

West Suffolk Local Plan Issues and Options October 2020

Call for sites form

If you would like to promote a site or sites for potential development then please complete this questionnaire.

All submissions must be accompanied by an ordnance survey map clearly showing the boundaries of the site outlined in red.

All submissions are made on a without prejudice basis. Please note that in seeking available sites the council is making no commitment in respect of which sites may be selected to be included in the preferred options stage of the West Suffolk Local Plan.

Please complete a separate questionnaire for each site

Only submit sites which:

- are available for development within the next 15 years
- that can accommodate five or more dwelling or are greater than 0.2 hectares in size if being promoted as a residential site.

Please send your form:

By email to: planning.policy@westsuffolk.gov.uk

By post to : Strategic planning, West Suffolk House, Western Way, Bury St Edmunds, IP33 3YU

You must provide an answer to all the questions in the form.

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Part one – site information

Please provide as much detail as possible about your site.

1. Location plan

Please supply a site plan that clearly shows the boundaries of the site outlined in red and access point indicated. ***Please see appendix A attached***

2. Settlement

What settlement is the site in, or nearest to?

The site is 900m from the settlement of Barnham Village.

3. Site address

Please provide the site address.

RAF Barnham Camp
Bury Road
Barnham
Thetford
IP24 2DJ

4. Previously submitted site

Has the site already been identified within the Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment 2020 or the West Suffolk Local Plan Issues and Options document?

YES **NO**
(click in the appropriate box)

If you answered yes, please enter the site reference number below.

A previous submission was made in November 2019. The site has been identified in Appendix K as a new site within the settlement of Barnham. The Council's response at the time was that the site should be put forward as part of the 2020 call for sites.

5. Additional information to previously submitted site

Please send us any additional information/supporting statement you have in relation to the site you have previously submitted

6. Planning history

Does the site have any relevant planning history?

If you answered yes, please provide the planning application reference number(s).

None relevant.

7. Current land use

What is the current use(s) of the land?

This is an active operational military site used as a training venue as a satellite station to RAF Honington, the site also includes accommodation for military personnel. The adjoining land to the west is an active military training area which is to be retained for training purposes and does not form part of this call for sites submission.

8. Brownfield

Is the site brownfield (has it been built on previously)?

YES **NO**
(click in the appropriate box)

9. Site size

Please provide the site area in hectares.

23 hectares as shown on the attached plan.

10. Site description

Please describe the site, providing photos if possible.

This 23-hectare brownfield site is broadly rectangular in shape and is wholly in the ownership of the Ministry of Defence (MoD). There is a single pedestrian and vehicle access from the A134 that includes generous visibility splays. This is a broadly flat site with the A134 to the entire of its eastern boundary with an electricity distribution centre to the south. Adjoining the north and western boundaries of RAF Barnham Camp is Barnham Training Estate.

The Training Estate is a retained operational MoD site that is separated from RAF Barnham Camp by a security fence that runs along the entire western boundary. A plan showing the training area is attached at appendix B. The Training Area is

used by the RAF for arms training and military vehicle use training. There is no public access to the Training Area. There are two access points to the Training Area, one through RAF Barnham and the other from Elveden Road to the south.

RAF Barnham Camp includes a number of single and two storey buildings most of which are located within the southern part of the site. These buildings are used for single living accommodation, offices, welfare/community facilities, inside sports and recreation provision, storage/warehousing, workshops and guard room. There are also generous areas of hardstanding. Grassed areas are used for outside training and personnel recreation.

The site has existing connections to the typical utility services including sewage treatment plant further to the east.

Part two – suitability

Site must comply with policies in the development plan documents which can be found at www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/planningpolicy

11. Constraints

Are there any other constraints to the development of the site?

(For example flood risk, or a loss of historical assets, or community facilities, and/or habitats and biodiversity constraints?)

Information on constraints can be found at <https://magic.defra.gov.uk/MagicMap.aspx>

Please provide as much information as possible.

It is recognised that Magic Map sets out the following constraints are relevant to new development at RAF Barnham Camp:

- Breckland Special Area of Conservation* abuts the western boundary of the site.
- Breckland Special Protection Area* abuts the western boundary of the site
- Thetford Heaths SSSI* abuts the western boundary of the site.
- North eastern part of the site abuts Barnham Cross Common Local Nature Reserve.
- Within the Woodland and Nightjar 400m buffer.
- Within the Stone Curlew 1500m buffer.

*Barnham Training Area and its associated unrestricted military operations is also within these designations.

It is recognised that the Habitats Regulation Assessment Issues and Options Version September 2020 shows that the site is within the SAC 200m Buffer, the Woodlark & Nightjar Urbanisation 400m Buffer, the Woodlark & Nightjar Recreational 7.5km Buffer and the Air Pollution 10km Buffer. It is not clear from the scale of the plan whether the entire site is within the SAC and Urbanisation buffer.

While the site is constrained by these designations it is important to recognise that the existing lawful use of both RAF Barnham Camp and Barnham Training Area and the associated daily activities undertaken at the site must be weighed in the planning balance to whether redevelopment of this previously developed site would have any further adverse impact upon the ecological value of these designations. Redevelopment also provides the opportunity for inclusion of mitigation measures. It is also recognised that adopted policy RV5 (Protection of Special Uses) in Rural Vision 2031 sets out favourable support for further built development at the site subject to taking account of SPA and SAC.

The Habitats Regulation Assessment Issues and Options Version September 2020 (HRA) references the 'Further assessments of the relationship between buildings and stone curlew distribution. Unpublished report by Footprint Ecology for Breckland Council' by Clark, R & Liley, D, 2013 and in particular where it says *"where there is existing development close to suitable stone curlew habitat, or high levels of development already, then further development has relatively little additional impact. This would suggest that 'infill' developments in larger settlements will have much less impact than equivalent sized developments in undeveloped areas."*

The security fence to the training area would need to be retained for security reasons which would prevent any recreational pressure on the immediate land. Access to the training area would be from the existing Elveden Road access point. It is wholly feasible that on site SANG could be provided to serve the needs of potential occupiers and to avoid recreational pressure elsewhere and to provide a buffer to both the above designations and military activities on the training area.

Any future planning application on this brownfield site could be supported by a project level Habitats Regulations Assessment. In addition, redevelopment would be informed by masterplanning which would provide the opportunity to incorporate mitigation measures that could be of greater benefit to the designations compared to the lawful use of the site.

The settlement of Barnham is 900m to the south of the site and is identified as a Type A village in the Issues and Options, Part 3: Settlements report where the opportunity for site allocations will be explored. Thetford Town is 3.5km to the north. As identified in the report there is a good bus service between Barnham Village and Thetford with bus stops in front of the site. The Interim Sustainability Appraisal (October 2020) identifies potential housing within Type A villages as the highest scoring option for meeting housing needs, however Issues and Options, Part 3 report explains that other sites in the vicinity of Barnham village have been previously deferred through the SHELAA due to environmental constraints. RAF Barnham Camp while not exempt from the similar environmental considerations is in a unique position, as discussed above, in that redevelopment could be undertaken without having any further adverse impact upon these designations and accordingly could meet the growth needs of the area. Redevelopment of the site has sustainability benefits.

The MoD intends to dispose of RAF Barnham in 2022. This surplus public sector brownfield site provides the opportunity to meet identified growth needs for West Suffolk within the emerging local plan. As discussed above the site has sustainability benefits and sensitive development would ensure it has no further impact upon the adjoining ecological designations.

Part three – availability

Confirmation of the intention to develop the land must be received to enable us to consider your site.

12. Landowner details

Please provide full contact details of the landowner, including name, address, telephone number and email address.

Name: Defence Infrastructure Organisation (on behalf of the MoD)
Address: Estates, Kingston Road, Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands, B75 7RL
Telephone number: 07917 708488
Email address: paul.hinton101@mod.gov.uk

13. Developer details

If there is a developer for the site please provide their full contact details, including organisation name, address, telephone number and email address.

Organisation:
Contact name:
Address:

Telephone number:
Email address:

14. Agent details

If you are an agent please provide full contact details, including your name, organisation (if applicable), address, telephone number and email address.

Organisation:
Contact name:
Address:

Telephone number:
Email address:

15. Intention to develop

How soon could development begin?

1-5 years	6-10 years	11-15 years	15+ years
X			

Please enter any additional comments you think would be useful in regard to the timescale for development.

In November 2016 the Ministry of Defence announced its intention to vacate and dispose of RAF Barnham Camp. Subsequently on 28 February 2019, the final vacation and disposal has been announced, by Tobias Ellwood MP, to be by 2022.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/better-defence-estate-strategy>

Part four – achievability

Sites to be considered suitable for allocation need to show good potential to come forward within a 15 year timeframe.

16. Legal issues

Do any other parties have any legal rights that relate to the site?

YES **NO**
(click in the appropriate box)

If you answered 'yes' go to legal issues (question 14) below.

If you answered 'no' go to proposed use (question 15) below.

17. Legal issues details

Please provide further details on the legal issues affecting the achievability of developing the site.

N/A

18. Proposed use

Please identify proposed future uses.

Select at least one option.

Residential	Economic development	Mixed use	Other use
X	X		

If you selected 'residential' please go to question 19.

If you selected 'economic development' go to question 20.

If you selected 'mixed use' go to question 21.

If you selected 'other use' go to question 22.

19. Type of residential use proposed

Please identify what type of residential dwellings is proposed.

Market housing	Affordable housing	Care home	Traveller site	Self or custom build	Other types of housing
X					

If you have selected 'other types of housing' please clarify

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20. Types of economic development

Please identify what type of 'economic use' is proposed

Retail	Leisure	Cultural	Office	Warehousing	Community building	Other
						X

If you selected 'other types of economic development' please specify.

<p>At this time no feasibility studies or soft marketing have been undertaken and the MoD would be keen to discuss with the Council how this soon to be vacant public sector site could be put into beneficial use once the military have vacated with a use that could meet identified growth needs for West Suffolk.</p> <p>Due to the existing use of the site and its location the site could be considered suitable for re-development as either a residential or secure residential institution should the Council identify such a requirement.</p>

In addition/alternatively the site could be suitable for climate change mitigation through use as renewable or low-carbon energy generation schemes, noting its proximity to an existing electricity distribution centre.

21. Types of mixed use

Please provide further details on the 'mixed use' proposed for the site.

22. Other uses

Please provide detailed information on the type of use proposed.

Appendix B

