

Issue Date: June 2010	<b>UNCLASSIFIED</b> DIRECTORATE MAJOR PROJECT	Issue No: FINAL 2
3. Planning and Policy Context	<b>Hydrus Defence Exempt Environmental Appraisal Volume I</b>	Reference: MER-110-009278

### 3. PLANNING AND POLICY CONTEXT

#### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter of the Defence Exempt Environmental Appraisal (DEEA) provides an outline of the planning policy context within which the Proposed Development will be assessed. The chapter also considers the development proposals against the key policy issues.

The Government guidance pertaining to planning is contained within Planning Policy Guidance Notes (PPGs) and more recently Planning Policy Statements (PPSs). PPGs and PPSs represent national strategic policy on different aspects of planning and outline how local policies should conform to the wider planning process. The regional planning guidance relevant to the Application Site is set out in Regional Spatial Strategy 9: The South East Plan (Ref. 3-1). At the local level, the chapter goes on to consider the detailed development control context as set out in the saved policies of the West Berkshire District Local Plan (Ref. 3-2) and other Supplementary Planning Guidance prepared by the authority.

The following documents provide the key national, regional and local guidance relevant to the proposal and therefore provide the basis on which the planning application must be considered.

The chapter has been prepared by RPS Group.

#### 3.2 National Planning Policy

National guidance on planning matters is contained within PPGs, PPSs, Circulars and other Statements of Government policy. Under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (Ref. 3-3) some PPGs have been superseded by PPSs.

The PPGs and PPSs relevant to the Proposed Development are:

- PPS1: Delivering Sustainable Development (Ref. 3-4);
- Planning and Climate Change – Supplement to PPS1 (Ref. 3-5);
- PPS4: Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth (Ref. 3-6);
- PPS5: Planning for the Historic Environment (Ref. 3-7);
- PPS7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas (Ref. 3-8);
- PPS9: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation (Ref. 3-9);
- PPS10: Planning for Sustainable Waste Management (Ref. 3-10);
- PPS11: Regional Spatial Strategies (Ref. 3-11);
- PPS12: Local Spatial Planning (Ref. 3-12);
- PPG13: Transport (Ref. 3-13);
- PPG17: Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation (Ref. 3-14);
- PPS22: Renewable Energy (Ref. 3-15);
- PPS23: Planning and Pollution Control (Ref. 3-16);

- PPG24: Planning and Noise (Ref. 3-17); and
- PPS25: Development and Flood Risk (Ref. 3-18).

##### 3.2.1 PPS1: Delivering Sustainable Development

This PPS sets out the Government's vision for planning and principles that should form the foundation of the planning system. PPS1 complements other national policies which should be read in conjunction with it. The document emphasises that sustainable development is a cornerstone of the planning system along with the need to ensure that residential, commercial and industrial developments are located in suitable locations.

PPS1 states that planning should facilitate and promote sustainable patterns of urban and rural development by:

- Making suitable land available for development in line with economic, social and environmental objectives to improve the quality of life;
- Contributing to sustainable economic growth;
- Protecting and where possible enhancing the character of the natural and historic environment and the quality and character of the countryside for existing communities;
- Ensuring high quality development through good design; and
- Ensuring that development supports and makes a positive economic contribution to existing communities and contributes to the creation of safe and sustainable communities with good access to jobs and key services.

##### 3.2.2 Planning and Climate Change – Supplement to PPS1

This document supports PPS1 by setting out how planning should contribute to reducing emissions and stabilising climate change and take into account the unavoidable consequences. Paragraph 9 sets out the Government's key planning objectives:

- Make a full contribution to delivering the Government's Climate Change Programme and energy policies, and in doing so contribute to global sustainability;
- In providing for the homes, jobs, services and infrastructure needed by communities, and in renewing and shaping the places where they live and work, secure the highest viable resource and energy efficiency and reduction in emissions;
- Deliver patterns of urban growth and sustainable rural developments that help secure the fullest possible use of sustainable transport for moving freight, public transport, cycling and walking; and, overall, reduce the need to travel especially by car;
- Secure new development and shape places that minimise vulnerability, and provide resilience to climate change, in ways that are consistent with social cohesion and inclusion;

- Conserve and enhance biodiversity, recognising that the distribution of habitats and species will be affected by climate change;
- Reflect the development needs and interests of communities and enable them to contribute effectively to tackling climate change; and
- Respond to the concerns of business and encourage competitiveness and technological innovation in mitigating and adapting to climate change.

##### 3.2.3 PPS4: Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth

PPS4 sets out the Government's policy framework for planning for sustainable economic development in urban and rural areas. This document outlines how regional and local planning bodies are to create a clear economic vision and strategy for their area which positively and proactively encourages sustainable economic growth.

##### 3.2.4 PPS5: Planning for the Historic Environment

PPS5 replaces previous PPGs on Planning and the Historic Environment (PPG15), and Archaeology and Planning (PPG16). Those parts of the historic environment that have significance because of their historic, archaeological, architectural or artistic interest are referred to in PPS5 as heritage assets. The Government's overarching aim is that the historic environment and its heritage assets should be conserved and enjoyed for the quality of life they bring to this and future generations.

Under policy HE7, in decision making, local planning authorities are required to seek to identify and assess the particular significance of any element of the historic environment that may be affected by the relevant proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of; evidence produced with the application; any designated records; the historic environment record and similar sources of information; the heritage assets themselves; the outcome of the usual consultations with interested parties, and; where appropriate expert advice. In considering the impact of a proposal on any heritage asset, local planning authorities should take into account the particular nature of the significance of the heritage asset and the value that it holds for future generations. This understanding should be used by the local planning authority to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposals.

When considering planning applications for development that affect the setting of a heritage asset including Historic Parks and Gardens, policy HE10 requires local planning authorities to treat favourably applications that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to or better reveal the significance of the asset. When considering applications that do not do this, local planning authorities should weigh any such harm against the wider benefits of the application. The greater the negative impact on the significance of the heritage asset, the greater the benefits that will be needed to justify approval.

Where an application site includes, or is considered to have the potential to include, heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should, under policy HE6, require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where desk-based research is insufficient to properly assess the interest, a field evaluation.

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### 3.2.5 PPS7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas

PPS7 sets out the Government's planning policies for rural areas, including largely undeveloped countryside up to the fringes of urban areas. The Government's objectives for rural areas include the continued protection of open countryside; the focussing of development in or next to existing towns and villages; sustainable economic growth; and the discouragement of development of greenfield land.

Under its key principles PPS7 states that:

*'New building development in the open countryside away from existing settlements, or outside areas allocated for development in development plans, should be strictly controlled; the Government's overall aim is to protect the countryside for the sake of its intrinsic character and beauty, the diversity of its landscapes, heritage and wildlife, the wealth of its natural resources and so it may be enjoyed by all.'*

It then goes on to say:

*'Priority should be given to the re-use of previously-developed (brownfield) sites in preference to the development of greenfield sites, except in cases where there are no brownfield sites available, or these brownfield sites perform so poorly in terms of sustainability considerations (for example, in their remoteness from settlements and services) in comparison with greenfield sites.'*

### 3.2.6 PPS9: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation

PPS9 sets out planning policies on protection of biodiversity and geological conservation through the planning system. A joint Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) (06/2005) and Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) (01/2005) Circular (Ref. 3-19) has been published to accompany this PPS. This sets out the wide range of legislative provisions at the international and national level that can impact on planning decisions affecting biodiversity and geological conservation issues. A separate guide has also been published (Ref. 3-20) which sets out good practice in relation to planning for biodiversity and geological conservation.

### 3.2.7 PPS10: Planning for Sustainable Waste Management

PPS10 sets out the Government's policy for sustainable waste management, which seeks to protect human health and the environment by producing less waste and using it as a resource wherever possible.

### 3.2.8 PPS11: Regional Spatial Strategies

The overall objective of PPS11 is one of sustainable development based upon key initiatives which include maintenance of high stable levels of economic and employment growth together with social progress that recognises the needs of everyone, effective protection of the environment and prudent use of natural resources.

### 3.2.9 PPS12: Local Spatial Planning

PPS12 sets out the Government's policy on local spatial planning, which plays a central role in the overall task of place-shaping and in the delivery of land uses

and associated activities. It sets out Government policy on how Local Development Frameworks (LDF) should be prepared.

The LDF is a portfolio of documents which collectively deliver the spatial planning strategy for a local planning authority area. LDFs are intended to streamline the planning process and promote a pro-active, positive approach to managing development. They must be prepared with the active involvement of the community, and should be integrated with other plans and strategies.

### 3.2.10 PPG13: Transport

PPG13 seeks to shape the pattern of development and influence the location, scale, density, design and mix of land uses whilst helping to reduce both the need to travel, and the length of journeys. PPG13 also seeks to make it safer and easier for people to access jobs, shopping, leisure facilities and services by public transport, walking and cycling.

Under PPG13, local authorities are urged to actively manage patterns of urban growth and to accommodate housing and other uses at locations which are highly accessible by public transport, walking and cycling. It also urges authorities to ensure that development comprising jobs, shopping, leisure and services offers a realistic choice of access by a variety of modes of transport other than the car.

The guidance also encourages the implementation of Travel Plans amongst businesses and organisations. Travel Plans should aim to reduce car usage and increase the use of more sustainable transportation methods such as public transport, walking and cycling. It introduces maximum parking standards and asks local authorities not to require developers to provide more spaces than they themselves wish to provide. Safe, convenient and secure cycle parking should also be provided within development proposals. The Government considers that Travel Plans should be submitted alongside planning applications which are likely to have significant transportation implications.

### 3.2.11 PPG17: Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation

This guidance note seeks to emphasise the importance that Government places on the influence open space, sport and recreation have on people's quality of life. The guidance encourages the provision of open and recreational space in and around commercial and industrial areas, and also seeks to provide better rights of way and other facilities for walkers, cyclists and horse-riders.

### 3.2.12 PPS22: Renewable Energy

PPS22 sets out Government objectives and national planning policies, which includes the key principles of renewable energy, regional targets, regional spatial strategies and local development documents, and locational considerations, as well as other considerations.

### 3.2.13 PPS23: Planning and Pollution Control

PPS23 complements the pollution control framework under the Pollution Prevention and Control Act 1999 (Ref. 3-21), the Pollution Prevention and Control Regulations 2000 (Ref. 3-22) and the Environmental Permitting Regulations 2009 (Ref. 3-23). This PPS advises that any consideration of the quality of land, air or

water and potential impacts arising from development which may possibly lead to impacts on health, is capable of being a material planning consideration.

The planning system plays a key role in protecting and improving the natural environment, public health and safety, and amenity. This is achieved by attaching conditions to allow developments which would otherwise not be environmentally acceptable to proceed, and preventing harmful development which cannot be made acceptable even with mitigation.

### 3.2.14 PPG24: Planning and Noise

Noise can have a significant impact on the environment and quality of life enjoyed by individuals and communities. The aim of PPG24 is to provide advice on how the planning system can be used to minimise the adverse impact of noise without placing unreasonable restrictions on development.

The impact of noise can be a material planning consideration in the determination of planning applications. The planning system has the task of guiding development to the most appropriate locations. The PPG recommends that engineering, layout and administrative methods can be used to control the source or limit exposure to noise. The PPG requires that measures proposed should be proportionate and reasonable to the development proposed.

### 3.2.15 PPS25: Development and Flood Risk

PPS25 states that all forms of flooding and their impact on the natural and built environment are material planning considerations. PPS25 accords with PPS1 which sets out the Government's objectives for the planning system and how planning should facilitate and promote sustainable patterns of development, avoiding flood risk and accommodating the impacts of climate change.

PPS25 advises that positive planning plays an important role in applying the Government's policy on flood risk management. The aim is to avoid, manage and reduce flood risk by taking account of the following issues during decisions on plans and applications:

- Present and future flood risk, involving both the statistical probability of a flood occurring and the scale of its potential consequences; and
- The wider implications for flood risk of development located outside flood risk areas.

Risk is managed by only permitting development in areas of flood risk when there are no reasonably available sites in areas of lower flood risk and where the benefits of the development outweigh the risk from flooding. Risk to new development is reduced through location, layout, design and by incorporating Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS).

## 3.3 Regional Planning Policy

### 3.3.1 The South East Plan

The South East Plan is the Regional Spatial Strategy for the South East of England, and was adopted in May 2009. It sets out the long term spatial planning framework for the region over the years 2006 – 2026.

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The South East Plan is based on the following six spatial planning principles:

- 1) A co-ordinated approach to managing change within the region's key settlements and their hinterlands. This will be achieved through the co-ordination of policy in nine identified sub-regions.
- 2) Focusing new development on the South East's network of regional hubs, according to their role and function, whilst promoting their accessibility and inter-linkages between them. This will include new development in five strategic development areas.
- 3) Pursuing a continuing strategy of urban focus and urban renaissance, by encouraging accessible mixed-use development in the region's network of town centres and by seeking a high quality built environment in all areas.
- 4) Spreading opportunities more evenly around the region through co-ordination of regeneration and social inclusion activity in the region's lagging areas.
- 5) Respecting and maintaining the general pattern of the South East's settlements and undeveloped areas, through the protection of the region's identified Green Belts.
- 6) Supporting the vitality and chance of the region's rural areas, whilst protecting the valuable natural and historic assets of the region.

In terms of design and construction, Policy CC4 requires all new development to adopt and incorporate sustainable construction techniques including:

- Consideration of how all aspects of development form can contribute to securing high standards of sustainable development including aspects such as energy, water efficiency and biodiversity gain;
- Designing to increase the use of natural lighting, heat and ventilation, and for a proportion of the energy supply of new development to be secured from decentralised and renewable or low carbon sources;
- Securing reduction and increased recycling of construction and demolition waste and procurement of low impact materials; and
- Designing for flexible use and adaptation to reflect changing lifestyles and needs and the principle of 'whole life costing'.

As far as sustainable economic development is concerned, Policy RE1 states that local development frameworks will provide an enabling context to ensure that the regional economy contributes fully to the UK's long-term competitiveness. Policy RE2 states that the development of nationally and regionally important sectors and clusters will be supported through collaborative working between local authorities, local strategic and economic partnerships, South East of England Development Agency (SEEDA) and the business community. Where possible, local development documents should include policies which:

- Ensure that land and premises are available to meet the specific requirements of nationally and regionally important sectors and clusters;
- Enhance, develop and promote local assets that can facilitate the development of sectors and clusters; and

- Promote and support non-land use initiatives that benefit and foster the growth and development of new and existing nationally and regionally important sectors and clusters.

The accompanying text states that supporting both innovation and the role of the knowledge-driven industry is important to realise the Plan's objective of sustainable economic development in the South East. It recognises that the region has a number of sectors that will be significant to realising this objective. Listed among six sectors of the regional economy which have the greater capacity to deliver growth through a sectorised focus on innovation and development of new products and services, is the aerospace and defence sector.

AWE Aldermaston is centrally located within the Western Corridor and Blackwater Valley sub-region. Among the challenges faced by the region is how to realise the economic potential of the area, without comprising the quality of life of its residents, and spread the benefits to all places and sections of the community given that the sub-region contains some of the most deprived wards in the region.

On the 27<sup>th</sup> May 2010, the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government wrote to Council Leaders in England informing them of the Government's intention to abolish Regional Spatial Strategies, and return decision making powers on housing and planning to local councils. The Secretary of State stated in the letter, that he expected Local Planning Authorities and the Planning Inspectorate to have regard to the letter as a material planning consideration (Ref. 3-24).

### 3.4 Local Planning Policy

#### 3.4.1 West Berkshire Local Plan Saved Policies 1991-2006

In accordance with the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 local councils have reviewed their existing planning policies and any that are agreed with the Secretary of State to still be applicable have been 'saved' and continue to be a consideration for planning applications until they are replaced by Local Development Framework documents (known as Local Development Documents (LDDs)).

In the West Berkshire Local Plan Saved Policies there is no site-specific policy for AWE Aldermaston. However Section 4.5 of the West Berkshire Local Plan deals with the retention of existing employment sites. Paragraph 4.5.2A states:

*"A number of MOD sites are located in West Berkshire rural areas, which are extremely important to the local economy. The sites concerned are AWE Burghfield & Aldermaston and RAF Welford and the army establishment at Hermitage".*

Paragraph 2.52 of the West Berkshire District Local Plan refers specifically to defence and government establishments in the countryside and states at 2.52.1 that:

*"Applications submitted for Crown development relating to existing establishments would be supported where required for the continuation of operational activities related to the use of the establishment within the context of other policies in the Plan".*

In November 2005, AWE published a "site development strategy" that made clear the MoD's position, and stated the need for AWE Aldermaston to continue its operations.

The AWE Aldermaston site itself is not designated within the Local Plan for any site-specific purpose. However, the following saved development control policies are relevant to the AWE Aldermaston site:

#### Policy OVS.1: Overall Strategy

The Council will follow the existing settlement pattern and hierarchy found within the district area in seeking sustainable locations for development which minimise the need to travel and with appropriate access to public transport services and other community facilities. In this context the Council would prefer to see the redevelopment of brownfield sites (land previously developed) than the use of 'greenfield' (undeveloped) land.

#### Policy OVS.2: Core Policy and Planning Benefits

The Council will require, where appropriate, all development proposals which accord with other policies of this Plan to:

- Show a high standard of design including landscape treatment which respects the character and appearance of the area;
- Retain and protect important landscape and nature conservation features and provide for further landscape treatment where relevant to the safeguarding of local amenity;
- Retain important open space areas of recreational and /or amenity value within or on the edge of settlements;
- Preserve or enhance the character and setting of listed buildings and conservation areas;
- Preserve the site and setting of Scheduled Ancient Monuments or sites of especial local archaeological significance;
- Use materials of a quality appropriate to the nature of the development, the site and its surroundings;
- Comply with highway standards in respect of access, parking and pedestrian movement including where appropriate links to adjoining land;
- Safeguard public rights of way and the amenities of adjoining land uses and occupiers, including where relevant the provision of alternative rights of way of equal or enhanced quality; and
- Provide buildings and spaces with suitable access arrangements and facilities for use by people with disabilities.

#### OVS.3: Planning and Community Benefits

The Council will need to be satisfied that the infrastructure, services and amenities made necessary by the development are provided or will be provided at the appropriate time so as to ensure the proper planning of the area. In addition, when considering proposals for development, opportunities will also be sought for securing environmental improvements and community benefits.

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Policy OVS.5: Environmental Nuisance and Pollution Control

The Council will only permit development proposals where they do not give rise to unacceptable pollution of the environment. In order to minimise the adverse impact on the environment or loss of amenity proposals should have regard to:

- The need to ensure the adequate storage and disposal of waste materials;
- The installation of equipment to minimise the harmful effects of emissions;
- The hours, days or seasons of operations; and
- Locating potential nuisance or pollution activities onto the least sensitive parts of the site or where the impacts can be best contained by physical or other appropriate measures.

Policy OVS.6: Noise Pollution

The Council will require appropriate measures to be taken in the location, design, layout and operation of development proposals in order to minimise any adverse impact as a result of noise generated. Special consideration is required where noisy development is proposed in or near Sites of Special Scientific Interest or which would harm the quiet enjoyment of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Proposals for noise-sensitive developments should have regard to the following:

- Existing sources of noise e.g. from roads, railways and other forms of transport, industrial and commercial developments, sporting, recreation and leisure facilities;
- The need for appropriate sound insulation measures; and
- The noise exposure levels outlined in Annex 1 of PPG24. In the context of this policy noise sensitive uses are housing, schools and hospitals.

Policy OVS.7: Hazardous Substances

The Council will not permit development which on advice from the Health and Safety Executive would cause unacceptable risk or harm to personal safety due to the presence of hazardous substances on the site or other land in the vicinity.

Policy OVS.8: Hazardous Substances

Hazardous Substances Consent will not be granted where on advice from the Health and Safety Executive the risk arising to persons in the vicinity from the presence of a hazardous substance would be unacceptable.

Policy ENV.18: Control of Development in the Countryside

The nature and scale of development in rural areas should seek to encourage and sustain balanced rural communities. Development outside of settlements, allocated sites and other defined areas will be permitted only where:

- It will benefit the rural economy in accordance with Structure Plan policy C2 and Local Plan policies ENV.16, ENV.19 and ENV.20; or

- It will provide beneficial use of a brownfield site in accordance with Structure Plan policy BU3 and Local Plan policies OVS.1, OVS.2, HSG.4 and ECON.2; or
- It is within the permissible categories of housing development in the countryside in accordance with Local Plan policy HSG.2; and
- Provided it will maintain or enhance the environment and is appropriate in scale, form, impact, character and siting to its location in the countryside.

Policy Econ.2A: Employment Schemes on Non-Protected Sites

Proposals to redevelop, re-use or extend non-protected existing employment generating sites will be permitted, provided that:

- The proposed buildings and structures are of a scale and character appropriate to the nature of the site and sympathetic to the surrounding environment;
- Landscape proposals are included where necessary as an integral part of the scheme to help blend the development into the wider environment;
- The proposals make provision for employment opportunities important to the local economy;
- There is no material intensification of use leading to increased traffic activity or other forms of environmental intrusion;
- There are no transport/highway objections and adequate provision has been made for access and parking; and
- The development does not give rise to pressures for housing development additional to the provision made in the local plan.

Although the AWE Aldermaston site does not have any special environmental designations, it does lie immediately south of Aldermaston Court which is designated as an Historic Park and Garden. The Application Site is also in close proximity to protected employment sites and a Site of Special Scientific Interest. Therefore, the following policies should be noted in the context of any possible development to AWE Aldermaston.

Policy ENV.1: The Wider Countryside

The Council in considering proposals for development will seek to conserve and enhance the special features and diversity of the different 'landscape character areas' found within West Berkshire.

Policy ENV.9: Nature Conservation Sites (Including Sites of Special Scientific Interest)

The Council in considering development proposals which could affect nature conservation sites or interests will have regard to:

- Expert nature conservation advice;
- The ecological value and objectives for which the site was classified or designated;

- The integrity of the site in terms of its nature conservation or ecological relationships;
- The likely impacts of cumulative uses or developments on the nature conservation interest and value of the site;
- The need to sustain the ecological diversity of the site;
- The presence of protected species and appropriate habitat area/wildlife corridors including those which abut the West Berkshire boundary;
- Proposed measures to safeguard and enhance existing nature conservation and habitat area including wildlife corridors; and
- The opportunity to create new habitat areas to help improve the conservation status of locally vulnerable species.

### 3.5 West Berkshire Local Development Framework

The West Berkshire Local Development Framework (LDF) will replace the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991 - 2006. It will be produced in consultation with the local community. The policies in the LDF will also need to take account of the South East Plan, changing national planning policies, and the latest development needs in West Berkshire's communities.

The Council will produce the following documents as part of the LDF:

- West Berkshire Core Strategy; and
- Site Allocations.

The lead document in the LDF is known as the Core Strategy and sets out the overall planning strategy without being specific about sites.

West Berkshire Council prepared the West Berkshire Planning Strategy (Ref 3-25) which was formally submitted to the Secretary of State on 22nd September 2006. This document recognised the important role that AWE plays in the District's economy and the need for cross boundary working in regard to the future of the area. However, the Council resolved to withdraw the Planning Strategy in December 2006 as a result of guidance indicating the need to be more detailed and specific over locations for growth.

The Council published a proposed submission version of their Core Strategy in February 2010. Paragraph 4.35 states that AWE's two bases at Aldermaston and Burghfield are important providers of local jobs, which may have implications for the future level of development. In paragraph 5.40, it is noted that the AWE sites are, along with the Districts' Protected Employment Areas, strategically important employment areas for the District and for the entire sub-region.

In general terms, proposed policy CS10 states that the "intensification, redevelopment and upgrade of existing, vacant and/or derelict employment sites and premises will be permitted for employment generation uses". (Ref. 3-26).

None of the Development Plan Documents have been adopted at the time of writing. The Council is looking to begin adoption of these documents by March 2011.

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### 3.6 Material Planning Considerations

Adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPGs) and the more recent Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) are material planning considerations in the determination of planning applications. These documents aim to expand on, or add detail to, the policies laid out in the saved policies of the existing Local Plan, or the new Development Plan Documents.

West Berkshire Council has produced a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) (Ref. 3-27) series on design and sustainability issues. The SPD comprises several documents which form the design guide series 'Quality Design - West Berkshire'. The series has been produced to help developers to create places of high quality design which are sustainable, secure and accessible to all. The SPD series applies to all new developments across the District, including residential and commercial.

### 3.7 AWE Site Wide Policies

In addition to the statutory documentation, there are a number of studies, strategies and guidance documents developed by AWE that have informed the Proposed Development and ensure that sustainable development principles are incorporated into its sites.

In 2002 AWE published a Site Development Strategy Plan (SDSP) (Ref. 3-28) that involved the consolidation of the majority of AWE's activities at Aldermaston. By 2003 it was clear that due to changes in the regulatory framework and operational issues this was impractical and the decision was made to retain and maintain a two-site operation in relation to AWE's principal activities.

In July 2005 the then Secretary of State for Defence announced a programme aimed at the refurbishment and renewal of facilities at both sites including those required to test systems in the context of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. The overall approach to the modernisation of AWE Aldermaston and Burghfield put forward in the programme is based on refurbishing and replacing facilities constructed principally in the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s.

A Site Development Context Plan (SDCP08) (Ref. 3-29) and associated Illustrative Framework Plan were produced to describe the approach to the development of both sites. The key aims of the approach were:

- To improve the standards of design;
- To enhance the environmental performance;
- To reduce the environmental impacts;
- To manage traffic; and
- To maximise benefits to the community.

The process of refurbishment needs to be achieved whilst maintaining continuity in relation to the activities and processes occurring on the sites, and having regard to important issues such as decommissioning, safety and security which are all to be carried out in the context of nuclear site licences and other stringent controls. This Proposed Development was referred to in the Illustrative Framework Plan for Aldermaston in the SDCP08 as references 9 and 10.

In addition, decommissioning, safety and security factors support the view that there is no practical and sustainable alternative to AWE's continued presence at Aldermaston and Burghfield.

AWE has a long history of positive co-existence with the local community and provides significant employment and other economic benefits. AWE Aldermaston is a brownfield site that should be re-used in accordance with Government policy.

### 3.8 Summary and Conclusions

National policy and guidance emphasise the need to take environmental and social issues into consideration as a routine part of all development proposals. In particular, the PPGs and PPSs together with other statements of Government policy require developers to take into account matters such as: urban design and layout (in terms of practicality, location aesthetics, energy conservation and safety); nature conservation and protection; preservation and minimisation of pollution; optimising land use and transportation considerations in designing proposals.

The overriding objective in national policy and advice is one of sustainable development with an emphasis on the efficient use of land and the location of development proposals where they can be close to good public transportation, pedestrian and cycle links/facilities.

The RSS takes these objectives further by advocating the concentration of development in and around urban areas throughout the South East, ensuring that new developments are well designed, and consistent with the overall strategy for sustainable development. The development proposed at AWE Aldermaston would meet these objectives.

The Proposed Development has been designed to comply with Government guidance, and to meet policy, strategic and local requirements. The Proposed Development conforms with their overriding objectives of serving the employment and other needs of the locality, whilst fulfilling the principles of sustainability.

### 3.9 References

Ref. 3-1 Government Office for the South East (2009). The South East Plan: Regional Spatial Strategy for the South East of England.

Ref. 3-2 West Berkshire Council (June 2007). West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991 – 2006 Saved Policies.

Ref. 3-3 HMSO (2004). The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

Ref. 3-4 Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) (2004). Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development.

Ref. 3-5 Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) (2007). Planning and Climate Change – Supplement to Planning Policy Statement 1.

Ref. 3-6 DCLG (2009). Planning Policy Statement 4: Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth.

Ref. 3-7 DCLG (2010). Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment

Ref. 3-8 ODPM (2004) Planning Policy Statement 7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas.

Ref. 3-9 ODPM (2005). Planning Policy Statement 9: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation.

Ref. 3-10 ODPM (2005). Planning Policy Statement 10: Planning for Sustainable Waste Management.

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