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Welcome

This information sheet has been designed by the Home Office and sets out our plans for the former RAF airfield in Scampton. This includes the intention to extend the temporary use of the site via a Special Development Order (SDO) for three years and where to find further information.

Background

The number of people arriving in the UK after crossing the Channel in small boats has put the asylum system under incredible pressure.

The Home Secretary has a legal duty to support individuals who claim asylum and would otherwise be destitute. This support can include accommodation which, for some time has included accommodating around 52,900 asylum seekers in hotels which is costing the UK taxpayer £8million a day.

The Government has been clear that using hotels to accommodate asylum seekers is unacceptable and unsustainable and is committed to reducing their use. Work is already underway to close hotels and use alternative accommodation, such as disused military sites.

Why Scampton?

Scampton was identified as a surplus military site that is suitable to accommodate asylum seekers and can be brought back into beneficial use. The site at Scampton will provide safe accommodation for asylum seekers and is designed to be as self-sufficient as possible.

Scampton is a former Ministry of Defence base near Lincoln.

Earlier this year it was the home of the Red Arrows, who have now moved to nearby RAF Waddington.

The Home Office recognises the importance of the rich heritage at Scampton and is committed to preserving and enhancing the site.

To that effect the government will not be using any of the heritage buildings on the site. It is government policy that all historic assets, for which central government is responsible, meet appropriate standards of care and use. Scampton will be no different.



RAF Scampton

What Has Happened So Far?

The Home Office has worked hard to ensure the site is suitable to provide accommodation for asylum seekers. We will continue to ensure local residents are updated as proposals to use the site progress.

The Home Office will be using a phased approach, gradually increasing the number of asylum seekers accommodated over time to 2,000.

Planning

The Home Office secured planning permission to use the site as asylum accommodation under Class Q emergency Crown development planning provisions. Under Class Q, the Home Office is permitted to use the site for non-detained asylum accommodation for a 12-month period until April 2024.

The Home Office intends to extend the temporary use of the site for a further three-year period and will seek planning permission by way of an SDO.

An SDO, a form of secondary legislation, grants planning permission for development specified in the order for a specific area of land.

Any decision to make the SDO will be made following independent assessment of the planning proposal and independent scrutiny by a Minister who is not the promoter of the development (i.e., not the Minister for Immigration or the Home Secretary) and who will decide whether to grant planning permission on the evidence before them.

The Home Office remains committed to working with key stakeholders to facilitate their vision for the site. This will ensure that the Home Secretary can continue to fulfil his statutory obligations to accommodate the large number of asylum seekers who would otherwise be destitute in a manner which reduces the use of inappropriate hotels.

We have been working closely with the Ministry of Defence and recognise Scampton's place in history, most notably for its contribution in the Second World War. The Home Office has also been engaging with statutory partners including West Lindsey District Council, Lincolnshire County Council and Lincolnshire Police.

What Will The Site Look Like Over The 3-Year Period?

If the Home Office obtains planning permission for a further three years, the Home Office will continue to ensure the site is fit for purpose with minimal impact on the local community.

- using existing refurbished buildings and modular accommodation to support up to 2,000 asylum seekers on the site.
- maintaining onsite provision for asylum-seekers
- working with local stakeholders to identify and mitigate key concerns.
- protecting the heritage assets of Scampton
- continued addressing of traffic concerns, implementing traffic mitigations were appropriate.
- environmental improvements continue to be considered.

Site Operation

The site will accommodate single adult male asylum seekers between the ages of 18 and 65. Once operational it will be staffed 24/7 which will mean minimal traffic overnight as staff come on shift.

Most asylum seekers accommodated at Scampton will be new arrivals to the UK following appropriate asylum screening processes, health check and checks against police and immigration databases.

They will also have received a health check on arrival at the Scampton site.

The asylum seekers will be accommodated in refurbished existing buildings on site and modular accommodation.

The first asylum seekers will arrive in small numbers, starting with no more than 30 individuals per day. This will then be gradually increased over time to site capacity will be able to accommodate a maximum of 2,000 individuals when it is fully operational but that will be several months after the site first becomes operational.

The maximum length of stay for asylum seekers is nine months, except when the Home Secretary is unable to find suitable onward dispersal accommodation despite reasonable efforts to do so.

Relevant health and safety policies apply to ensure the site continues to be fit for purpose.

The Scampton site will be operated by Serco, an experienced and specialist asylum accommodation provider under the supervision of the Home Office.

Serco has a strong track record of providing asylum seeker accommodation and its supporting services. Serco has worked closely and successfully with local authorities and other public and voluntary organisations across the UK.

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Impact on community and local services

The Scampton site has been designed to be as self-sufficient as possible in order to minimise the potential impact on local communities, services, and the need to leave the site.

This includes providing accommodation with:

- on-site medical provision
- catering
- communal space
- faith and worship facilities
- large gymnasium to allow for recreational and sporting facilities to be used all year round.

We are working with local partners to continue to keep them informed about what is happening on site. This has included various local community engagement events.

The Home Office has carefully considered the impact on local services including the NHS, police, and fire services.

The Home Office is providing funding to the NHS to support an on-site primary healthcare service to reduce the impact on local services.

The department is working with local partners to develop bespoke plans that take account of local environmental issues, heritage and any risks associated with each site.

To minimise the potential impact on the local services, and to ensure the orderly flow of people onto and off the site, a regular transport service is in place to take users to local urban centres. Transport will also be provided so asylum seekers can attend off site appointments.

Safety and security

The safety and security of the local community, asylum seekers and staff are of paramount importance.

Asylum seekers allocated to the site will have undergone asylum screening assessments including checks against police and immigration databases. The Home Office will continue to apply an Allocation of Asylum Accommodation policy to ensure that those accommodated are suitable to be accommodated on the site.

On arriving, asylum seekers at the site will receive a briefing and orientation about the site and the local community, including traffic safety. In addition to information about how to access services on and off site, the briefing explains what constitutes appropriate behaviour. It sets out acceptable and unacceptable behaviours as well as their responsibilities as individuals to act as good neighbours.

A specialist and experienced security provider is working on site 24/7, with measures such as mobile CCTV units.

The Home Office recognises the specific concerns raised by the community. We are working with key stakeholders to manage the impact of using the Scampton site to accommodate asylum seekers and address those concerns. For instance, we are working with Lincolnshire Police to ensure appropriate policing for the site and local community.

Lincolnshire Police has implemented a small community beat team who will work with local communities and partners in advance of the site opening to asylum seekers.

If any criminal activity does occur on site, our provider has robust processes in place to report them to the police.

Funding

Funding grant of £1.8million has been awarded to Lincolnshire Police. In advance of the site opening the police have put in place a small team of officers to work with the local community and partners.

The government currently provides £3,500 to local authorities for new and occupied beds across the country. This £3,500 funding for local authorities has been extended to West Lindsey District Council with £3,500 for occupied beds on the site.

The site has been designed to limit the impact on the local community. The Home Office is providing funding to the NHS to support an on-site primary health service to reduce the impact on local services. Asylum seekers register at the onsite facility to reduce the impact on the local health services.

Further information

The Home Office has been engaging with a range of national and local stakeholders regarding the proposals for the Scampton site.

We understand the community may have further questions regarding the Scampton site itself. We endeavour to keep you updated through the factsheets and newsletters however, if you have any further questions, please don't hesitate to contact us at:

Home Office
Direct Communications Unit
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF
Email: public.enquiries@homeoffice.gov.uk
Telephone: 020 7035 4848

You can find additional information on the:

Scampton Factsheet

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/asylum-accommodation-factsheets/factsheet-raf-scampton-asylum-accommodation-accessible>)

and

Scampton Community Newsletter

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/asylum-accommodation-factsheets/scampton-community-update-newsletter>)