Town and Country Planning Act 1990

Section 293D Crown Development Application

Haslar Immigration Removal Centre (IRC)

Dolphin Way

Gosport

Hampshire

PO12 2AW

Proof of Evidence of

[redacted]

BSc (Hons) MSc Spatial Planning

Local Authority Ref: 26/00216/CROWN

Planning Inspectorate Ref: CROWN/2026/0000005

20th October 2026

Contents

1 Introduction

The Inquiry

Qualifications and experience

Scope of evidence

2 Site Description and Planning History

Site Identification and Description

Planning History

Pre-application Consultation

3 The Application

Mitigation

4 Planning Policy Context

Introduction

The Development Plan

Other Material Considerations

5 The Council's Position in Relation to the Application

6 Conclusion and the planning balance

1 Introduction

The Inquiry

1.1 This Proof of Evidence [PoE] relates to an Inquiry under the Town and Country Planning (Crown Development Applications) (Hearings and Inquires) Rules 2025 relating to a Crown Development application for Outline planning permission by the Home Office [the Applicant] relating to development at Haslar Immigration Removal Centre (IRC), Dolphin Way, Gosport, Hampshire PO12 2AW [the Site].

1.2 The description of development for the Planning Application [the Development] is as follows:

Outline Planning Application with all matters reserved (except for access) for the expansion of Haslar IRC comprising the development of new accommodation blocks and ancillary supporting accommodation, the conversion and expansion of existing site infrastructure including internal roads, demolition of existing structures, minor amendment to coastal path to accommodate the creation of additional car parking, landscaping and associated site infrastructure.

Qualifications and experience

1.3 I am [redacted] and I hold the post of Head of Development Management at Gosport Borough Council who are the Local Planning Authority for the site. I hold a Masters degrees in Spatial Planning and have over 20 years' experience working for Local Authorities in various roles relating to development management.

1.4 The evidence which I have prepared and provide in this proof of evidence [PoE] for this Inquiry is true, and has been prepared and is given in accordance with the guidance of the Royal Town Planning Institute institution. I confirm that the opinions expressed are my true and professional opinions.

Scope of evidence

1.5 The Council's Regulatory Board on 29th July 2026 resolved to object to the application as submitted and raise very strong concerns about the following:

Firstly the Borough Council as Local Planning Authority is extremely concerned about the level of redaction of details on the submitted drawings and supporting documents which make a thorough assessment of the proposals very challenging and is contrary to the presumption in favour of transparency and openness in the planning process.

The Council has very strong concerns, given the height and scale necessary to achieve the quantum of development proposed in the application, about the harmful impact on the setting of a number of adjacent designated heritage assets, in particular the Haslar Barracks Conservation Area and the Listed Buildings and Park at the former Royal Hospital Haslar.

The Council has very strong concerns about the unknown assessment of cumulative traffic and reliance on an unconfirmed future bus service in the context of a constrained access to the site located on a peninsula and heavily redacted transport information.

The Council is very concerned about the potential impact on protected species, including bats and reptiles, especially as the survey work undertaken is considered to be out of date and deficient.

The Council is concerned that the Flood Risk Assessment submitted with the application is not adequate and reminds the decision maker that they will need to be satisfied that the development proposals would not be at risk of flooding and would not give rise to an increase in flood risk elsewhere.

1.6 In regard to the final point the Council is aware that an amended Flood Risk Assessment has been provided to the Environment Agency such that they have withdrawn their objection and recommendation that the applicant be refused. In light of this the Council does not intended to present evidence to the Inquiry in relation to flooding.

1.7 In the pre-Inquiry note of 6th October 2026, the Inspectorate set out that the main issues to be considered at the Inquiry will be:

1) 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.

2) 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.

3) The effect of the development on the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers, with particular regard to outlook, privacy, noise, lighting, traffic and construction activity.

4) Whether the proposed access arrangements, local highway network, parking provision and emergency access arrangements would satisfactorily accommodate the development.

5) Whether the development would be safe and acceptable having regard to flood risk, coastal change, climate-change resilience and emergency evacuation arrangements

6) The effect of the development on ecology, biodiversity, protected species and habitats, the coastal environment and public access to the coast.

7) Whether sufficient information has been provided to enable the relevant planning effects of the development to be properly assessed.

1.8 This PoE is structured as follows:

- Section 2, by way of background, provides a description of the Site and surrounding area together with details of the planning history of the Site

- Section 3 sets out detail of the Application
- Section 4 identifies the planning policy framework for the Inquiry, including national, regional and local guidance, and other material considerations
- Section 5 outlines the Council's position in relation to Application
- Section 6 provides a conclusion and my opinion in relation to the planning balance

1.9 Alongside the production of evidence, the Applicant and the Council are in the process of agreeing a Statement of Common Ground.

1.10 I have visited the Site on several occasions and am familiar with the general area.

1.11 A list of suggested planning conditions to be imposed should the Application be permitted were provided with the Council's consultation response.

2. Site Description and Planning History

Site Identification and Description

2.1 The Site of the existing Haslar Immigration Removal Centre (IRC) is located towards the southern edge of Borough on the southern side of Fort Road. The wider site is bound to the north by residential properties on both sides of Fort Road. To the north, beyond Dolphin Way, is the former Royal Hospital Haslar which is currently being redeveloped to provide a residential led mixed use development of the former Naval Hospital site. To the south of the Site is The Solent and the south-western approach to Portsmouth Harbour. To the west of the site is Fort Monckton, home to No 1 Military Training Establishment.

2.2 The site (which extends to approximately 4.5 hectares) comprises the enclosed area of open space to the south-west of the existing IRC buildings (that form the Haslar Barracks Conservation Area) together with the former Council owned car park and land between the IRC and Fort Monckton. The application site also includes Dolphin Way and an access route through the existing IRC complex.

2.3 The majority of the application site is located within the urban area boundary. The area of the site comprising the former Council owned car park at Fort Road is located outside of the urban area boundary.

2.4 The site is enclosed by 5.2 metre high security fencing, which along part of the northern boundary runs to the rear of number 13 to 33 (odds) Fort Road. The route of the King Charles III England Coastal Path crosses the car park at the south-western part of the site from Fort Road and runs seaward of the site and then returns along Dolphin Way to re-join Fort Road opposite Friary Close.

2.5 The site is mainly laid to grass with the main part of the site being identified as a Core Area (G63) used by overwintering birds in the Solent Waders and Brent Geese Strategy. The site lies adjacent to the Solent & Dorset Coast SPA, and in close

proximity to the Portsmouth Harbour SPA and Ramsar site, the Solent Maritime SAC and the Solent & Southampton Water Ramsar site. The site is also close to several Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs): Monkton Sports Field, Gosport Golf Course, Haslar Hospital, Haslar RN Cemetery, The Piggeries (Clayhall Road).

2.6 The wider site was originally built as an army barracks in 1802, but converted to an army hospital in 1864, before becoming the home of the Royal Engineers in 1892. The site was then occupied by the Royal Army Ordinance Corps before it changed to a Youth Offenders' Centre in the 1950s and finally became an Immigration Removal Centre. The former army barracks was designated by GBC as a Conservation Area in 2018.

2.7 The main part of the site lies adjacent to the Haslar Barracks Conservation Area with the route through the existing complex of buildings being within the Conservation Area. The site is also immediately adjacent to the Stokes Bay Conservation Area to the west and the Haslar Peninsula Conservation Area to the north-east. The site is also located close to a number of designated heritage assets including Fort Monckton to the west which includes a Scheduled Monument as well as Grade II* and Grade II Listed Buildings. To the north-west of the site is the former Royal Hospital Haslar which includes a number of Grade II* and Grade II Listed Buildings well as being a Registered Historic Park (Grade II).

2.8 A significant proportion of the site is located in Flood Zone 2 and 3 at present day according to the national flood map for planning. The extent of Flood Zone 2 and 3 is predicted to increase by 2122 as shown in the Council's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment.

Planning History

2.9 Relevant aspects of the Site's planning history are set out below

76/16524/GD - (C.80/71) - er. new security fence and wall - raise no objection 13.02.1976

77/16525/GD - (C.80/71) - er. extensions to workshop and stores - raise no objection 21.03.1977

83/16526/GD - (C.7/77) - er. new security fence and wall - raise no objection 26.01.1983

85/16528/GD - (C.7/77) - 5.2 metre boundary wall (frontage onto Dolphin Way.) - raise no objection 06.09.1985

83/16527/GD - (C.7/77) - 17 feet (in height) security fence - raise no objection 13.07.1983

85/16528/GD - (C.7/77) - 5.2 metre boundary wall (frontage onto Dolphin Way) - raise no objection 06.09.1985

93/00039/GVT - C.18/84 Consultation - Outline - erection of single storey office/health care building - raise no objection 04.10.1993

93/00040/GVT - C.18/84 Consultation - erection of single storey office/healthcare building - raise no objection 18.10.1993

07/00447/FULL - siting of freestanding 1.8 metre diameter satellite dish (max. height 4.2 metres) - permitted 31.08.2007

09/00044/FULL - replacement roofing works to dormitories A & H and link block - permitted 02.04.2009

09/00404/FULL - erection of precast concrete panel boundary wall in place of existing blockwork boundary wall - permitted 28.01.2010

11/00017/FULL - refurbishment of storage building to form visitor waiting room, installation of door in place of window, replacement window and 2no replacement doors - permitted 07.04.2011

11/00370/FULL - erection of modular activities building with 16no. solar panels and link to existing building and installation of 16no. solar panels on 1no. existing building - permitted 14.10.2011

23/00346/FULL - demolition of some ancillary buildings and structures - permitted 06.03.2024

24/00016/P14JPA - GPDO Part 14 application - installation of solar panels - prior approval not required 21.03.2024

24/00349/FULL - demolition of store building - permitted 10.12.2024

24/00352/DEMO - GPDO Part 11 Notification - demolition of boiler house - Prior approval granted 10.12.2024

24/00382/FULL - erection of three single storey buildings, housing generators and electrical plant and sub station, together with the creation of gated vehicular access, flood barrier, replacement and additional internal fencing and associated infrastructure - permitted 05.06.2025

25/00199/FULL - installation of like for like replacement fencing, gates and timber fence panels - permitted 01.10.2025

25/00264/NMA - amendment to planning permission 24/00382/FULL for removal of timber fence top front of the sub station, change to substation enclosure to brick work structure with separate GRP structure and change to position of flood wall - approved 08.10.2025

3 The Application

3.1 The Application was accepted by the Planning inspectorate, on behalf of the Secretary of State on 3 July 2026.

3.2 The proposal the subject of the Inquiry seeks Outline planning permission with all matters reserved except access, for the expansion of the IRC comprising the erection of new accommodation blocks and ancillary supporting accommodation, the conversion and expansion of existing site infrastructure including internal roads, the demolition of existing structures, minor amendment to coastal path to accommodate the creation of additional car parking, landscaping and associated site infrastructure.

3.3 The main access to the site would be via Dolphin Way and through the existing gatehouse arrangement. The existing vehicular access to the car park at the western end of the site would be retained to facilitate the use of this part of the site as a car park for staff and visitors. The existing dropped kerb access adjacent to no 13 Fort Road is indicated to be retained as an emergency access point only (which is understood to be how it was used when the site was previously in use).

3.4 The documents supporting the Application indicate that the proposed phase 2 expansion seeks to deliver capacity for up to 470 additional detainees resulting in a total capacity of the IRC of 600 persons. Whilst the submitted drawings are indicative, the Planning Statement sets out that the quantum of floorspace for which Outline planning permission is sought is 3,258 sq. metres (which compares to 5,300 square metres for the Phase 1 element which includes a range of facilities to serve phase 2 (e.g. health, administration and visitor)).

3.5 The Planning Statement also sets out height parameters of up to 12 metres (three storeys) for the accommodation blocks with lower heights of 7 and 8 metres for other buildings.

3.6 Notwithstanding the Outline nature of the Application, indicative plans have been provided indicating how the quantum of development needed to expand the capacity to 600 detainees could be provided. The indicative plans show six new buildings

located adjacent to the existing buildings on the land furthest from the residential properties backing onto the site. These would be in the form of four three-storey accommodation blocks and two smaller buildings described as single storey but appear to be of two-story scale. The smaller buildings would providing dining facilities and a ‘Care and Separation Unit’.

3.7 The plans also show the land between the existing IRC complex and Fort Monckton to be used to provide a 259 space car park to serve the expanded IRC. The plans also show an additional 20 spaces for public use on land to be leased to the Council for this purpose.

4 Planning Policy Context

Introduction

4.1 The Planning Application must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise: s38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004].

4.2 S72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 [1990 PLBCAA] places a statutory duty on LPAs in considering planning applications in conservation areas: “special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of” such areas.

The Development Plan

4.3 The Development Plan comprises the Gosport Borough Local Plan, 2011 – 2029 which was adopted in October 2015 together with the emerging Gosport Borough Local Plan 2042 which has been the subject of Regulation 19 consultation and is anticipated to be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for Examination prior to the opening of the Inquiry.

4.4 The relevant policies within the Gosport Borough Local Plan, 2011 – 2029 are:

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 The relevant policies within the Gosport Borough Local Plan, 2042 are:

D1 Adaptation and Mitigation to Climate Change
D2 Development Strategy
D4 Green Infrastructure Network
D5 Internationally and Nationally Important Sites and the Local Ecological Network
D6 Gosport Strategic Open Spaces
D7 Flood Risk and Coastal Erosion
D8 Healthy Communities
D9 Design
D10 Historic Environment
D11 Securing Infrastructure
D12 Sustainable Travel
RA6 Royal Haslar Hospital
A6 Safeguarded Land for Transport Improvements
E2 Skills
E5 Promoting a Digital Peninsula
DE1 Sustainable Construction
DE3 Layout of Sites and Parking
DE4 Designated Heritage Assets
DE5 Conservation Areas
DE6 Locally Important Heritage Assets
C6 Community, Cultural, Health, Sports and Leisure Facilities
LE1 Open Space
LE4 Access to the Coast and Countryside
LE5 Locally Designated Nature Conservation Sites
LE6 Protecting Species and Other Features of Nature Conservation Importance
LE7 Protecting and Enhancing Tree, Woodland and Hedge Coverage
LE8 Securing Measurable Biodiversity Net Gain
LE9 Pollution Control
LE10 Contaminated and Unstable Land and Unexploded Ordnance
LE11 Hazardous Substances
LE12 Safeguarding Zones
LE13 Water Resources
LE14 Waste and Material Resources

Other Material Considerations

National Planning Policy Framework and Guidance

4.6 The National Planning Policy Framework [NPPF] (2026) is a material consideration in the determination of the Applications. The following decision making policies in the NPPF are relevant in relation to the main issues in this case:

- S3: Presumption in favour of sustainable development
- S4: Principle of development within settlements
- S5: Principle of development outside settlements
- CC2: Mitigation of climate change
- CC3: Adaptation to climate change
- M6: Safeguarding mineral resources and infrastructure through decision-making
- L2: Making effective use of land
- L3: Achieving appropriate densities
- DP3: Key principles for well-designed places
- TR3: Locating development in sustainable locations
- TR4: Street design, access and parking
- TR6: Assessing transport impacts
- TR8: Public rights of way
- P2: Ground conditions
- P3: Living conditions and pollution
- P5: Maintaining public safety and security
- F4: Assessing flood risk for decision-making
- F5: The sequential test
- F6: Development in areas at risk of flooding from rivers or the sea
- F7: Ensuring development is safe from flooding
- F8: Sustainable drainage systems and watercourses
- N2: Improving the natural environment
- N5: Maintaining the character of the coast
- N6: Areas of particular importance for biodiversity and geodiversity
- HE4: Securing the conservation of heritage assets
- HE5: Assessing effects on heritage assets
- HE6: Proposals affecting designated heritage assets
- HE9: Conservation areas

4.7 National Planning Practice Guidance [NPPG] and the National Design Guide [NDG] (2021) are also relevant.

4.8 The Council is in the process of reviewing its Local Plan and a Regulation 19 version was the subject of public consultation between 13 September and 28 October 2024. Given its current status, the daft Local Plan and its draft policies should be given no weight in the determination of the Applications.

5 The Council's Position in relation to the Application

5.1 This section of my PoE sets out the Council's position in relation to the Application as proposed and the issues raised in its objection. It will deal with matters relating to the principle of development, impact on amenity, parking and other matters that could be dealt with through planning conditions in the event that the scheme was found acceptable. Issues relating to Heritage impacts will be addressed in the PoE of the Council's Principal Conservation & Design Officer.

Principle of Development

5.2 As set out in Policy LP1: Sustainable Development, the GBLP takes a positive approach in generally supporting the presumption in favour of development in accordance with the policies of the NPPF subject to detailed local policy considerations which are set out in this report.

5.3 Policy LP3: Spatial Strategy, Point 2 states that development proposals will be permitted within the urban area (as defined on the Policies Map) provided that it accords with Policy LP10: Design and other policies in the Local Plan.

5.4 The majority of the application site is located within the urban area boundary. The area of the site comprising the former Council owned car park at Fort Road is located outside of the urban area boundary. The proposal utilises this existing car park for continued parking provision to serve the wider site. Policy LP3, Point 9 states:

'9. Areas outside of the urban area will be safeguarded from development unless they are for appropriate recreational uses or development essential to the operational requirements of public and other essential services. Such exceptions will need to accord with Policy LP10: Design.'

5.5 Policy D2 of the emerging GBLP 2042 continues to define an urban area boundary, albeit a review of the boundary was undertaken and several changes made within the Borough. As a result, the Fort Road car park is now included within the urban area,

and therefore when the emerging Local Plan is adopted, there would be a presumption in favour of development across the entire application site. The Council published an Urban Area Boundary Background Paper in February 2026 which sets out the rationale for this change:

'The Fort Road Car Park has now been shown within the urban area boundary to provide greater flexibility of uses associated with adjacent Haslar Immigration Removal Centre. It is recognised that the site will need to remain open in character due to a covenant on the land associated with the military use to the west and also to reflect that the King Charles III England Coast Path runs through the site.'

5.6 While part of the site is currently located outside of the adopted urban area boundary, its use as a car park to support the development could be considered essential to the operational requirements of a public service (as set out in LP3, Point 9) and is therefore considered appropriate in principle in this instance. In addition, the emerging policy proposes to include the entire site within the urban area.

5.7 Policy S4 of the NPPF makes reference to adverse effects including a substantial impact on allocations within the development plan. While the Site itself is not within an identified Regeneration Area, it is adjacent the Haslar Peninsula Regeneration Area. Policy LP6 of the GBLP identifies the Blockhouse site and Royal Haslar Hospital for regeneration for a mix of uses which conserve and enhance the distinctive built heritage and setting of the Haslar Peninsula. The emerging Local Plan continues to identify the Haslar Peninsula as one of five Regeneration Areas in the Borough which are key sites available to meet development needs. Policies RA3-RA7a set out further detail. Of key relevance to this application is the Council's ambitions to see the continued redevelopment of Royal Haslar Hospital (adjacent the IRC site) and heritage-led mixed-use regeneration of the Blockhouse site when released by the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO). The regeneration of both these sites as a significant new waterfront neighbourhood is one of the key objectives of the Council and has the potential to be transformative for Gosport, similarly the earlier residential allocation at the Site would also have contributed to this wider vision. The Council has serious concerns that the proposed scale of the IRC proposals has the significant potential to detract from these wider regeneration objectives and the potential delivery of the key sites within the Haslar Peninsula Regeneration Area.

5.8 Notwithstanding the above, 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 are considered acceptable in principle.

Heritage & Design

5.9 Evidence relating to the impact of the Application proposals on the Haslar Barracks Conservation Area and other nearby designated heritage assets is presented in the PoE of Richard Whittington.

Archaeology

5.10 The application is supported by comprehensive Desk-Based Assessment which provides a clear and proportionate baseline for the archaeological potential of the site and assesses that there is a potential for remains relating to defensive activities and troop activities from the Napoleonic Wars, World War 1 and World War 2.

5.11 The report also states that the existing IRC to the north has been the subject of an archaeological watching brief which has not revealed any significant archaeological remains and has confirmed Ground Investigation results, that also extend across the application site, which show that the site is overlain by significant deposits of made ground of modern date and that this has greatly reduced the potential for significant archaeological remains to be present, particularly within those parts of the site which would be subject to major new ground disturbance.

5.12 Given the reduced potential for archaeological remains to survive, the report recommends that a continuation of the mitigation scheme that was designed for the existing IRC site would be appropriate. This approach is considered to represent an appropriate and proportionate response to below ground archaeology. This could be secured through the imposition of a suitably worded planning condition to ensure compliance with Policy LP13 of the Local Plan.

Design

5.13 Chapter 14 of the NPPF sets out policies with the objectives of promoting high quality, healthy, inclusive and sustainable places, through setting clear expectations about design outcomes and the use of relevant tools and processes. Policy DP3, paragraph 1 states that development proposals should respond to their context (the history, character and features of their site and its setting), so that they integrate with and enhance their surroundings; such as through the arrangement of development plots and buildings, the use of materials and architectural features, and the restoration, reuse and integration of heritage assets. Policy DP3, paragraph 2 sets out principles to create well-designed places. Policy DP3, paragraph 3 states that development proposals should be refused if, without clear justification, they conflict with paragraph 1 of Policy DP3 or relevant aspects of the principles in paragraph 2, or with any explicit design standards set out in the development plan (including those in locally specific policies, guides, codes or masterplans). Substantial weight should be given to compliance with relevant development plan policies when assessing the design quality of proposals.

5.14 Policy LP10: Design sets out the Council's overall approach to securing high quality design not only in terms of built form but also through achieving a high quality, accessible environment that is well integrated with existing patterns of development. The Council's Design SPD is linked to Policy LP10 and provides guidance on the Council's expectations and aspirations for the design of development. Policy D9: Design of the emerging GBLP 2042 continues to set out the Council's expectation that development should be of a high standard and contribute towards sustainable development and local distinctiveness including by inter alia addressing context and carefully considering the surrounding context, heritage and vernacular architecture and seeking to deliver enhancements.

5.15 While it is recognised that detailed design is a reserved matter in this application and therefore there is still opportunity for significant improvement to be made through revised designs, it is considered that the current indicative proposals are not well designed in terms of scale, massing and detailing, nor do they have any regard to their setting. As such the proposals do not demonstrate that the quantum of development can be accommodated in a visually acceptable way. It is clear that this proposal

detracts from its location and is clearly unable to demonstrate that it is well designed as expected by the Government's NPPF, but more than this the proposal is of poor design and contrary to both national and local planning policies. Paragraph 1 of Policy DP3 in the NPPF refers to buildings responding to their historic context to integrate and enhance their surrounding which the indicative proposals fail to do in any meaningful way.

5.16 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, including the barrack blocks forming the historic Haslar Barracks and the former cooperage buildings at Royal Clarence Yard. Given the sensitive context and presence of heritage assets, it is considered unacceptable that the scheme is stark and not in keeping with the considered design of many nearby heritage assets, including those in the adjacent Haslar Barracks Conservation Area.

Impact on Residential Amenity

5.17 The closest existing residential properties to the site are those on the eastern side of Fort Road (numbers 13 to 33 inclusive) whose rear gardens back into it. Properties on the western side of Fort Road face the site across the carriageway of Fort Road. The undeveloped part of the site that forms the bulk of the Phase 2 measures in excess of 200m metres wide (north to south) and at least 100 metres deep (east to west). Given these dimensions it is considered 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 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 experiences a loss of outlook from rear windows, however, these are private views and are across third party land and this is not protected by planning policy.

5.18 Given the proximity of the site to residential properties it is essential that the impact of any construction works (in the event planning permission were to be granted) is managed and mitigated through the approval and implementation of a Construction and Traffic Management Plan.

Ecology

Brent Geese

5.19 The application is accompanied by a shadow Habitats Regulations Assessment and Appropriate Assessment which deals with the loss of the site as an identified core site used by overwintering birds. The provision of a geese reserve on land out outside the Borough has been agreed by Natural England in principle. Should the Inspector, as Competent Authority under the Habitats Regulations, be satisfied that this matter has been properly considered and appropriate mitigation secured then the LPA would make no additional comments in regard to this matter.

Nutrient Neutrality

5.20 It is noted that a Nutrient Neutrality Assessment with budget calculator accompanies the application which identified a net TN load of 212.05kg TN/year which is proposed to be mitigated through nutrient credits purchased from the Knowle Sewage Treatment works wetland scheme. Should the Inspector, as Competent Authority under the Habitats Regulations, be satisfied that this matter has been properly considered and appropriate mitigation secured then the LPA would make no additional comments in regard to this matter.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

5.21 The application is supported by a 'BNG Design Stage Report' which is considered acceptable by the LPA. Given the Outline nature of the application, the requirements of the statutory bio-diversity net gain condition would ensure that the legal duty to deliver BNG would be met.

5.22 In addition to the national BNG requirement, the proposal should address Policy LP41: Green Infrastructure which seeks to maintain and enhance the Borough's Green Infrastructure Network through the provision of on-site infrastructure and where appropriate contributions towards off-site provision. Point 1b seeks to secure a net gain in biodiversity; green infrastructure measures should contribute to a net gain in

biodiversity on the site. 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.

Protected Species

5.23 The application is also supported by an Ecological Impact Assessment which was reviewed by the Council's Ecologist who raised concerns about the validity of some of the surveys that were carried out in 2023, in partial with regard to reptiles.

5.24 The proposed reptile mitigation is based on sensitive habitat clearance (i.e. reptiles moving to a safe refuge location outside of the working area). However, there appears to be insufficient habitat retained for the reptile population on site, nor any habitat that could be managed in a sensitive way for reptiles due to their anticipated use. Therefore, it was not clear where the existing population could be relocated to. Nevertheless, the Council considers that there is the potential for an alternative mitigation strategy to be put in place to ensure that the proposals will not have an adverse impact on the reptile population on site. This could be secured through the imposition of a suitably worded planning condition.

5.25 Due to the loss of the majority of habitats on site and introduction of additional lighting, the Council's Ecologist raised concern that no bat activity surveys have been carried out to date. It remains unclear how a mitigation strategy could be designed for foraging and commuting bats (e.g. soft landscaping plans and a sensitive lighting strategy) in the absence of any survey work. The retention of the hedge along part of the southern boundary alone, as stated in the submitted report, is not considered acceptable justification for lack of any survey work whilst the removal of the grassland will limit the ability to provide dark corridors. Incidental observations during emergence surveys covering buildings in a different part of the site, particularly given that these surveys are 3 years old, are not acceptable and do not provide the minimum information required into the level of bat usage and species composition on site. Given the lack of any survey work and a mitigation strategy (e.g. final lighting plan and soft landscaping

plans), the Council is remains concerned that the proposals have the potential to have an adverse impact on the local bat population

5.26 Notwithstanding the foregoing concerns, the LPA would make no additional comments in regard to this matter.

Highways & Parking

5.27 Hampshire County Council are the Local Highway Authority (LHA) and have separately provided comments relating to the impact of the application proposals on the local highway network and be compatible with the objectives of the Local Transport Plan 4. The LHA have also provided comments in relation to highway safety, access (and an assessment of on-street parking restrictions), and the suitability of the Travel Plan.

5.28 The proposed development would increase the number of bed-spaces at the site from 130 (“existing” IRC, opening 2027) by 470 bed to a total of 600 beds, with a corresponding increase in staff from 148 to 265 (414 in total), giving rise to a total of 774 average daily vehicle movements.

5.29 Access to the new car park is to be as current arrangements from Military Road (which is a short access road taking access from Fort Road. The new car park will increase parking availability from 85-93 spaces (including 35-43 spaces on Dolphin Way) to 295-302 spaces (including 35-43 spaces on Dolphin Way).

5.30 Table 4-14 on page 18 of the TA sets out staffing levels on site across a day. It is acknowledged that at the peak shift change over time (between 07:00 and 07:30) there will be over 350 staff on site. The submitted plans show a maximum parking capacity of 302 in the car park adjacent to Fort Monckton (259) and on Dolphin Way (43). At the maximum shift change time the TA predicts a maximum demand for 295 car parking spaces.

5.31 Whilst the TA makes reference to 20% of staff travelling to work by modes other than the private car there is no evidence to support the provision of 80% peak car parking in this location at the end of a peninsula and given its acknowledged relatively poor

accessibility to public transport. Based on the prediction of 20% of staff arriving by non-car modes, during the ‘day shift’ there would appear to be sufficient capacity to cater for a level of visitor parking in addition to the staff working on the site.

5.32 For the new car park a layout plan is provided – whilst the spaces appear to be provided at 2.5m wide, end spaces do not appear to comply with the adopted Parking SPD and should be increased in width to 2.8m. The plans appears to make adequate provision for disabled parking and EV charging , however, it is not clear if enabling infrastructure is included to allow for increased demand for EV charging in the future.

5.33 The Planning Statement details 26 spaces near new car park and 18 spaces close to the Dolphin Way entrance). The provision of cycle parking and associated facilities (e.g. showers and lockers) would be provided at a level and to a standard (secure, covered, easily accessible and convenient to use) that would promote cycling as an attractive alternative to driving to the site. These facilities should be conveniently located as well as being secure and weatherproof as set out in the adopted Parking SPD.

5.34 The submitted Transport Assessment demonstrates a level of car parking provision that would meet peak demand with next to no spare capacity if 20% of the staff travelled to work using an alternative to the private car. Whilst the Highway Authority are best placed to comment on the acceptability, or otherwise, of the submitted Travel Plan, it is critical to ensure that the stated level of travel to work by alternative modes of transport to the private car is delivered. If this were not the case, the lack of any additional capacity would be likely to generate demand for on-street parking along Fort Road to the potential detriment of the amenities of the occupiers of those properties. Subject to a 20% level of staff travelled to work using an alternative to the private car being delivered, the application demonstrates that the proposed level of parking being proposed would meet the likely peak demand for car parking at the wider site once fully operational as required by Policy LP23 of the Local Plan.

Rights of Way

5.35 The application makes reference to the ‘realignment and improvements to the England Coastal Path through the site’. This is likely to need the approval of Hampshire County Council as Rights of Way Authority and Natural England as the responsible body for the England Coastal Path.

5.36 Given that the route of the Solent Way follows Fort Road landward of the site whereas the England Coastal Path runs across the car park, seaward of the site and returns along Dolphin Way, there appears to be an opportunity to enhance public routes around the site, especially with regard to improving connectivity through to the former Royal Hospital Haslar where public access through that site and to the Solent frontage has been secured and provided.

Flooding

5.37 The application is accompanied by a Flood Risk Assessment, Coastal Modelling Report, and Flood Evacuation Management Plan that have been updated following an objection from the Environment Agency that has now been withdrawn. These documents confirm that the proposals relate to a more vulnerable use which is located in Flood Zone 3 therefore requires the Exception test to be passed. The FRA also identifies the need for mitigation measures including raised floor levels of up to 1.27 metres above current ground levels.

5.38 Policy F8 of the NPPF requires sustainable drainage systems to be incorporated into development and sets out that they should be designed in accordance with National Standards for Sustainable Drainage Systems, have maintenance arrangements in place, and take account of advice from the Lead Local Flood Authority, unless there is clear evidence that this would be inappropriate. Point 4 of Policy LP45 states that all new development must ensure there will be no net increase in surface water run-off. It is noted that surface water flooding has been considered within the FRA and it is proposed to use soakaways and permeable paving.

5.39 Given the position of the Environment Agency being satisfied that the proposed development could be operated with minimal risk from flooding, would not increase flood risk elsewhere and is compliant with the requirements of national policy and

guidance relating to flooding, the LPA would make no additional comments in regard to this matter.

Other Matters

Pollution

5.40 The application is accompanied by an indicative Lighting Assessment, a Noise Assessment and an Air Quality Assessment. The conclusions of each document that the proposals should not result in harmful impacts are agreed subject to the relevant mitigation measures being secured through the imposition of suitably worded planning conditions.

Contamination

5.41 The Phase 1 Ground Investigation Desk Study concludes that “there is high risk to site users from elevated lead concentrations resulting from historical activity on the site”. However a remediation strategy and subsequent verification can be secured through the imposition of suitably worded planning conditions.

Employment & Skills

5.42 The Planning Statement confirms that “it is anticipated that the construction phase will create 491 additional construction jobs” and that “this employment boost has the potential to provide opportunity to local people who are currently unemployed or with poor labour market contributions, as well as through apprenticeship opportunities providing wider social value in the area”. The Planning Statement also states that “a further 364 net additional jobs are anticipated as a result of the construction of the proposed development”

5.43 In regard to the future operation of an expanded IRC the Planning Statement advises that “it is anticipated approximately 265 net additional jobs could be generated across the operational phase [when] the development is completed” and that “this employment

level has the potential to provide opportunity to local people who are currently unemployed or with poor labour market contributions".

5.44 Policy LP17 of the Local Plan relates to skills with the development exceeding the thresholds for measures to secure local employment and training relating to both the construction and operational phases of the development. The Planning Statement confirms that the applicant is agreeable to providing opportunities for local employment and training as part of the development. This can be secured through the imposition of a suitably worded planning condition.

5.45 Overall the development has the potential to create employment opportunities for local people both during the construction of phase and it future operation should it be permitted and built out.

6 Conclusion and the planning balance

6.1 The Council's Regulatory Board accepted that whilst the proposed expansion of the IRC may be considered acceptable in principle, for the reasons set out in paragraph 1.5 and expanded upon in Section 5 of this PoE, they raised objection in regard to a number of material issues where the available information does not provide sufficient detail for a properly informed planning judgement to be made.

6.2 Notwithstanding the indicative character of some of the drawings and the Outline nature of the application, the scale and siting of the indicative proposals give rise to significant concerns about the harmful impact of the proposals on the Haslar Barracks Conservation Area and the setting of the designated historic assets at the former Royal Hospital Haslar. These are set out in the Proof of Evidence of Richard Whittington.

6.3 The scale of the phase 2 site is considered capable of accommodating the quantum of development proposed in a way that would safeguard the residential amenities of the occupiers of neighbouring properties and not give rise to harm to their living conditions.

6.4 The proposals have the potential to adversely affect protected species known to use the site. Whilst mitigation measures have been set out in the supporting documents in relation to some of these, in other instances the survey and other work undertaken are not considered appropriate to enable a robust judgment to be made as to the potential impact or the effectiveness of proposed mitigation.

6.5 The likely level of traffic generated by the expansion of the IRC has the potential to affect the function of the local road network such that it could have an impact on the capacity of junctions in the wider area. Ultimately, however, this is a matter for Hampshire County Council as Local Highway Authority.

6.6 The proposal has the potential to deliver demonstrable local benefit through the creation of employment and training opportunities for residents of the Borough who are currently out of work or who currently commute outside of the Borough for work.

6.7 Whilst the proposals may deliver other broader potential benefits such as an increased immigration detention capacity, these will have a more limited local benefit to the Borough. These wider benefits must be considered against the potential impact of the development on the delivery of key regeneration sites elsewhere on the Haslar peninsula which would deliver much greater benefit to the Borough through the creation of much needed homes, employment opportunities and the opening up of former military sites with substantial historic interest.

6.8 Planning conditions should be imposed, in the event that the Application be permitted, to ensure that a number of material planning issues can be addressed and impacts mitigated. These will be discussed with the Applicant and included with the Statement of Common Ground, and will be the subject of a roundtable discussion at the Inquiry.

6.9 Planning obligations in the form of a legal agreement are anticipated to be provided in accordance with the Inquiry timetable, to secure matters raised in the comments of the Local Highway Authority. These too will be the subject of a roundtable discussion at the Inquiry.

6.10 Overall the potential public benefits of the Application proposals to the Borough are not considered to outweigh the collective potential harm to the Conservation Area, the delivery of key regeneration sites within the Haslar peninsula and to ecological interests in the form of protected species.