

Greenham Common Airbase

Planning Brief: Extracts and summaries

In 1994, Newbury District Council approved a planning brief which outlined the options for the development of Greenham Common.

Extract from Sections 1.0 and 2.0

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.02 The purpose of this brief is to focus on the opportunities that exist for the reuse at Greenham Common, to clearly establish what constraints exist and how these will affect future reuse of the site ...

2.0 THE SITE & THE LOCATION

2.01 Greenham Common Airbase is located to the south east of Newbury

2.02 In order to make it easier to describe the whole site, (the site has been) split into a number of identifiable areas, namely A to G

2.03 The main site, excluding areas F and G, is approximately 900 acres

In Section 3.0 of the planning brief, an outline of the 'Newbury District Local Plan' was given. This plan outlined the objectives for the whole of the district. In planning the development of Greenham Common Airbase, the objectives for development of the whole of the district needed to be considered.

In summary, the development needed to ensure;

The **attractiveness** of the district must be retained or enhanced

No further '**built up**' areas to be constructed outside of the town and villages, with limited exceptions

Employment opportunities are limited so as not to put pressure on housing, traffic congestion and local labour supply

The **redevelopment** of under used, vacant and derelict land

Sites of Specific Scientific Interest (SSSI) must be protected

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Extract from Section 4.0

- 4.0 Planning objectives
- 4.01 In order to come forward with proposals for reusing the airbase, it is necessary to establish planning objectives ... which are listed below but are not in priority order:
 - To seek a sustainable form of development
 - To protect and enhance the nature conservation interest of the site
 - To protect commoners who have rights over the common
 - To pursue the recreational potential of the site
 - To explore the potential of the site to accommodate residential or employment generating developments
 - To pursue an approach that expands the local employment base
 - To retain, reuse or relocate buildings worthy of retention
 - To promote recycling of redundant materials
 - To protect the site from illegal encampments

Extract from Section 5.0

- 5.0 NATURE CONSERVATION ISSUES
- 5.01 There are three Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) ... which include much of the undeveloped land on the airbase
- 5.02 SSSIs play a key role in conserving and protecting Britain's wildlife ...
- 5.03 Many rare plants and animals are known to occur on the common including Great Crested Newts, Nightjars, Purple Emperor Butterflies, rare Orchids and nesting Lapwings
- 5.04 The removal of concrete would enable conservation interests to be pursued
- 5.05 Nature Conservation interests, although important, are not the sole consideration and must be kept in balance with other issues and demands
- 5.06 The Berks Bucks and Oxon Naturalist Trust presently manage ... 'The Old Bombsite'. They are eager to continue and have expressed an interest in acquiring this area if it becomes available

Planning Brief: Extracts and summaries - continued

Section 6.0 of the planning brief outlines the constraints on development of the airbase. These are summarised as follows;

- ✪ 32 people hold rights over parts of the land, including the right to take gravel for the repair of paths and drives, the right to take wood, bracken or copse for the repair of fences and for fuel, and the right to graze cattle, sheep, goats, ponies, pigs, ducks and geese
- ✪ The amount of ground contamination from aircraft fuel must be established
- ✪ The Russians have the right, under the INF Treaty, to check certain buildings at any time to ensure they are not being used as nuclear warfare facilities
- ✪ Rights of access (e.g. rambling) exist
- ✪ There is a significant need for local housing; over 4000 workers commute into the area
- ✪ The Sports Council have stated that the reuse of the redundant airbase presents a unique opportunity to provide recreational facilities for a number of sports which presently have poor or non-existent facilities (particularly are A), for example athletics, court sports, cycling, equestrian, land yachting, motor sports, shooting, triathlon and climbing.
- ✪ Current, unauthorised, use of land for karting and drag racing is disturbing local residents. Use of some of the runway to develop this provision would need to demonstrate that disturbance to residents would not be excessive
- ✪ Provision for air sports is limited in the Newbury area
- ✪ Area E and the three aircraft hangars have been highlighted as possible accommodation for indoor sports

Section 9.0 describes each of the areas and outlines the possibilities for development. These are summarised as follows;

| Area | Description | Development possibilities |
|-------------|--|--|
| A | Largest area Contains runway (2.25 miles) and two taxiways running either side Small number of buildings along northern boundary, including control tower and fire station | Grazed heathland Recreational uses Sporting and leisure use in buildings Cycleways and pathways Light airfield |
| B | Buildings previously used as a school All weather athletics track, three fenced tennis courts, seating and score board | School, nursery, museum, library or medical centre Short term accommodation for sports people using facilities |

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| | | |
|---|---|--|
| C | <p>Six storage facilities, previously used to store nuclear weapons, in eastern half</p> <p>Other buildings to west and south</p> <p>SSSI forms part of site</p> | <p>Cycling or go karting on tarmac area</p> <p>Cold war/military museum</p> |
| D | <p>Three parts; D1, D2 and D3</p> <p>D1 is SSSI area – very fragile</p> <p>D2 is concreted area</p> <p>D3 Communications building and workshops</p> | <p>D1 must be conserved</p> <p>Open sports possible in D2</p> <p>D3 may be developed in line with area E</p> |
| E | <p>Built up area</p> <p>Many buildings not of sufficient quality to be worth retaining</p> <p>Buildings include housing, community buildings (shops, post office, bank, etc), aircraft hangars, workshops and water storage tanks</p> <p>High quality infrastructure (roads, street lighting, pavements, landscaping)</p> | <p>Housing</p> <p>Light industry and storage</p> <p>Waste recycling facilities</p> <p>Sporting uses</p> |
| F | <p>Ministry of Defence property</p> <p>Contains six barrack blocks, a grade II listed building/landscaped gardens and eighty one MoD dwellings</p> <p>Listed building and gardens being considered as conservation area</p> <p>Dwellings being used to house troops returning from abroad</p> | <p>College, hotel, golf and country club or offices in the listed building and grounds</p> <p>Homeless accommodation</p> |
| G | <p>Often known as ‘The Old Bomb Site’</p> <p>Currently a nature reserve</p> | <p>Maintain as a nature reserve</p> |