTRUCTURE



SMART ADAPTABLE HOMES:

The development will include smart meters as standard and 'smart' Electric Vehicle (EV) charging points.



LOW ENERGY / CARBON INFRASTRUCTURE:

LED street lighting will be used, powered by renewable energy.



SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT:

The development will facilitate the use of low carbon transport through the provision of EV charging infrastructure such as smart charging points in public areas.



WATER EFFICIENCY:

Water efficiency measures such as low flow toilets, shower heads and water butts will contribute to achieving the water consumption rate of 100/ p/d in accordance with the national higher water efficiency standard.



15. CONCLUSION

Highwood has proven expertise in delivering exemplar new landscape-led communities and a commitment to responsible and sustainable development.

We will provide a diverse mix of housing, including policy compliant affordable housing alongside SANG/POS and improved connections to the wider pedestrian and cycle network.

Our proposals will provide suitable, high-quality accommodation for the young, families and the elderly, with sustainability at the core including energy and water-efficient homes, electric charging points for cars.

The proposals include provision of home offices, offering flexibility to work from home, as well as bespoke, serviced employment accommodation.

We will work with the council and other stakeholders to unlock the first element of Policy ALD2 proposals for a new Trailway link to Fordingbridge.

We look forward to working with the Parish Council and other stakeholders to deliver the benefits development at Cross Farm can achieve.

CONTACT



MARTIN HAWTHORNE
DIRECTOR



JON BRAY
PLANNING MANAGER

APPENDIX 1

HIGHWOOD STATEMENT OF EXPERIENCE





HIGHWOOD

