

## Planning, Transport and Development Overview & Scrutiny Committee 21 April 2015

### Update Report: Invicta Barracks

1. Invicta Barracks has been identified as one of three 'broad locations' for further housing growth in the draft Local Plan (Regulation 18). These are locations which will deliver housing in the latter years of the Plan (2026 onwards).
2. Various component parts of the Reg. 18 plan have been amended as a result of the last consultation and considered through a series of Overview and Scrutiny and Cabinet meetings. After the elections in May further reports will be presented to Members, including for Policy H3 (Broad Locations).
3. The Barracks site is an inherently sustainable brownfield site within the built up area of the town and within striking distance of the town centre. The barracks site is still in active use and the MoD has no immediate plans for its disposal. Officers had meetings with one of the MoD's Senior Estates Surveyor in January/February 2014. The site has been identified as a 'retained' site under the latest MoD estates review (2013). Core sites are those which are definitely required in the long term whilst a retained site is needed for the foreseeable future (in the order of 10 years). Beyond this timeframe, the need for it is unconfirmed. The MoD may choose to retain it, use it for another MoD purpose or declare it as surplus to dispose of it for an alternative use. Meanwhile the MOD has indicated that it supports the identification of the site for inclusion in the Local Plan.
4. As there is some realistic prospect of the site becoming available in the longer term, the wording in the draft plan was agreed with the MoD as follows:

*Invicta Park Barracks covers a substantial area (41 ha) to the north of the town centre. It comprises a range of military buildings, including army accommodation, set within expansive parkland. The site is currently home to the 36 Engineer Regiment. The MoD has categorised the site as a 'retained' site in its most recent estates review (2013); there are no immediate plans to vacate this site.*

*The MoD keeps its property portfolio under regular review. It has been confirmed that, in the longer term, there could be some prospect that the site may be declared surplus and so become available for alternative uses.*

*In recognition of this potential, the Local Plan identifies Invicta Park Barracks as a broad location for future housing growth for towards the end of the Local Plan period (post 2026). The site has the potential to deliver in the order of 1,300 new homes.*

5. The site is already substantially developed. Existing housing on the site comprises married quarters and officer's quarters. This housing is leased to Annington Homes on a 999 year lease (this is the case across the MoD estate). Elsewhere MoD estates and Annington Homes have come together in a joint venture to bring sites forward comprehensively. The MoD has also had experience of working in partnership with major developers to bring sites forward.
6. The next review of the Local Plan (after adoption) will be the time to bring forward more detailed proposals for the site, including a specific site allocation and/or masterplanning of the site. Policy H3(2) in the draft Local Plan highlights the particular development considerations which will apply to more detailed proposals for the site, namely
  - Integration of development within the existing landscape structure of the site
  - Provision of community facilities (as proven necessary) including neighbourhood shopping, and education and health facilities
  - Off-site highway improvement measures
  - Footpath and cycling connections through the site and improved connections to the town centre, including by public transport
  - Preservation and enhancement of existing ecological features including wildlife corridors
  - Preservation of the Grade II\* listed Park House

Such criteria would ensure concerns surrounding the sensitivities of the site such as its ecology, parkland and heritage assets could be adequately conserved and potentially enhanced.
7. Until that time, as the current draft plan is developed toward Reg.19 and submission, and subject to consideration of all broad locations in the plan by committee later in 2015 Invicta Barracks remains a suitable candidate site for promotion as a broad location for development for the latter years of the plan. It is also important to consider the contribution toward the housing need figure made by this site. The site would deliver 1,300 dwellings which would need to be found elsewhere if the site is not progressed. Like any other allocation in the emerging Local Plan the dwelling number attributed is only a guide to the potential yield from the site, and the detail will be dealt with later through design briefs and / or masterplans and the development management process. At this stage of the development of the plan it is enough to demonstrate capacity in the 20 year plan period for the delivery of enough homes to meet the needs of the borough, in accordance with the NPPF.