

REPORT TO THE STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	22 nd October 2014		
Proposal	Army Basing Programme – Salisbury Plain Masterplan Report for information		
Applicant	Defence Infrastructure Organisation		
Electoral Divisions	Bulford, Allington and Figheldene Ludgershall and Perham Down Tidworth	Unitary Members	Councillor John Smale Councillor Christopher Williams Councillor Mark Connolly
Case Officer	Simon T Smith		

Reason for the application being considered by Committee

Report for information only.

Following the Strategic Planning Committee of 30th July 2014 when the Salisbury Plain masterplan was considered and recognised by the Committee, agreement has now been reached on the matters of principle set out within the recommendation. Following agreement being reached on those issues, this report to the Strategic Planning Committee notifies the Committee of the finalisation of the Masterplan.

1.0 **Background**

- 1.1 In March 2013, the Secretary of State for Defence announced the Regular Army Basing Plan. This set out the future lay down of Army units in the UK as units move back from Germany and restructure to deliver the Army 2020 future operating Model. The Army Basing Plan has transitioned into a delivery as Army Basing Programme (ABP). This proposes an optimisation of the UK estate including greater concentration of the Army on Salisbury Plain Training Area (SPTA), where three high readiness Reaction Force Brigades will be based. It is anticipated that the unit moves to Wiltshire are to occur in the 2015 – 2019 period.
- 1.2 This reorganisation of the Army will involve significant new development in the locality to accommodate the additional activity, personnel and their families as well as the infrastructure to support them.
- 1.3 Policy CP37 of the emerging Wiltshire Core Strategy (eWCS) acknowledges that the provision of new housing on MOD land for military personnel and other operational facilities will be required as a result of the ABP across the SPTA. CP37 envisages that a single master plan should be developed, thereby front loading consultation and partnership

working with the local community and other stakeholders. The master planning process could ensure that the infrastructure needs arising from the proposed development are established and can be delivered as well as enabling the cumulative impact of development arising from the programme to be addressed.

- 1.4 In the context of CP37, the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) has been liaising closely with Wiltshire Council on preparing and planning for the expected new development in the County. As envisaged by Policy CP37, the work has culminated in the preparation of the Army Basing Programme Salisbury Plain Masterplan. The Masterplan brings together the key conclusions of the various technical background studies and has enabled the full engagement of the local community over the proposals. Critically, the Masterplan identifies the additional infrastructure requirements that will be needed to support the unit moves in the context of the resulting planning applications that it will be necessary to submit to the Council in the next few years.

2.0 Strategic Planning Committee resolution 30/07/14

- 2.1 In considering the Masterplan prepared by the DIO, in the meeting of 30th July 2014, the Council's Strategic Planning Committee resolved the following:

That the Strategic Planning Committee notes the evolving Army Basing Programme Master Plan as foreshadowed by the emerging Wiltshire Core Strategy. That the Strategic Planning Committee recognises the work done to date and encourages the DIO to reach agreement with the Associate Director for Economic Development and Planning on the following matters of principle before finalising the Master Plan:

- The outstanding issue relating to the impact of additional water abstraction arising from ABP being addressed to the satisfaction of the Council, in consultation with the Environment Agency and Natural England;*
- The outstanding issue relating to the impact of foul water discharge from ABP on phosphate levels in the River Avon being addressed to the satisfaction of the Council in consultation with the Environment Agency and Natural England;*
- The outstanding issue relating to the potential impact of increased recreational pressure on Salisbury Plain from ABP on protected species being addressed to the satisfaction of the Council;*

That the Strategic Planning Committee encourages the DIO to resolve the following matters prior to the submission of planning applications:

- The outstanding issue relating to the potential need to provide additional STW capacity from ABP at Larkhill being addressed to the satisfaction of the Council in consultation with English Heritage;*
- The outstanding issue relating to the potential impact of the Larkhill SFA on the setting of Stonehenge and the WHS being addressed to the satisfaction of the Council in consultation with English Heritage;*

- *The outstanding issue relating to unknown underground archaeology being addressed to the satisfaction of the Council;*
- *The outstanding issues relating to the design of the mechanisms required to ensure delivery of essential infrastructure made necessary by ABP being addressed to the satisfaction of the Council.*
- *The Highways Agency raising no material objections;*
- *Veolia raising no material objection to water supply and foul water processing capacities at Tidworth and Ludgershall.*

2.2 In the build up to, and following the resolution of, the Strategic Planning Committee the DIO have continued to work upon the 3 matters of principle set out in the first part of the resolution reached above: those being (i) water abstraction issues; (ii) impact of foul water discharge on phosphate levels in River Avon; and (iii) impact upon protected species.

2.3 To address those matters of principle, the DIO have prepared a schedule of “Environmental Commitments”, a final draft of which has now been submitted to the Council to support the Masterplan. The DIO Environmental Commitments can be found in appendix 1 to this report.

3.0 Statutory Consultee responses

3.1 Following receipt of the DIO Environmental Commitments, the final comments of the three relevant consultees were sought.

Natural England –

Confirm that they are satisfied with the final version of the DIO environmental commitments.

Environment Agency –

“I can confirm the Environment Agency would be happy to endorse the Army Basing Programme Salisbury Plain Masterplan, based on the attached draft DIO environmental commitments (note: now finalised). Please note I have provided some amendments to your draft document to hopefully further clarify the discussion held during our meeting on Monday. I have also had a brief discussion with Dianne Matthews (NE) regarding the draft commitments document. We are happy with their proposed amendments, which Dianne will send to you separately”

The EA makes specific comment on two aspects of the submitted DIO Environmental Commitments:

- In relation to Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) flow targets and monitoring of impacts as well as long-term mitigation measures that may be required to

meet the conservation objectives of the River Avon SAC (para. 1.4) – the EA comment that they would need a time commitment or conditioned planning response stating that agreed mitigation should be in place before development takes place. The DIO rightly point out that the JNCC flow charts referred to by the EA have not yet been adopted and it may not therefore be practicable to put mitigation in place prior to development, particularly for the early works. In any event, given the broad agreement reached on this issue, it is not thought to be a barrier to the finalisation of the Masterplan.

- In relation to water abstraction and the proposed implementation of water efficiency improvements and demand management programme to significantly reduce leakage (para. 1.6) – the EA comment that if the net abstraction volume increases a reduction in leakage and abstraction will not necessarily reduce the impact on receptors. The EA go on to suggest that the expressed DIO commitment may form part of the solution but additional mitigation such as pond/stream support etc. may also be required. In the final draft of the Commitments, the DIO have confirmed that they will provide a back-up water supply if required to offset an increased abstraction requirement.

Council Ecologist –

“Thank you for consulting me on DIO’s environmental commitments to support the Salisbury Plain Masterplan. The commitments are welcomed and set out a clear path to support both the decision making process and the sustainable operational phase of the development. The vast majority of commitments will need to be met prior to determination of relevant planning applications with the exception of a number of other issues which will be dealt with post-determination; these relate to monitoring of the water environment (1.5), biodiversity enhancement and management (3.2 – 3.4) and planning obligations (10.1 – 10.2). While the commitments do not in themselves fully address the outstanding issues previously highlighted in the Strategic Planning Committee report, they do provide reassurance to the Council that those issues can and will be addressed prior to an application being determined.

With regards to the Habitats Directive, given that the masterplan would not constitute an adopted plan, it is considered that the statutory need for the Council to carry out a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) of the plan is not triggered. Nonetheless, as a competent authority the Council must in exercising any of its functions, have regard to the requirements of the Habitats Directive so far as they may be affected by the exercise of those functions. Having reviewed the masterplan and its supporting documentation including the Overarching Environmental Appraisal and the draft Overarching Habitats Regulations Assessment, having regard to the views of the relevant statutory consultees and the DIO Environmental Commitments, I am satisfied that the masterplan can be delivered without having any adverse effects upon the Natura 2000 network. I therefore consider that further HRA is not required at this stage for the ABP masterplan to move forward, and in the circumstance it would be appropriate that such detailed assessment work is carried out at the planning application stage, which would be a statutory requirement of Regulation 61.

It is recommended that in moving the masterplan forward, that the Council also recognise the importance of the DIO environmental commitments, and that it be ensured that all relevant commitments are fully met before issuing planning permissions for the ABP development.”

4.0 Conclusion

- 4.1 The finalised DIO “Environmental Commitments” are considered to provide the necessary reassurance that the three outstanding issues (as set out in the resolution of Strategic Planning Committee of 30th July 2014) can be addressed during the planning application process.
- 4.2 Further, there is every expectation that the points raised in the consultees responses, as set out above, can be comprehensively addressed to all parties’ satisfaction during the planning application process.
- 4.3 The finalised Masterplan will be regarded as an important and critical background document informing the assessment of the expected planning applications. The Master Plan will be embedded within each of those planning applications by defining the wider context and assessing the cumulative impacts and thereby demonstrating, in the broadest terms, how and where development can, and cannot, take place. It follows that the Master Plan will be a material consideration in the determination of those planning applications, providing contextual understanding and consistency for decision-making.
- 4.4 The Master Plan is a necessary first step in the preparation of proposals for development and the successful determination of planning applications, as is called for in Core Policy 37 of the emerging Wiltshire Core Strategy.
- 4.5 As the Masterplan has been prepared outside of the statutory Local Plan process, it will remain the case that the content and conclusions of the Master Plan will necessarily be without prejudice to how the Council chooses to determine the planning applications.
- 4.6 **Accordingly, when read in conjunction with the “Environmental Commitments”, the Army Basing Programme Salisbury Plain Masterplan can now be regarded as being finalised and a sound basis upon which the Council can have confidence that forthcoming development will be planned in a comprehensive manner and deliver the necessary infrastructure.**

APPENDIX 1

DIO Environmental Commitments for Salisbury Plain Masterplan Final Draft – 11th September 2014

1. Hydrology and Water Resources

- 1.1 DIO will ensure that its assessment approach, including the results of groundwater modelling, is clearly stated in the HRA, which will be submitted to Wiltshire Council in October 2014.
- 1.2 DIO will continue to work with the Environment Agency (EA), Natural England (NE) and Wiltshire Council to address the issues regarding additional water abstraction from Army Basing and support forthcoming planning applications for Salisbury Plain infrastructure (the first of which are planned for the last Quarter of 2014).
- 1.3 DIO (in agreement with EA and NE) has re-run the regional groundwater model with Wessex Water sustainability reductions in place to reassess the in-combination impacts on natural flows and groundwater levels. DIO will update Annex 9A of the OEA with an assessment of the individual and in-combination abstraction impacts of supplying the existing network and the proposed development against the Review of Consent flow targets and methodology. The update to Annex 9A will also provide a narrative on the merit/ feasibility of doing further work using the JNCC methodology.
- 1.4 In due course, as a separate exercise, DIO will also assess the implications of the JNCC flow targets and methodology with NE and EA, and will identify and agree any additional long-term mitigation measures that may be required to meet the conservation objectives of the River Avon SAC.
- 1.5 DIO will agree and implement appropriate monitoring measures for the Nine Mile River with the EA and NE as soon as possible to inform forthcoming planning applications. These may include pump testing, pond level and groundwater monitoring. Appropriate mitigation and habitat management measures will then be agreed and taken forward.
- 1.6 DIO will mitigate the abstraction impacts of supplying both the existing network and the proposed developments through a combination of water efficiency improvements, demand management (including implementation of a comprehensive water infrastructure management programme to significantly reduce leakage) and providing a back-up supply from Wessex Water and/or other sources. The mitigation options and implementation timelines will be agreed with NE and EA as soon as possible to support planning applications for Salisbury Plain infrastructure.
- 1.7 DIO is assessing the provision of additional sewerage treatment capacity, and will include options for phosphate and nitrate removal in the design of its STW effluent systems for when policy has been confirmed by NE and the EA. The location of any new STW infrastructure at Larkhill will be agreed with Wiltshire Council and English Heritage (EH).
- 1.8 DIO will ensure that WFD assessments for planning applications are updated, as required, once more detailed water resource and water quality modelling/investigations are completed.

2. Nine Mile River Crossing, Bulford

- 2.1 DIO will assess the potential effects of the new crossing on the Nine Mile River and River Avon downstream, including on water quality and stream flow. Appropriate mitigation, which may include further surveys and monitoring during operation, will be developed and agreed with EA and NE.
- 2.2 Mitigation/ compensation measures developed for the planning application will take due account of the various habitats in the context of their connection with the river (rather than in isolation).

3. Habitat Mitigation and Enhancement

- 3.1 DIO and Industry Partners are completing seasonal ecological surveys and will undertake all further studies as required in support of planning applications.

- 3.2 DIO is developing an overall biodiversity mitigation and enhancement strategy for Army Basing on Salisbury Plain. The details will be agreed with Wiltshire Council and relevant conservation bodies through an agreed form of voluntary undertaking. The strategy will include consideration of a wide range of habitat types, including woodland and arable land. Compensation measures (including consideration of priority species) will then be developed for individual planning applications where required.
- 3.3 DIO is developing a specific Habitat Management Plan for the Nine Mile River. Appropriate references to the river, plus protected species (such as great crested newt) being notified features of Salisbury Plain SSSI will be included in relevant planning applications.
- 3.4 DIO will look into opportunities for wider improvements at garrison sites with relevant Industry Partners.

4. Stone Curlew Disturbance

- 4.1 DIO will work with Wiltshire Council and NE to address the potential impact of increased recreational pressure from Army Basing on Stone Curlew and will develop a range of additional mitigation measures beyond the Wiltshire Council Stone Curlew Mitigation Strategy. As well as updating the MOD Stone Curlew Management Plan, these measures may include provision of additional recreational green space close to/ within SFA sites; development of walking/ cycle routes to encourage use away from sensitive parts of the training area; continuing adaptive management and exploring measures to positively influence recreational access (particularly for dog walking) on SPTA.

5. Habitats Regulations Assessment

- 5.1 DIO will finalise the Habitats Regulations Assessment for the Salisbury Plain Masterplan in October 2014. This will incorporate consultation comments, including those on stone curlew disturbance and hydrology. Any mitigation required will be agreed with relevant authorities and will include full details and timescales where appropriate.
- 5.2 The HRA will be used to inform individual project-level HRAs, where required, to support individual planning applications.

6. Training Infrastructure

- 6.1 The potential environmental effects associated with new training infrastructure will be further assessed, as more detail becomes available, for the SPTA planning applications.

7. Pollution Prevention and Waste Management

- 7.1 DIO / Industry Partners will produce Construction Environment Management Plans for all developments in line with industry best practice.

8. Visual Impact

- 8.1 DIO will liaise with the North Wessex Downs AONB Unit and will undertake further assessment of the visual impacts of the Perham Down and Upavon proposals as part of individual planning applications.

9. Heritage Assessment

- 9.1 DIO/ Industry Partners will undertake appropriate archaeological and heritage assessments to support individual planning applications, and will implement any mitigation measures as agreed with Wiltshire Council and EH. As part of this, DIO will address any remaining issues regarding the setting of the Larkhill SFA in relation to Stonehenge World Heritage Site.

10 Planning Obligations

- 10.1 DIO will seek to agree appropriate conditions/ undertakings with Wiltshire Council; it is envisaged that these will be in a similar form to those developed as a result of the 2002 Environmental Appraisal of the Strategic Defence Review; they will be specific and include timescales where appropriate.
- 10.2 DIO recommends that a forum with relevant parties be set up to enable ongoing and future discussion on progress of the conditions/ undertakings. This could be by inclusion in the existing Environmental Steering Group or another format to be agreed.

APPENDIX 2

ARMY BASING PROGRAMME – SALISBURY PLAIN MASTERPLAN