P/17/0608/FP **STUBBINGTON**

MARITIME & COASTGUARD AGENCY

AGENT: HARTNELL TAYLOR COOK LLP

CONSTRUCTION OF MEOLUTS MONITORING AND TRACKING SYSTEM FOR EMERGENCY SERVICES

SOLENT AIRPORT AT DAEDALUS LEE-ON-THE-SOLENT FAREHAM HAMPSHIRE PO13 9FL

Report By

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Introduction

A MEOLUT is, according to the application, a Medium Earth Orbit Local User Terminal. It is a form of radar system (named MEOSAR, SAR standing for Search and Rescue) which allows the monitoring and tracking of satellites to enhance and improve detection, and response to, emergency distress beacons.

The application sets out that emergency distress beacons carried on shipping, aircraft or individuals, when activated, transmit a signal which is received by orbiting satellites. These then relay the data to Local User Terminals (LUTs). The LUTs interpret data and determine the location of the signal which is relayed to the Search and Rescue Authority.

Site Description

The application site is a parcel of land towards the south side of the active airfield at Solent Airport at Daedalus, just to the east of the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) hangar, north of the former east to west runway and to the north of the driving test centre.

The land is generally flat and laid to either grass or hardstanding when the site crosses the former runway.

Description of Proposal

It is proposed to erect seven MEOLUTS in a circular arrangement. Each MEOLUT is sited on a 5m by 5m concrete pedestal. The individual MEOLUT itself is 4m wide and 3.56m high. The MEOLUT is a parabolic dish encased in a fibreglass radome. The overall circular area for the installation has a 25m radius.

Supporting the seven MEOLUTS is a centrally located, Geo-Antenna. This is a static 5m wide dish on a 1.5m high pedestal. The overall height of the Geo-Antenna is approximately 4.5m. Sited with the central Geo-Antenna is an equipment cabin and generator.

Policies

The following policies and guidance apply to this application:

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)

Approved Fareham Borough Core Strategy

CS5 - Transport Strategy and Infrastructure

CS11 - Development in Portchester, Stubbington and Hill Head

CS12 - Daedalus Airfield Strategic Development Allocation

CS14 - Development Outside Settlements

CS17 - High Quality Design

CS22 - Development in Strategic Gaps

Development Sites and Policies

DSP3 - Impact on living conditions

Relevant Planning History

The following planning history is relevant:

P/16/0689/FP **The erection of a new 25 metre high radar tower, Radar Equipment Cabin within a secure fenced compound and associated development (Revised application from P/16/0270/FP)**
APPROVE 26/07/2016

P/16/0270/FP **The erection of a new 25 metre high radar tower, Radar Equipment Cabin within a secure fenced compound and associated development**
APPROVE 27/05/2016

P/13/0129/FP **ERECTION OF 41.25M HIGH RADIO TOWER WITH ASSOCIATED CABIN, NEW FENCING/GATES AROUND PERIMETER AND CAR PARKING AREA**
APPROVE 08/04/2013

P/13/1107/FP **ERECTION OF COASTAL TRAINING HUB AND A BASE FOR A COASTGUARD RESCUE TEAM (USE CLASS D1), FREE STANDING TRAINING WALL, PARTLY BELOW GROUND, WHICH IS RETAINING AN EARTH BANK**
APPROVE 23/04/2014

P/11/0436/OA **USE OF AIRFIELD FOR EMPLOYMENT BASED DEVELOPMENT (UP TO 50202 SQ.M OF FLOOR SPACE) IN NEW AND EXISTING BUILDINGS (USE CLASSES B1, B2 & B8) WITH INCREMENTAL DEMOLITION TOGETHER WITH CLUBHOUSE (CLASS D2) VEHICLE ACCESS, ALLOTMENTS, OPEN SPACE AND LANDSCAPING.**
APPROVE 20/12/2013

P/10/0412/FP **PROPOSED MARITIME RESCUE CO-ORDINATION CENTRE BUILDING, SINGLE STOREY SECTOR BASE BUILDING, COMMUNICATIONS TOWER AND ASSOCIATED ON-SITE PARKING AND LANDSCAPING**
WITHDRAWN 27/03/2013

Representations

Gosport Borough Council: No Objection

Consultations

INTERNAL CONSULTEES:

Airport Manager: comments awaited

Environmental Health (Contamination): comments awaited

Environmental Health (Pollution): No objection

Planning Considerations - Key Issues

The key considerations in the determination of this application are:
- The principle of development
- Implications for the strategic gap and landscape
- Neighbouring amenity
- The Enterprise zone
- Other Material Considerations and the planning balance

THE PRINCIPLE OF DEVELOPMENT:

The application site is upon land subject to Policy CS12 (Daedalus Airfield Strategic Development Allocation) of the adopted Core Strategy. Whilst within the Daedalus Airfield, the site is outside of the employment allocation at Hangars East as shown on the Proposals Map. The site is therefore also subject to the requirements of CS14 (Development Outside Settlements). The whole of the Daedalus Airfield is located within a Strategic Gap to which policy CS22 applies.

One of the key aims of policy CS12 is that development should not "...adversely affect the existing or future potential aviation operation of the airfield". In addition development is encouraged "that retains and strengthens the marine and aviation employment clusters, particularly those that require direct access to an operational airfield."

Whilst not a new employment generating use, the MEOLUT facility will be linked directly to the existing MCA facility at Daedalus which does require constant direct access to the airfield. It is noted that the MCA is the Government body responsible for executing our Search and Rescue function. The proposal sets out that the MEOLUT facility is the new international response to Search and Rescue operations given the current satellite systems are coming to the end of their useful life in 2020. The new technology in MEOLUTS will contribute towards improved Search and Rescue operations as part of the International Cospas-Sarsat Programme. This programme is an organisation of forty-four nationalities which aims to provide accurate, timely and reliable distress alert data to Search and Rescue authorities to enable the saving of lives. The Daedalus site will provide a satellite receiving station (the MEOLUTS) for distress beacon signals.

The application sets out that the advantages of the proposal are:
1) The Low Earth Orbit (LEO) Satellites that currently provide the MCA with data are coming to the end of their useful life in 2020. The proposal will, therefore, provide for continuity of service.
2) The MEOSAR system offers a "...substantive increase in the accuracy and speed of distress alert detection".

3) Future capability functions are available giving the opportunity for the Search and Rescue response to send signals back to the distress beacon such as notification that help is on the way.

CS14 seeks to restrict new built development outside of the defined urban settlement boundaries to that essential to agriculture, forestry or essential infrastructure. The reason for this policy is "...to protect the countryside and coastline from development which would adversely affect its landscape character, appearance and function".

There is not, within CS14, a presumption for refusal for all development but rather a presumption of refusal for development proposals which adversely affect the character of the landscape followed by an exceptions test, (for example that which is essential to agriculture).

It is necessary, therefore, to consider if there are any of the exceptions provided for in the policy which could apply to the proposal. It is clearly not an agricultural use and the term "required infrastructure" within policy CS14 appears to be aimed at infrastructure related to the acceptable rural uses or for infrastructure required for the Borough, such as that planned for elsewhere in the development plan such as Stubbington Bypass (identified in Local Plan Part 2 policy DSP49).

A proposal such as the MEOLUTS is not a typical planning land use or type of development. As such Fareham Borough Council has not planned for this type of development through a criteria based policy or site allocation. However, it is not unreasonable, given the fact that this is new technology to assist search and rescue operations that it be reasonably related to an existing MCA facility. The part of the MCA facility at Daedalus in Fareham (the borough boundary runs straight through the hangar) is in the countryside such that any associated infrastructure within the Borough of Fareham is likely to be located outside the defined settlement boundary and in the countryside also.

Whilst Officers acknowledge that the proposals comprise an important piece of new national infrastructure necessary for the saving of lives, the proposal is not considered to be "required infrastructure" as anticipated by the development plan and the proposal therefore appears contrary to the requirements of policy CS14.

Whilst not a policy requirement to consider other sites; to help justify the overriding need for new development in the countryside, the submission sets out that the MCA has considered other sites within its control for the proposed installation. These are listed in the submission. The application sets out that this site has been identified due to the ability to connect easily to the existing MCA complex, the need for a large flat site and a clear view of the horizon down to a five degree elevation, particularly in a western and northern direction.

Paragraph 42 of the NPPF clarifies that high quality communications infrastructure is essential for sustainable economic growth. The application submits that the provision of the MEOLUTS installation would facilitate the replacement of aging technology and ensure adequate communications infrastructure is in place to enable the provision of the MCA search and rescue service beyond 2020.

Whilst the applicants case that the proposal is "required infrastructure" and therefore accords with policy CS14 is noted, as detailed above, the proposal is not accepted by Officers as required infrastructure under the terms anticipated in policy CS14. The proposal therefore conflicts with policy CS14.

However, the continuation of the Search and Rescue service provided by the MCA and the fact that the MCA is the Government body responsible for executing our search and rescue function is a material consideration afforded significant weight in the decision making process.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE STRATEGIC GAP AND LANDSCAPE

Policy CS22 states that:
"Land within a Strategic Gap will be treated as countryside. Development proposals will not be permitted either individually or cumulatively where it significantly affects the integrity of the gap and the physical and visual separation of settlements."

Also as described above, within policy CS14, there is a presumption of refusal for development proposals which adversely affect the character of the landscape.

In the consideration of other schemes at Daedalus it has recently been found that the airfield does not form a tract of undeveloped countryside in the same way that other parts of the Strategic Gap do. It already contains sporadic built development and has a distinct character of its own. Existing development within the airfield to an extent blurs the settlement edges of Stubbington and Lee-on-the-Solent, meaning that there is not a strong boundary between the settlement and the Strategic Gap in most instances. However, the open areas around the runways are the greatest contributors to the Strategic Gap.

In this case, whilst north of the southern most runway (so in the open area of the airfield) the MEOLUTs are dispersed from one another allowing for retained views and a sense of openness over the airport and yet the site is also located on the fringe of the other built form such as the MCA hangar, associated training centre and the driving test centre. The proposed arrangement of the MEOLUTs will continue to allow for views across the airfield between each installation and the large tract of open land to the north and west will remain. It is noted that there is other communication infrastructure within the vicinity of the site, notably the MCA communication mast and the permitted NATS radar to the north of the application site such that whilst the proposal is not typical of an airport location, the MEOLUTS will sit within the context of other radar and communication equipment so as to not be unacceptable in terms of its impact.

The proposal would not, as a consequence, result in the coalescence of settlements or the perception of coalescence and neither would the proposal result in demonstrable harm to the landscape qualities of the area. The scheme is, therefore, considered by Officers to accord with the aims of policy CS22 in that it would not affect the separation of settlements and would not physically and visually affect the integrity of the gap. Similarly, the proposal would not adversely affect the character of the landscape as required by policy CS14.

NEIGHBOURING AMENITY:

The proposal is sited some distance from the nearest residential neighbours which are due south east of the site. Immediately to the south of the driving test centre is an area within Gosport Borough known as Daedalus Park which benefits from a planning permission for employment generating uses.

The separation distances to any residential property are such that it is considered that there are no overshadowing or overbearing impacts.

MELOUTS are static installations such that there would be no noise or shadow flicker from its operation. Furthermore the system will only receive signals and will not transmit data such that there is no requirement for any certification that the transmissions are within accepted parameters for public health.

There will be one backup generator that will be housed in an acoustic enclosure located in the centre of the terminal formation. The generator will only be used in the event of power failure. The data sheet for the enclosure indicates that noise 1m from the enclosure will be 75dB. Environmental Health has undertaken an assessment of noise propagation (assuming the nearest properties are 200m distance away) the noise at the nearest sensitive receptor will be below 30dB. At this level the impact on neighbouring amenity is considered to be acceptable. There is no objection from Environmental Health.

Whilst it is noted above that one of the benefits of the project is the future capability of the scheme to relay messages back to distress beacons the Applicant has confirmed that this would be relayed through Internet Provider connections via the European Space Agency and that there is no requirement for transmitting equipment at the MEOLUT site.

THE ENTERPRISE ZONE:

The Applicant has clarified that the signal received at the MEOLUTS would require a limitation on building heights within close proximity to them so as to not affect the signals being received. The Applicant has clarified that the MEOLUTs need to "see" down to approximately five degrees above the horizon for optimal coverage. This is most pertinent due west and north due to the range required to cover the UK search and rescue region.

The Applicant has indicated that the selected site has taken account of the projected developments within Fareham at Daedalus and the NATS radar proposal. One of the reasons for Daedalus being selected as the preferred site was a consequence of the openness of the airfield.

Daedalus Park, within the Borough of Gosport, to the south of the site is some 150m away from the southern site boundary of the MEOLUTS installation. At this distance the maximum building height would need to be between approximately 12-13m in height so as to not adversely affect the MEOLUT operations. There is a planning permission for an 18m high building within Daedalus Park (not yet implemented). At approximately 180m from the LUT this building would cut into the 5 degree view of the horizon that the MCA would seek to retain for the MEOLUTs. The maximum building height at that distance to not interfere with the horizon view is about 16.4m.

However, the applicant has confirmed that as a result of the building being to the south of the MEOLUTs, the UK Search and Rescue Region of Responsibility to the South is effectively half way across the English Channel, which it is suggested by the applicant, isn't a massive area to cover from Lee-on-Solent and as such the applicant has advised that any loss of range as a consequence of the proximity of this building (should it be constructed) will not actually cause an issue.

It is considered that the proposal, at this separation distance, and with this level of building height allowance, that the proposal would not result in demonstrable harm to the attractiveness of the enterprise zone for future growth and investment.

The supporting statement with the application sets out that the proposal has taken account

of the Council's desires (as landowner for the site) to develop the peripheral areas of the airport. The applicant sees no issues relating to the compatibility between this development and the operations on the application site.

OTHER MATERIAL PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS AND THE PLANNING BALANCE:

The MEOLUT project is not, as detailed earlier in this report, considered to be "required infrastructure" as anticipated by the development plan policy CS14 yet it does provide an important piece of strategic infrastructure for the UK search and rescue operations. The national need for this technology upgrade to ensure continuity of the Search and Rescue service weighs heavily in favour of the scheme when balanced against the conflicts with policy CS14.

In accepting this policy conflict, it is important to understand that all other planning issues are policy compliant and that the objectives of the development plan are still able to be achieved even with the identified policy conflict.

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act directs that determination of planning applications must be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

To outweigh the strong presumption in favour of the development plan, material considerations must be afforded significant weight. In this case, when balancing the issues and when considering the development plan as a whole, the scheme is broadly policy compliant with only one identified policy conflict. This conflict is addressed simply by the importance of the MCA Search and Rescue operations and the need for this new MEOLUT technology being given significant weight worthy of a departure from the development plan policy when balanced against the conflict with policy CS14. As such it is recommended that Permission be granted.

Recommendation

PERMISSION subject to conditions:

01. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before three years from the date of this permission.

REASON: To allow a reasonable time period for work to start, to comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, and to enable the Council to review the position if a fresh application is made after that time

02. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the following drawings/documents:
a) Location Plan
b) PB6329-P-001 Revision P1 Proposed Site Layout and Elevations
c) Broadcrown Technical Data for model BCJD 29-50SP E2, dated April 2016

REASON: To avoid any doubt over what has been permitted.

03. No development shall take place until an investigation of ground conditions (to include contamination, UXO, radiation) and an assessment of the risks from any ground contamination should be carried out. Where results indicate, a strategy of remedial measures necessary to address the identified risks shall be submitted to and approved in

writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved remedial measures within the remedial strategy shall be implemented in full during the construction. Prior to the first use of the proposal hereby permitted, validation (by a suitably competent person) of the implementation of the remedial measures shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: To ensure a safe working and operating environment and in the interests of the airfield.

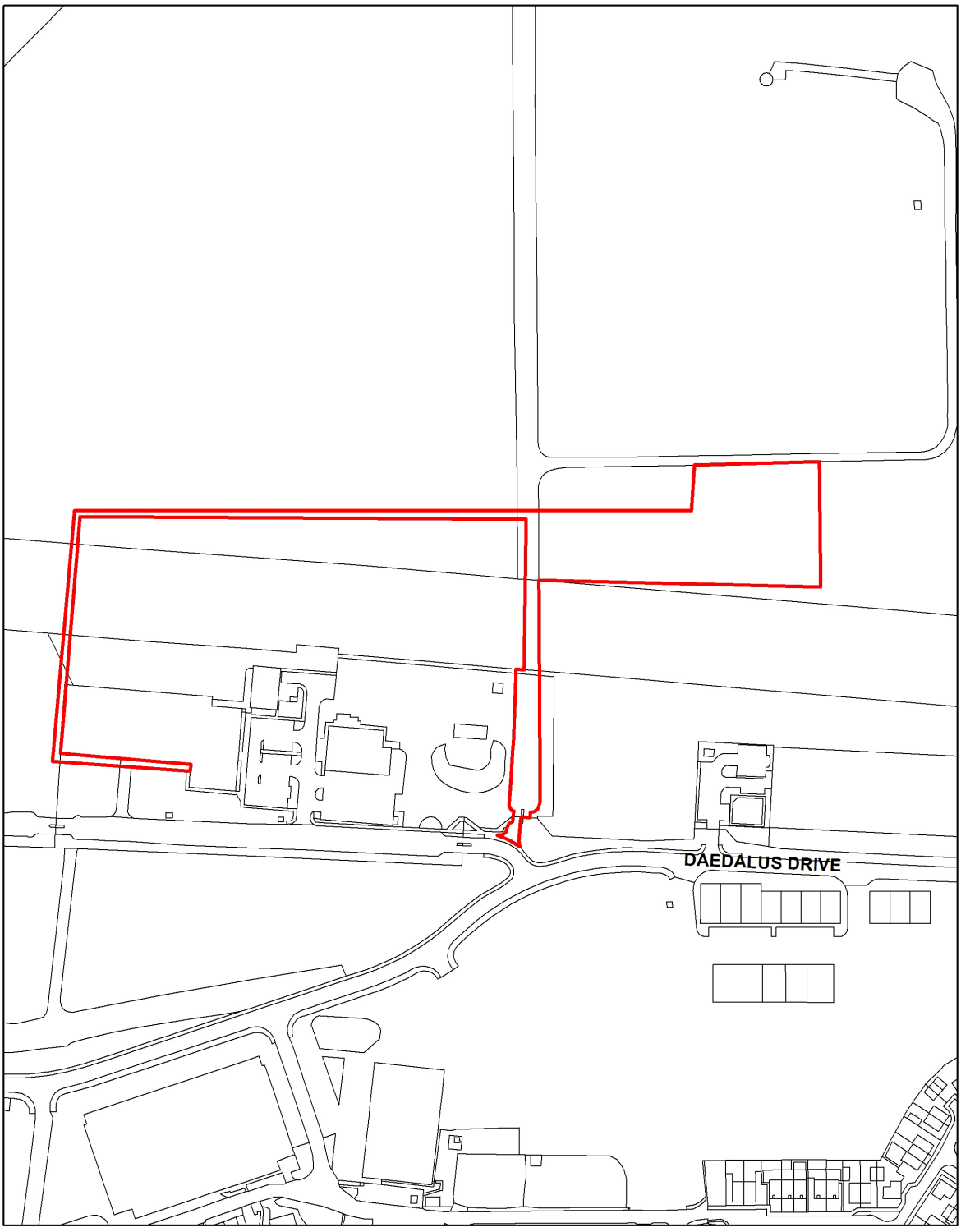
04. Should contamination be encountered during works that has not been investigated or considered in the agreed scheme of remedial measures all work must stop. A risk assessment and a detailed remedial method statement shall be submitted to and agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority before work re-commences. The approved remedial measures within the remedial strategy shall be implemented in full during the construction. Prior to the first use of the proposal hereby permitted, validation (by a suitably competent person) of the implementation of the remedial measures shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: To ensure a safe working and operating environment and in the interests of the airfield.

Background Papers

see "relevant planning history" section above

FAREHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL



Solent Airport at Daedalus
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