



**GOVERNMENT
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Public exhibition of proposed new development at Benhall

A public exhibition of proposals to build new office accommodation and replacement car parking on the Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ) site at Benhall in Cheltenham is being held at the Hesters Way Resource Centre on Saturday 21 November from 12pm to 4pm and Monday 23 November from 2pm to 8pm.

Members of the public, living near the GCHQ Benhall site, are invited to visit the exhibition to view the proposal in detail. A scale model and computer generated images will be on show to help provide a realistic picture of what the proposed development will look like.

The proposed development consists of two three-storey office buildings located on land adjacent to the A40, which is currently used as a car park, and a replacement car park to be built on the unused land to the east of the Benhall site. The new buildings will provide accommodation for staff being relocated from the Oakley site and enable the current problem of over utilisation at the Benhall site to be addressed.

The proposals are being put forward by Integrated Accommodation Services (IAS), a consortium made up of Carillion, British Telecom and services provider G4S, which manages and operates GCHQ's accommodation and related services. Members of the IAS team and their professional advisors will be on hand at the exhibition to answer questions relating to their proposals.

Commenting on the need for the new office accommodation, GCHQ Public Affairs Officer, Jo Hare, said: "For a number of years, we've been trying to bring all our Cheltenham-based staff together in one location. However, increases in staff numbers have meant that we have reluctantly had to keep using our site at Oakley for longer than originally anticipated. Last year we put forward proposals to accommodate all our personnel at the Benhall site. While planning permission for these proposals was granted in September, the scheme has become unaffordable in the current economic climate. We've therefore developed an alternative approach

that offers a more affordable and flexible accommodation solution and also makes more effective use of the space available on the Benhall site for parking.

“Bringing all our staff together will ensure we can continue to deliver the intelligence and security information required by our customers while allowing us to work much more efficiently and effectively. This will also enable us to release much of the Oakley site for residential development. However, a decision will not be made until all the options have been explored. Any decision will be consistent with the prevailing economic climate.

“We will be working hard to minimise any impact the proposed development of the Benhall site may have on our neighbours and the wider Cheltenham community,” continued Jo Hare “As part of the development, we are carrying out detailed traffic and environmental assessments to help us identify and reduce potential problems.”