

NORTH YORKSHIRE
LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

17 August 2006

Expansion of Catterick Garrison – Implications for Access

1.0 Purpose Of Report

1.1 To brief members on current proposals for the expansion of Catterick Garrison and to consider their implications for access

2.0 Background

2.1 At the last meeting of the Local Access Forum, members requested a report on the expansion of Catterick Garrison and its potential effects on the rights of way network.

3.0 Proposals

3.1 During March 2006, the Ministry of Defence undertook public consultation on its Long Term Development Plan for the Garrison. A briefing note on the Plan and the background to the MOD expansion proposals is included in appendix 1. Members will note that:

- There is a desire to move towards more of a 'mixed community' on the Garrison of both military and civilian populations.
- Future development of the Garrison 'Super-Garrison' could potentially involve an additional 2,500 dwellings over the next 15 years for both civilian and military purposes. The number of military personnel could expand by up to 3,600.
- There is uncertainty over the future scale of any new development as this is dependent upon decisions still to be taken nationally regarding asset disposals elsewhere in the country and troop re-locations from abroad
- There is also uncertainty over the location of any future development. Significant new housing allocations have been made on the Garrison itself but most development will be marketed through the private sector and some could take place over a much wider area of the sub-region. This makes it difficult to predict associated infrastructure needs, including for recreational access.

4.0 Consideration by the County Council

4.1 The County Council has established an officer working group under the chairmanship of the Assistant Director of Business and Environmental Services to liaise with Defence Estates on County Council issues. This links in with liaison arrangements already in place dealing with economic development and highway issues.

4.2 The Long Term Development Plan was reported to the County Council's Executive at its meeting on 28 March 2006. This established the authority's current position with regard to the MOD's proposals, the main points of which are summarised below:

- The long term Development Plan and the ambition to create a sustainable community are supported and welcomed.
- Work still needs to be done to fully justify the levels of proposed development.
- The Plan does not currently give enough certainty on the levels of growth proposed to ensure that an appropriate balance of housing, employment, community facilities and infrastructure are provided.
- There is an absence of strategic environmental guidance underpinning the proposals which recognises the particular environmental qualities of the natural and built environment.
- There is little clarity on the proposed housing supply impact on adjoining authorities.
- There is a need for a closer alignment of services and community facilities and a clear distinction between those that are to be used for MOD purposes only and those that are to be shared.

4.3 Whilst no specific points have been raised by the County Council to date in relation to access provision, the interest of the Local Access Forum in the issue was raised at the officer working group on 17 July 2006. Further discussions with the MoD and Defence Estates are planned.

5.0 Report on Public Consultation

5.1 In May 2006, the MoD published its draft report on public consultation summarising views expressed during the consultation period. The section dealing with open space, sport and recreation provides a précis of the comments made including:

- The need for new recreational provision including an assault course / climbing wall, re-instatement of the former ski slope, provision of a motorbike track, provision for a dancing hall; and provision for a skateboarding park
- Concern about the potential loss of open space to development
- Concern about the perceived quality of some of the existing facilities
- Concern about impacts of development upon Coronation Park
- Concern about improved linkages to the Yorkshire Dales National Park

5.2 In respect to the last point, in their comments, the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority believed that linkages to the neighbouring National Park should be enhanced in order to fully tap into the resource that it provides. The response from the MoD was as follows:

“ The MoD recognises that there is an opportunity to inform military personnel and their families of local attractions within the National Park. It is also recognised that the Yorkshire Dales offers a wide range of accommodation and restaurants, which could be marketed to the large numbers of visitors to the Garrison, many on business. With respect to enhancing the high quality environment of the National Park it should be noted that the Army Training Estate (North) has recently prepared a Management Development Plan (MDP) for the Catterick Training Area, which stretches into the National Park. The MDP will provide a basis for ongoing discussion with the National Park Authority expanding military training activities and public access to MoD land within the National Park.”

6.0 Comments

- 6.1 The regular dialogue now taking place between the County Council, District Council and the Ministry of Defence should ensure that there are opportunities for feeding in any points the Forum may wish to raise concerning future access provision.
- 6.2 A brief summary of the draft ‘network needs analysis’ that has been undertaken for the Catterick Garrison area as part of work on the North Yorkshire Rights of Way Improvement Plan is included as Appendix 2. This flags up the need to plan ahead to meet the recreational requirements of an expanding population and identifies some of the issues that would need to be taken into account.
- 6.3 At its meeting on 3 June 2005, the Local Access Forum discussed the potential impact of major development proposals on the demand for access to the countryside. This concluded that where large new

housing allocations were being proposed, the local authority should seek to reach agreement with the developer on funding appropriate improvements to the local footpath network to ensure that it has the capacity to accommodate the increased recreational needs of an expanded population. Following the meeting, the Secretary wrote to all planning authorities in the county requesting their support for this proposal.

- 6.4 For the reasons outlined in section 3 above, there is insufficient detail in the Long Term Development Plan to predict the impact of the Catterick Garrison proposals on future recreational demand with any degree of precision. However, it is clear that a major expansion in local population is anticipated and this will inevitably bring new demands on the local rights of way network that it may not be possible to meet.
- 6.5 It is suggested, therefore, that the Local Access Forum requests the Ministry of Defence to prepare an access management plan as part of the Catterick Garrison expansion proposals which assesses future access needs in relation to the rights of way network both within the Garrison area and in relation to links to the surrounding countryside, and which puts forward proposals to address those needs. The existing Army Training Estate Management Development Plan may provide a useful framework within which this work could be undertaken. The similar interests of the National Park Authority suggest the need for a partnership approach.
- 6.6 It would also be useful to invite a representative from the Ministry of Defence / Defence Estates to attend a future meeting of the Forum to outline the Catterick Garrison proposals in more detail and discuss their potential implications for access.

7.0 Recommendation

7.1 It is recommended that:

- (a) the Ministry of Defence be requested to prepare an access management plan, as part of the Catterick Garrison expansion proposals, which assesses future access needs in relation to the rights of way network both within the Garrison area and in relation to links to the surrounding countryside, and which puts forward proposals to address those needs; and
- (b) a representative from the Ministry of Defence / Defence Estates be invited to a future meeting of the Local Access Forum to outline their Catterick Garrison proposals in more detail and discuss their potential implications for access.

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Catterick Garrison Long Term Development Plan

Background

Catterick Garrison has been a military base since the First World War and several barracks were built in the 1930s. However, most of the housing seen today was built in the 1960s as part of a modernisation programme of barracks and married quarters. This development continued at a slower pace throughout the 80s and 90s. Recently, private house builders have been developing owner occupied housing on pockets of land within the Garrison, a Learning Centre for Darlington College of Technology opened in 1999 and in 2000 a new shopping centre was anchored around a new Tesco store.

Today the garrison has a total civilian and military population of 13,000 (over 8,800 work in the town including 6,500 military personnel and 2,300 civilians). Current proposals may see that population rise by 2,500 military personnel, although there is capacity within the land allocations available for up to 3,600 personnel (see below) and much depends upon strategic military decisions yet to be taken. The civilian population is also likely to expand if District Council housing allocations are fully utilised.

Current Proposals

The proposals arise from three main factors: a national programme to modernise service personnel accommodation, a decision to consolidate national military activities at a 'Super' Garrison and a programme of relocation away from the south-east of England.

The Catterick Garrison Long Term Development Plan (LTDP) has been commissioned by the Ministry of Defence (MOD). It provides a strategic long term vision, setting out a number of policies and supporting text for the development of the Garrison over the next 15-20 years to meet military and wider community needs.

It is proposed that the town will receive considerable housing and economic growth and investment in accordance with its 'Super' Garrison status. To facilitate this, the MOD expects the LTDP to form part of the Richmondshire Local Development Framework.

For administration purposes Catterick Garrison also refers to Marne, Topcliffe, Dishforth and Ripon barracks; largely self-contained communities living 'behind the wire'. Modernisation plans will be considered in the long term in these other locations.

The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 removed the Crown Immunity from MOD owned land. From 1st April all development is now subject to planning control with the majority of planning applications falling under the jurisdiction of Richmondshire District Council.

The Long Term Development Plan for Catterick Garrison outlines some key objectives and land use strategy principles:

Objectives

- To create a more balanced and mixed sustainable community
- To create a prosperous and vibrant town with a thriving town centre at its core
- To plan the expansion of the town's military functions
- To maintain and enhance the town's natural and built environment
- To identify development sites to meet future demands
- To strengthen the town's services and infrastructure for the long term

Land Use Strategy Principles:

- Concentrate military activities on the western and southern sides of the Garrison.
- Concentrate private sector development in the town centre and on the eastern side of the Garrison along Catterick Road.
- Maintain the 'green' appearance of the Garrison town by safeguarding grasslands, wetlands and recreational areas.

Capacity for Development

A capacity study revealed that there is sufficient land within the limits of the Garrison to accommodate a further 5-6 major units (equivalent to 3000-3600 military personnel). This will be through use of undeveloped sites and the restructuring of existing barracks at Pulmer Road and Loos Road.

Some boundary restructuring is also proposed to facilitate the proposed development.

Housing

Part of the LTDP is already being implemented. A recent proposed order of development (akin to a planning permission) for single living accommodation for 1,000 personnel, was refused by Richmondshire District Council Members last year. This has subsequently been re-submitted and approved. There has been positive feedback from the MOD on the lessons learnt in this exercise: namely the need for effective and early consultation with all relevant parties.

This development forms part of the “behind the wire” needs of the Garrison. However, as a result of the desire to create a more sustainable and integrated community other housing is proposed:

- To meet the housing needs of Richmondshire District, there will be a requirement of 500 dwellings to be developed within Catterick in 2005 - 2016, with a further 500 dwelling units to be developed in 2016 - 2021.
- To meet the housing needs of service families, there will be a requirement of 900 dwellings, to meet the current shortfall and the requirements of incoming major units, to be developed in 2005 – 2016, with a further 600 dwelling units to be developed in 2016 – 2021.

It is proposed that most of the housing needs of service families be met by the private sector. To that end, the MOD may subsidise military personnel to enable them to purchase a property on the open market.

Employment

To diversify the town’s employment base and create a more balanced town, two employment sites within the town’s boundary will be safeguarded for employment uses, these are:

- Former Colburn Barracks, South of Catterick Road (6ha)
- Site adjoining Richmond Walk, along Gough Road (0.7ha)

North Yorkshire Rights of Way Improvement Plan – Draft Analysis of Access Issues in the Catterick Garrison Area*

** Advance draft text, subject to change*

Catterick Garrison is one of the largest centres in North Yorkshire with around 13,000 people living at the Garrison. The Garrison is predicted to double in size with growth plans proposed by the MoD. MoD land covers some 2,400 acres including neighbouring training areas covering 20,000 acres in the Yorkshire Dales that are not designated as National Park. Expansion plans include creating a vibrant town with modern retail, sports and leisure facilities. The Garrison has supermarkets and a branch of Darlington College of Technology.

Access to and from surrounding communities:

- Catterick is within a short distance of Richmond and Colburn by footpath and footway;
- Residents of Tunstall, East Hauxwell and Catterick village can access the Garrison using a mix of rights of way, quiet roads and some negotiation of busy roads;
- Hudswell links to the Garrison by footpath but the route is used very little, perhaps because it involves steps that drop steeply towards Richmond.
- There are no direct off road routes for riders and cyclists, many are accessed via main roads leading from the centre.

Main issues:

- Plans to expand the Garrison will create demand from surrounding communities to access recreational and retail opportunities and demand from the expanding community to enjoy the surrounding countryside. Routes need to be planned now to cater for both of these needs.
- There is a good bridleway network around Tunstall to the south-east of Catterick Garrison but links to the Garrison are hampered by fragmentation by roads, particularly the high use of the military road running from Redmire to Catterick village. To the south of this road there are quiet roads and unclassified roads that can be used by riders, though some are narrow, twisty and used as 'rat runs'.
- There is a reasonable bridleway network to the north-east and south of Richmond in a corridor west of the A1. Links between this network and that around Tunstall are severed by busy roads. Grassed areas adjacent to roads and playing fields are being used by horse riders, a practice which is unlawful under MoD byelaws and is causing significant damage. A lack of bridges over the river Swale severs the rights of way network and community links at either side.

- Negotiation with owners of private roads has the potential to link rights of way together.

Subsidiary Issues:

- Hard surfaced routes are fairly dispersed. One available route leads south from the Garrison, another from Scotton and another from Colburn. Garrison expansion plans could increase the available network for people with different abilities.
- Recognition that there is a particularly high equestrian population in the area, including horses stabled at the Garrison.
- Road crossings that require particular attention with regard to vulnerable users includes one south of Scotton near Craggs Lane where a bridleway joins the road.
- Future improvements should integrate with the network of cycle tracks which was developed in and around the Garrison in 1999/2000.
- There is a walking network: from the south of the Garrison, near woodland; north to Richmond; and east and south-east to peripheral communities. There is permissive access to the south-west and west, which is an army training area regulated by operational need.
- Applications to down-grade bridleways to footpaths mean that alternative strategic non-motorised routes are required to connect demand centres together.
- Walks enable access to nearby woodland, the River Swale and views of Richmond but are restricted by the army training area to the south-west and west, though permissive access is available subject to military operations.