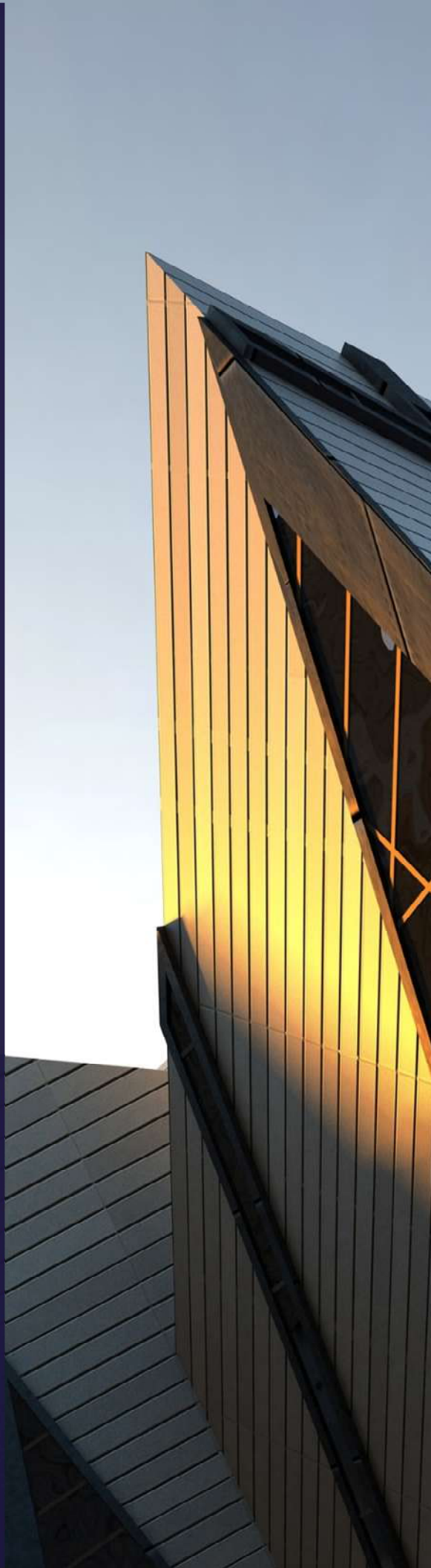
CUSHMAN & WAKEFIELD

Proof of Evidence of Mark Jackson MRTPI

Haslar IRC

Home Office

DEVELOPMENT & PLANNING | BIRMINGHAM



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1. Qualifications and Experience

1.1 My name is [redacted], and I have a BA (Hons) and PG Diploma in Town Planning, as well as a PG Diploma in Surveying. I am a chartered Member of the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI).

1.2 I am a Partner at Cushman & Wakefield and head of the Midlands planning team based in the Birmingham office. Cushman & Wakefield is a real estate company, which operates both in the UK and globally. I have worked for Cushman & Wakefield (previously DTZ) since 2001.

1.3 I have over twenty-four years' post qualification experience working in planning consultancy and advise both private and public sector clients on a range of town planning related matters.

1.4 I am instructed by the Home Office (the "Applicant").

1.5 I have worked on projects in a range of sectors and have advised the applicant on several sites in England within the Home Office detention estate.

1.6 The Applicant has submitted a Crown Development Application for the expansion of the Haslar Immigration Removal Centre (IRC), Fort Road, Gosport PO12 2AW (the 'Application Site'). The application is made in outline with all matters reserved except for access.

1.7 I have been directly involved in the applicants' proposals for the application site since June 2022. This has included assessing the application site, advising the applicant during the pre-application process and preparation of the application, as well as being the planning agent during the planning application submission stage.

1.8 I am familiar with the relevant policies within the Development Plan (CD/6.1) and other material considerations, including those contained within the National Planning Policy Framework ('NPPF') (CD/7.1) and the National Planning Practice Guidance ('NPPG') (CD/7.2).

1.9 I have visited the Site which is the subject of this application on several occasions, and I am acquainted with the local area and understand the range of issues that the development proposal gives rise to.

1.10 The evidence which I have prepared and provide for this Inquiry (in this proof of evidence) is true and has been prepared and is given in accordance with the guidance of my professional institution. I confirm that the opinions expressed are my true and professional opinions.

2. Scope of Evidence

2.1 Matters in relation to the proposed operation of the IRC and the Applicants' experience of managing other similar sites, as well as addressing Gosport Borough Council's (the 'Council) comments regarding the need for the proposed IRC extension, are dealt with as part of the Proof of Evidence of William Round **(CD/8.1)** of the Home Office.

2.2 Matters in relation to the effect of the proposal on the local traffic network are dealt with as part of the Proof of Evidence issued by Alex Thompson (CD/8.3) of Stantec.

2.3 Matters in relation to the provision of drainage infrastructure are dealt with as part of the Proof of Evidence issued by Scott Dawson (CD/8.7) of First Horizon.

2.4 Matters in relation to heritage and archaeology are dealt with as part of the Proof of Evidence issued by Naomi Brennan (CD/8.5) of Wessex Archaeology.

2.5 Matters in relation to ecology are dealt with as part of the Proof of Evidence issued by Derek Allen (CD/8.4) of First Horizon.

2.6 Matters in relation to landscape and visual impacts are dealt with as part of the Proof of Evidence issued by Rachel Williams (CD/8.6) of UBU Design.

2.7 My evidence will provide commentary on matters relating to planning policy and will seek to assist the Inspector with an assessment of impacts and benefits of the application.

2.8 Based on the comments submitted on the application, the Inspector has set out the Main Issues in the Pre-Inquiry Note (CD/10.2). I agree that these represent the principal issues for the application.

2.9 I will demonstrate in my Proof that the proposed development is entirely acceptable in planning terms. I will demonstrate there are public benefits which will be delivered as a result of the proposal and that outline planning permission should be granted.

3. The Proposed Development and Planning History

3.1 The detailed description of the application site and surrounding area, as well as a description of the proposal and the planning history for the site are set out in of the Applicants Planning Statement (CD/1.16) and also summarised in the Applicant's Statement of Case (CD/8.8). Therefore, I will not repeat this information within my evidence.

3.2 Haslar IRC is an established IRC situated on the Haslar Peninsula in Gosport. The application site comprises an existing secure detention facility within Use Class C2A, which is currently being refurbished and due to be reopened early in 2027.

3.3 The site has a long operational history as a detention facility. The site changed to a Youth Offenders' Centre in the 1950s and finally became an Immigration Removal Centre in 2002, which closed in 2015. The Applicant made the decision to re-open the former IRC in 2022.

3.4 The application proposal seeks outline planning permission for the expansion of the existing IRC through the development of:

- additional accommodation blocks;
- ancillary support facilities;
- replacement and upgraded infrastructure;
- additional parking;
- landscaping; and
- associated operational works.

3.5 The proposal would increase operational capacity from 130 detainees that the refurbished IRC can accommodate to a total of up to 600 detainees.

3.4 The Applicant applied for pre-application advice from the Local Planning Authority (LPA), Gosport Borough Council, on 24th July 2025. This followed a series of meetings with the LPA to discuss the application site and the proposed development dating back to October 2022. Pre-application discussions were also held with Hampshire County Council (HCC) in its role as Highway Authority (HA) and Lead Local flood Authority (LLFA). Additional engagement was held with key stakeholders as identified in pre-application guidance issued by the Ministry for Housing, communities and Local Government (MHCLG) issued on 21st May 2025. In addition, the Applicant undertook a public engagement exercise prior to the submission of the planning application, and the details are set out within the Engagement Report submitted with the application. (CD/1.15).

3.5 It is agreed that there is a need for additional IRC accommodation. The application site was chosen following a review of potential sites undertaken by the applicant. The application site was chosen as it was judged to be one of two preferred sites capable of meeting the need for additional accommodation. This is explained within Mr Round's evidence.

3.6 The consultation responses to the outline application include an objection from the LPA. There is one holding objections by HCC Highways Authority. There are objections from local councillors and the Member of Parliament and a significant number of individuals and interest groups from the local area as well as further afield.

3.7 The consultation responses from the following consultees have confirmed no objection to the application subject to conditions:

- Active Travel England
- Environment Agency
- HCC as Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA)
- Historic England
- Natural England

3.8 The Applicant has continued to work with HCC Highways Authority and Gosport Borough Council to provide evidence necessary to enable the objections to be withdrawn and for 'no objection' to be confirmed. At the time of submitting my proof I understand the Applicant and HCC Highways have reached agreement on highway matters and this is explained in evidence submitted by Alex Thompson. Additional ecology survey work has been undertaken by the Applicant, and this is explained in the proof of evidence of Derek Allen.

4 Relevant Planning Policy

4.1 This section of my evidence provides background and context to the relevant planning policy which is central to the issues in dispute for the determination of the Application.

4.2 A detailed review of the planning policy relevant to the Application is provided in the Planning Statement (CD/1.16) and therefore I will not repeat this information here.

4.3 A list of the adopted planning policies and guidance that are relevant to the Site and application proposals is set out in the Draft Statement of Common Ground, as well as draft policies contained in the emerging Local Plan.

4.4 The relevant Development Plan policies are:

Gosport Borough Local Plan, 2011 – 2029:

- LP1 Sustainable Development
- LP2 Infrastructure
- LP3 Spatial Strategy
- LP6 Haslar Peninsula
- LP10 Design
- LP11 Designated Heritage Assets including Listed Buildings, Scheduled Ancient Monuments and Registered Historic Parks & Gardens
- LP12 Designated Heritage Assets: Conservation Areas
- LP13 Locally Important Heritage Assets
- LP15 Safeguarded Areas
- LP17 Skills
- LP20 Information and Communication Technology
- LP21 Improving Transport Infrastructure
- LP22 Accessibility to New Development
- LP23 Layout of Sites and Parking
- LP37 Access to the Coast and Countryside
- LP23 Layout of Sites and Parking
- LP32 Community, Cultural and Built Leisure Facilities
- LP34 Provision of New Open Space and Improvement to Existing Open Space
- LP38 Energy Resources
- LP39 Water Resources
- LP40 Waste and Material Resources
- LP41 Green Infrastructure
- LP42 International and Nationally Important Habitats
- LP43 Locally Designated Nature Conservation Sites
- LP44 Protecting Species and Other Features of Nature Conservation Importance
  LP45 Flood Risk and Coastal Erosion
- LP46 Pollution Control
- LP47 Contamination and Unstable Land
- LP48 Hazardous Substances

4.5 This section sets out the planning policy framework which is of relevance to the Application and to which the applicant will have regard to in evidence.

4.6 It will be demonstrated in evidence how the proposed development is consistent with local and national policy.

4.7 The proposed use constitutes sustainable development, which will deliver economic, social and environmental benefits. The proposals accord with the adopted planning policies of the local plan and meet the tests set out in Policy S4 of the NPPF (2026) and the application should be approved.

Development Plan

4.8 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires all planning decisions to be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

4.9 The development plan applicable to the site and proposed development is comprised of:

- Gosport Borough Local Plan 2011-2029
- Hampshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2026 (HMWP)

4.10 The application site does not have a site-specific land use allocation on the adopted Proposals Map.

4.11 The Development Plan **(CD/6.1)** sets out the policies to guide development proposals within Gosport during the plan period. Details of these policies are contained within the Planning Statement submitted in support of the application proposal **(CD/1.16).** Those policies that relate to matters in issue with the Council are considered below.

4.12 It is common ground between the Applicant and the Council that the proposal is acceptable in principle. There is no dispute between the parties that the application site is an existing Immigration Removal Centre, that the lawful planning use of the site is a secure residential institution (Class C2A), and that the proposal represents an expansion and intensification of an established use rather than the introduction of a new land use.

4.13 Consequently, the principal issues between the parties do not concern the principle of development but rather whether the detailed impacts of the proposal comply with specific development plan policies relating to design, heritage, ecology, highways and flood risk. I understand the following development plan policies are not at issue between the Council and the applicant:

- Policy LP1 (Sustainable Development)
- Policy LP2 (infrastructure)
- Policy LP3 (Spatial Strategy)
- Policy LP13 (Archaeology).
- Policy LP15 (Safeguarded Areas)
- Policy LP17 (Skills)
- Policy LP20 (Information and Communication Technology)

- Policy LP32 (Community, Cultural and Built Leisure Facilities)
- Policy LP34 (Provision of New Open Space and Improvement to Existing Open Space)
- Policy LP37 (Access to the Coast and Countryside)
- Policy LP38 (Energy Resources)
- Policy LP39 (Water Resources)
- Policy 40 (Waste and Material Resources)
- Policy 41 (Green Infrastructure)
- Policy LP45 (Flood Risk and Coastal Erosion)
- Policies LP46, LP47 and LP48 (Pollution and Contamination).

Policies at Issue

4.14 Those policies that relate to matters at issue with the Council are considered below.

It will be demonstrated how the development complies with the Framework, in particular policies LP6 relating to the regeneration of Haslar Peninsula, LP10 relating to design, LP11, LP12 and LP13 relating to Heritage Assets and Conservation Areas, LP21, LP22 relating to accessibility, LP23 relating to site layout and parking, LP42, LP43 and LP44 relating to Habitats and Protected Species.

Design

4.15 Policy LP10 requires development to achieve a high standard of design in terms of scale, layout, massing, appearance and relationship with surrounding development. Whilst the application is in outline form with all matters reserved save access, the Council nonetheless contends that the indicative scheme fails to demonstrate that the proposed quantum of development can be delivered in a visually acceptable manner. In particular, the Council objects to:

- the scale and massing of the proposed accommodation blocks;
- the indicative three-storey building heights;
- the relationship with adjoining heritage assets;
- a "starkly utilitarian design";
- the failure to demonstrate a high-quality design response

4.16 I understand the issue relates to the scale, massing and design of the proposed IRC extension on the local area and, in particular, the setting of the Conservation Area. The introduction of a three-storey building (up to 12 metres in height above the design flood level with freeboard as agreed with the EA and defined on the indicative parameters plan – appendix A) appears to be the most significant concern.

4.17 I consider the proposed development is in general compliance with Policy LP10, as the detailed appearance and layout remains a reserved matter; the application seeks approval of access only and the Applicant has provided an indicative parameters plan as part of the application.

4.18 The indicative plans are submitted for information. In preparing the indicative plans, building locations were amended by the Applicant following pre-application discussions with accommodation blocks moved further from the Conservation Area with larger landscape introduced.

4.19 The application is accompanied by a Design and Access Statement (CD/2.13), which explains how the site constraints and opportunities have informed the indicative layout. The indicative layout seeks to contain development on the eastern part of the site closest to the existing IRC for both operational reasons and also to reduce the impact of the development on neighbouring residential dwellings by maintaining a large area of open space to the western part of the site as well as tapering the height of the proposed building to 7.5 metres closer to neighbouring dwellings, which would be similar to the pitch height of the two storey houses

4.20 I recognise that the amendment to the indicative location of the proposed buildings is modest. However, the indicative scheme seeks to indicate how the development can be set out having regard to the site constraints and opportunities. Indeed, the Council acknowledges at 4.3.9 that the movement of indicative buildings away from the Conservation Area is tempered by the importance of locating buildings close to the existing IRC for operational reasons.

4.21 I explain below how the applicant has demonstrated how the proposal could be developed and the approach the Applicant has followed to identify an appropriate development form. I also explain how outline planning permission can be granted and the layout, scale and appearance can be controlled through submission of a future Reserved Matters planning application. I note the LPA Officer's report states that *"it is recognised that the buildings are functional and could be suited to a utilitarian design but there are numerous examples where such buildings are well-designed and attractive."* I consider the Reserved Matters application process will enable this to be achieved.

Heritage and Conservation

4.22 I understand the issue relates to the harm the proposed development would have on the Haslar Barracks Conservation Area, the setting of listed buildings associated with the former Royal Hospital Haslar and the setting of heritage assets across the Haslar Peninsula. The Council considers that the proposed accommodation blocks would be overbearing in relation to adjacent historic barrack buildings, insufficiently separated from the Conservation Area boundary, materially taller than surrounding development and harmful to the setting and significance of heritage assets.

4.23 Policy LP11 requires applicants to describe the significance of the heritage asset and confirms that *"Planning permission will not be granted for development proposals which would harm the significance of a Listed Building, Registered Park & Garden or Scheduled Ancient Monument."*

4.24 Policy LP12 relates to Conservation Areas. Whilst the application site extends through a Conservation Area, no development is proposed within it. However, I consider LP12 to be relevant insofar as the proposed development is required to *"conserve or enhance the setting of the Conservation Area and is not detrimental to inward or outward views."*

4.25 Policy LP13 relates to locally important heritage assets. I consider this policy is relevant to the locally listed buildings within the Conservation Area, which is considered within the Heritage Impact Assessment submitted with the application.

4.26 The application is accompanied by a Heritage Assessment (CD/3.12), which concludes the proposed development will have no impact on the significance of any designated heritage assets,

including Haslar Barracks Conservation Area and Fort Monckton Scheduled Monument" and would result in "no harm to the significance of the Conservation Area."

4.27 I note that Historic England does not object to the proposed development, concluding that the *"proposals would not greatly harm the significance of the barracks when viewed in very narrow terms…. There is at least some space between the proposed buildings and the barracks, which would reduce their presence when viewed from around the historic buildings and is welcome."*

4.28 The evidence of Naomi Brennan (CD/8.5) addresses points around heritage impact on designated and non-designated heritage assets.

Haslar Regeneration

4.29 I understand the issue relates to the concern that the extended IRC will potentially impact the delivery of regeneration proposals on the Haslar peninsula. I note the Council's concern outlined in paragraph 4.2.6 of the Officers report that the scale of the proposed IRC *"has the significant potential to detract from the wider regeneration activities."*

4.30 I note that in paragraph 4.2.7 the LPA notes the *'lawful planning use of the wider site is as an IRC and as such the proposals represent an intensification of an existing use."* Accordingly, I understand the concern to be that it is the extension of the IRC that may potentially impact the delivery of wider regeneration proposals rather than a suggestion that the existing IRC should change its use.

4.31 Policy LP6 relates to the Haslar Peninsula Regeneration Area. The closest regeneration site is Royal Haslar Hospital, which lies adjacent to the application site. LP6 establishes general principles for development in the regeneration area and supports the redevelopment of the Haslar Hospital to comprise a mix of uses.

4.32 I do not consider the expansion of an existing IRC, which has been established for many years will impact the delivery of the wider regeneration activities on the Haslar Peninsula. I address this issue below.

Highways and Access

4.33 I understand that the Council has not reached a definitive conclusion that the proposal conflicts with Policy LP22, it raises significant concerns regarding cumulative traffic impacts; parking demand; dependence on a future bus service; the adequacy of sustainable transport provision and impact on the wider highway network.

4.34 Policy LP22 permits development provided:

- "The site is located where convenient public transport services exist or there is a commitment by the developer and public transport providers to deliver such service.
- The site is, or will be made, accessible to pedestrians and cyclists.
- Any new or improved road access and the traffic generated would not have any unacceptable environmental implications nor significantly prejudice the safety, function and capacity of the road network.

- Local and strategic transport improvements will be provided, where necessary, to support the development and mitigate adverse impacts on the safety, function and capacity of the transport network.
- Transport Statements or Transport Assessments are submitted in support of the planning application to evaluate transport impacts and demonstrate that transport improvements to be provided will meet the needs of the development and mitigate adverse impacts.
- A Travel Plan is provided in support of a planning application where appropriate in relation to the scale and type of development.

4.35 The Applicant has submitted a Transport Assessment, which concludes that all relevant junctions would continue to operate within capacity and that the development would not result in severe highway impact.

4.36 The Applicant has submitted a Travel Plan, which includes commitments to promote active travel. Covered cycle parking is proposed on the site at the Haslar Sea Wall car park and closer to the Dolphin Way entrance. In addition, the Applicant has agreed a financial contribution towards a segregated on-carriageway cycle track.

4.37 The Applicant is providing a minibus for visitors to the IRC, and the Travel Plan will include a commitment to review the provision to include staff where it is appropriate.

4.38 I understand that while the Council has not reached a definitive conclusion that the proposal conflicts with Policy LP23, it raises concern as to the adequacy of parking provision, safe access arrangements and appropriate cycle parking and disabled parking facilities. Specific concerns relate to parking demand assumptions, parking layout compliance, disabled parking provision, EV charging infrastructure, potential overspill parking and Travel Plan effectiveness.

4.39 Policy LP23 relates to the layout of sites, which this outline application is not seeking approval. I understand that the only matter at issue with regard to Policy LP23 is whether the indicative plans submitted with the application demonstrate that:

- *"Adequate provision is made for an appropriate range of vehicles to access the site, manoeuvre within it, park, load and unload and turn around in a safe and convenient manner.*
- *Provision is made for parking cars, motorcycles, bicycles and where appropriate, goods vehicles and electric cars. 8. Access and parking for people with disabilities is provided in accordance with the relevant current standards."*

4.40 The Applicant has confirmed that the proposed staff parking provision at the end of the Refurbishment and Expansion phase is for a total of 294-302 staff car parking spaces on the basis of 35-43 along Dolphin Way and 259 in the Haslar Sea Wall Car Park. The level of provision is to cater for the anticipated modal share and shift pattern times.

4.41 The evidence of Alex Thompson (CD/8.3) addresses points around highway impact, the provision of on-site car parking and proposed improvements on the highway and active travel.

Ecology

4.42 I understand that the Council accepts aspects of the applicant's mitigation strategy, including the proposed approach to Brent Geese habitat compensation and Biodiversity Net Gain. However, it maintains concerns regarding protected species surveys and mitigation. In particular, the Council raises concern about the age of reptile surveys, the adequacy of reptile mitigation proposals, the

absence of bat activity surveys, the absence of a comprehensive bat mitigation strategy, potential impacts on notable invertebrates,

4.43 The Applicant has submitted an Ecological Impact Assessment, Habitats Regulations Assessment, nutrient neutrality strategy, Brent Goose mitigation package and Biodiversity Net Gain measures, all of which conclude that ecological effects can be appropriately mitigated.

4.44 I summarise the mitigation proposed by the Applicant below.

Loss of habitat for Brent Geese

4.45 The provision of habitat replacement land to mitigate the loss of habitat land on the application site. This receptor site has already been secured by legal agreement between the Applicant and Wild Capital (the provider) in accordance with the Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP). A copy of the legal agreement and HMMMP is submitted with the application. A Conservation Covenant Agreement between the provider and RSK Biocensus Ltd (the Responsible Body) is entered into to ensure that the Mitigation Site provides Bird Mitigation to satisfy the requirements of the local planning authority and the Habitat Regulations to allow the development of the Haslar Site and loss of the Haslar Site as Functionally Linked Land Core Area. A copy of the Conservation Covenant is submitted with the application.

Nutrient Neutrality

4.46 The provision of nutrient neutrality mitigation through the purchase of credits. The credits are drawn from a site where a S106 Agreement is in place between Albion Water Ltd and Winchester Council and is submitted with the application. An Allocation Agreement between Albion Water and the Application is submitted with the application.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

4.47 I confirm the applicant proposes to provide the required 10% BNG through off-site provision through the acquisition of BNG units from a secured and registered scheme. This will be provided alongside on-site biodiversity improvements to be confirmed at the reserved matters application stage when the site layout and landscaping plans have been established. It was the Applicant's intention to enter into a unit pre-purchase. However, this has not been possible, and a purchase will instead be made prior to commencement of development and in accordance with the planning conditions and legal obligation. This accords with the statutory scheme for securing BNG.

Protected Species

4.48 The Applicant proposed reptile mitigation based upon sensitive habitat clearance. I understand the issue to be that the County Ecologist considers "it is not clear where the existing population could be relocated to" on the application site. I note that planning permission (ref: 24/00382/FULL) was granted for the development of an Energy Centre to serve the proposed development. The approved mitigation for the development of the Energy Centre was for a managed return of the former playing field area to short grassland to allow Brent Geese to use the site during the Winter (condition 12). It has been agreed with the County Ecologist that managed clearance of the site can take place retaining an uncleared buffer towards the boundaries of the site. I understand this demonstrates the application site is sufficiently large with development proposed on a proportion of the site, so it is capable of providing adequate mitigation land on site.

4.49 I understand the County Ecologist is concerned that no bat activity surveys have been carried out to date. I note that the proposed development does not include the demolition of any structure or the removal of trees and, therefore, the potential impact on bats is limited to foraging and commuting and the site is of sufficient size for mitigation to be provided through a suitably worded planning condition.

4.50 Notwithstanding the above, the applicant is undertaking additional species surveys including Bat Activity and Reptiles. An Addendum letter has been provided to HCC Ecology detailing additional survey findings to date, which are contained within the proof of evidence of Derek Allen (CD8.4), which explains why the proposed mitigation would be proportionate and justified.

4.51 I consider the Applicant has demonstrated the proposed development is capable of adequately mitigating ecological impacts. I address this issue in my evidence.

Flood Risk and Drainage

4.52 In relation to Flood Risk, I understand that there is agreement that the Exception Test applies and that the Council does not dispute that flood risk can potentially be addressed but maintains concerns that the Flood Risk Assessment is insufficient and that the decision maker must be satisfied that the Exception Test is passed, the development will be safe for its lifetime and there is no increase in flood risk elsewhere.

4.53 The Applicant submitted a Flood Risk Assessment, Coastal Modelling Assessment and Flood Evacuation Management Plan, which together with the Planning Statement conclude that the Sequential Test and Exception Test are both met and flood risks can be appropriately mitigated through raised floor levels, evacuation procedures and drainage measures.

4.54 I note that the LLFA does not object to the proposed development subject to the imposition of planning conditions. I note the Environment Agency does not object to the proposed development, as the Applicant has agreed to raising site levels to provide sufficient freeboard above the design flood level.

4.55 The evidence of Scott Dawson (CD/8.7) addresses points around sustainable drainage.

Development Plan Summary

4.56 I have considered the relevant policies in the Development Plan **(CD/6.1)** and for the reasons set out above conclude that there is no conflict and that the application proposal represents a sustainable form of development.

Other Material Considerations

4.57 To support the decision-making process, there is a range of guidance that form material considerations. These are set out within the Planning Statement (CD/1.16) and the SoCG (CD/8.8), however for ease are as follows:

- National Planning Policy Framework ('NPPF') (2026)
- National Planning Policy Guidance ('NPPG').
- Design Supplementary Planning Document (February 2014)
- Parking SPD (February 2014)
- Gosport Borough Council Policy Guidance Note: Securing Employment and Training Measures through planning obligations (April 2012)
- Haslar Barracks Conservation Area Appraisal (March 2018)
- Haslar Peninsula Conservation Area Appraisal (March 2007)
- Stokes Bay Conservation Area Appraisal (July 2023)

National Planning Policy Framework ('NPPF') (2026)

4.58 On 17 August 2026 the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government published a revised National Planning Policy Framework ("NPPF 2026"), replacing the previous versions of the Framework, including the December 2024 edition upon which the submitted Planning Statement was based. The revised Framework does not alter the fundamental Government objectives of:

- delivering sustainable development;
- supporting nationally important infrastructure;
- making efficient use of land;
- supporting economic growth;
- protecting environmental assets; and
- enabling development required in the public interest.

4.59 Consequently, whilst the structure of national policy has evolved, the substantive planning considerations relevant to this application remain broadly consistent with those relied upon in the submitted application documents.

4.60 The Framework **(CD/7.1)** sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. Policies in Chapters 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 16 and 17 either contain policies not relevant to this application or policies that are relevant but not in issue with the Council. Details of these policies are contained within the Planning Statement submitted in support of the application proposal **(CD/1.16).** Those policies that relate to matters in issue with the Council are considered below as well as reference to the associated Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) and any successor documents.

4.61 I understand that the central issue under the NPPF is not whether the proposal serves an important public purpose, but whether the environmental effects identified by the Council are sufficient to outweigh the substantial national, operational and public benefits arising from the redevelopment of Haslar IRC.

4.62 It will be demonstrated how the development complies with the Framework, in particular policies in chapters 4, 11, 14, 15, 18, 19 and 20.

Sustainable Development

4.63 Policy S3 **Presumption in favour of sustainable development** establishes a presumption in favour of sustainable development when determining planning applications. Proposals within settlements should be considered under Policy S4, which states that *"Development proposals within settlements should be approved unless the benefits of doing so would be substantially outweighed by any adverse effects, when assessed against the national decision-making policies in this Framework."* The built elements of the proposal lie within the identified urban area boundary of Gosport, and therefore within a settlement.

4.64 Policy S4 sets out circumstances in which the benefits of approving development are likely to be substantially outweighed by adverse effects, which include (but are not limited to):

a. *"Have a substantial adverse impact in relation to:*
i. The allocation or safeguarding of land or buildings for particular uses in the development plan, unless there is no reasonable prospect of an application coming forward for the allocated use, or there is evidence that the safeguarding is no longer appropriate; or

ii. The application of the policies in this Framework for existing recreational land and facilities (HC7), Local Green Space (HC8), areas of particular importance for biodiversity and geodiversity (N6), Protected Landscapes (N4) and development within residential curtilages (L2(1)(d)).

b. Involve the whole or partial loss of undeveloped land which is used for a cemetery or burial ground; or for water storage and/or flood risk management (unless suitable compensatory provision is made that does not increase the risk of flooding either on or off-site); or

c. Fail to comply with one of the national decision-making policies which state that development proposals should be refused in specific circumstances."

4.65 It is agreed that the proposed development would not have a substantial adverse impact in relation to a(i). It is agreed that the application does not affect existing recreational land and facilities, local green space, protected landscapes and residential curtilages. The development will require the realignment of the King Charles III England Coastal Path. However, the development will provide improvements to the route of the path around the site and result in a beneficial impact. I explain in my evidence why I consider it has been demonstrated by the Applicant that the proposed development would not have a substantial adverse impact on biodiversity.

4.66 It is agreed that b is not relevant to the proposed development.

4.67 In my proof of evidence, I consider the proposed development against the national decision-making policies and conclude it complies with the framework.

Policies at Issue

4.68 I understand there is a dispute between the parties as in relation to Policy S4 to whether the identified environmental effects are of sufficient significance to substantially outweigh the public benefits arising from the redevelopment of a nationally important immigration detention facility.

Policies HC1-HC8 - Promoting Healthy Communities

4.69 Haslar IRC forms part of the infrastructure necessary to support public services and Government functions. National policy recognises the importance of ensuring sufficient infrastructure and services are available to meet identified needs.

4.70 I understand that there is no dispute regarding the public need fulfilled by immigration detention facilities. The dispute concerns the environmental consequences of delivering that infrastructure rather than its strategic function.

4.71 Policy HC4 states: *"1. Substantial weight should be given to the benefits where:*

a. New or improved public service infrastructure or community facilities would be provided; and

b. Development proposals would make a demonstrable contribution towards promoting good health, preventing ill-health, reducing health inequalities or supporting social interaction in the

local community (such as, but not limited to, the provision of new recreation facilities, meeting places and opportunities to grow or purchase healthier food).

2. Local planning authorities, developers and public service providers should collaborate in a positive and proactive manner to identify and resolve key planning issues before applications for community facilities and public services infrastructure are submitted. Where appropriate local communities should be engaged in the design of proposals, including children and families where new or improved facilities for play are involved so that developments are inclusive and reflect user needs."

4.72 I consider the proposed development to be improved public service infrastructure, as defined in the NPPF which include criminal justice uses. I consider the expansion of the IRC in contributing towards the Government policy 'Strong Foundations: Secure Borders and Safer Streets' policy would contribute towards improving health and social interaction. There is a similar "substantial weight" policy for development for defence and public safety purposes (Policy P6). As I explain below, immigration removal facilities contribute to public safety.

TR1-TR8 - Promoting Sustainable Transport

4.73 I understand it is common ground that the proposal involves redevelopment of an existing operational facility rather than the creation of a wholly new use. The dispute revolves around the extent of residual network impacts and whether the submitted transport evidence satisfactorily demonstrates compliance with national policy.

4.74 Policy TR6 Assessing transport impacts requires development proposals that are expected to generate significant levels of movement to be supported by a proportionate Transport Statement or Transport Assessment, together with a Travel Plan demonstrating how sustainable transport objectives will be achieved and monitored. These documents should align with the transport vision for the development and the wider area, assess likely transport impacts under realistic future scenarios, and consider cumulative effects, multimodal travel patterns and opportunities to promote sustainable travel. Planning permission should be refused where a proposal would result in a severe adverse impact on the transport network, significant congestion, or unacceptable highway safety issues, unless suitable mitigation measures can adequately address those impacts during both construction and operation.

4.75 The evidence of Alex Thompson (CD/8.3) addresses points around highway impact, the provision of on-site car parking and proposed improvements on the highway and active travel.

L1-L3 - Effective Use of Land

4.76 I understand that it is common ground that the site constitutes previously developed land. I understand the dispute is whether the scale, massing and intensity of redevelopment represents an appropriate use of the site when assessed against landscape, visual and heritage considerations.

4.77 The Planning Statement sets out that part of the application site is considered to fall within the definition of previously developed land, which is the part of the site within the 5.2m perimeter fencing where the new accommodation buildings will be located. The western section of the site where the extended car park is proposed was considered to have blended back with the landscape

and is not considered to be previously developed land. I note that at present this land is being used for contractor car parking associated with the refurbishment of Haslar IRC. The proposed car park area was previously used as a car park as shown in figure 6.1 of the Planning Statement.

DP1-DP4 - Design

4.78 These policies seek development that responds positively to local character, reinforces a sense of place and achieves a high-quality design outcome. I understand the principal area of dispute appears to be the scale of development; the massing of proposed buildings; visual impacts; townscape effects; and compatibility with surrounding character.

4.79 I explain how the applicant has demonstrated how the proposal could be developed and the approach the Applicant has followed to identify an appropriate development form. I also explain how outline planning permission can be granted and the layout, scale and appearance can be controlled through submission of a future Reserved Matters planning application. I note the LPA Officer's report states that "it is recognised that the buildings are functional and could be suited to a utilitarian design but there are numerous examples where such buildings are well-designed and attractive." I consider the Reserved Matters application process will enable this to be achieved.

F5-F7 - Flood Risk and Safety

4.80 I understand that there is agreement that the Sequential Test is passed. It is also agreed that the Exception Test applies. The Council does not dispute that flood risk can potentially be addressed but maintains concerns that the Flood Risk Assessment is insufficient and that the decision maker must be satisfied that the Exception Test is passed, the development will be safe for its lifetime and there is no increase in flood risk elsewhere

4.81 I note that the LLFA does not object to the proposed development subject to the imposition of planning conditions. I note the Environment Agency does not object to the proposed development, as the Applicant has agreed to raising site levels to provide sufficient freeboard above the design flood level, i.e. 5.24m AOD. This amendment has a modest effect on the height of the indicative proposed development parameters and is shown in Appendix A.

4.82 The evidence of Scott Dawson (CD/8.6) addresses points around sustainable drainage.

Policies N4-N6 - Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment

4.83 I understand that the principal issues are the ecological effects of the proposed development and specifically, the adequacy of ecological surveys that inform the potential impacts upon protected species and mitigation.

4.84 An objection from a third party has also raised concern regarding the adequacy of the Habitats Regulations Assessment.

4.85 The Applicant's case is that ecological effects have been appropriately assessed, and that mitigation, enhancement and management measures ensure compliance with the requirements of national policy.

Policies HE4-HE6 - Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment

4.86 These policies require decision makers to identify significance, assess effects upon heritage assets and weigh heritage impacts against public benefits where harm is identified. Importantly, the 2026 NPPF no longer relies upon the former "less than substantial harm" terminology and instead requires a more direct assessment of the degree and consequences of heritage effects.

4.87 I understand the principal heritage disputes concern the significance of affected heritage assets, effects on setting and the magnitude of heritage harm, cumulative effects; and the weight attributable to public benefits.

4.88 The Applicant's position is that the proposed development will have no impact on the significance of any designated heritage assets, including Haslar Barracks Conservation Area and Fort Monckton Scheduled Monument". Even if there are judged to be adverse heritage effects, they are limited and are clearly outweighed by substantial public benefits as outlined in my proof of evidence.

Summary

4.89 I have considered the relevant policies in the Framework (CD/7.1) and for the reasons set out above conclude that there is no conflict and that the application proposal represents a sustainable form of development.

5. Assessment of Key Matters – Planning Balance

5.1 The main matters to be considered as part of this inquiry are set out in a succinct manner by the Inspector in in the Pre-Inquiry Note:

- Whether the principle of the development is acceptable, having regard to the operational need for the proposed expansion and the regeneration objectives for the Haslar Peninsula, including those in the emerging Gosport Borough Local Plan.
- The effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area, including the character or appearance of the Haslar Barracks Conservation Area, the setting and significance of nearby heritage assets, and the wider regeneration of the Haslar Peninsula.
- The effect of the development on the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers, with particular regard to outlook, privacy, noise, lighting, traffic and construction activity.
- Whether the proposed access arrangements, local highway network, parking provision and emergency access arrangements would satisfactorily accommodate the development.
- Whether the development would be safe and acceptable having regard to flood risk, coastal change, climate-change resilience and emergency evacuation arrangements.
- The effect of the development on ecology, biodiversity, protected species and habitats, the coastal environment and public access to the coast.
- Whether sufficient information has been provided to enable the relevant planning effects of the development to be properly assessed.

5.2 My assessment of the application scheme is therefore structured as follows.

- Matter 1 – The principle of development (need for increasing capacity at Haslar IRC)
- Matter 2a – Heritage and Conservation
- Matter 2b - Character and appearance
- Matter 3 - Amenity – lighting, privacy, noise, traffic and construction
- Matter 4 - Highways and access
- Matter 5 - Flood Risk and Drainage
- Matter 6 – Ecology
- Matter 7 –Supporting information
- Third party representations

MAIN MATTER 1 – THE PRINCIPLE OF DEVELOPMENT (NEED FOR INCREASING CAPACITY AT HASLAR IRC)

The Principle of Development

5.3 It is common ground between the Applicant and the Council that the proposal is acceptable in principle. The Council's Officer Report concludes in paragraph 4.2.7 that *"the lawful planning use of the wider site is as an Immigration Removal Centre and as such the proposals represent an intensification of an existing use rather than a change of use to an Immigration Removal Centre. Given this position and having regard to Policy LP3 of the Local Plan and Policy D2 of the emerging Local Plan, the proposals must be considered acceptable in principle."*

5.4 Policy LP3 supports development within the defined urban area subject to compliance with other Local Plan policies. The vast majority of the application site lies within the urban area, and the Council accepts that development associated with the Fort Road car park is capable of falling within the exception in Policy LP3 for development essential to the operational requirements of public services. The Council further acknowledges that the emerging Local Plan places the entirety of the site within the urban area boundary. As a consequence, the presumption in policy S4 of the NPPF applies to the proposals.

Need for the Development

5.5 The NPPF gives substantial support to public service infrastructure and to decision-making which enables the delivery of nationally important infrastructure required to meet public policy objectives.

5.6 The need case is compelling and the operational consequences if additional capacity is not delivered are significant. The proposal is not speculative development. It forms part of a Home Office programme intended to increase detention capacity across the IRC estate to around 3,500 spaces by 2030. Mr Round's evidence explains the current headline and effective capacity. The Planning Statement submitted with the application demonstrates that projected demand exceeds current operational capacity and that the application forms a key component of the Government's expansion programme.

5.7 The Home Office undertook a structured site selection process. Existing detention facilities and public sector landholdings were assessed against:

- ownership;
- operational suitability
- developable capacity;
- deliverability; and
- value for money

5.8 The Haslar IRC site was chosen because it performed better when compared to other alternative sites because:

- The proposal involves expansion of an existing Immigration Removal Centre and allows the Home Office to make best use of its existing portfolio of sites in the detention estate.
- The lawful use of the site is established and undisputed.
- The proposal is not for a new detention facility in a previously undeveloped location. Rather, it represents the extension of existing nationally significant public infrastructure.

5.9 The proposal therefore directly advances the social objective of sustainable development under sustainable development policies contained within Chapter 4 of the 2026 NPPF. It should accordingly attract very substantial weight.

5.10 The capacity of sites to accommodate new development was also important. It was vital that the site could provide sufficient critical mass for both operational and economic reasons.

5.11 The capacity of the Haslar site was informed by a site assessment by the Home Office, which included consideration of the site planning constraints.

5.12 I note that the Planning Officer's report at paragraph 1.6 questions whether the application site is suitable for the significant intensification proposed. Additionally, the report questions *'whether this is the most appropriate site, in principle, when compared with other potential sites on a national basis".*

5.13 The planning statement appendix E sets out how the site selection process has been carried out.

5.14 In the Bicester appeal decision (ref: APP/C3105/V/02/1097456) at paragraph 23 the Secretary of State agreed with the Inspector stated that *"it is not necessary for the Home Office to carry out an exercise comparing the site against alternative locations."*

5.15 I consider the Applicant's search has focused correctly on whether there are other suitable alternatives for an IRC expansion that are available and deliverable and that may be a more suitable site. The conclusions of the search were that the application site and another site, Campsfield, were the preferred sites and both were taken forward.

Summary of Need

5.16 In summary I conclude that the Applicant has demonstrated a clear urgent need for additional IRC capacity and, through an appropriate assessment of sites has demonstrated that the application site can provide additional accommodation to help meet the identified need to a scale that is appropriate for the site.

Regeneration objectives for the Haslar Peninsula of the adopted and emerging Local Plan

5.17 I consider the adopted and emerging plans are broadly consistent in seeking a comprehensive, heritage-led regeneration of the Haslar Peninsula, but the emerging plan is more detailed and divides the peninsula into a series of specific regeneration allocations. This reflects the progress made on the regeneration projects. Notably, the emerging plan confirms progress on the Haslar Hospital site and states *"A planning application for a comprehensive redevelopment of the site was approved in 2014 (ref: 12/00591/OUT)….Subsequently, reserved matters planning permission has been granted for parts of the site, enabling the implementation of the outline consent….When accounting for the development permitted by the outline consent, the subsequent reserved matters, and the additional application, there remains 15 C2 units from the outline consent which have no reserved matters consent."*

5.18 I understand the completed phases of the Haslar Hospital site include the conversion of historic buildings into residential accommodation, retirement living and community facilities, with residents

already living on the site[1]. I also understand the former hospital quadrangle, Canada House, Trinity House, the Water Tower and a number of ancillary listed structures have either been restored or are subject to approved restoration schemes.

5.19 I consider the Haslar Peninsula regeneration strategy has achieved measurable success in preserving heritage assets, securing substantial private investment, delivering new housing and bringing parts of the Royal Haslar estate back into productive use. However, the wider vision for a comprehensive mixed-use regeneration area centred on marine industry, tourism, employment growth and heritage-led waterfront redevelopment remains only partially implemented, with several key regeneration sites yet to be fully brought forward.

5.20 In relation to concerns raised regarding the impact of the proposed development on the regeneration of the Haslar Peninsula, I consider the evidence indicates that the presence of the Haslar IRC has not prevented substantial regeneration investment from being secured and implemented across the Haslar Peninsula with redevelopment ongoing at Royal Haslar.

5.21 Whilst the proposed development expands the IRC, the same secure perimeter will remain with the same security arrangements in place. The continued and expanded operation of the IRC is not inconsistent with the principle of maintaining a diversity of uses across the peninsula.

5.22 No compelling evidence has been presented that the operation or expansion of the IRC would prevent the continued delivery of those objectives. Consequently, while some stakeholders may consider the IRC to be an imperfect fit with the longer-term vision for the peninsula, there is insufficient evidence to conclude that its expansion would materially undermine the regeneration strategy itself.

Conclusions on Matter 1

5.23 In my opinion, the principle of the proposed development is acceptable. The proposal would deliver nationally important public service infrastructure on an existing operational IRC site where the lawful use is already established. Whilst concerns have been raised regarding the relationship between the proposal and wider regeneration aspirations for the Haslar Peninsula, there is insufficient evidence to demonstrate that the proposed expansion would materially undermine the delivery of those regeneration objectives. Conversely, there is compelling evidence of an operational need for the development and significant public benefits arising from it. Although the proposal is not itself a regeneration scheme, it would deliver several economic and regeneration-related benefits that I explain later in my proof.

MATTER 2A - HERTAGE

5.36 Matters relating to heritage and archaeology are dealt with in detail within the proof of evidence of Naomi Brennan of Wessex Archaeology (CD/8.5). Specifically, it addresses the potential impact of the scheme on the significance of Haslar Conservation Area and below ground archaeological remains. However, I summarise the matters relevant to the determination of the application.

5.24 I understand there is agreement that the archaeological potential of the application site is limited, and potential impacts low and the Applicant has proposed a mitigation approach comprising

[1] Source: https://www.royalhaslar.com/

education alongside a finds reporting protocol. I understand the Council agrees that mitigation could be ensured by a planning condition.

5.25 The principal heritage issue is whether the proposed development would conserve the significance of heritage assets within and surrounding the application site, having particular regard to the statutory duties under sections 66 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and relevant national and local planning policy. I understand that it is the impacts to the setting of Haslar Conservation Area, which are the point of concern.

5.26 The proposal has been informed by a detailed understanding of the historic environment, and the application was accompanied by a Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) (CD/3.12) and Archaeology Assessment and Mitigation Strategy (CD/3.2). The reports were informed by pre-application discussions with Historic England and the LPA Conservation Officer.

5.27 The HIA undertaken in support of the application identifies the relevant designated and non-designated heritage assets, assesses their significance, and evaluates the contribution made by setting to that significance. The assessment distinguishes between significance derived from architectural and historic interest and significance derived from spatial, visual or contextual relationships. It concludes that *"there are no overriding cultural heritage constraints which are likely to prohibit development at Haslar IRC."* Additionally, that*, "the proposed development will have no direct impacts on any designated heritage assets."* Noting the mitigation measures and incorporating Historic England's recommendations the report concludes that *"the proposed development will have no impact on the significance of any designated heritage asset through a change in their setting."*

5.28 I consider that whilst the development will introduce change near to the Conservation Area. However, as Naomi Brennan states, changes in the surroundings of a heritage asset need to be assessed for the effect of the changes on the significance of the heritage asset is derived. Even if it is not accepted that the proposed development will have no impact on the significance of any designated heritage asset, any effect on heritage significance is limited and falls well within the scope of acceptable development anticipated by national planning policy. Specifically, Policy HE6 requires that *"when considering the potential effect of a development proposal on the significance of a designated heritage asset, substantial weight should be given to the asset's conservation."*

5.29 The HIA concludes that there has no impact on the significance of any designated heritage asset. It follows that heritage policies do not indicate that the proposals should be refused. I note that Policy HE6 confirms that any harm will be a matter of considerable importance and weight but in the absence of harm, there is nothing to weigh against the benefits of the proposals in this respect.

5.30 Even if there is found to be some heritage harm, it is common ground that the proposed development would not cause substantial harm and so paragraph 5 of policy HE6 is not engaged. Accordingly, policy HE6 directs that the public benefits resulting from the proposal should be weighed against any harm to designated heritage assets. Any impacts on the Conservation Area should therefore be considered as part of the overall planning balance.

5.31 Whilst some change to elements of setting would occur, this is a common consequence of development in historic environments and does not necessarily equate to heritage harm. The critical question is whether the change undermines the significance of the asset. In this case, the ability to understand, experience and appreciate the significance of the relevant assets would remain substantially unchanged.

5.32 I consider that the evidence demonstrates that the proposal would not result in harm. And in any event, even if the proposal were to result in harm, it is not substantial harm, and any limited adverse effects arising are significantly outweighed by the substantial public benefits associated with the development.

Public Benefits

5.33 The benefits of the proposed development are set out within the Planning Statement accompanying the application.

5.34 I consider the following benefits to have substantial weight as directed in the NPPF in policies L2, HC4 and P6:

- The provision of nationally important immigration infrastructure.
- Additional detention capacity supporting national policy objectives.
- Delivery of Government immigration enforcement objectives.
- Public safety benefits through increased removal capacity.
- Making better use of underutilised land and making efficient use of previously developed land

5.35 I consider the following benefits to have significant weight:

- The proposal will provide new jobs during construction, as well as in the supply chain, and in the operation of the site (estimated 176 permanent jobs and 250 construction phase jobs).
- The development will achieve BREEAM Excellent buildings and include renewable energy generation on site.

5.36 I consider the following benefits to have moderate weight:

- The provision of Biodiversity Net Gain
- Off-site highway improvements and financial contributions to improve access to public transport.
- Landscape enhancements and tree planting.

5.37 I consider these benefits substantial and to carry significant weight in the planning balance.

Conclusions on Heritage

5.38 In conclusion, the heritage objections do not demonstrate that the proposal would cause unacceptable effects on the historic environment.

5.39 The evidence demonstrates that:

- the significance of relevant heritage assets has been properly understood;
- no substantial harm would arise to any designated heritage asset;
- the proposal preserves the ability to understand and appreciate the significance of the historic environment;
- any effects on setting are limited and amount, at most, to low-level less than substantial harm; and
- any such harm is decisively outweighed by the substantial public benefits delivered by the proposed development.
- For these reasons, the proposal accords with national heritage policy and the development plan and should be supported in heritage and conservation terms.

Archaeology

5.40 An Archaeological Desk-based Assessment (ADBA) (CD/3.2) has been submitted with the application. The ADBA concludes that there is a low-level potential for the proposed development to result in harm to the significance of archaeological remains.

5.41 An Archaeological Mitigation Strategy has been produced by Wessex Archaeology in consultation with the archaeologist for Gosport Borough Council.

5.42 It is agreed that archaeological considerations can be dealt with by way of planning conditions.

MATTER 2B - CHARACTER AND APPEARANCE

5.43 An LVIA (CD/3.13) accompanies the application, and landscape effects are concluded to be localised rather than widespread. The LVIA states at paragraph 7.8 that *"the overall conclusion is that there would be no significant long term adverse effects apart from a major/moderate adverse effect for the limited dwellings on the south-eastern side of Fort Road backing onto the site. The proposed development could therefore be accommodated within the landscape character and visual amenity of the area and is generally acceptable in terms of landscape and visual impact, assuming that opportunities to introduce appropriate mitigation measures are taken."*

5.44 The Council planning officers report does not specifically address landscape and visual impacts. However, paragraph 4.41 does comment on the scale of the site and its capability of accommodating the scale of proposed development that *"would not give rise to any significant harm to the residential amenities of the occupiers of neighbouring properties in terms of loss of light, loss of privacy or any overbearing or unneighbourly sense of enclosure".* I consider this relevant, as the LVIA identifies the localised harm created by the proposed development. I agree with the Council that this harm can be adequately mitigated through appropriate design and landscaping at the reserved matters application stage.

Analysis

5.45 Policy LP10 requires development to respect the character of the built and natural environment. Landscape and visual impacts are addressed in the proof of evidence of Rachel Williams.

5.46 Following pre-application engagement, the accommodation blocks were moved away from the Conservation Area and towards the south-eastern portion of the site. The taller buildings are located in the least sensitive parts of the site whilst lower structures occupy locations closer to surrounding development. An indicative development parameters plan is submitted with the application to show where development is proposed and maximum heights.

5.47 I acknowledge the proposed development, at 12m above the flood design level and additional freeboard will be one of the tallest structures within the vicinity. Whilst there are some taller buildings and structures nearby, including buildings and structures within the regeneration areas of the Haslar Peninsula, I note that the tallest proposed buildings are larger than the residential dwellings nearby. Nevertheless, the principal buildings remain within the established institutional complex set back from the properties on Fort Road behind an existing 5.2m security fence.

5.48 The application site does not comprise an undeveloped coastal landscape. It forms part of a long-established institutional complex with a history of secure and custodial uses. it is an urbanised maritime environment shaped by defence, institutional and marine-related uses. I note that Rachel William's concludes in her proof of evidence that the proposals do respond to their setting in form and layout and *"the LVIA reports no significant residual visual effects from public viewpoints, primarily due to the location of the proposed built form set back from public routes and enclosed by high fencing."*

5.49 The visual effects arise principally from increased height and massing when viewed from limited locations. They do not fundamentally alter the defining characteristics of the area.

5.50 I consider that public infrastructure buildings can appropriately form part of an urban landscape where their design and siting respond to context. These matters can be adequately addressed within a reserved matters application, and I consider the indicative parameters plan demonstrates that the quantum of development could be accommodated on the site without giving rise to unacceptable effects on character and appearance.

5.51 The planning appeal system contains numerous examples where significant adverse landscape effects have been found acceptable when balanced against substantial public benefits. In APP/U1050/W/24/3354670 the Inspector allowed a major Energy Recovery Facility notwithstanding a "significantly detrimental impact" on character and appearance due to the clear need for nationally important waste infrastructure. Similarly, in Appeal Ref 6003039 the Inspector accepted significant landscape harm arising from a solar farm but concluded that the national benefits of renewable energy outweighed that harm. These decisions demonstrate that landscape and visual impacts, even when significant, do not automatically justify refusal. The planning exercise requires a balanced judgement having regard to the scale of public benefits and operational need.

5.52 Unlike those cases, the proposed IRC expansion would not introduce a wholly new feature into an undeveloped landscape. It would expand an existing institutional use within an established secure compound. Consequently, whilst the development results in moderate landscape harm, that harm falls materially short of the level accepted in a number of recent appeal decisions where planning permission was nevertheless granted in recognition of compelling public benefits and national need.

5.53 As referenced in the proof of evidence of Naomi Brennan, I consider the evidence demonstrates the proposed development will result in minor to moderate harm to the character an appearance of the area with some local major/moderate effects. I attach moderate weight to the wider impacts and significant weight to the local impacts.

5.54 However, these are locally rather than widespread and do not significantly affect the setting of settlements and other landmark features. I consider the harms identified are capable of being reduced through careful design and are also significantly outweighed by the benefits of the proposed development identified in my proof of evidence.

MATTER 3 – AMENITY

5.55 I understand the matter relates to the operation of the expanded IRC and how this larger facility will affect the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers, principally the nearby residential properties, which are more sensitive receptors. I agree the inspector has noted the key matters as being lighting, privacy, noise, traffic and construction.

5.56 The relationship between the site and neighbouring residential properties is not new. The site has historically accommodated institutional and secure uses, including military, custodial and immigration-related functions. The existing IRC site is enclosed by substantial security fencing and has operated in conjunction with neighbouring residential areas for many decades. The proposal therefore represents an intensification of an established use rather than the introduction of a new activity into a previously residential environment.

5.57 I consider the LPA officer's report at paragraph 4.41 correctly concludes that *"a development of the scale for which Outline planning permission is sought could be delivered in a manner that would not give rise to any significant harm to the residential amenities of the occupiers of neighbouring properties in terms of loss of light, loss of privacy or any overbearing or*

unneighbourly sense of enclosure. Residents may experience a loss of outlook from rear windows; however, this is across third party land and is not protected by planning policy".

5.58 I comment on each of issues in detail below in addition to matters of noise and public perception.

Lighting

5.59 It is accepted that lighting forms an important component of a secure facility. However, that does not mean unacceptable effects would arise. I also acknowledge that the expanded car park results in a visual change for the residents of Fort Road. The need to illuminate the car park will also have an impact, as previously this area has remained vacant since it was last used as a car park with no formal lighting as I understand from the photographic evidence (figure 6.1 of the Planning Statement).

5.60 Whilst an outline application, the approach to lighting is informed by a Lighting Assessment (CD/3.27) submitted with the application. The lighting used will be a low energy lighting system with no upward light.

5.61 Detailed lighting design is not sought for approval through the current application. The reserved matters process and planning conditions provide robust mechanisms through which column locations, lighting intensity, hours of operation, directional controls and mitigation measures can be secured.

5.62 Landscaping, also to be agreed at Reserved Matters, can be improved along the north, east and south boundaries to the car park which will also assist in reducing light spill.

5.63 In conclusion I agree with the Council's planning officer that the lighting impacts can be adequately mitigated through careful lighting controls.

Privacy

5.64 In relation to privacy, I agree with the LPA officer's conclusions at paragraph 4.41.

5.65 The proposed accommodation blocks are to be located entirely within the existing IRC compound. The indicative layout and accompanying parameter plans show the accommodation blocks and ancillary buildings are set back from the highway and separated from the residential properties which includes a 5.2m security fence and some existing landscaping between the rear of the residential properties on Fort Road and the existing secure fenceline. An indicative landscaping plan sows how the landscaping could be improved along the boundary of the site from Fort Road and wrapping around the edge of the site to the Haslar Sea Wall car park where boundary landscaping is proposed between the car park and the IRC.

5.66 I acknowledge that the expanded car park off Military Road results in a visual change for the residents of Fort Road, particularly those living closest to the car park. I note the existing Haslar Sea Wall car park is located closest to the adjoining dwellings such that the additional parking spaces will be further from the houses. As with the layout of the IRC, I consider appropriate landscaping can be introduced to soften the appearance of the extended car park.

5.67 In addition to the separation distance, the layout, scale and massing, as well as window orientation, will be controlled via the reserved matters planning application whereby further mitigation, if necessary, can be achieved.

5.68 In conclusion I agree with the Council's planning officer that any privacy issues can be adequately mitigated through careful design control. I am not aware of any technical evidence before the inquiry indicating that the proposal would result in harmful overlooking or unacceptable loss of privacy. In these circumstances, I consider privacy concerns attract only limited weight.

Noise

5.69 The application site is an existing IRC where activities occur within a secure site, external activity is limited, movements are controlled, detained persons do not freely enter and leave the site; and significant outdoor operational processes do not occur.

5.70 I understand the noise associated with plant for the extended IRC will not create any significant additional noise impacts. I understand the main issues to be the noise arising from the operation of the expanded IRC and the noise that is anticipated to be created from the extended car park area and, in particular, noise created during the nighttime although I note that the level of parking during nighttime hours would be significantly lower than during the day. Similarly, the noise associated with the operation of the IRC will be carefully managed with very limited external noise anticipated during the evening and nighttime hours. As a responsible operator, the Applicant is prepared to agree to a planning condition requiring the approval of a noise management plan for the operational site prior to the occupation of the extension.

5.71 A detailed Noise Assessment (CD/3.15) has been prepared in support of the application. The assessment considered the cumulative effects of existing and proposed plant and operational activity.

5.72 The Noise Assessment concluded that *"the cumulative plant noise impact from the existing IRC and expansion of the IRC plant remains acceptable, with no significant adverse effect anticipated at nearby dwellings and no resulting harm to residential amenity."*

5.73 I agree with the Council planning officer's conclusions in paragraph 4.8.1 that *"the conclusion [of the Noise Assessment] that the proposals should not result in harmful impacts are agreed subject to the relevant mitigation measures being secured through the imposition of a suitably worded condition."*

Traffic and Construction

5.74 Highway impacts have been assessed through the submitted Transport Assessment (CD/3.18). I note the Council does not conclude that unacceptable residential amenity impacts will occur as a consequence of traffic generation and neither does HCC Highways authority.

5.75 Consequently, there is currently no evidence demonstrating that neighbouring residents would experience unacceptable amenity impacts arising from highway activity.

5.76 Construction activity inevitably gives rise to temporary effects. However, these effects are temporary and controllable through conditions that can manage construction traffic, noise, dust, wheel cleaning, delivery hours, contractor parking and community liaison.

5.77 In relation to construction impacts, the Applicant agrees this should be managed through a Construction Management Plan (CMP) (Environment and Traffic) to be submitted for approval prior to commencement of development. An Outline Construction Management Plan was submitted with the application. The application anticipates construction working hours of 08:00 to 17:00 Monday to Friday. I understand there have been construction traffic problems associated with the refurbishment works, specifically parking issues. This matter can be adequately controlled through a CMP, which I understand was absent from the refurbishment works.

5.78 In conclusion I consider temporary construction effects therefore attract limited weight in the planning balance.

5.79 I comment more generally on highway matters in the next section of my proof of evidence.

MATTER 4 - HIGHWAYS AND ACCESS

5.80 Matters relating to highway impacts and access are dealt with in detail within the proof of evidence of [redacted] of Stantec. However, I summarise the matters relevant to the determination of the application.

5.81 The application is accompanied by a Transport Assessment (TA) (CD/3.18) and a Framework Travel Plan (TP) (CD/3.19), which were informed by pre-application discussion with the Highways Authority. The TA includes the access plans, swept path analysis, traffic diagrams and junction modelling outputs.

5.82 The TA concluded that *"The Applicant has submitted a Transport Assessment and Travel Plan, which concludes that all relevant junctions would continue to operate within capacity and that the development would not result in severe highway impact.*

5.83 I understand that I understand that the Council has not reached a definitive conclusion that the proposal conflicts with Policy LP22, it raises significant concerns regarding cumulative traffic impacts; parking demand; dependence on a future bus service; the adequacy of sustainable transport provision and impact on the wider highway network. In addition, HCC Highways raised concerns regarding the assessment of the proposed development. The Applicant has continued to work with the highways authority to address the outstanding matters in advance of the inquiry and I understand it is provisionally agreed that matters can be resolved through appropriately worded planning conditions and planning obligations and these discussions are explained within Alex Thompson's proof of evidence.

5.84 In my opinion, the evidence demonstrates that the proposed access arrangements are acceptable, the local highway network has sufficient capacity, adequate parking can be provided on-site, and the emergency access arrangements are satisfactory. Moreover, significantly, neither Gosport Borough Council nor Hampshire County Council has identified a highway reason for refusal. Rather, both authorities sought clarification on operational details which have subsequently been comprehensively addressed by the applicant's transport consultants, Stantec.

5.85 In terms of access, the proposed development principally relies upon existing access points that have historically served the site throughout its previous operation as an Immigration Removal Centre. The scheme does not require the creation of new vehicular access onto the public highway. The Dolphin Way access arrangements, including the proposed priority system, represent a formalisation of an existing operational arrangement and are acceptable.

5.86 In terms of parking, the Applicant has calculated parking demand based on assessed actual staff numbers and shift change periods rather than relying upon generic parking standards, which contain no equivalent land use category for an IRC. The proposed development provides between 294 and 302 parking spaces through a combination of spaces on Dolphin Way and within the Haslar Sea Wall Car Park. Additional operational spaces are also available within the wider site.

5.87 Critically, the parking provision has been specifically designed around the peak shift-change scenario, which represents the highest parking demand experienced by the site. Consequently, the evidence demonstrates that sufficient parking can be accommodated within the site. In my opinion, the proposed parking strategy is robust and proportionate.

5.88 I accept that the site's coastal location means opportunities for sustainable travel are more limited than at more central urban locations. Indeed, the Council acknowledges that public transport provision is currently limited. Nevertheless, the proposal incorporates the following:

- a Staff Travel Plan;
- secure covered cycle parking

- motorcycle parking;
- EV charging provision;
- financial contributions of approximately £131,533 towards Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan improvements.

5.89 I consider these measures represent a proportionate response to the site's location and provide meaningful opportunities for modal shift and improved active travel.

5.90 I conclude that the proposed access arrangements, local highway network, parking provision and emergency access arrangements would satisfactorily accommodate the Haslar IRC expansion and provide no basis upon which planning permission should be withheld.

MATTER 5 – FLOOD RISK AND DRAINAGE

5.91 Matters relating to flood risk and drainage are dealt with in detail within [redacted] proof of evidence.

5.92 The application site is located in Flood Zones 1,2 and 3 (ranging from low risk to high risk from flooding). The Applicant submitted a Flood Risk Assessment (CD/3.8), Coastal Modelling Assessment (CD/3.10) and Flood Evacuation Management Plan (CD3.9), which conclude that flood risks can be appropriately mitigated through raised floor levels, evacuation procedures and drainage measures.

5.93 In relation to Flood Risk, I understand that there is agreement that the Sequential Test and the Exception Test applies and that the Council does not dispute that flood risk can potentially be addressed but maintains concerns that the Flood Risk Assessment is insufficient and that "the decision maker must be satisfied that the Exception Test is passed, the development will be safe for its lifetime and there is no increase in flood risk elsewhere." However, the Officer's Report does not identify any substantive technical flaw within the FRA. Indeed, it recognises that specialist advice from the Environment Agency and LLFA should be relied upon in reaching a conclusion.

5.94 I consider the Applicant has demonstrated compliance with the Sequential Test. The expansion of existing IRC's is considered the preferred approach to providing nationally important infrastructure. Accordingly, it is considered that the Sequential Test is met because the application site is the sequentially preferable site by virtue that it is an extension of an existing facility and alternative sites are not reasonably available, as set out in Policy F5 of the NPPF. The Applicant's Planning Statement (paragraph 6.72) notes that *"even if it were considered that the Sequential Test was not met, the benefits of the proposed development are considered to outweigh the potential failure of the test and this is a key consideration, as established in the Gladman decision[2]."*

5.95 I consider that the exception test is met, as the IRC extension will provide wider sustainability benefits to the community, as summarised in my Proof of Evidence and the Planning Statement. These benefits outweigh the flood risk, and the FRA demonstrates that development will be safe

[2] Gladman Developments Ltd v Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government and Lancaster City Council (15 January 2026)

for its lifetime taking account of the vulnerability of its users, without increasing flood risk elsewhere.

5.96 I note that the LLFA does not object to the proposed development subject to the imposition of planning conditions. I consider the absence of objection from the LLFA provides compelling evidence that the development would not increase flood risk elsewhere and complies with the core requirements of national flood policy.

5.97 I understand the objection from the Environment Agency has been resolved, as the Applicant has agreed to raising site levels to provide sufficient freeboard above the assessed flood design level. An amended FRA was submitted to the EA (CD3.22) which included the proposed amendments. The principal body responsible for assessing tidal flood risk is satisfied that the development can be made safe through the proposed design measures.

5.98 I conclude that the outline application would be safe and acceptable having regard to flood risk, coastal change, climate-change resilience and emergency evacuation arrangements and therefore complies with the relevant provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework and the development plan.

MATTER 6 - ECOLOGY

5.99 Matters relating to ecology are dealt with in detail within the proof of evidence of [redacted] of First Horizon. However, I summarise the matters relevant to the determination of the application and in particular focus on the policy tests that apply at outline application stage.

5.100 The principal policy framework comprises the National Planning Policy Framework, together with Policies LP41, LP42, LP43 and LP44 of the adopted Gosport Borough Council Local Plan. These policies seek to protect internationally designated habitats, safeguard protected species and secure biodiversity enhancement.

5.101 The application is supported by the following information:

- Ecology Impact Assessment (ECIA) (CD3.6)
- Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Metric (CD3.24)
- Shadow Habitat Regulation Assessment (HRA) (CD3.11)
- Nutrient Neutrality Mitigation
- Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP) – relating to the loss of functionally linked land on the application site. (CD3.26)

Matters not at Issue

Mitigation Habitat for Brent Geese

5.102 The primary ecological issue arising from loss of overwintering bird habitat is acknowledged and addressed through compensatory habitat provision. The evidence shows that mitigation has been identified and is capable of delivery.

5.103 The Applicant has secured the provision of a Brent Geese reserve on land out outside the Borough (Stubbington Brent Geese Reserve within Fareham Borough Council). Natural England has reviewed the mitigation package and confirmed that it agrees the mitigation would negate any adverse effect on the integrity of the designated sites. Its consultation response concludes with a clear "No Objection Subject to Appropriate Mitigation Being Secured". A legal agreement (Mitigation Agreement and Conservation Covenant) was submitted with the application (CD3.26).

5.104 Natural England further confirms that the Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP), Conservation Covenant and Mitigation Project Plan provide sufficient certainty that mitigation will be secured for the lifetime of the impact. It expressly agrees with the conclusions of the submitted HRA. In those circumstances, the competent authority can be satisfied that the loss of functionally linked habitat has been appropriately addressed and will not adversely affect the integrity of the SPA or Ramsar network.

5.105 The habitat mitigation works have begun, and confirmation is attached at appendix B.

5.106 I understand the Council does not object to this proposed mitigation.

Nutrient Neutrality

5.107 In relation to Nutrient neutrality, the Applicant has mitigated the development through securing nutrient credits purchased from the Knowle Sewage Treatment works wetland scheme. An Allocation Agreement was submitted with the application (CD3.27)

5.108 The HRA concludes that hydrological impacts will therefore be avoided and compensated in accordance with Natural England's guidance. Natural England reviewed this approach as part of its assessment and concluded that the proposed mitigation measures are appropriate.

5.109 I understand the Council does not object to this proposed mitigation.

BNG

5.110 In relation to BNG The Council considers that there is an opportunity to enhance local biodiversity in most development through a range of appropriate measures. For this proposal, this could include swift bricks, green roofs/green walls, and/or additional tree planting where appropriate and which could be secured through the imposition of suitably worded planning conditions.

5.111 I confirm the applicant proposes to provide the required 10% BNG through off-site provision through the acquisition of BNG units from a secured and registered scheme. This will be provided alongside on-site biodiversity improvements to be confirmed at the reserved matters application stage when the site layout and landscaping plans have been established.

5.112 It was the Applicant's intention to enter into a unit pre-purchase. However, this has not been possible, and a purchase of BNG units will instead be made prior to commencement of development and in accordance with the planning conditions and legal obligation.

Matters at Issue

5.113 I understand the matter to be that the Council's considers there is not currently enough information submitted by the Applicant for it to be satisfied. The Council does not state that ecological effects are incapable of mitigation.

5.114 The methodology for assessment was agreed through pre-application discussions. Additionally, the methodology was also informed by ecology assessment undertaken on two related development proposals – the development of the Haslar IRC Energy Centre (ref: 24/00382/FULL) and the temporary use of the wider car park site for construction vehicle storage associated with the refurbishment of the Haslar IRC.

5.115 I understand that where surveys have not been carried out by the applicant, this is because there is not a likely significant effect that needs to be assessed.

5.116 Furthermore, where ecological impacts are judged to be possible on site, ecological mitigation can be delivered within the parameters of the outline permission, as the parameters plan identifies substantial areas where development will not take place.

5.117 I consider that based on the evidence it is possible for the reserved matters application and planning conditions to require the Applicant to provide the necessary detail. I refer to Natural England's current guidance, which confirms that surveys should be proportionate, mitigation can be secured through planning conditions and the planning authority's role is to assess likely effects and mitigation.

Bats

5.118 The Ecological Impact Assessment identified no bat roosts within the application site. The applicant has incorporated a sensitive lighting strategy designed to minimise impacts on bat commuting and foraging activity.

5.119 In relation to the consideration of the impact of the proposed development on bats, matters of layout, scale, appearance and landscaping are reserved. Therefore, the precise lighting arrangement, the final planting design and the final layout of ecological corridors have not yet been designed. Notwithstanding, as set out within Derek Allen's proof of evidence, the applicant has provided an indication as to where ecological mitigation can be provided as well as an indication as to how this is managed. I consider the details of this can be controlled by a suitably worded planning condition.

5.120 Additional bat surveys have been undertaken by the Applicant, which I understand the findings to date can be provided in advance of the inquiry. The Applicant acknowledges that the Council has asked for surveys that cannot be fully completed prior to the determination of this outline planning application. However, the need for further refinement of information does not equate to the existence of significant residual effects. Based upon the evidence, I do not consider the proposed development would give rise to unacceptable ecological effects. Additionally, it is possible to control impacts by conditions, as I have summarised above. The final bat mitigation strategy will necessarily evolve alongside the final reserved matters design.

Reptiles

5.121 The Applicant's surveys identified only a small population of Common Lizard on the site. The EcIA proposes a mitigation strategy based upon sensitive, phased clearance supervised by an Ecological Clerk of Works. Whilst the Council's ecologist has questioned certain aspects of the mitigation approach, the EcIA concludes that impacts can be appropriately managed and that no significant residual effects would remain following implementation of mitigation. It is notable that no objection has been raised by Natural England in relation to reptiles or protected species

5.122 I understand the issue between the Applicant and the Council is how adequate reptile habitat can be provided on site. As set out in the proof of Evidence of Derek Allen, the outline planning application contains a substantial area of land that will not contain new development and is capable of retention for a receptor habitat.

5.123 The age of a survey does not demonstrate ecological harm and does not establish that protected species cannot be adequately protected. I consider mitigation to be achievable. There is sufficient land available to provide mitigation. I consider suitably worded conditions can be agreed to control habitat management, translocation strategy.

Matters for subsequent approval

5.124 The following matters will be addressed through subsequent planning approval (submission of Reserved Matters or discharge of planning conditions):

Pre-commencement conditions

- Updated bat surveys.
- Updated reptile surveys.
- Ecological Management Plan.
- Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP).
- Construction Environmental Management Plan.

Pre-occupation

- Lighting verification.
- Reptile translocation completion.
- Habitat establishment.

Habitat Regulation Assessment

5.125 I understand there is no issue between the Applicant and the Council regarding HRA. However, a letter of objection submitted by DCC Town Planning raises concerns regarding the robustness of the assessment. I understand the criticism to be that lighting effects have been incorrectly scoped out and therefore the Competent Authority cannot conclude no adverse effect on integrity.

5.126 I consider there to be two distinct issues here. The concern regarding lighting is in relation to the protection of bats. However, the HRA is concerned with impacts on European sites, not bats. Specifically, the impact on the Special Protection Area (SPA), Ramsar interests and other qualifying features. These designations are concerned with birds and their habitats, not bats. No evidence has been produced demonstrating an adverse effect on site integrity.

5.127 The application is accompanied by a HRA, and mitigation has been identified having consulted with Natural England.

Coast Environment and Access to the Coast

5.128 The site occupies a coastal location on the Haslar Peninsula adjacent to the Solent. The coastal environment forms an important aspect of the site's context. The proposal has been specifically designed to avoid harm to nearby coastal habitats through mitigation measures outlined above.

5.129 Natural England agrees that the proposed mitigation measures are adequate to address potential impacts on nearby designated coastal sites and habitats. The proposal therefore preserves the ecological integrity of the wider coastal environment whilst delivering compensation and enhancement measures.

5.130 The proposal affects the route of the King Charles III England Coast Path, which currently runs through the existing car park and coastal frontage.

5.131 Importantly, the application does not seek to remove public coastal access. Rather, it proposes the realignment and enhancement of the route. The Planning Statement explains that the revised route along the western edge of the site would formalise the path and provide improved separation between pedestrians and vehicular movements within the car park.

5.132 Natural England confirms that permanent rerouting can be achieved through a formal route variation process and emphasises the importance of maintaining public access during construction wherever possible.

5.133 The Applicant has committed to keeping the route open during construction where practicable and will engage with the authority in preparing a temporary and permanent realignment.

5.134 The proposal is therefore consistent with Policy LP37, which seeks to maintain and enhance public access to the coast. Rather than reducing accessibility, the development provides an opportunity to formalise and improve the safety and quality of the route.

Ecology Conclusions

5.135 I do not consider the Council has identified any ecological effect that cannot be mitigated. The issue relates principally to the degree of detail available at outline stage. The application establishes that ecological mitigation is feasible, deliverable and capable of being secured through planning conditions and future reserved matters approvals. Consequently, in my opinion, ecology does not represent a sound basis for withholding outline planning permission.

5.136 I conclude that the proposed development will not result in unacceptable impacts upon designated sites, protected species, biodiversity interests, the coastal environment or public access to the coast. Furthermore, the evidence demonstrates that all identified impacts can be appropriately avoided, mitigated or compensated and that the proposal is capable of delivering measurable biodiversity net gain.

MATTER 8 – SUPPORTING INFORMATION

5.137 I understand concerns have been expressed regarding the redaction of information submitted with the planning application.

5.138 I refer to the Pre-Inquiry Meeting Agenda dated 6th October 2026, which reiterates that a Security Direction directing that the information identified in Annex A1 is to be treated as 'sensitive information' for the purposes of section 293H (7) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. The plans submitted for approval are not redacted.

5.139 In relation to whether sufficient information has been provided to enable the relevant planning effects of the development to be properly assessed, I consider the application is supported by more than sufficient information to enable the Secretary of State's appointed decision maker to reach a robust and legally sound planning judgment. While certain operational and security-sensitive details have been withheld from public disclosure pursuant to a Secretary of State Security Direction, the planning application contains extensive information addressing all material planning issues and the unredacted information provides sufficient information for an outline planning application. Furthermore, the statutory consultees and technical bodies have been able to undertake substantive assessments and provide informed responses.

5.140 The Pre-Inquiry Note further confirms that the existence of the Security Direction does not prevent the planning merits of the proposal being considered,

5.141 The application is accompanied by an extensive suite of technical reports covering every principal environmental and planning issue identified within local and national policy. Despite being an outline proposal with all matters reserved except access, the application is supported by indicative site layouts, development parameters, elevations, landscaping strategies and technical assessments based upon realistic development scenarios.

5.142 Having regard to the application documentation, consultation responses and technical evidence, I conclude that sufficient information has been provided to enable the relevant planning effects of the development to be properly assessed.

THIRD PARTY REPRESENTATIONS

5.143 The Appeal has received 490 comments from statutory consultees and interested parties. The main themes in the comments are similar to the reasons for refusal including the following:

- The scale of development
- Pressure on local infrastructure and public services
- Traffic highways and parking
- Impact on residential amenity
- Design and Visual impact
- Heritage
- Flood risk and coastal erosion
- Safety and security concerns (fear of crime)
- Consultation
- Human rights and detention policy objections

5.144 I have dealt with the above within my evidence and so do not repeat this here.

5.145 The remaining comments fall within the following other topics.

Public perception and the fear of crime

5.146 I understand the issue to be the concern neighbouring / local residents have regarding the expanded operation of the existing IRC and the potential safety impacts associated with the expansion. The Planning Statement submitted with the application commented specifically on the matters of Fear of Crime and of Community Cohesion.

5.147 The application site is an existing secure residential institution and people detained are not allowed to leave the facility. The proposed development does not change the use, or the operation of the site and, therefore, on this matter there is no new amenity issue. I consider it is, therefore, unlikely that the proposed development and its operation will give rise to the fear of crime.

5.148 I understand that there were previously protests regarding the operation of the IRC in 2015 and there is potential for such protests to take place again and following the expansion of the IRC. The Applicant, in coordination with Hampshire Police will be responsible for managing any such events to ensure public order is maintained and community reassurance is prioritised. In summary, I understand lawful protests will be managed on site, and unlawful protests will be dealt with by the police. This matter is dealt with in more detail in [redacted] proof of evidence.

5.149 I agree that where relevant to land use impacts it can be appropriate to control operational management. In the case of this application, a car park operational management plan would be appropriate in order to ensure any amenity issues associated with the functioning of the car park can be mitigated.

Impact on public services - Healthcare

5.150 The proof of evidence of Mr Round comments on the provision of health care infrastructure on site.

5.151 In relation to healthcare, I consider there will be a negligible impact on resources from the application, as on-site provision reduce these impacts to the requirement for secondary care only. I, therefore, conclude the impacts are acceptable in planning terms.

Security

5.152 The proof of evidence of [redacted] comments on the provision of security on site.

Human rights and welfare concerns

5.37 Where these matters are material planning considerations, they are dealt with in the proof of evidence of [redacted]

Public policy and ethical objections

5.38 Where these matters are material planning considerations, they are dealt with in the proof of evidence of [redacted]

6 Conclusion

6.1 I have, within this Proof of Evidence, set out my evidence which confirms that, on planning merits, the Application should be approved.

Compliance with the Development Plan

6.2 I consider the proposed development is consistent with the development plan and national decision-making policies. The principle of development is also supported by NPPF policy S4.

Need for the Development

6.3 I conclude that the Applicant has demonstrated a clear and urgent need for additional IRC capacity and, through an assessment of sites has demonstrated that the application site can provide additional accommodation to help meet the identified need to a scale that is appropriate for the site.

6.4 I consider this to be a material consideration that should be given substantial positive weight in the planning balance.

The Benefits of the Proposed Development

6.5 I consider the proposed development to be an improvement to public service infrastructure, as defined in the NPPF which requires in Policy HC4 that substantial weight should be given to the benefits where improved public service infrastructure would be provided. There is a similar "substantial weight" policy for development for defence and public safety purposes (Policy P6), which I consider relevant to the proposed development. The proposed development makes better use of underutilised land and makes efficient use of previously developed land. I consider that substantial weight should be given to the above benefits provided by the proposed development.

6.6 The Framework requires new development to be sustainable. To achieve sustainable development the planning system should give consideration to three overarching objectives - economic, social, and environmental.

6.7 In the case of the application there are several positive economic, social and environmental benefits that will be delivered at the construction and operational phase of the development both at the local level and in the wider economy. I have set these out in Section 5 of my proof and I consider significant weight should be given to the benefits associated with the provision of new jobs during construction and in the operation of the site, as well as the sustainable approach to construction with the development achieving a BREEAM Excellent rating. I also consider moderate weight should be given to the provision of Biodiversity Net Gain, as well as financial contributions to improve access to public transport and encourage active travel.

The Principle of Development and the Regeneration of Haslar Peninsula

6.8 In my opinion, the principle of the proposed development is acceptable. The proposal would deliver nationally important public service infrastructure on an existing operational IRC site where the lawful use is already established. Whilst concerns have been raised regarding the relationship between the proposal and wider regeneration aspirations for the Haslar Peninsula, there is insufficient evidence to demonstrate that the proposed expansion would materially undermine the delivery of those regeneration objectives. Conversely, there is compelling evidence of an operational need for the development and significant public benefits arising from it. Although the proposal is not itself a regeneration scheme, it would deliver several economic and regeneration-related benefits.

Heritage Impacts

6.9 In conclusion, the heritage objections do not demonstrate that the proposal would cause unacceptable effects on the historic environment. The evidence indicates that:

- the significance of relevant heritage assets has been properly understood;
- no substantial harm would arise to any designated heritage asset;
- the proposal preserves the ability to understand and appreciate the significance of the historic environment;
- any effects on setting are limited and amount, at most, to low-level less than substantial harm; and any such harm is decisively outweighed by the substantial public benefits delivered by the proposed development.

6.10 For these reasons, the proposal accords with national heritage policy and the development plan and should be supported in heritage and conservation terms.

Landscape and Visual Impact

6.11 In relation to landscape and visual impacts, I conclude the application will result in minor to moderate harm to the character an appearance of the area. I consider that this should be given moderate weight in the planning balance.

6.12 However, these are locally rather than widespread and do not significantly affect the setting of settlements and other landmark features. I consider the harms identified are capable of being reduced through careful design and are also significantly outweighed by the benefits of the proposed development identified in my proof of evidence.

6.13 I acknowledge the proposed development will be one of the tallest structures within the vicinity, but not the tallest. Accordingly, I do not consider the proposal to be inconsistent with the local character.

Amenity Impacts

6.14 In relation to privacy issues, I consider these can be adequately mitigated through careful design control. Likewise, I consider the lighting impacts associated with the proposed development can be adequately mitigated through careful lighting control.

6.15 In relation to amenity, I consider the development would cause concern and potentially some localised harm, but it is important to be recognise the application site is an existing IRC and the site will be subject to operational security, management and planning controls.

6.16 I do not consider that the fear of crime has a reasonable basis when considering the application and I consider that it does not meet the threshold for being a material consideration. Mr Round's evidence addresses safety and security management of the application site and demonstrates that even if there are problems, they will be managed by the Applicant. Any fear of crime will therefore not arise as a result of the extension of the IRC.

6.17 In relation to lighting impacts I agree with the Council's planning officer that these can be adequately mitigated through careful lighting controls. I also agree with the Council planning officer's conclusions in relation to noise and that the proposals should not result in harmful impacts are agreed subject to the relevant mitigation measures being secured through the imposition of a suitably worded condition.

6.18 I consider there is currently no evidence demonstrating that neighbouring residents would experience unacceptable amenity impacts arising from highway activity. I also consider temporary construction effects can be adequately managed by planning condition.

6.19 Overall, I consider that these matters should be given moderate weight in the planning balance.

Local Highway Impacts

6.20 I conclude that the proposed access arrangements, local highway network, parking provision and emergency access arrangements would satisfactorily accommodate the Haslar IRC expansion and provide no basis upon which planning permission should be withheld.

Flood Risk

6.21 I conclude that the outline application would be safe and acceptable having regard to flood risk, coastal change, climate-change resilience and emergency evacuation arrangements and therefore complies with the relevant provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework and the development plan.

Ecology Impacts

6.22 I conclude that the proposed development will not result in unacceptable impacts upon designated sites, protected species, biodiversity interests, the coastal environment or public access to the coast. Furthermore, the evidence demonstrates that all identified impacts can be appropriately avoided, mitigated or compensated and that the proposal is capable of delivering measurable biodiversity net gain.

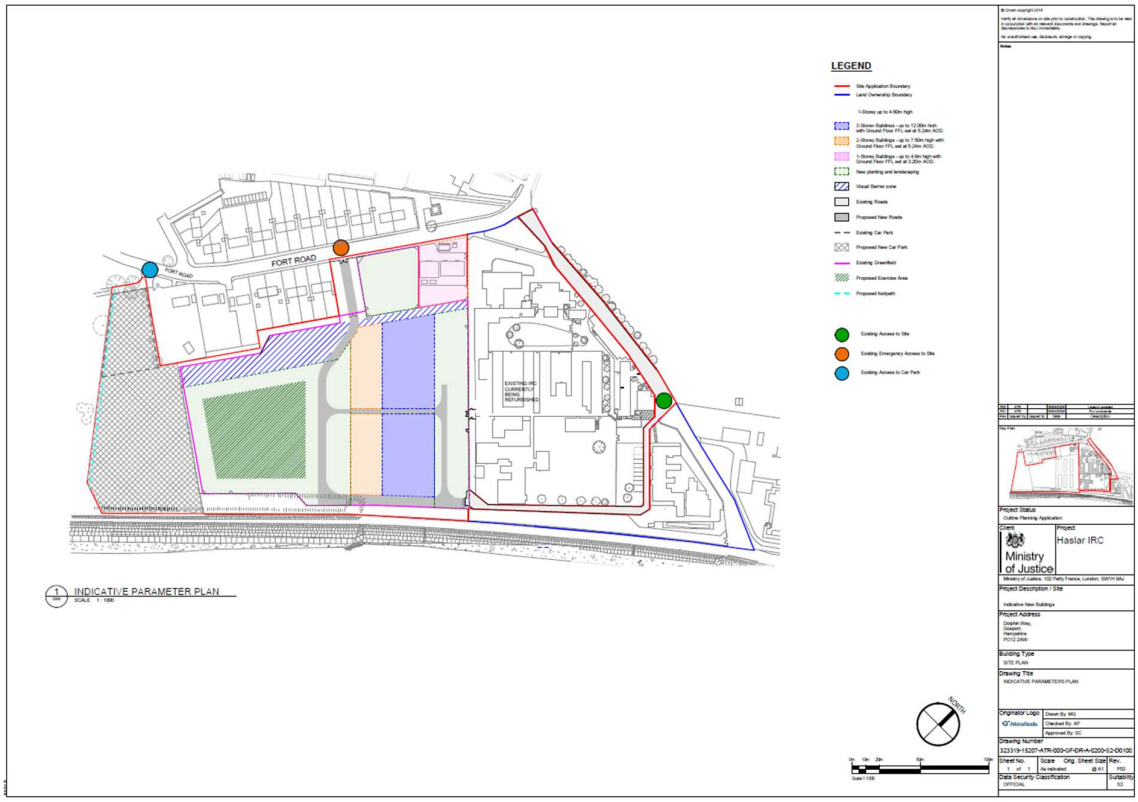
Impact on Emergency Services

6.23 In relation to healthcare, I consider there will be a negligible impact on resources from the application, as on-site provision reduce these impacts to the requirement for secondary care only. I, therefore, conclude the impacts are acceptable in planning terms.

Conclusion

6.24 I am of the view that the application represents a sustainable form of development that should be granted planning permission.

Appendix A – Indicative Parameter Plan (Updated to reflect Environment Agency Flood Mitigation)



Appendix B – Confirmation of Habitat Creation and Enhancement

Confirmation of Habitat Creation and Enhancement

Internal Conservation Covenant and Site Reference: Wild Stubbington Brent Geese

Client: Wild Capital

Client ref for site: BGS-250425002

Phase: NA

As a Responsible Body designated under the Environment Act 2021 by Defra, we are issuing this form as confirmation of implementation under the requirements of the Biodiversity Net Gain system in England and any requirement of the conservation covenant signed and held with ourselves.

Report/Evidence File Title: Stubbington Establishment Evidenced WC.pdf

Date Received: 24.6.26

Site Visit: Not deemed necessary

Date of Responsible Body Confirmation of Creation and Enhancement: 24.6.26

Future Anniversary date [Start of Management and Monitoring Period]: 18.3.26

Expected end date of 80 year Management and Monitoring Period: 17/3/2106.

Authorised and signed for RSK Biocensus:

Name: [redacted]
Signature: [redacted]

Role: Director and Lead for Responsible Body
Date: 24.6.26

Standard Certification of Implementation V1.2 June 2025



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Better never settles