

Report

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Affordable Housing Statement

Land at Sling Road, Bulford

Introduction

- 1.1. This Affordable Housing Statement has been prepared by JLL on behalf of the Defence Infrastructure Organisation, referred to herein as DIO which is a part of the Ministry of Defence (MoD) and is responsible for managing the estate for the military, including the provision of homes for service personnel in the UK. This Statement has been prepared in support of an application for full planning permission for new residential units at Land at Sling Road, Bulford (the site).
- 1.2. The proposals are for new military homes to be provided at Bulford, as part of a national strategy for the delivery of a new era of Service Family Accommodation ('SFA').
- 1.3. The proposed description of development is:

'The erection of 8 dwellings and associated infrastructure'

Development Context

- 1.4. In January 2025 MoD announced the buy-back of dwellings which had previously been transferred to the private sector. Along with the established MoD housing estate, this has made MoD one of the largest landlords in the country with control over circa 47,000 homes which are available as SFA.
- 1.5. In April the Strategic Defence Review highlighted the importance of good quality accommodation for the morale and retention of service personnel and made a £7 billion commitment to Defence accommodation in this parliament, including an additional £1.5 billion to improve Defence family homes. The total Government financial commitment to SFA is £9.2 billion.
- 1.6. More recently the Defence Housing Strategy (November 2025) set out further detail on how the Government intends to deliver significant improvement in the provision of homes for service families.
- 1.7. This includes the review of all existing properties and the projected modernised or upgrading of 90% of those homes. It is estimated that circa 14,000 homes will be rebuilt or substantially refurbished, whilst 5,000 homes, which are considered to be in the wrong location and/or the wrong size/character to meet operational requirements, will be sold to the private sector.
- 1.8. The Strategy acknowledges that traditionally the level of empty homes in the military estate has been higher than necessary, and there will be a focus on bringing the number of those "void" properties down.
- 1.9. However, there remains a requirement for circa 9,000 new homes to be built for military families across the country to meet future requirements. This, in part, is due to increasing personnel numbers as a result of additional investment announced in the Strategic Defence Review, but more significantly due to the implementation of the Modern Accommodation Offer (MAO), whereby, through a change of MoD policy, an increased number of families will be eligible for SFA.
- 1.10. All of this means that, there is now underway a programme of reviewing the supply and demand for service family homes across the country, which is leading to refurbishment/redevelopment/and new development to deliver the right number of good quality homes for military families, in the right places, for the future.

- 1.11. To fulfil the outlined objectives of the Defence Housing Strategy, it will be necessary to refurbish existing properties and bring vacant homes back into use. Also, to provide the full amount of SFA required, it will be necessary to build new homes across the country. The planning for this is underway and, as a central element, it will be necessary to design the new generation of homes to be delivered.
- 1.12. Those new homes are being designed at present, and as set out in Pillar One: A Generational Renewal' of the Defence Housing Strategy (page 45), it will be necessary to test and demonstrate those proposed housing types and designs.
- 1.13. This application includes the first of these emerging house types and it is intended will serve as a model for the future delivery of SFA across the country. It is the first location where the new house types will be planned, built, tested and lived in and therefore represent an important milestone in the rollout of the future SFA house types.

National Planning Policy Framework

- 1.14. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), most recently updated in December 2024, outlines the planning policies for England from National Government. Such policies are a material consideration in planning decisions.
- 1.15. Annex 2 (Glossary) of the current NPPF includes military personnel within the definition of 'essential local workers'. In turn, the definition for 'affordable housing' includes housing that is for essential local workers.
- 1.16. A consultation proposing reform of the NPPF was issued in December 2025. This document sets out a significantly changed approach to the structure of the national guidance and, in regard to military housing, the proposed NPPF extends the definition of Affordable Housing in Annex B Glossary to include:

"Military affordable housing: meets all of the following conditions: (a) the rent is sub-market military rent as determined by the Ministry of Defence; and (b) it includes provisions to remain as affordable housing for future eligible households, service personnel and veteran households (including widowed partners and spouses of service personnel), or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision".
- 1.17. This clearly identifies the Government's intention that SFA be included within the definition of Affordable Housing in the future.
- 1.18. The Draft NPPF is currently in consultation form only and the Government is seeking comments on the proposed reforms by 10th March 2026. Following this date, it is anticipated that a revised NPPF will be issued, but the details of this will not be known until after the consultation closes.
- 1.19. Therefore, for the interim, the December 2024 version of the NPPF remains in place and forms part of the basis for decision making, though the proposed changes do demonstrate a clear direction of travel for Government policy towards SFA be defined as affordable housing.

Local Planning Policy

Wiltshire Core Strategy (adopted 20 January 2015)

- 1.20. The Council's Core Strategy Policy CP43 (Providing Affordable Homes) (as amended by the NPPF) sets out a requirement for 30% on-site Affordable Housing provision for market housing schemes within the area of the application.
- 1.21. The Council's pre-application response issued 15th January 2026 indicated that this policy may apply, in which case it was considered that the Council would seek an offsite commuted sum in lieu of onsite affordable housing.

Affordable Housing Provision

- 1.22. The proposals within the associated application are for Service Family Accommodation (SFA) which are homes built and owned by the MoD and provided to serving personnel at a rent lower than market rate.
- 1.23. This form of housing has many of the characteristics of affordable housing and Annex 2 (Glossary) of the current NPPF includes military personnel within the definition of '*essential local workers*'. In turn, the definition for '*affordable housing*' includes housing that is for essential local workers.
- 1.24. On this basis, SFA has previously been considered a form of affordable housing and in Wiltshire, as part of the determination of past applications for SFA developments (including those forming part of the Army Basing Programme), it has been agreed that those developments were exempt from affordable housing provision.
- 1.25. Accordingly, it is considered that the same approach could be relevant for this application within the current development plan policies.
- 1.26. However, the status of SFA as a form of Affordable Housing has been recognised in the Defence Housing Strategy and the proposed reforms to the NPPF (issued for consultation in December 2025).
- 1.27. It is the clear intention of the Government that SFA becomes included in the definition of affordable housing. The supporting consultation document with the NPPF consultation clarifies that military affordable housing proposals should form part of affordable housing contributions, and that this should remove obstacles and enable military affordable housing to be delivered on a broader range of sites, in line with operational needs.
- 1.28. The consultation period for the NPPF reform runs until March 2026 and, it is anticipated a revised NPPF will be published soon after. Therefore, it is anticipated that this application may be determined in the context of this revised NPPF, wherein SFA is defined as affordable housing.
- 1.29. It is therefore, considered that the status of the housing and the requirement for affordable housing provision should be considered through the determination of the application and addressed at the time of decision making.

Section 106 contributions

- 1.30. In association with any application for housing, the Council's validation checklist seeks the inclusion of a Sc106 Head of Terms.
- 1.31. This application relates to the provision of eight homes for service families.
- 1.32. Service Family Accommodation exhibits the characteristics of affordable housing and draft NPPF consultation document includes SFA within the definition of Affordable Housing. If this is adopted before the determination of the application, then the homes will be considered affordable homes and this may be secured within a legal agreement.
- 1.33. If the status of SFA is not changed nationally, then it will be necessary to confirm the status of the homes within the context of the NPPF at the time and the previous status of SFA schemes within Wiltshire, whereby additional affordable housing provision has not been sought.

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reflects your business needs and priorities**

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