

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This section contains site specific policies and proposals relevant to the former Church Fenton Airbase settlement and the airbase itself, both of which are located in Ulleskelf Parish. General policies applicable throughout the Plan area are set out in Part One of the Local Plan.
- 1.2 Baseline data referred to generally reflects the situation at the time the Second Set of Proposed Pre-Inquiry Changes were published (February 1999) unless specifically updated through modifications to the Plan or through factual changes consequent to modifications to the proposals map, such as additional recreation space and/or amenity space.

2. LOCATION

- 2.1 The airbase is located approximately 1 km from the eastern end of Church Fenton village and 2 km south of Ulleskelf. Busk Lane, an unclassified road, passes through the airbase and links all three settlements.

3. FORM AND CHARACTER

- 3.1 The airbase was established in the 1930s and has since that time been used as an operational airfield, primarily as a fighter base and more recently as a training location. Although the airfield remains operational, the majority of the base buildings ceased to be used in 1992.
- 3.2 There are four elements to the airbase:
- a) *The former married quarters* – There are two distinct areas of former married quarters. One consists of detached and semi-detached dwellings to the west of Busk Lane with the second located at the northern end of the airbase to the east of Busk Lane which is largely composed of terraced dwellings. These dwellings have been refurbished by a property company who have then sold them individually on the open market.
 - b) *The operational airfield* – The airfield continues in daily use by training aircraft, as a satellite airfield to Linton-on-Ouse. The RAF's requirement now only consists of the runway area itself and adjoining hangers, administration and air traffic control buildings.
 - c) *The redundant airbase* – The majority of the airbase has been disused since July 1992 and was officially declared surplus to requirements in June 2000. These buildings consist of barrack blocks, buildings formerly housing social facilities and other miscellaneous uses including offices and storage. These buildings are located on the main campus east of Busk Lane, but a smaller area containing the former officers' mess building is located to the south of the residential area on the western side of Busk Lane.
 - d) *The sports field* – the former sports field for the airbase is located to the north of the main base and residential area. This was also officially declared as surplus to requirements in June 2000.

4. HOUSING AND POPULATION

- 4.1 The married quarters, consisting of approximately 120 dwellings, have been refurbished and sold individually on the open market during 1997/98 onwards. It is estimated that a resident population of around 300 persons will have resulted from this process.

5. EMPLOYMENT

- 5.1 Only a small number of personnel are now permanently based at RAF Church Fenton and there are no other significant employers currently located at the airbase.

6. SERVICES AND FACILITIES

- 6.1 There are no existing retail or education services available within the airbase settlement itself. Church Fenton village provides the nearest local services including a primary school and local shops.

Recreation

- 6.2 Recreational open space facilities include a children's play area in each of the two residential areas. There are also a number of local amenity spaces within both areas.

Public Transport

- 6.3 As at July 2002, bus service Nos 492/3, between Tadcaster, Sherburn in Elmet and Pontefract, passing through Church Fenton Airbase, operates at least 8 buses per day in each direction on a 1.5-2 hourly interval from Monday to Friday between approximately 0700 hours and 1800 hours. There is a slightly reduced service on Saturdays and no Sunday service. Rail services to Leeds and York are available from Church Fenton and Ulleskelf stations.

Public Utilities

- 6.4 Water supplies can be made available but a substantial off-site water main will be required. The sewerage and sewage treatment facilities serving the remainder of the airbase are currently operated privately by the MOD. Therefore proposals for the redevelopment of the redundant airbase would need to consider how adequate sewerage and sewage treatment facilities can be provided.

7. STRATEGY

Constraints

- 7.1 The airbase has a relatively remote location, well away from the primary road network.
- 7.2 The RAF airfield remains operational and although currently relatively lightly used, the intensity of future use cannot be guaranteed and there is always the potential of increased noise problems occurring.

Development Strategy

- 7.3 The airbase itself represents a substantial brownfield site. However, its location, remote from existing major roads and service centres and facilities makes its use for a mainstream housing or intensive industrial development unsustainable from a traffic and travel aspect. The current proximity of the operational airfield also creates uncertainty as

to the acceptability of neighbouring uses, both from security and potential noise aspect. No sites have been allocated for further residential development.

- 7.4 The airbase however does present an opportunity for certain uses, or mix of uses, which the District Council would wish to see realised in an appropriate manner as outlined in Paragraphs 8.3-8.7 and POLICY CFA/1 below.

8. POLICIES AND PROPOSALS

Environment

- 8.1 The original layout of the residential areas included a number of attractively landscaped, amenity areas which it is proposed should be retained. Consequently six areas of local amenity open space have been identified within the residential areas of the Church Fenton Airbase settlement. Two are located adjacent to the western side of Busk Lane and two adjoin the open countryside to the west of Little Ings Close. On the east side of Busk Lane one area creates an attractive frontage to the residential area whilst a fourth is located in the centre of Dorts Crescent, again on the east side of residential area. The areas are safeguarded under POLICY ENV29.

Recreation

- 8.2 Two recreation areas are protected in accordance with POLICY RT1. Both are long standing play areas which serve the needs of the residential areas on either side of Busk Lane.

Redundant Airbase Area

- 8.3 It is desirable to encourage new uses for the airbase which are compatible with its relatively remote, rural location and character of the area. In order to acknowledge the special circumstances of the airbase it is included within the Plan as a Special Policy Area, which indicates the range of potential future uses, which would be preferred. These uses should not be heavy traffic generators and utilise a substantial proportion of the site in order to avoid piecemeal development.
- 8.4 In order to encourage activities which are extensive land users, rather than heavy traffic generators, intensive forms of piecemeal development will not be permitted within the site. Ideally a single comprehensive use for the whole site would be preferred, but failing such a use emerging, development of the site could be separately progressed on the parts of the site either side of Busk Lane.
- 8.5 Potential possible uses include business uses and research establishments; educational and leisure establishments, preferably with a strong residential element and other residential institutions for people in need of care. A mixture of these uses may be acceptable if one comprehensive use cannot be found, subject to development not being undertaken in a piecemeal manner and in accordance with a development brief for the site agreed with the local authority.
- 8.6 The adjoining highway network is incapable of supporting additional development without significant upgrading. A Transport Assessment will be required prior to the approval of any development on the site, in order to establish the nature and scale of off-site highway improvement works. This assessment should include the need for improved pedestrian and cycle linkages with neighbouring villages, particularly Church Fenton. This may involve improved footway and street lighting provision.

8.7 Development of the site should be undertaken as part of a comprehensive scheme with appropriate provision for landscaping and adequate sewerage and sewage treatment arrangements. Existing landscaping features within and around the periphery of the site should be retained and provision should be made to safeguard the amenity of the existing residential properties. The continued operation of the adjacent airbase may also have implications for development within the Special Policy Area.

CFA/1 Proposals for conversion and redevelopment of properties within the Church Fenton Airbase special policy area as defined on the Proposals Map should comply with the following guidelines:

- 1) **A single user for the whole of the site or for each of the two parts of the site, east and west of Busk Lane separately.**
- 2) **The following uses would be appropriate;**
 - a) **B1**
 - b) **C2 residential institutions including schools, colleges or training centres**
 - c) **tourism and leisure**
- 3) **Potential traffic generation from proposed uses will be carefully assessed to ensure that the cumulative impact of the generated traffic does not exceed the physical and environmental capacity of the surrounding road network, or create highway problems;**
- 4) **Proposals should provide satisfactory highway infrastructure including upgrading the public highway in the vicinity of the site;**
- 5) **Proposals should be low rise and low density;**
- 6) **Proposals should retain the existing mature landscaping, particularly that around the periphery of the site; and**
- 7) **Proposals should safeguard, and where possible enhance, the environment and amenities of the adjoining residential occupiers.**