

West Berkshire Local Plan Review 2022-2039 (LPR) Examination

West Berkshire Council response to

IN14 Action Point AP13

Denison Barracks and RAF Welford

The Council's response to PQ47 said it was not necessary to modify the Plan to include a specific policy relating to the operational sites at Denison Barracks and RAF Welford because policies SP1, SP2, DM1 and DM35 would apply.

However, Defence Infrastructure Organisation's written statement for matter 2 [WS3/10] suggests that this would not be effective or consistent with NPPF as those policies would allow development close to the operational sites in certain circumstances without any consideration of the potential impact on operations. Furthermore, the sites are in the countryside and those policies are not directly relevant to defence-related development which may be needed at those sites (whereas DM33 specifically supports development that sustains the functions of the AWEs). They suggest an additional policy in the Plan (along with additional reasoned justification):

- a) Development within Denison Barracks and RAF Welford will be supported where it directly sustains the functioning of these defence establishments.
- b) Non-defence related development in the areas around a defence site will not be supported where it would adversely affect defence related operation or capability.

AP13. Council to prepare a main modification to the Plan to include a policy relating to Denison Barracks and RAF Welford (along with appropriate reasoned justification), having regard to the suggestion from the Defence Infrastructure Organisation.

Council response

In response to AP13 and in collaboration with the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) the Council propose the following policy on RAF Welford and Denison Barracks.

It is proposed to include the safeguarding zones for RAF Welford, as well as the site boundary for both RAF Welford and Denison Barracks on the Policies Map.

Policy DMXX: RAF Welford and Denison Barracks

Development within the site boundary of RAF Welford and/or Denison Barracks will be supported where it directly sustains the functioning of these defence establishments.

Development in the areas around RAF Welford and/or Denison Barracks will not be supported where it would adversely affect the defence related operation or capability of these sites and/or the safety and wellbeing of those within the relevant statutory safeguarding zones.

Supporting text

RAF Welford and Denison Barracks provide important outputs that support national defence activities. The NPPF outlines that planning policies and decisions should recognise and support development required for operational defence and security purposes.

National policy also seeks to ensure that operational sites are not affected adversely by the impact of other development proposed in the area and that existing businesses and facilities should not have unreasonable restrictions placed on them as a result of development permitted after they were established.

RAF Welford is safeguarded due to its capacity as a military explosive storage area and as such it has statutory safeguarding zones to ensure that development and land uses will be compatible with MOD capability. The inner and outer safeguarding zones¹ are defined on the Policies Map and within the safeguarded area of RAF Welford the MOD is a statutory consultee under the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (safeguarded aerodromes, technical sites and military explosives storage areas) Direction 2022 (DfT/ODPM Circular 01/2003).

The MOD will object to development proposals which support people living, working, or congregating within the inner safeguarding zone of RAF Welford. In principle, the MOD does not object to land in the outer safeguarding zone being developed for residential, commercial and/or industrial land use purposes. However, within this zone, where applicable, requirements relating to the siting, design and construction of buildings, or changes to land use may apply.

Whilst Denison Barracks in Hermitage does not have safeguarding zones around the site, consideration should be given to the impact of development proposals on the operation and capability of the site as a defence establishment and the local planning authority will consult with Denison Barracks and/or MOD as appropriate.

¹ The extent of the safeguarding zones shown on the Policies Map could change before the Plan is updated or superseded. Policy DMXX will be applied to the latest version of the RAF Welford safeguarding zones as determined by the MOD.