

Sites Allocated for New Developments

Queen Elizabeth II Barracks area, Church Crookham

DEV 2 74 HECTARES OF LAND IN CRONDALL (EWSHOT) PARISH, TO THE SOUTH OF CHURCH CROOKHAM, KNOWN AS QUEEN ELIZABETH II BARRACKS AND WAKEFORDS COPSE, IS PROPOSED FOR COMPREHENSIVE MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT AS FOLLOWS.

- A) ON NO MORE THAN 32 HECTARES OF PREVIOUSLY DEVELOPED LAND (OR AN EQUIVALENT AREA) WITHIN THE SITE:**
- i) Housing, at an average density of 40 dwellings per hectare, on up to 25.4 hectares, of which up to 550 units will be developed during the current local plan period and any remainder after 2006;**
 - ii) Combined home/employment units or employment on approximately 2.6 hectares;**
 - iii) A site for a school on approximately 1.1 hectares;**
 - iv) A local centre (including shops and a supermarket for local needs) on up to 1.5 hectares;**
 - v) A site within the local centre for primary medical care services (with the ability to accommodate a single storey surgery building of approximately 740 square metres and associated car parking and delivery space); and**
 - vi) A community centre incorporating sports changing facilities on approximately 0.2 hectares (juxtaposed with formal open space);**
 - vii) Children's play areas on approximately 1.2 hectares;**
 - viii) Other leisure and employment uses, should the opportunity arise within this overall area.**
- B) ON AT LEAST 34.7 HECTARES OF OPEN SPACE, WOODLAND AND PREVIOUSLY UNDEVELOPED LAND (OR AN EQUIVALENT AREA) WITHIN THE SITE:**
- ix) Open space for formal recreation on at least 7.6 hectares;**
 - x) Open space for informal recreation on at least 10.1 hectares;**
 - xi) Land, comprising Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation within the site set aside and managed for nature conservation on 17 hectares.**
- C) THE BALANCE OF THE SITE IS REQUIRED TO SECURE A MEANS OF ACCESS AND TO PROVIDE A RURAL SETTING ON THE EDGE OF THE SITE.**

THE OVERALL SCALE OF HOUSING DEVELOPMENT IS SUBJECT TO:

- 1) Adequate protection, in perpetuity, from the impact of recreation pressure and disturbance from people and pets arising from the development of the site, of the nearby part of the Thames Basin Heaths proposed Special Protection Area for Birds (comprising the Bourley and Long Valley Site of Special Scientific Interest);*
- 2) Adequate protection and management of the following Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation - Soanes Copse, Wood Copse, Wakefords Copse, Soanes Field, Riddings Copse, Ewshot Marsh, Long Gut Copse, Greendane Copse and Beacon Hill/Parkhurst Hill;*
- 3) Sufficient provision to offset the effects of development on other habitats and nature conservation interests, including replacement or substitution of the habitats or features lost and conservation of ecological networks;*
- 4) Siting of essential services and facilities to ensure that they are not subject to unacceptable*

"societal" risk arising from flying at Farnborough Aerodrome;

- 5) *Capacity of the surrounding highway network and transportation systems to accommodate growth.*

DEVELOPMENT MUST SECURE:

- 6) *Improvements to the public highway needed to accommodate the development;*
- 7) *Off-site provision of cycleways, as appropriate, to integrate the development with the wider area;*
- 8) *Improvements to public transport to integrate the development with Fleet Town Centre, Secondary Schools and the Railway Station and, where appropriate, with employment opportunities in Farnborough;*
- 9) *Buffer strips to minimise the risk of adverse visual impact on the open countryside beyond the site; and*
- 10) *If necessary, the provision of public access, in perpetuity, to open countryside to the south to meet the needs of the development and provide for the proper management of nature conservation interests affected by the development.*

EXCHANGE BETWEEN PREVIOUSLY DEVELOPED AND PREVIOUSLY UNDEVELOPED LAND

Having regard to the phrase "(OR AN EQUIVALENT AREA)" in section A of the policy, the local planning authority will permit the development of previously undeveloped land provided that an equivalent (or larger) area of previously developed land is restored to open space or open countryside within the site. The effect of any such exchange of land must:

- a) *Not lead to harm (indirectly) to the Thames Basin Heaths proposed Special Protection Area; and*
- b) *Secure a net benefit for nature conservation; and*
- c) *Secure a more sustainable design and layout of the development.*

Strategic Justification

In accordance with the definition in Annex C of PPG3: Housing, the Queen Elizabeth II Barracks is a previously developed ("brownfield") site, formerly in M.o.D. use as the Gurkha Barracks but vacated as surplus to requirements in August, 2000. Although actually located in Crondall Parish, the Barracks are situated adjacent to the southern edge of Hart's main settlement of Fleet / Church Crookham. Prospective residents should therefore be able to take advantage of the existing shopping, leisure and other facilities available within the town centre, subject to improved access by public transport.

Similarly, Wakefords Copse is a very low density residential area under M.o.D. control, also released as surplus to requirements and as such qualifies as a previously developed ("brownfield") site. It has similar locational advantages to the nearby Barracks with which it has strong relationships. It is proposed that this area should be redeveloped for housing at higher densities than the existing housing.

Paragraphs 57 to 62 of PPG3 set out the Government's guidance on housing density and car parking standards with the objective of making the best use of land. Paragraph 9 of PPG3 points out that the majority of projected household growth will be in one-person households. In the light of this advice, the LPA considers that it is reasonable to seek an average density of 40 dwellings per hectare. The LPA's objective is to make best use of this site, whilst having regard to its location on the southern edge of the Fleet/Church Crookham urban area some 3 - 4 kilometres from Fleet Town Centre and Fleet Station.

The reference to 550 units in criterion (i) is intended to inform housing supply calculations and is not intended as an arbitrary restriction on development rates.

Strategic Constraints to Development

It is essential that the Queen Elizabeth II Barracks and Wakefords Copse should be planned comprehensively through preparation of a Master Plan for the whole area. However, as advised in PPG3, Annex C, this does not mean that the whole area of the curtilage is appropriate for development

because:

1. *The site contains playing fields, open land and nature conservation interests, much of it in a single block forming a sizeable open area. There is a need for the site to preserve its considerable attraction, its recreational value and its contribution to the amenity of the southern part of Church Crookham. These considerations set limits on the extent that development could be permitted to impinge on this central part of the site.*
2. *Furthermore the eastern boundary of the main Barracks area is in places under 1.6 kilometres from the edge of the Bourley and Long Valley Site of Special Scientific Interest, which is part of the proposed Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (pSPA) for Birds. Wakefords Copse is much closer. Having regard to Policy E10 of the adopted Hampshire County Structure Plan (Review) 1996 - 2011 and Government policy in PPG9: Nature Conservation, it is the view of the local planning authority that the need for development cannot be said to outweigh any adverse impact. Therefore, the scale and layout of development must be such that there will be no significant permanent adverse impact on the pSPA/SSSIs.*
3. *The site also contains locally designated Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) at Soans Copse, Wood Copse, Wakefords Copse and Soans Field and is close or adjacent to SINCS at Riddings Copse, Ewshot Marsh, Long Gut Copse, Greendane Copse and Beacon Hill/Parkhurst Hill. In accordance with Policy E11 of the adopted Hampshire County Structure Plan (Review) 1996 - 2011, sufficient provision should be made to minimise potential damage and provide appropriate compensatory measures to offset any damage that does occur.*
4. *There are other habitats and areas of nature conservation interest within the site that, although not up to the standard of SINCs, are covered by Policy E12 of the adopted Hampshire County Structure Plan (Review) 1996 - 2011. Sufficient provision must be made to offset the effects of development, including replacement or substitution of the habitats or features lost and conservation of ecological networks.*

This means that development of the site must take place within a framework set by the need to protect nature conservation interests. In particular, planning permission will not be granted for development unless the Competent Authority (the local planning authority) is satisfied that it will not result in an adverse effect on the integrity of the Thames Basin Heaths proposed Special Protection Area. English Nature has indicated that it would be seriously concerned about proposals to increase the capacity of the site beyond 550 dwellings and indeed has concerns even at that level.

Other than the constraints described above, the site as a whole should be capable of development, subject to appropriate boundary treatments, without directly harming any specific landscape interests (based on visual appearance) outside the site.

However, the site is in line with the runway of Farnborough Aerodrome and so may be affected by height restrictions and a requirement to address "Societal Risk". This should not affect the location of housing to such an extent that the site cannot deliver its full potential. However, it might place a restriction on where types of uses can locate, where large numbers of people may be expected to gather, such as a school, community-building etc.

Comprehensive Package of Proposals

A Master Plan will be required for the whole of the Queen Elizabeth II Barracks and Wakefords Copse site because the combined scale of development makes it imperative that these two sites are planned comprehensively.

A comprehensive package of proposals is required for the redevelopment of this site as a whole, including:

- (i) *Primary medical care facilities involving expansion and relocation of the GP Surgery to cope with the increased population;*
- (ii) *A local centre including shops and a supermarket for local needs;*
- (iii) *Land for a school (subject to the overall scale of housing development);*
- (iv) *Affordable housing;*
- (v) *"Live-and-work" units or employment space;*
- (vi) *A community centre & sports changing facilities juxtaposed with land for formal recreation;*
- (vii) *Provision of (or a contribution towards) synthetic athletic facilities;*

page 85

- (viii) *Appropriate contributions towards enhancement of existing off-site leisure facilities to meet additional pressures arising from the development;*
- (ix) *Provision of public art;*
- (x) *Safeguarding of land of importance for nature conservation;*
- (xi) *Securing the proper management of nature conservation interests affected by the development;*
- (xii) *Provision of sufficient land for informal open space (including open countryside off-site if necessary) to meet the needs of the development and divert pressure away from the Thames Basin Heaths proposed Special Protection Area;*
- (xiii) *Appropriate means of access linking the site to the highway network;*
- (xiv) *Appropriate boundary treatments to minimise the risk of adverse visual impact on the open countryside beyond the site.*

The Primary Health Care team of the North Hants Health Authority (now contained within the Rushmoor and Hart Primary Care Group) identified a need for increased primary medical care facilities to serve the population resulting from this new development.

Similarly, subject to the overall capacity of the site, a new primary school will be required to cope with the potential scale of development proposed (including that beyond the end of the plan period). Land will need to be reserved within the site to accommodate these facilities. It is acknowledged that if the capacity of the site is substantially reduced below 1,150 dwellings due to nature conservation issues, a school may not be appropriate and only contributions would be required.

The development will be expected to contribute a proportion of affordable housing, as set out in policy URB 13.

The LPA considers that the site of the former Motor Transport Depot may offer an ideal opportunity to provide home/employment units (the dwelling units to be taken into account in the global housing figure for the Barracks site). However, through preparation of the Master Plan there is scope to identify an alternative area of equivalent size in its place, integrated with the rest of the development. In the event that the home / employment units are not forthcoming, an employment (not residential) use will be considered as an alternative somewhere within the overall site.

Wakefords Copse will be accessed from the spine road running through the whole area and, as part of the overall development, will be expected to contribute to infrastructure, facilities and affordable housing requirements.

Part of the site forms an important local gap or "green lung" between the Barracks and Wakefords Copse development areas. It has the potential to provide for formal recreation needs for the residents of the new development and for residents elsewhere in Church Crookham. The woodlands on the site also provide informal recreation areas, are of local nature conservation value and provide a landscape setting for the new developments.

In the light of Annex C of PPG3: Housing, the local planning authority would prefer not to release existing woodland and open land on the site for built development. This area has the potential to provide good quality open space and recreation land to satisfy the needs of the development. In particular land that is flat can provide for the formal recreation needs. Nor does the local planning authority wish to see any overall loss of recognised habitats. However, the need for some flexibility over the disposition of open space is acknowledged in order to secure the proper planning of the site and at the same time minimise adverse impacts on interests of acknowledged importance.

The woodland SINC should be retained around the boundaries of Wakefords Copse to provide buffer strips between the housing and the adjacent industrial estate and road. This buffer strip is also important in its contribution to the setting and approach into Church Crookham and for its amenity value on the surrounding area. Its value in terms of nature conservation will require proper management of the woodland in association with the development.

In the interest of the comprehensive planning of the wider area of Church Crookham, there is also benefit in consolidating existing playing field provision with that to be provided as part of the Queen Elizabeth II Barracks development, should the opportunity arise. Also, if possible, the opportunity should be taken to enhance leisure facilities further to meet an existing local deficit in provision.

It is essential that the Ewshot Marsh Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) to the south is protected from any impact of development (including drainage), and that the woodlands adjacent to the site are retained. Both the meadow and the woodlands require active management to benefit their

ecological value and safeguard them from detrimental effects of recreation demands. In general, appropriate management of open countryside to the south of the site must be secured to:

- a) *Provide effective mitigation to prevent any adverse impact of development on the Thames Basin Heaths proposed Special Protection Area through provision of recreational access to the open countryside; and*

Hart District Council Local Plan

page 86

- b) *Secure the long-term future of nature conservation interests on this land and protect those interests from the effects of development.*

Access for walkers to the wider countryside to the south may also be an important aspect in the planning of the site. If access to open countryside is required to enable the proper management of nature conservation interests, it must be secured in perpetuity before planning permission is granted.

The area covered by this policy includes two areas, which are outside the Fleet/Church Crookham settlement boundary. These include the access point from Ewshot Lane and the triangular apex of the site to the south and are excluded from the settlement boundary because it is not envisaged that they will contain development per se (other than the access road). They are included within the policy area because of the need to resolve their future within the Master Plan and any subsequent planning exercises associated with the development of the Barracks. However, they remain outside the settlement boundary.

Transportation and Highways

Improved public transport including regular bus links to Fleet Town Centre, secondary schools, the railway station and (if appropriate) Farnborough will need to be provided, as well as cycleway links to the town centre and secondary schools. It is proposed that a spine road (to include a cycleway) be developed across the site, linking Sandy Lane and Redfields Lane. This would link the housing with employment developments proposed for the area.

Off-site highway works will also be required in the area to improve road safety and to accommodate traffic generated by the development. Appropriate contributions will also be sought towards the strategic cycleway network.