

- Only 2 out of 10 of the leisure facilities within the primary catchment (3km) are Allegra rated (*Holmes Place and Spirit*). Only 2 out of 16 of the facilities in the secondary catchment are Allegra rated (*Fitness First and Canons*). It is also noted that Farnborough Leisure Centre is not Allegra rated.
- the De Vere Village Hotel is able to offer a mix of high quality leisure facilities with accommodation, conferencing and ancillary facilities. This mix of uses will itself be responsible for the generation of new demand for the facilities, currently not satisfied at town centre locations within the catchment area;
- no other existing leisure facility is able to serve the Business Park as efficiently as the proposed De Vere Village Hotel (the knock-on benefits of this relationship are explained elsewhere, and represent a key benefit of the proposed development);

4.51 The starting point in assessing the impact of the proposed leisure facility (that forms an integral part of the Village Hotel) remains the threshold for impact assessments set out within PPS6. The proposed leisure suite at the hotel is only 1,775 sqm and therefore falls below the 2,500 threshold identified within this document. However, to provide the Council with reassurances in this regard, the potential impact of the proposals on town centre vitality and viability has been assessed. All the above factors combine to present compelling evidence that the proposed development will not materially impact upon the operations of any competing leisure facility. In contrast, the proposals will represent a complementary addition to the range of health and fitness clubs currently available.

Sequential Test Requirements

4.52 The site of the proposed Village Hotel at FBP is considered to be an edge of centre location in the Local Plan.

4.53 The application is accompanied by a sequential site analysis which involves a systematic review of Farnborough, North Camp, Farnham, Aldershot, Fleet, Frimley, Camberley, Blackwater and Yately centres. The purpose of this analysis is to assess the availability and suitability of sequentially preferable sites within the catchment of the site. Full details of this analysis are not repeated here, but the approach adopted involved reviewing relevant development plans for the allocated development sites, identifying existing planning permissions and valid applications for development and discussions with officers to establish the location of potential alternative sites to FBP.

4.54 Identified sites were then assessed to establish the potential to accommodate a De Vere Village Hotel. The analysis concludes that all of the sequentially preferable sites

identified can be discounted, with FBP representing the only site genuinely capable of accommodating the proposed development. It also represents the only location that could deliver the benefits to FBP, described in detail above.

Policy Appraisal

- 4.55 Within the context of the above assessment that highlights the operational characteristics of the development, the findings of the need/impact/sequential assessments, the sustainable transport credentials of the site and masterplanning issues, this section of the report assesses the extent to which the scheme conforms with the policy objectives set out in the Local Plan. It will consider the principle of the proposed use, particularly, in relation to the relevant employment and leisure policies in the Local Plan but also assess the conformity of the proposals with all other relevant policies.

Employment

- 4.56 The 'main factory site' on which FBP has been developed is allocated in Policy FA3 of the Local Plan as an employment site. Outline consent (Ref: 99/00744) was granted for the development of the site for up to 155,350 sq m of B1 floorspace, 6,000 sq m of ancillary development and associated development in November 2000.
- 4.57 Policy FA3 which specifically relates to the 'main factory site' contains policy support for '*appropriate uses to achieve a greater diversity of activities*' including commercial leisure. As explained above, the Village Hotel will make a significant contribution in respect of these policy aspirations. Specifically, it is estimated that the proposed Village Hotel will create approximately 250 jobs (direct employment). It is also noted that the ratio of jobs to floorspace associated with the Village Hotel, compares favourably with B-class employment uses. These catalytic benefits of the scheme, evidenced above, further contribute to the site specific policy objective.
- 4.58 The State of the Economy (2004), a report commissioned by Rushmoor Borough Council and produced by Roger Tym and Partners to assess the business space requirements of the Borough concludes that, in strict numerical terms, office space available or currently in the 'planning pipeline' will broadly meet the demand until 2016.

4.59 It is considered that the development of a Village Hotel at FBP would be in accordance with policies set out in the Local Plan and the presence of a Village Hotel at the site would act as a catalyst to attract further inward investment and businesses to take up the vacant floorspace at the Park.

Tourism

4.60 There is policy support at all levels for the development of additional tourist facilities within Farnborough and this is clearly stated both in the Structure Plan (Policy R1) and identified as one of the key objectives of the Local Plan (para 3.54). Policy R4 of the Structure Plan even accepts that in some circumstances development of tourist related facilities may be appropriate on edge of centre sites subject to there being no suitable alternative sites, and appropriate transport and amenity considerations.

4.61 The proposals are considered to adhere to the requirements of both Policy T1 which seeks to encourage the provision of additional hotels and conference facilities and Policy T3 which encourages the development of further tourist related facilities subject to highways, public transport and amenity considerations.

4.62 The operational characteristics of the hotel are well-rehearsed above, and are not repeated here, other than to state that the proposals are well placed to meet the important and growing business component of tourism demand. The development proposals will contribute to the level of overnight accommodation available locally and therefore help to meet the objectives of the Plan.

4.63 Although the Plan contains general references to PPG6 (that has since been replaced by PPS6) and the sequential assessment, the Local Plan only makes a single reference to the need for sequential assessments in relation to other town centre uses (Para 10.3). In view of the prevailing policy context at national, regional and local levels, the guidance contained in PPS6 and the outcome of the Rushmoor Retail Study a sequential assessment has been undertaken to accompany this planning application. The site of the proposed Village Hotel at FBP is considered to be edge of centre and as such only alternative town centre sites have formed part of the assessment. The results of the sequential assessment demonstrate the lack of alternative sites that could realistically support a De Vere Village Hotel. Equally, studies show that there is a demonstrable need for the development and that there will be no material impact from the proposals upon town centre vitality and viability.

4.64 It should also not be overlooked that the proposed Village Hotel will provide a valuable facility to cope with the increased demand for hotel accommodation generated by the internationally recognised Farnborough International Airshow that is held on site of the Farnborough Aerodrome, within walking distance of the site of the proposed Village Hotel. The Farnborough International Airshow is a week long event that attracts visitors and exhibitors from around the world and generates a considerable demand for hotel accommodation for a period extending beyond the week long duration of the show while exhibitors attend pre-meetings and set up and dismantle their exhibits. It is considered that the demand for quality hotel accommodation that is generated by this high profile event is not currently catered for in the local area and the proposed Village Hotel will represent a high quality and sustainable choice for such visitors who will no longer have to travel elsewhere to access facilities of a similar quality.

Leisure

- 4.65 The proposed Village Hotel includes approximately 1,775 sq m of leisure development. Although the Hotel will include a significant and high quality leisure facility the floorspace proposed is below the threshold set out in PPS6 as generating a requirement for an impact assessment. Following informal discussions with the local planning authority and a desire to provide the Council with full information in respect of the proposals, the application is accompanied by a full need assessment that includes reference to the leisure component of the site. The details of this work are not repeated here but it concludes that there is a need for the leisure facilities and their provision will not result in any material impact.
- 4.66 The Plan provides support for additional leisure facilities subject to accordance with Policy OR7 which states that proposals for such facilities will be granted unless they would be detrimental to the character of the area or the amenities of nearby residents, and that such proposals should be close to other traffic generating uses and be accessible by public transport.
- 4.67 The proposed Village Hotel has been carefully designed to minimise the impact of the development and the proposals fully accord with the requirements of Policy OR7 as set out below:

- The development will improve the range of quality leisure facilities that are available to businesses located within FBP and the surrounding area and local residents.
- The Village Hotel has been carefully designed to complement the style of the existing buildings within FBP. The Village Hotel is located well away from the nearest residential properties and the development will not therefore result in any material impact on the surrounding amenities, in terms of visual impact, noise or general disturbance. In addition, the development has been carefully sited and a high standard of landscaping is incorporated as part of the scheme;

4.68 The Council's commitment to increasing the role of the leisure sector and to stimulating the evening economy within Farnborough is clear in the Council's Town Centre Strategy for Farnborough and from the supporting text in the Local Plan (para 10.27). Further emphasis is provided by Policy TC1 that states that development that maintains and enhances the diversity, vitality and viability of Farnborough Town Centre will be permitted subject to other policies within the Plan. In addition to this, Policy TC4 aims to encourage a range of activities outside the retail core, but still within the town centre including leisure uses. It is considered that the proposals will make a significant contribution towards increasing the leisure offer within Farnborough and will achieve this at a site within close proximity of the town centre. The site is located less than 100 metres from the edge of Farnborough Town Centre and less than 250 metres from the defined shopping core. The site is also well linked to the town centre by a network of existing footpaths. The Village Hotel will make a positive contribution towards the vitality and viability of the town centre by attracting a considerable number of people to the area both during the day and outside normal working hours. These additional visitors are also likely to patronise the facilities available in Farnborough Town Centre which is a short walk from the site of the proposed development.

4.69 In summary, it is therefore considered that the proposals accord with the requirements of the employment, leisure and tourism policies identified in the Local Plan and the principle of the use of the site for a Village Hotel has therefore been established.

Transport and Highways Issues

4.70 In accordance with the requirements of Policy FA1, a Transport Assessment (TA) has been submitted to accompany the planning application.

- 4.71 FBP is identified as an employment site in the Rushmoor Borough Council Local Plan and the Business Park was granted planning permission under Ref: 99/007744. As such the Council has accepted that acceptable access to the site can be provided and, as previously stated in Paragraph 3.68 of this report, the upgrading of Kennel Lane, Elles Road and the related junction improvements referred to in policies FA9, FA10 and FA11, respectively, formed part of the original S106 Agreements for FBP and are now largely complete.
- 4.72 The Village Hotel will be accessible by a choice of means of transport. De Vere also propose to implement a Green Travel Plan (GTP) that will encourage and promote access by public transport, cycling and walking as an alternative to the private car. The GTP will ensure that proposals comply with the requirements of Policy FA14 of the Local Plan which requires that a 'commuter plan' should be produced in respect to assess the overall transport implications of such developments and seek a decrease in vehicle movements. The proposals also make provision for public transport improvements and the provision of access to the site by footpaths and cycleways and in accordance with the requirements of policies FA12 and FA13. Slough Estates currently provides a Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) Service, a dedicated free bus service for the tenants of Farnborough Business Park. This service operates between Farnborough Main Station and the business park. Further details of this service and other transport related issues are contained in the Transport Statement that accompanies this Planning Statement. The proposal is thus compatible, and in conformity with transport policy at all levels.
- 4.73 The level of car parking proposed at the site, (340 spaces) of which 20 spaces will be disabled spaces) has been calculated on the basis of De Vere's experience at other Village Hotel sites. This level of car parking will be sufficient to service the requirements of the development and is in accordance with the guidance contained in PPG13. This issue is addressed in detail in the Transport Assessment that accompanies the application.

Masterplanning and Design

General Principles

- 4.74 The design and layout of the Village Hotel has been developed in a cohesive manner to ensure that the development protects the future integrity and longer term

development potential of the Business Park for the benefit of the owners, occupiers and the local community.

Site Layout

- 4.75 The layout of the site has been designed to enable the integration of the Hotel and associated parking areas into the Business Park's landscape. This approach will ensure that the high quality development provides a focal point and 'social hub' for FBP that will create a better working environment and enhance the positive image of the Business Park as location for business.
- 4.76 The proposal allows for the creation and enhancement of direct, convenient and high quality pedestrian and cycle links to the Business Park and the wider environment from which the business park already benefits.

Design

- 4.77 The proposals are considered to be of a high standard of design and the Village Hotel and the associated access, parking, and servicing facilities comply with planning policy at all levels.
- 4.78 The proposals are considered to have been designed in complete accordance with the aspirations for development set out in Policy ENV16 of the Local Plan and each of the criteria specified in Policy ENV16 are addressed below:
- i) The proposals are located within FBP and the majority of the site is located within the area allocated for employment uses in Policy FA3 of the Local Plan. It is noted that a small area of the site falls within an area identified in the Local Plan as open space under Policy FA7. However, an equivalent replacement area will be provided elsewhere in the business park in negotiation with the Local Planning Authority. The site is located well away from the nearest residential properties and is not considered to have any material impact on the amenities of the occupiers of either the surrounding employment or residential areas.
 - ii, iii, iv) The proposals have been carefully designed with particular attention paid to the scale, layout and design of the building in order to ensure that it is in keeping with the surrounding architecture and both Slough Estate's existing design aspirations and future development aspirations for FBP. Careful consideration has therefore been given to the relationship of the site with its immediate surroundings and the visual appearance of the site has been enhanced with the use of landscaping;

- v) The external environment of a De Vere Village Hotel is as important as the interior of the Hotel to the perception of its customers. All external areas will therefore be finished and landscaped to a high standard;
- vi) In order to develop these application proposals De Vere has undertaken comprehensive surveys of the site which are available to the Council;
- vii & viii) The TA demonstrates that the site complies with all relevant policies in this regard, adequate provision is made for parking, servicing and provision by alternative and sustainable means of transport such as walking and cycling;
- ix & x) A sustainable approach has been adopted to the design of the scheme and this is dealt with in more detail in the Design Statement that accompanies the planning application. A sustainable approach has been adopted to the use of energy with a view to minimising demand and increase the efficiency of the use of such resources.

Sustainable development

- 4.79 Sustainable principles have been an underlying principle in the design of the scheme and these are discussed in more detail in the Design Statement that accompanies the planning application.
- 4.80 The proposed Village Hotel makes an efficient use of the available land by providing a range of services and facilities under one roof. The layout and design of the Village Hotel has been established taking into consideration the existing development on the site and the clear functional differences in the requirements of B1 offices and hotel and leisure development.
- 4.81 As detailed above, the primary functions of the De Vere Village Hotel in this location are to:
- a) support other businesses at FBP and nearby employment sites, by providing "over spill" conferencing and function rooms when these are required and hotel rooms for their clients/visitors; and
 - b) provide a facility for local residents and their visitors.
- 4.82 In sustainable terms, the location of such a facility on site reduces the need for business occupants to travel, thereby offering a sustainable form of development. The Hotel is designed so that all facilities can be provided "under one roof", therefore, reducing the amount of land take and the need for separate leisure and food & drink facilities. The hotel rooms will provide accommodation for visitors to the Business Park which will assist in promoting a pattern of sustainable development by enabling

overnight accommodation to be provided adjacent to the ultimate trip destination. Similarly, visitors to local residents can stay in close proximity, again avoiding the generation of unnecessary (potentially car-borne) trips.

Landscaping

- 4.83 De Vere has a reputation for providing quality establishments and the quality of the landscaping is vital to achieving the standard of environment that De Vere seek to achieve. The development proposals therefore incorporate a high quality landscaping scheme which De Vere will continue to manage to a similar standard for the lifetime of the development. The proposals are therefore considered to comply with the requirements of Policy ENV19.1-4. De Vere will work with the Local Planning Authority to ensure that the species that are planted at the site accord with the aspirations of the Council.

Access for people with Disabilities

- 4.84 All De Vere Village Hotels take account of the needs of disabled people and the elderly and comply with all relevant legislation.

5.0 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 The application proposals at FBP seek consent for the development of a 154 bedroom Village Hotel providing a four star facility with associated quality conference and leisure facilities.
- 5.2 The development will substantially improve the facilities available to occupiers of FBP, surrounding employment uses and local residents and raise the profile of the business park at both local and regional levels. The Village Hotel will provide an invaluable service to the businesses located on FBP and will make a significant contribution to enhancing the attractiveness of the business park to future occupiers.

The Principle of the Development

- 5.3 The site is identified as an employment site in Policy FA3 of the Rushmoor Borough Council Local Plan. Policy FA3 also permits parts of the site to be developed for other appropriate uses (including leisure), in order to achieve a greater diversity of activities on the site. The proposed development is therefore considered to accord with the Council's aspirations for the site, providing essential ancillary business facilities whilst also creating jobs and acting as a valuable catalyst to attract other quality businesses to the area. This phenomenon has been demonstrated elsewhere (for example, Rochdale, Newcastle, Coventry, Hull and Bournemouth) where De Vere has developed Village Hotels within business parks and the development has been successful at attracting new business investment to the area.
- 5.4 The economic evidence produced by Knight Frank that accompanies this planning application provides detailed background information to support the economic arguments presented in this report.

Direct Economic Benefits

- 5.5 A range of economic benefits, both direct and indirect, will be generated by the proposed development.
- 5.6 A broad range of non seasonal employment opportunities will be created by the proposed Village Hotel development. It is envisaged that approximately 250 jobs (160 full time equivalents) will be created as a result of the development, with the development also providing additional indirect support to a range of local businesses.

- 5.7 The employment opportunities created will range from opportunities for management and professional staff, sports and health care professionals, security, bar and catering staff, maintenance and cleaning staff.

Tourism

- 5.8 Policy guidance at all levels, including Central Government guidance, the Hampshire County Structure Plan and the Rushmoor Borough Council Local Plan, all encourage the development of additional tourist and leisure facilities. The contribution that such facilities will make to quality of life, the regeneration of urban areas and in stimulating economic investment is also recognised.

The Need for the Development

- 5.9 It is considered that there is a substantial and well evidenced economic case for the development. There is an identifiable need for additional quality ancillary development at FBP in order to service the needs of both existing and future occupiers and to ensure that the Park remains competitive and is seen as attractive to potential new occupiers. It is considered that the Village will assist in reducing vacancy levels and help to secure the development of the remaining vacant plots.
- 5.10 The Need Statement that has been produced to accompany the planning application demonstrates that, there is currently a high level of need for a hotel accommodation, both regionally and across the County. The Need Statement also reveals a need for additional health and leisure facilities as part of the hotel development at FBP.

Sequential Assessment

- 5.11 In order to comply with the guidance contained in PPS6 and relevant Local Plan policies, a sequential site assessment was also undertaken. The sequential assessment concludes that the proposed site at FBP represents the only possible location within the area genuinely capable of accommodating the proposed development. It also represents the only site that could deliver the level of catalytic benefits that are envisaged as a result of the development.
- 5.12 It is noted that the Council has previously accepted that there may be further potential for a hotel as part of Farnborough Aerodrome (paragraph 7.4 of the Local Plan). Policy FA6 which relates to the SBAC site goes further and states that planning permission for a hotel may be granted where this is compatible with exhibition use.

However, the Plan was published in August 2000 and no suitable hotel proposals have yet been forthcoming. The proposed Village Hotel is ideally located to serve the demand generated by FBP, the surrounding employment uses and the bi-annual demand generated during the Farnborough International Airshow.

Sustainable Transport

5.13 On the basis of the findings of the Transport Assessment (TA) submitted to accompany the application, it is considered that the Hotel and associated leisure uses will be accessible by modes other than the private car and that the local road network will be able to sustain the additional vehicle movements that are likely to be generated as a result of the development.

5.14 In addition, in order to improve and encourage access to the site by sustainable means, De Vere is proposing to implement a Green Travel Plan (GTP) that will seek to encourage both visitors to the hotel and employees to travel to the site by means other than the private car. The results of the GTP will be monitored and the Plan reviewed to ensure that a sustainable approach to transport issues continues over time.

Design

5.15 The masterplan for the site seeks to provide a modern and attractive development that complements the design of both the existing and approved development within FBP.

5.16 In summary, it is considered that the proposed Village Hotel accords with adopted Local Plan policy, providing an essential support facility for FBP and the surrounding employment uses and nearby residential areas. In addition, the Village Hotel will provide important additional hotel accommodation to service the demand generated by the Farnborough International Airshow. The Village Hotel will make a positive contribution towards the comprehensive development of the wider FBP area, create a significant number of new local jobs, and add to the attractiveness of the business park as a location of choice for additional quality development.

5.17 The Village Hotel will also contribute towards a more sustainable pattern of development with the needs of the surrounding employment and business occupiers

catered for in close proximity, thereby reducing the need to travel further afield to access support facilities.

- 5.18 On the basis of the thorough analysis of the issues set out in this report, it is considered that the development proposal complies with the policy requirements of Rushmoor Borough Council and the application should be granted.

APPENDIX

- 1 Original Outline Permission
- 2 Need Statement
- 3 Sequential Assessment
- 4 Public Safety Zones
- 5 Nottingham Committee Report
- 6 Extract from Rushmoor Housing Report
- 7 Henry Boot Letter
- 8 Seddon Letter
- 9 Extract from Rushmoor Retail Study