Title: Our New Accommodation

Why does GCHQ need new accommodation?

GCHQ exists to deliver first class intelligence and information security services to HM Government, to help counter threats to peace and stability such as global terrorism and serious crime.

We are in the middle of a period of massive business and culture change, all designed to make us more effective, efficient and responsive to the rapidly changing global and technical challenges facing us in the 21st century. Although we have made excellent progress so far (a fact recognised by Whitehall), we are hampered by old and inefficient buildings (50 mostly old buildings, many of World War II vintage, over two sites 4 miles apart). Our continuing progress depends on securing accommodation which allows us to maximise our flexibility.

Our award winning new building - Public Finance Initiative (PFI) Project of the Year 2002 - and its integrated technical infrastructure are key enablers, helping ensure that our highly skilled staff can work together more effectively. The open plan nature of the building will allow us to reshape work areas quickly to respond to specific threats, and the introduction of a common desk top computer means our staff can operate from virtually any desk in the building. Features such as the street running around the building, the courtyard and a range of other 'break out' areas will also encourage staff to meet and bounce ideas off each other.

Why opt for a PFI solution?

Basically, because PFI offers us the best value for money**.** Integrated Accommodation Services (IAS) - a consortium comprising Carillion plc, BT and Group 4 Falck - is not only providing us with a fantastic £337 million building but will also make it secure, clean it, maintain it, and provide catering, telephony and other services for GCHQ over the next 30 years. Although the total cost over that period is in excess of £1 billion, we estimate significant savings on the cost of accommodating and servicing GCHQ's business 'in house' over that period. And, significantly, any cost overruns for these services will be borne by the consortium - not the government.

When does GCHQ move in?

The move begins in September 2003 and nearly every member of GCHQ will be in the building by summer 2004.

Why does it take so long to move?

For business continuity reasons GCHQ cannot shut down operations for a long period; we must maintain a continuous flow of vital intelligence and information security services to the government. So we will have a staged move, retaining vital equipment on part of the Oakley site during, and for a

while after, our transition to the new building so as to minimise risk to the business. The extra costs involved will be offset by gains in terms of operational robustness and savings through prolonging the operational life of expensive hardware.

How much will this technical transition cost?

Just over £300 million, which covers all the work necessary to enable GCHQ's systems to work in the new building and to keep risks to our service provision at an acceptable level. This includes the introduction of a common computer 'desk top' for all GCHQ users, computer and network management systems as well as business continuity systems. The transition programme has been approved (and largely funded) by the government and it is on track and on budget.

Environmental Issues

The new building has excellent environmental credentials, and computer simulations indicate that it will consume less energy than a conventional office design of its size. This is likely to reduce running costs and save the equivalent of 1000 tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions per year.

The building is well-insulated and incorporates the latest energy control systems. For example, lights are automatically switched off when sensors indicate that work areas are not in use.

A high proportion of the building materials come from sustainable or renewable sources or can be recycled at a later date.

During construction, as much waste as possible was separated and recycled; the same good practices will continue for the processing of office waste when GCHQ move into the building. Staff will also be encouraged to use containers for recycling drinks cans, vending cups, bottles and newspapers.

GCHQ is working with Cheltenham Borough Council and Gloucestershire County Council to improve roads, cycle ways, footpaths and bus provision with the aim of minimising the impact on Cheltenham's transport infrastructure when we move to our new home.

Getting on with our Neighbours

GCHQ is part of the local community and we recognise that our new accommodation has a significant impact on local residents.

GCHQ and IAS both consult regularly with representatives of the local community at GCHQ-chaired residents' groups and other public meetings held by Cheltenham BC. Additionally, working with local community leaders, we provide volunteers to help in a wide range of short and long-term community-based projects.

Together GCHQ and IAS have helped our neighbours cope with the inevitable upheaval and disruption during construction work and we continue to work with them to learn of any concerns they may have. As a result, complaints have been at a unique low for such a large- scale construction project.

Did you know?

- BT laid over 5000 miles of cable (equivalent of Cheltenham to Cairo and back again) and 1850 miles of fibre optics in the new building.

- Over 5 miles of new drains were laid to deal with run off, gradually feeding the rain water into a nearby stream.

- The courtyard could accommodate the Albert Hall. It is 88 metres in diameter and topped off by 1,000 cubic metres of soil and sand.

- Over 6000 miles of electrical wiring have been installed in office space equivalent in size to seventeen football pitches.

- There are covered bays for 600 bicycles and there are about 2900 parking spaces.

- The frame for the Doughnut required 250,000 tonnes of concrete.

- Building is in actual fact three separate structures joined together and collectively they are the same size as the old Wembley Stadium.

- The roof comprises over 11,000 sq metres of aluminium and is based on the design of the roof on Centre Court, Wimbledon. When the building's lifespan comes to an end, the roof can be 'unzipped' and reused or recycled at low cost.

- The two power houses outside the main building have enough capacity to run about 10% of the London Underground.

- The shell of each office chair is made from 36 recycled plastic 2 litre pop bottles. Desks and table surfaces are made from 90% recycled wood and all steel products are made from 30% recycled metal.

- The building has 13,000 sqm of glass which is equivalent to double-glazing for 10% of the houses in Cheltenham.

- Employees will be able to lunch in the 600-seater restaurant or hold informal meetings in one of the seating areas off the ‘street.’ The building will also contain a few shops and other amenities, such as a gym and a quiet/prayer room.