

Army Basing Update for Upavon, Warminster, Tidworth and Amesbury Area Boards - January 2018

Background

The government's Army Basing announcement in March 2013 advised of around 4,300 extra Service personnel moving to Wiltshire by the end of the decade. They will be accompanied by their families, bringing the total number of additional people estimated to be moving to the area to 7,600. These plans will require additional levels of infrastructure and services to be provided by Wiltshire Council. The MOD has since reviewed the figures as the relocations draw nearer and now expect the net addition of Service personnel to total 4,000. Accordingly the expected net increase in population will be a little over 7,000.

Service Family Accommodation (SFA): The MOD announced on 26th November 2017 that 917 new homes for service personnel and their families will be built across Salisbury Plain. They are to be built by British construction company Lovell, and will offer modern three and four bedroom accommodation, as well as a number of bungalows and adapted homes for families with specific needs, such as wheelchair access. They are expected to complete by May 2020 with sufficient housing provided across Salisbury Plain to accommodate all families relocating from Germany in 2019. They will be built in Bulford, Larkhill and Ludgershall for service personnel and their families relocating from Germany and also units moving within the UK.

Pre-construction work on the project has already begun in the spring of 2017, including off-site highways to facilitate access to the new homes. The £250 million investment comes alongside a further £90 million in road and utility improvements in support of the three developments. £1.1 billion has already been pledged to the Salisbury Plain area for living and working accommodation 'behind the wire' including 2,500 bed spaces for single soldiers and the construction, conversion or refurbishment of nearly 250 other buildings such as offices, garages, workshops and mess facilities.

The programme is expected to create a significant number of jobs in Hampshire and Wiltshire, as well as training opportunities, including apprenticeships, as up to 700 construction workers are set to be on site at the peak of the development.

St Michael's school build at Larkhill: Good progress continues for the new school which will cater for 420 pupils plus 60 nursery places. The superstructure (i.e. the structural steel frame and supporting concrete) and the groundworks are complete, so the shape of the building is now evident. The new road to the school is due to be completed in January 2018 by the Defence Infrastructure Organisation. The school build being managed by Wiltshire Council will complete in the summer of 2018, allowing the transfer of the existing school from Figheldean in readiness for the start of the autumn term. School numbers are expected to grow considerably the following year as service families relocate to Wiltshire.

Other schools: Planning permission to extend Avon Valley College (AVC) at Durrington was granted, subject to conditions, at the Strategic Planning Committee on 11 October 2017 ([17/05062/DP3](#)). The tender process for AVC will be completed in January 2018, with planning for Ludgershall primary school and Wellington Academy extension underway. Planning applications for these two latter schools are being prepared. All additional places will be available in August 2019, in good time for the arrival of the army units arriving in the summer of 2019.

Larkhill Roadworks: There are roadworks in place at Larkhill to complete the surfacing of the approach road from an eastbound direction which connects with the new roundabout on The Packway. Additionally there will be further roadworks to enable completion of a cycle path along the Packway. The roadworks at Larkhill Road (between the A344 roundabout and Bulford Hill) will continue until early 2018. There is also some traffic controls on Fargo Road and Tombs Road to complete sewer connections. Further information will be published via the Larkhill Travel Information Leaflet issued by the ABP. Any queries regarding the roadworks are to be sent to: DIO-ABPSPTARoadworks@mod.uk.

Distance learning opportunities for Army Spouses: Wiltshire Council is presently exploring the possibility of enabling an innovative training programme for the spouses of service personnel due to relocate to Wiltshire under the ABP. The “distance learning” will be providing qualifications in jobs that are likely to be hiring staff in the summer of 2019. Wiltshire Council has a good relationship with the major employers in the county and will work in cooperation with them to help fill local vacancies.

Warminster Army Numbers: The MOD has indicated that following its A2020 Refine Review, which looked again at long term basing plans, 1 Yorks Unit will move from Warminster to Catterick in 2020 , Royal Dragoon Guards Armoured Cavalry Regt will relocate from Catterick to Warminster in 2020 and RL Medical Armoured Regt will relocate from Catterick to Warminster in 2021. This is likely to lead to an overall increase of around 300 service personnel In Warminster. Wiltshire Council has been in discussion with local schools to plan for additional capacity where it may be needed. It is also reviewing implications for health facilities.

Wiltshire Assembly: The Wiltshire Assembly was held on 9 November at County Hall in Trowbridge. It was chaired by John Bush, CVO OBE, KStJ, JP and brings together hundreds of organisations from the public, private and voluntary sectors and Wiltshire’s communities, to decide how to ensure a bright future for the county. This year the assembly had a military theme and included a presentation from the HQSW Brigade based at Tidworth. The presentation highlighted how the military engages with the youth, community and employers as well as demonstrating how successful Wiltshire organisations have been in accessing funds from the Armed Forces Covenant grant scheme.

The assembly showcased the strong civilian and military links that exist throughout Wiltshire and the widespread support for the Armed Forces Covenant from public bodies, charities and many private sector companies who have pledged their support. Panel discussion on challenges and opportunities facing military and civilian integration and how veterans can be better supported were held. Local councillors from the area boards around Salisbury Plain contributed strongly to these discussions to help make it a success.

Garrisons Development: Construction work continues at pace behind the wire (Tidworth, Larkhill, Bulford, and Perham Down). Single living accommodation, mess extensions, regimental headquarters and technical buildings are underway or have been completed. Demolition and groundworks have begun at Larkhill for the new ‘Super Diner’; one of the key ‘eat and sleep’ assets to be completed in time for the return of troops in the summer of 2019.

Future Activity

- Summer 2018: St Michael’s Primary school build is due to complete enabling transfer from Figheldean
- By August 2019: Additional school capacity required by the Army Basing Programme will be completed
- Summer 2019: Majority of Service personnel are due to move to Salisbury Plain.