

Application Number: F/25/98808
Case Officer: Gary Osmond
Received Date: Monday 27th January 2025
Site Address: POLICE TRAINING CENTRE, ROYAL VICTORIA
COUNTRY PARK, NETLEY ABBEY, SOUTHAMPTON,
SO31 4TS
Applicant: The Police and Crime Commissioner for Hampshire and
Isle of Wight
Proposal: Erection of 3.0 metre high steel mesh security fence to site
boundaries, with vehicular entrance gates, and widening of
access drive from Hamble Lane
Recommendation: PERMIT

CONDITIONS AND REASONS:

- 1 The development hereby permitted shall be implemented in accordance with the following plans numbered: E05535-HCC-ZZ-DR-B-1000-P4.00; E05535-HCC-ZZ-DR-B-1002-P2.00; E05535-HCC-ZZ-DR-B-1500-P04; E05535-HCC-ZZ-DR-B-1550-P02; E05535-HCC-ZZ-DR-B-1552-P02; E05535-HCC-XX-XX-DR-B-7100-P02; & E05535-HCC-XX-XX-DR-B-7101-P01.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

- 2 The development hereby permitted shall start no later than three years from the date of this decision.

Reason: To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

- 3 The development hereby approved shall not commence until a Construction Environmental Management Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The plan shall include details of how habitat will be protected; waste disposal, including the safe management of small pieces of metal and plastic which may need to be cut off of the fence panels, screws, nuts and bolts; refuelling and refilling of any required plant; management of concrete washout and waste tarmac; lighting; noise; precautions taken to avoid the inadvertent spread of invasive species (Rhododendron and cherry laurel); and minimising trampling. All works shall be undertaken in accordance with the approved plan.

Reason: To protect existing habitat.

- 4 Prior to any works which involve removal or disturbance of existing woodland or

undergrowth, a Precautionary Working Method Statement to protect nesting birds, reptiles, amphibians, hedgehogs, badgers and bats shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. All works shall be undertaken in accordance with the approved method statement.

Reason: To ensure protected species are not harmed.

- 5 No construction, demolition or deliveries to the site shall take place during the construction period except between the hours of 0800 to 1800 on any day of the week.

Reason: To protect the amenities of the occupiers of nearby dwellings.

- 6 No burning of materials obtained by site clearance, or any other source shall take place during the demolition, construction and fitting out process.

Reason: To protect the amenities of the occupiers of nearby properties.

- 7 No vegetation clearance shall occur on site during the bird nesting season [between 1st March & 31st August] unless supervised by an appropriately qualified ecologist.

Reason: To prevent harm to breeding birds.

- 8 The development must accord with the arboricultural reports reference P-EBC-NetleyPoliceTrainingFENCE-SS23671-AIA-1.1 and P-EBC-NetleyPoliceTrainingFENCE-SS23671-AMS-1.1. No excavation, demolition or development related works shall commence until the tree protection measures have been installed as per the details contained within the report. Tree protection measures shall be retained in their approved form for the duration of the work and may only be modified subject to written agreement from the LPA.

Reason: To retain and protect the existing trees which form an important part of the amenity of the locality.

- 9 No vehicles, machinery, equipment, materials, including fencing and lighting, spoil, scaffolding, or anything else associated with the works shall be positioned on or near to Hound Footpath 6 at any time, as to cause obstruction, hindrance or a hazard to the footpath's public users, who retain the right to safe and convenient use of the Public Right of Way at all times.

Reason: To ensure the Public Right of Way remains accessible at all times.

- 10 Any improvements to surface water drainage required as a result of the development hereby approved shall utilise Sustainable Urban Drainage methods, including permeable surfacing for new parking and waiting areas.

Reason: To minimise flooding.

- 11 The fencing and gates hereby approved shall be finished in a dark grey colour.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity.

- 12 Prior to their installation, details of the lighting to be used along the Hamble Rail Trail shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall then be implemented in accordance with these agreed details.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity, public safety and ecology.

- 13 Before the development hereby approved is completed, a formal Biodiversity Gain Plan and Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. This shall show how the predicted biodiversity net gain will be achieved, and how it will be managed and monitored for a minimum period of at least 30 years.

Reason: To ensure biodiversity and habitat enhancements are secured.

Note to Applicant: In accordance with paragraph 39 of the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024), Eastleigh Borough Council takes a positive approach to the handling of development proposals so as to achieve, whenever possible, a positive outcome and to ensure all proposals are dealt with in a timely manner.

Note to Applicant: It is requested that the works are carried out considerately to minimise disruption to members of the public and occupiers of neighbouring properties. The council operates a code of best practice, which is available on the council's website www.eastleigh.gov.uk by following the links to Planning, Guidance on the process, scroll down to Guidance on Aspects of the Planning & Construction Process and select considerate builders' advice note.

Report:

1. This application has been referred to Committee by Councillors Craig and Holes.

Description of Application

2. The application seeks consent for the erection of a 3.0 metre high steel mesh security fence around the site of Hampshire Constabulary's Southern Support & Police Training Headquarters at the Royal Victoria Country Park, Netley. The proposals also include revisions to the main Hamble Lane and secondary Hound Road site access gates, as well as widening of the access road from Hamble Lane to allow two way traffic along its whole length up to the main gate.

3. The application is accompanied by the following reports and technical assessments which can be viewed on the Council's website via this link - [Planning Application: F/25/98808](#):
 - Planning Statement
 - Design and Access Statement
 - Heritage Statement
 - Arboricultural Impact Assessment
 - Ecological Appraisal
 - Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Matrix
 - Flood Risk Assessment
4. The proposal has been screened out under the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 due to the size and nature of the proposed development.
5. Screening under the Habitats Directive was not required as the development will have no impact in combination with other development upon the Solent and New Forest SPAs.

Site Characteristics and Character of the Locality

6. Hampshire Constabulary's Southern Support & Police Training Headquarters covers an area of 20 hectares and lies within the grounds of the Royal Victoria Country Park, which itself is on the site of the former military hospital. The headquarters site consists of a number of buildings used for various operational and training purposes. The main building being Victoria House, which originally formed part of the military hospital, acting as a secure 'asylum' facility away from the main hospital which fronted Southampton Water but was demolished in the 1960s.
7. Whilst surrounded by the country park, the headquarters site is generally shielded from public view by mature woodland, with glimpsed views of some buildings only being visible when close to the site boundaries, such as along the Hamble Rail Trail which runs along the northern edge of the site parallel to the railway line.
8. To the east of the site is the Netley Military Cemetery, with playing fields beyond this to Hamble Lane, which is the main access point into the training HQ. To the south is woodland which forms part of the country park, with further public playing fields to the south of this. To the south-west, is the main open space of the country park, with Southampton Water beyond. And to the north-west is further woodland, together with Nightingale House and Osbourne Quarters. These buildings again originally formed part of the military hospital accommodation for officers and NCOs but are now private residential properties. Also to the north-west is Hound Road, which is a secondary access point into the HQ site.

Relevant Planning History

9. Since the site was given approval in 1980 for use by Hampshire Constabulary, there have been various full and listed building applications relating to facilities and buildings to be used for both operational and training purposes. None are directly related to that now under consideration, although the application is being considered alongside a concurrent listed building application for the same development (L/25/98812).

Representations Received

10. A total of 26 representations have been received, all objecting to or raising concerns with that proposed. All but one of these objections were in relation to use of the existing vehicular access point from Hound Road, siting concerns in relation to: increased traffic; highway and pedestrian safety; speeding; parking; and general loss of amenity to neighbouring residential properties.
11. Only three objections relate to the main element of the application, the erection of the security fence. Concerns were expressed as to the size of the area to be enclosed by the fence, whether this was necessary, and that it would prevent public access to land which has always been shared. Impact upon the historic importance of the country park was also highlighted, raising concern as to the visual impact of that proposed upon an important heritage asset.
12. Concerns have also been raised as to why it has been decided to install security fencing around the site now, with fears being expressed as to whether there is considered to be an increased security risk which the public should be aware of, and whether the site should continue to be used by the Police if there is an increased risk to the public. These concerns are understood and a more detailed response on this matter is provided below.

Consultation Responses

13. **Trees** – No objection subject to a condition requiring works to be undertaken in accordance with the approved arboricultural report.
14. **Ecology** – No objection. The habitats along the proposed fence line were surveyed as: broadleaved woodland, bracken, other neutral grassland, modified grassland, running water, hardstanding and species poor hedgerow.
15. Survey results found habitat suitable for breeding birds, badgers in the wider woodland but no setts near the proposed fence, likely presence of bat roosts in woodland trees, high quality bat foraging habitat, tall grassland suitable for reptiles and amphibians, and general suitability of the site for small mammals. The woodland and scrub has been assessed as high quality dormouse habitat and the nearby ponds had potential

suitability for great crested newts. Dormouse and great crested newt surveys were conducted and confirmed likely absence for both species.

16. The mitigation and enhancement recommendations in the report are appropriate. They can be conditioned in a precautionary working method statement to protect nesting birds, reptiles, amphibians, hedgehogs, badgers and bats.
17. The development is predicted to deliver 14.89% net gain in area habitats and 52.49% net gain in linear habitats. This is proposed to be done by enhancement of an area of woodland that is currently dominated by Rhododendron and Cherry Laurel, the enhancement of existing areas of amenity grassland to create a more species-rich and diverse neutral grassland habitat, and new native hedge planting. The outline Biodiversity Net Gain strategy has been included in the Ecological Appraisal report. A formal Biodiversity Gain Plan and Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP) can be conditioned.
18. **Landscape** – Formal comments awaited (the committee will be updated prior to the meeting).
19. **HCC Highways** – No objection from a highway perspective. Widening of the access drive from Hamble Lane will have no impact upon the highway and would be a betterment of the existing site access. The rear access from Hound Road is also acceptable, being located further into the site and with suitable turning area. Improvements to the crossing point at the Hamble Rail Trail is also welcome.
20. With regards to use of the rear Hound Road access, given there is no intention to alter how this access is used, there is no objection. However, if this is not the case, and use of this access is to increase, this would not be welcome given the constraints of Hound Road.
21. **Hampshire Countryside Services** – No objection provide the new security fence is installed no closer to the footpath than the existing fencing, so as to avoid encroaching upon the width of the Public Right Of Way.
22. **Built Heritage Consultant** – No objection, although it is suggested that the height of the new timber gates to the rear of Victoria House could be raised a little to match the height of the boundary wall, and that the height and position of the proposed fencing where it abuts the wall to Victoria House car park could be revised so as to lessen the visual impact upon the setting of the building.
23. **Hampshire Gardens Trust** – No comments received.
24. **Hound Parish Council** – Objection. Concern that the need for such security measures means there is an increased threat to the local community. If so, should the site continue to be used for its current

purposes. Concerns also that use of the Hound Road access will increase beyond that already allowed, leading to increased traffic, vehicle speeds, and pedestrian safety issues. Use of the playing field as a helicopter landing area was also raised.

25. **Hamble Parish Council** – No objection.

Policy Context and Designations Applicable to Site

- Outside the Urban Edge
- Within Settlement Gap
- Affects setting of Grade II Listed Building
- Within Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC)
- Adjacent to designated Recreational Space

Development Plan

Eastleigh Borough Local Plan 2016-2036

26. The most relevant policies are:

Strategic Policies:

- S1 (Delivering sustainable development);
- S2 (Approach to new development);
- S5 (New Development in the countryside);
- S6 (Protection of settlement gaps);
- S8 (Historic Environment);

Development Management Policies:

- DM1 (General criteria for new development);
- DM2 (Environmentally sustainable development);
- DM6 (Sustainable surface water management and watercourse management);
- DM9 (Public utilities and communications);
- DM11 (Nature conservation);
- DM12 (Heritage Assets);
- DM13 (General development criteria - Transport);
- DM14 (Parking);
- DM18 (Extension and replacement of non- residential buildings in the countryside);
- HA1 (Railway station parking, Hamble).

Hampshire Minerals and Waste Plan

- Policy 15 – Safeguarding of Mineral Resources.

Supplementary Planning Documents

- Quality Places (November 2011)

- Trees and Development (April 2022)
- Biodiversity (December 2009)

National Planning Policy Framework

27. At national level, the National Planning Policy Framework (the 'NPPF' or the 'Framework') is a material consideration of significant weight in the determination of planning applications. The National Planning Policy Framework (the 'NPPF' or the 'Framework') states that (as required by statute) applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise and sets out a general presumption in favour of sustainable development unless material considerations indicate otherwise. A deliverable five year supply of housing within each local authority area is required, and if this is not demonstrated a tilted balance in favour of the development applies. Agent of Change principles protect existing businesses.
28. Three dimensions of sustainability are to be sought jointly: economic (supporting economy and ensuring land availability); social (providing housing, creating high quality environment with accessible local services); and environmental (contributing to, protecting and enhancing natural, built and historic environment) whilst local circumstances should also be taken into account, so that development responds to the different opportunities for achieving sustainable development in different areas.

National Planning Practice Guidance

29. Where material, the Planning Practice Guidance which supports the provisions and policies of the NPPF should be afforded weight in the consideration and determination of planning applications.

Assessment of Proposal: Development Plan and / or Legislative Background:

30. Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 require a Local Planning Authority determining an application to do so in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The Development Plan comprises the policies of the Eastleigh Borough Local Plan 2016-2036 and the Hampshire Minerals and Waste Plan 2013 (which is not applicable in this case). The NPPF and the Planning Practice Guidance constitute material considerations of significant weight.

Listed Buildings:

31. The proposal affects a Listed Building and section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Building & Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states:

“In considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a Listed Building or its setting, the Local Planning Authority ... shall have regard to the desirability of reserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses”.

Policy & Principle:

32. The application site lies outside the urban edge where the basic principle of development is not usually considered acceptable, except for a number of specific uses set out in Policy S5. These uses include existing employment uses, as well as essential public utilities as set out in Policies DM18 and DM9 respectively. Whilst the existing use of the site by the police does not easily fall within either of these categories in the usual planning sense, it is an existing established employment use and can be considered as an essential public service. For the purposes of this planning application therefore, these policies are considered to be a reasonable starting point for establishing the principle of that proposed.
33. Policy DM18 relates specifically to the extension or replacement of non-residential buildings in the countryside and sets out a number of criteria which must be met for development to be considered acceptable. Whilst the majority of these criteria do not directly relate to the proposed security fencing, the policy does require proposals to ensure any impact upon the surrounding countryside is minimised or suitably mitigated.
34. Policy DM9 relates to the provision of new and improved public utilities which may be required to serve new development within the borough. The policy best relates to utilities, such as water and electricity, as well as telecommunications. However, it could be argued that providing appropriate policing of the borough is an equally important public utility. As such, the policy supports the provision of new and improved facilities.
35. Whilst Policy DM9 does not relate specifically to development outside the urban edge, Policy S5 does allow essential public utilities provided any impact is minimised or appropriately mitigated. In basic principle therefore, that proposed can be considered acceptable. However, any formal planning approval will be dependent upon how well that proposed is considered to accord with the other relevant policies of the adopted Local Plan.
36. In addition to being outside the urban edge, the application site also lies within the Hamble, Netley and Bursledon Settlement Gap, as set out in Policy S6. This states that development within settlement gap will be permitted provided: it would not undermine the physical extent and/or visual separation of settlements; and it would not have a detrimental urbanising effect.
37. Also of relevance, in terms of impact upon the countryside is Policy DM1, which whilst not specific to development in the countryside, does require all proposed development to be of a high quality of design which takes

appropriate account of the context and character of the application site and that of the surrounding area. It also requires the impact of development upon neighbouring occupiers and uses to be minimised or appropriately mitigated. There is also a requirement for natural features to be retained where appropriate, as well as a number of other requirements which are not directly relevant to the nature of the development proposed in this instance.

38. The application site lies within the setting of Victoria House, which is a Grade II Listed Building, as well as within the wider setting of the former military hospital, as such Policies S8 and DM12 are relevant. These policies relate to the protection of heritage assets, requiring new development to take into account its impact upon these assets, with the more important the asset the greater the level of protection afforded to it.
39. The other main policy to take into account is DM13, which relates to matters of transport, highways, and access, as well as Policy DM14 which relates to parking provision. Policy DM13 requires all development to “have safe and convenient access to the highway network” and sets out the standards required, together with ensuring the safety of road users is protected, and to minimise any environmental impact. It also requires any development which would result in additional traffic to provide suitable mitigation in the form of physical works or transport contributions/obligations.
40. In principle therefore, it is considered that the proposed development can be considered acceptable, subject to a more detailed assessment against the above mentioned policies.

Need:

41. The following is taken directly from the supporting Planning Statement:

“A counter terrorism security review was conducted in April 2022 which concluded that many of the security risks identified for the site would be greatly reduced by securing the perimeter to prevent unauthorised access. This application seeks to improve security by providing perimeter fencing, incorporating vehicular and pedestrian gates, and upgrades to the main access road in line with the report recommendations. This is an acceptable approach in line with many other police sites nationally, to protect staff and assets from potential attack. These improvements will also prevent unauthorised members of the public crossing the site and finding themselves in a critical training scenario, where firearms and other tactical police training methods are being deployed. A secure compound will enable the police to more effectively control training areas and keep people safe during training exercises. These improvements will provide a safer, more secure environment which protects critical police operational assets, staff and the public and will not give rise to any significant adverse environmental or amenity impacts.”

42. The need for the proposed fencing is not a response to any perceived or confirmed additional threat level to the Police HQ site, rather to bring the site more in line with similar facilities elsewhere around the country.

Sustainable Development:

43. Section 2 of the NPPF (December 2024) states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, which can be summarised as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
44. Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways. Each of the three objectives of sustainable development are considered below.
45. National legislation and guidance, together with local policy ensure that all planning applications are tested for their resilience to and impact on the Environment. Details elsewhere in this report set out the Climate Change and Environmental implications of this application and their proposed mitigations.

Economic Sustainability:

46. Section 2 of the NPPF, states that the objective of economic sustainability is “to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;”
47. In planning terms, the proposed development would have limited economic benefit, other than providing employment for the manufacturer and contractors appointed to undertake the works. Notwithstanding, that proposed would assist in allowing Hampshire Constabulary to continue its work in protecting and policing the borough and the wider county, which in turn allows the local economy to continue to operate in a safe and efficient manner. For the purposes of economic sustainability therefore, that proposed is considered to have a neutral to marginally positive impact.

Social Sustainability:

48. In relation to social sustainability, section 2 of the NPPF states that the objective is “to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering well-designed, beautiful and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities’ health, social and cultural well-being;”

49. The NPPF goes on to state in section 8, 'Promoting healthy and safe communities', that "To ensure faster delivery of other public service infrastructure such as health, blue light, library, adult education, university and criminal justice facilities, local planning authorities should also work proactively and positively with promoters, delivery partners and statutory bodies to plan for required facilities and resolve key planning issues before applications are submitted. Significant weight should be placed on the importance of new, expanded or upgraded public service infrastructure when considering proposals for development." (para. 101, Sec 8)
50. Whilst the development proposed will not alter the role undertaken by the constabulary, it will assist in ensuring that it can do so in a more secure manner which protects staff, officers and facilities. As such, for the purposes of social sustainability, that proposed is considered to have a positive impact.

Environmental Sustainability:

51. Section 2 goes on to state that the objective of environmental sustainability is "to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy."
52. There are a number of different components to Environmental Sustainability, including consideration of site-specific planning matters and the impacts of the development on its surroundings, which are considered below under the relevant subheadings.

Layout, Form & Design

53. The application proposals consist of a number of elements: erection of the new security fence; provision of a secure main access gate from Hamble Lane and widening of the access road to allow two-way traffic; provision of a secondary access gate along Albert Avenue via Hound Road; and repairs to the original boundary walls around Victoria House. Whilst the proposed fence line will encompass all buildings within the HQ site, as well as the open field to the west of the Gymnasium, it will not include all the land within Police control, with the sports field off Hamble Lane and land in the north-west corner of the site known as 'The Orchard' through which the Hamble Rail Trail passes remaining as they are at present.
54. Fencing will not be erected around Victoria House, instead the original boundary walls will form the secure boundary, with repairs being made where necessary. This will also include replacing a set of timber gates which are close to the western corner of the walled garden. The existing gates are not historic, and the new gates will also be solid timber.

55. The fencing will be weld-mesh panels between steel posts and 3.0 metres in height with spiked topper to prevent climb over attempts. The mesh proposed is relatively lightweight in its appearance, made up of a small section rectangular grid. This will allow clear views through the fencing and should be relatively unobtrusive. It will also be finished in a dark grey colour, which is much less visible than green fencing which is very noticeable during the winter months when trees are not in leaf.
56. The main vehicular access gate from Hamble Lane will allow two-way traffic and will be controlled via an ANPR and security pass system. The existing access road will be widened at this point and include a small parking and turning area for non-pass holders to wait. Further upgrades to the Hamble Lane access will be made by widening the current single width road to allow two-way traffic along its entire length from Hamble Lane to the new main gate.
57. The Albert Avenue gate will also be controlled via an ANPR and security pass system and include a widening of the road adjacent to the gate to allow vehicles to pass. The new gate will be located further into the site, with the existing access barrier removed.

Landscape & Visual Impact

58. Installing fencing of the height and nature proposed will inevitably have some negative visual impact, particularly where the fence line will be in close proximity to areas which are regularly accessed by the public, such as along the Hamble Rail Trail footpath. However, this needs to be balanced against the need to ensure an important police facility is appropriately protected and secure.
59. Notwithstanding, careful consideration of the fencing route has been undertaken so as to limit its visual impact as much as is reasonably possible. All fencing will be routed within wooded areas, or along woodland edges within the confines of the Police HQ site. For the vast majority of its length, the fencing will be well away from any publically accessible areas, the only exception being along the northern edge of the site adjacent to the rail trail and railway line. Here it will be necessary to erect the fence immediately adjacent to the footpath in places due to the very narrow space available between the application site and the railway line fencing. This may result in the footpath feeling somewhat enclosed, although it is proposed to mitigate this to some extent by providing low-level lighting along the length of the footpath. This will help to improve safety along what is a well-used walking route.
60. Whilst the site is technically within the country park, it is not an area which is open to the public and is well away from the main areas of the park used by visitors. In terms of the landscape impact upon the wider country park, the settlement gap and countryside, it is not considered that there would be any adverse or unacceptable impact. The erection of the fencing will not impinge upon the settlement gap or significantly alter the character of the

immediate area or wider designated countryside. As such the general requirements of Policies S5 and S6 are not contravened.

Heritage Impact

61. The concurrent listed buildings application will assess in more detail the impact of that proposed upon Victoria House and the country park. Notwithstanding, heritage impact is a material planning consideration and should form part of any decision made on the planning application.
62. In terms of Victoria House, the proposed fencing will only abut the existing boundary wall in two places externally and two places within the enclosed grounds of Victoria House and will be well away from Victoria House itself.
63. The Council's Heritage Consultant has suggested that the position and height of the fencing where it abuts the walls of the Victoria House car park could be revised so as to lessen its visual impact, as well as slightly increasing the height of the replacement gates to the rear boundary wall to match the height of the wall. Amended drawings to showing these suggested changes have now been received.
64. As to the wider country park, as has been set out above, whilst there will be a degree of visual impact, it is not considered that the fencing or other associated work will have any detrimental impact upon the park or its historic importance. As such, the requirements of Policies S8 and DM12 are considered to have been complied with.

Highways, Access & Parking

65. Several issues have been raised by those who have commented upon the application, but by far the main concern relates to the secondary access from Albert Avenue/Hound Road. These concerns principally relate to its use, with fears that a greater number of vehicles will wish to access the site via this entrance, resulting in increased traffic along Hound Road and in turn impacting upon pedestrian and highway safety, as well as the amenity of local residents and those using the country park.
66. Whilst these concerns are acknowledged, it is unclear where the suggestion came from that use of this access would increase as a result of the development proposed. Nowhere is it stated within any of the supporting documents that this will be the case. On the contrary, part of the reason for the proposed works to improve the main Hamble Lane access is to reduce the need for use of the Albert Avenue gate. It is also the case that there is no intention to alter how the Police HQ site is used or the number of staff employed there. This has been confirmed in writing directly from the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Hampshire and the Isle of Wight (OPCC). The OPCC have also confirmed that "The Albert Avenue access point will remain as emergency use only." This does not mean that the access will not be used, rather that it will only be used when there is a need for critical staff to access the site in the event that there is

an issue along Hamble Lane which restricts use of the main Hamble Lane entrance.

67. From a highways perspective, it has been confirmed by Hampshire Highways that both revised access points to the site are acceptable, and given there will be no increase in staff numbers or general use of the site, there are no foreseen issues in relation to traffic movement or impact upon the local highway network. They have however, highlighted that should there be a need to alter use of the Albert Avenue gate in a manner which could increase traffic movements along Hound Road, that further investigations and traffic surveys may be required. Given this is not the intention, it is not considered such surveys are required.
68. In terms of parking provision, the proposed development will not impact that currently available within the Police HQ site, which is sufficiently large enough to accommodate all authorised vehicles.
69. A further highway issue raised related to where the Hamble Rail Trail crosses Albert Avenue. Presently, the existing access barrier is relatively close to this crossing point, meaning that vehicles travelling along the road are generally travelling at lower speeds, allowing time for pedestrians and/or vehicles to stop and give way to the other. Concerns have been raised that by moving the new access gate further into the site and further away from the crossing point, that vehicles exiting the site will be travelling at higher speeds, thereby causing a potential danger to pedestrians. This is a reasonable concern which could be addressed via a number of possible options, from clear signage to physical traffic calming measures. No details of how this could be achieved have been included with the planning application but is something that can be conditioned should the application be approved. Such a condition is recommended, requiring details of what measures to be submitted, approved and implemented prior to the new gate coming into operation.
70. Overall, in relation to issues of highway impact, access and parking, that proposed will have no increased or wider impact upon the locality and is considered to accord with Policies DM1, DM13 and DM14 of the adopted Local Plan.

Amenity

71. Although some residential properties do neighbour the site, the proposed position of the security fencing is far enough away so as to have no impact in terms of light or outlook. However, there will be some impact upon the visual amenity of the country park, which has been discussed above. There will also be some impact upon how this part of the country park is used by the public. Some objections have been received highlighting that by fencing off the Police HQ site, members of the public will no longer be able to use the site for recreational purposes, which it is claimed has been a regular occurrence for as long as the site has been used by Hampshire Constabulary.

72. However, whilst members of the public are permitted to use designated footpaths through parts of the Police HQ site, the site is not open to the public. Therefore, any use by the public for recreational purposes is unauthorised and constitutes trespass.
73. The requirement for the proposed fencing is not only for site security against malicious actions, but also for the safety of staff and officers undertaking their duties, as well as for the protection of the public. The site is used for various training purposes, including situation training which can involve vehicles and other hazardous equipment. The currently unsecure nature of the site has occasionally resulted in members of the public inadvertently being caught up in training exercises, potentially placing them and officers at risk of harm. Such situations are obviously concerning and do not assist in the effective training of officers.
74. Whilst securing the site in the manner proposed will prevent future public access to the more sensitive areas of the Police HQ site, this access has been unauthorised and cannot be allowed to continue for reasons of safety and security. Although the view could be taken that this will impact the amenity of some members of the public, it is considered to be reasonable and necessary to allow Hampshire Constabulary to undertake its duties in a safer and more efficient manner. It also will not prevent the public from accessing or using the parts of the country park to which public access is allowed.

Trees & Nature Conservation

75. Given much of the proposed fence line will run through woodland, there will be a need to undertake some tree works and clearance of undergrowth, including removal of invasive species to provide access and erect the fencing. Details of the likely works required have been provided as part of the planning application in the form of an Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) and Ecological Appraisal, both of which have been reviewed by the Council's Tree Officer and Ecologist, who have confirmed that they are satisfied with the proposed working methods and mitigation proposals.
76. A condition is therefore recommended requiring all tree works to be undertaken in accordance with the approved AIA, and for a more details Precautionary Working Method Statement and Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) to be submitted and approved by the Council's Ecologist prior to works commencing. With these measures in place, the requirements of Policy DM11 will be met.

Biodiversity Net Gain:

77. In England, Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) is mandatory under Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021). Developers must deliver a BNG of 10%. This means a development will result in more or better quality natural habitat

than was there before development. However, certain development, such as householder applications, is exempt from needing to provide this improvement. Other exemptions include where development will impact less than 25 square meters of on-site habitat, or less than 5 metres of on-site linear habitat such as hedgerows. This is the case for the application site, where what limited on-site habitat there is will not be impacted by that proposed.

78. Due to the scale of that proposed, there is a requirement to demonstrate a biodiversity net gain of at least 10%. With the measures proposed in the supporting Net Gain Strategy, including badger gates and other measures to allow small animals to cross the fence line, it is predicted that the development will provide a 14.89% gain in area habitats and a 52.49% gain in linear habitats (i.e. hedgerows). This can be secured via the requirement for a formal Biodiversity Gain Plan and Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP) to be submitted and approved prior to works commencing. A condition to this effect is recommended.

Drainage

79. The proposed security fencing will have no impact upon drainage along its route. However, the proposed widening of the Hamble Lane access road will result in a greater area of hard surfacing. Whilst this is unlikely to have any significant impact upon drainage, it is nonetheless proposed to include new sustainable drainage, including permeable surfacing in new parking areas. This can be secured by condition.

Sustainability Measures and Climate Change

80. In July 2019, the Council declared a Climate Change and Environmental Emergency. In doing so it agreed, among other things, to: (a) put in place measures to ensure the Council's own operations and functions achieve carbon neutrality by 2025; (b) work with partners to aim for all projects and services delivered in the Borough to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030; (c) ensure that the Council's procurement policy recognises carbon neutrality as one of its primary considerations; and (d) recognise the urgency of action to mitigate and adapt to climate change in every decision taken by the Council. This is underpinned by the Climate and Environment Emergency Strategy 2020–2030 and the supporting Climate and Environmental Emergency Action Plan – Update June 2020.
81. The declaration of the Climate Change and Environmental Emergency demonstrates a strong commitment from the Council to achieve net zero. The NPPF, development plan and adopted local plan policy do not set this as a specific target, but it is a material consideration to be considered alongside all other material considerations. In any case addressing climate change is a core part of the NPPF and local plan policy. The need to support the economy is part of the Strategic Environmental Assessment for the adopted local plan, as is an assessment of climate impacts.

82. The NPPF aims for the need for housing to be met, and policy S2 of the Local Plan sets a target for 14,580 dwellings to be provided by 2036. The NPPF, Policies S1, DM2 and DM3 of the Local Plan and energy and water elements of the adopted Environmentally Sustainable Development SPD require development to be sustainable in terms of resource use, climate change and energy use.

83. When considering the impact of climate change, the new development would be expected to be resilient to the potential effects of climate change and expected to reduce/limit impacts on climate emissions as a result of the development or its use.

Planning Obligations / Considerations

84. The nature of the application is such that planning obligations to mitigate any impact from the development are not considered necessary.

Equalities Implications:

85. Section 149 of the Equalities Act 2010 created the public sector equality duty. Section 149 states:-

“A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:

- i. eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- ii. advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- iii. foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.”

86. When making policy decisions, the Council must take account of the equality duty and in particular any potential impact on protected groups. It is considered that this application does not raise any equality implications.

Conclusion:

87. Whilst the strong concerns of those who have commented upon the application are acknowledged, particularly in relation to use of the secondary Albert Avenue/Hound Road access gate, there is no suggestion that the erection of the security fencing and associated new access arrangements will result in increased traffic or disturbance. The development is purely to provide a more secure site for the safety of police staff and officers, as well as members of the public. There will be no increase in staff numbers or how the wider Police HQ site is used.

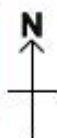
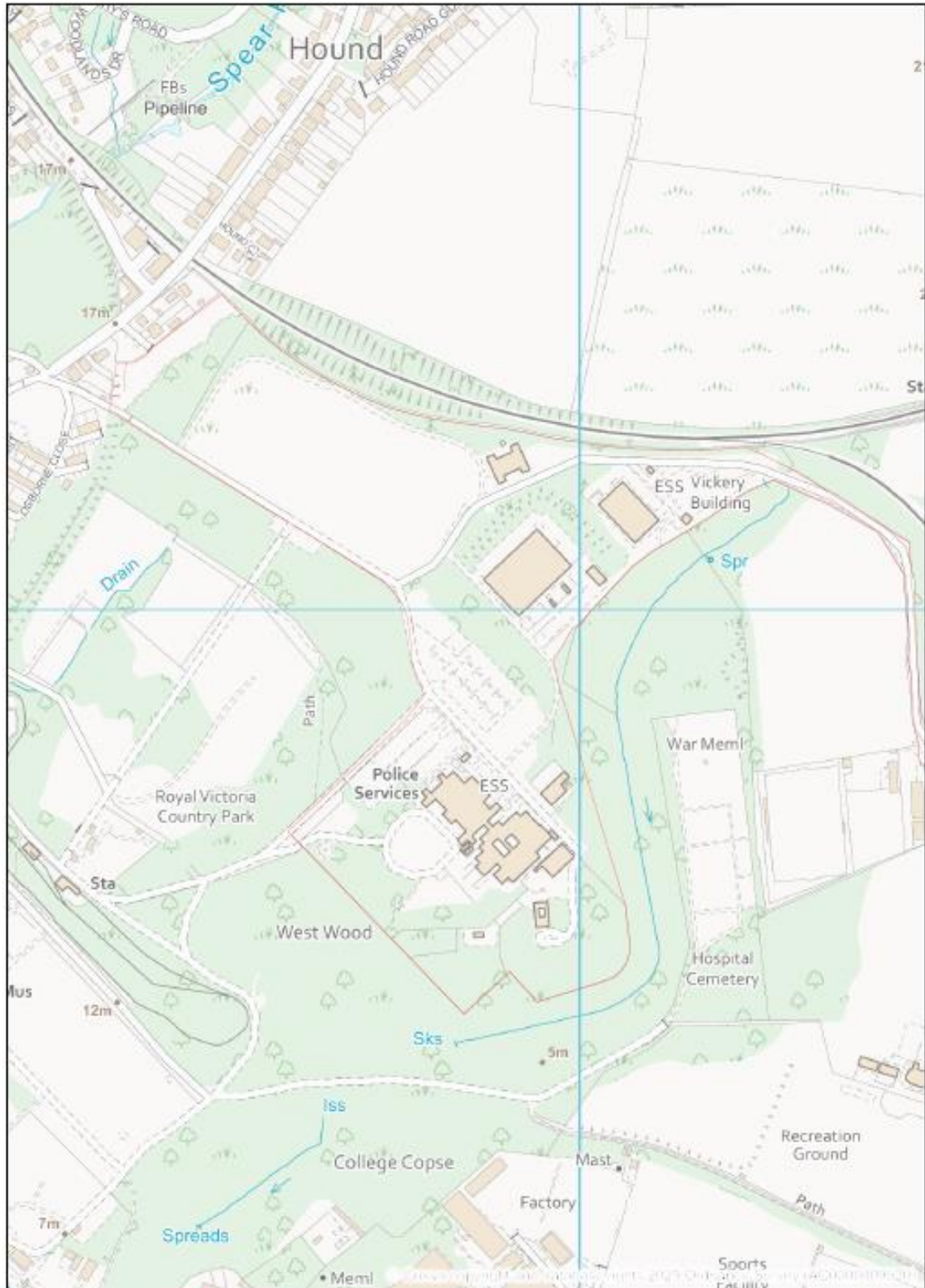
88. It is acknowledged that erection of the fencing will have a modest negative impact upon the visual amenity of some areas of the country park, namely along part of the Hamble Rail Trail route. However, this impact will be very

localised and will be mitigated by the introduction of low level lighting for the safety of the public using the route. Visual impact will be further mitigated once the existing woodland planting along the fence line reestablishes here and along the remainder of the proposed fence line.

89. In addition, the development will retain and repair the original boundary walls to Victoria House, thereby preserving and maintaining an important heritage asset.

90. In conclusion, it is not considered that the proposed development will result in any detrimental impact upon the amenity of neighbouring residents or members of the public who use the Royal Victoria Country Park. Whilst there will be some negative visual impact, this needs to be weighted against the need to ensure a safe and secure site for the benefit of police officers and staff, as well as members of the public. In this instance it is considered that this carries the greater planning weight. As such, the application is recommended for approval subject to the conditions set out at the beginning of this report.

F/25/98808



Address: Police Training Centre, Royal Victoria Country Park
Netley Abbey, SO31 4TS

Date: 13/03/2025 | Scale: 1:5000