SOUTH NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL – DELEGATED REPORT

Application for Screening Opinion (SCR)

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<th>Application No.</th>
<th>Case Officer:</th>
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<td>S/2016/0657/SCR</td>
<td>Wayne Campbell</td>
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Statutory Expiry Date: 8 April 2016
Consultation Expiry Date: Consults: 1 April 2016
Re-consults:
Site: Royal Air Force RAF Croughton Road Croughton NN13 5NQ
Proposal: Screening opinion for EIC and school development

RECOMMENDATION

EIA Not Required for the reasons set out at the end of this report.

APPLICATION SITE
RAF Croughton is a military base located at Croughton near Brackley, and approximately 11 kilometres (km) south-west of Banbury. RAF Croughton covers an area of approximately 280 hectares (ha) and has an elevated ridge running east-west across the centre of the base with the terrain sloping northwards and southwards away from the ridge. The site is contained within security fencing, with controlled access to the B4031 at the north of the base, known as Village Gate. The base is bounded by the highway of the A43 to the south-east, approximately 4.5km north-east of the junction of the A43 with the M40 at Cherwell Valley Services. There is also emergency and over-sized vehicle access on to the base from the A43.

RAF Croughton is a military communications base owned by the Ministry of Defence (MoD) and currently occupied by the United States Visiting Forces (USVF). There has been a military airfield at this location since 1938; originally known as Brackley Landing Ground, it became RAF Brackley in 1940 and was used during the Battle of Britain as an emergency landing site. In 1941 the airfield was renamed RAF Croughton and was used as a training base until 1946. In 1950 the USVF took over use of the airfield, using it as a communications base, which it has continued to do to the present day.

RAF Croughton is a communications base and operates one of Europe’s largest military switchboards, processing approximately one third of all US military communications in Europe. The base is currently a mixture of relatively dense buildings along with areas of open space that is used as an antennae field. The proposed development is required to enable RAF Croughton to fulfil a communication base role, previously filled by RAF Molesworth in Cambridgeshire which is due for closure. Military personnel and their families currently based at RAF Molesworth will be relocating to RAF Croughton.

CONSTRAINTS
• Potential wildlife site;
• Within 2km buffer zone of local wildlife sites: The Moors, Old Astwick Village Moat, Slade Covert, Croughton Spinney, and Croughton Spring Copse;
• Grade II listed structure – fighter pens;
**PROPOSAL**

The planning application will seek a number of changes and alterations on this site in association with the use as a military base. These works include:

**Administration building:** To provide office accommodation. Two storey building with a ground footprint approximately 10,900m². A landscaped bund ranging from approximately 2.5m to 5m high will surround the north, south and east perimeter of the building covering approximately 34,100m².

**Warehouse:** To provide storage for office supplies/furniture. Approximately 11m high building with a ground footprint approximately 1900m².

**Recycling bin storage centre:** To provide storage for recycling bins and temporary storage for recycled furniture. A small area of the storage centre will be used for hazardous material storage. Approximately 5m high building with a ground footprint approximately 200m².

**Accommodation block:** Will accommodate 168 military personnel. Three storey building with a ground footprint approximately 2200m².

**Fitness centre:** Facility provided for military personnel and families living or working with the base. Two storey building with a ground footprint approximately 5300m².

**Commissary Food store** facility provided for military personnel living or working with the base. Approximately 8m high building with a ground footprint approximately 2900m².

**School:** Facility for primary and secondary school aged children of military personnel living or working with the base. Approximately 11m high building with a ground footprint approximately 9100m². Hardstanding (i.e. car parking and playgrounds) associated with the school cover approximately 55,150m² and sports fields cover approximately 31,100m².

**Road:** Approximately 1km road linking the warehouse in the south of the base with the administration building in the north of the base. Ground footprint approximately 9200m².

**Car parking:** Car parking for the administration building, the accommodation block and the commissary. Ground footprint approximately 73,150m².

**Substation:** Ground footprint approximately 150m².

**To be constructed for use within the construction phase:**

**Base entrance facility:** Base entrance providing temporary access via the A43 for abnormal loads and construction traffic. Ground footprint approximately 11,700m² which includes a security cabin with a ground footprint approximately 100m².

**Concrete batching facility:** Temporary facility to be present during the construction phase of the development. Anticipated highest component of the plant approximately 6m high. Ground footprint approximately 900m². To be located on the existing recycling bin storage centre that is due to be demolished as part of the development. After the construction phase the facility will be removed and the area will be incorporated into the landscaping surrounding the accommodation block.

**To be extended:**

**Existing post office:** Single storey extension with a ground footprint approximately 550m².
Existing nursery: Nursery for children of military personnel either residing or working within the base. Single storey extension with a ground footprint approximately 450m².

To be demolished:
Existing recycling bin storage centre: Approximately 5m high building with a ground footprint approximately 1000m².

Existing fitness centre: Two storey high building with a ground footprint approximately 1800m².

CONSULTATIONS
Environment Agency: confirm no further comments to make. However in terms of ground water and contaminated land although it is acknowledged in section 5.4 “ground conditions and contamination”, that further detailed investigation may be required associated with any proposed development. Any contaminated land issue should be able to be dealt with by suitable investigations/remedial works under conditions on any planning permission. Would also just highlight that in section 7.1.4 it is concluded that this development is of low environmental sensitivity, due in part to it exact location. In respect to groundwater, the site is on a principal aquifer, so we would not agree to this assessment with regards to controlled waters. While this would not change our position on the requirement of a EIA, assessment of the risk to the controlled waters in particular the principal aquifer would need to be fed into any detailed site assessment associated with the development.

APPRAISAL
A screening request has been submitted for the above site, in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (EIA) Regulations 2011.

The development is not of a type listed in Schedule 1

The development is of a type listed in Schedule 2 (13 Changes and extensions [b]) in that it consists of (b) Any change to or extension of development of a description listed in paragraphs 1 to 12 of column 1 of Schedule 2, where that development is already authorised, executed or in the process of being executed.

The site is not within a ‘sensitive area’.

The development does meet the relevant criteria in Schedule 2.

The development does exceed the relevant threshold and criteria in Column 2.

Will the development be ‘likely to have significant effects on the environment’?
No.

The development is not in an environmentally sensitive area but does exceed the indicative thresholds and criteria contained within the PPG. The selection criteria in Schedule 3 of the Regulations includes reference to the characteristics of the development (size, cumulation, use of natural resources, production of waste and pollution), the location of development and the characteristics of the potential impact.
In my opinion the most significant environmental impacts are likely to relate to the
visual impact of the development on the surrounding area; impact on ecology; impact
on the setting of the grade II listed fighter pens; and transport implications on the
local highway network.

It is considered that the implications could be addressed properly through the
Council’s normal consultation procedures.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion the development is listed in Schedule 2 of the Regulations but I am of
the opinion that due to the scale of development, the site characteristics, its location
and context and the nature of the development, the proposal is unlikely to give rise to
significant environmental effects and hence an EIA is not required in this instance

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<tr>
<th>Authorising Officer signature</th>
<th>Paul Seckington</th>
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