Who is IAS?
Integrated Accommodation Services (IAS) is a consortium made up of the construction company Carillion, British Telecom and Group 4 Security Limited. The service provider is G4S. The consortium manages and operates GCHQ's accommodation in Cheltenham.
What happened to the previous proposal?

The economic climate has changed dramatically since our earlier consultation on GCHQ’s proposal for the development of additional accommodation and a replacement car park on the Benhall site. As a consequence, the previous proposal is no longer cost effective so we are not planning to proceed with these plans.

However, to continue to provide the intelligence and security services vital to the safety and well-being of the United Kingdom, GCHQ still needs to make a number of changes to its current accommodation.

A history of evolution

Since its formation, GCHQ has continually evolved. This has allowed the organisation to anticipate and meet the demands placed upon it, protecting our nation through the cold war period and into the post 9/11 era and beyond.

Since moving to Cheltenham in 1952 to occupy sites at Benhall and Oakley, much of this evolution has been very visible as GCHQ’s facilities have developed.

Our current proposals are the latest chapter in GCHQ’s history of evolution and are designed to help ensure the organisation can continue to effectively inform decision makers, save lives and benefit everyone who is interested in ensuring that democracy and the rule of law prevail.
3. SECURING OUR FUTURE

The need for change

To continue to provide the vital intelligence and security services which help protect the UK and its citizens, there are a number of changes GCHQ needs to make to optimise its operations in Cheltenham.

Consolidating personnel
Firstly, a viable solution still needs to be found to bring the majority of GCHQ’s Cheltenham-based personnel together in one location. This will help the organisation work more efficiently and effectively and involves the movement of the majority of personnel currently working at Oakley to the main site at Benhall.

However, consolidation can only be achieved through the creation of additional office space at Benhall, which is sufficient in size to accommodate GCHQ’s Oakley-based personnel and provide additional capacity to address the current overcrowding at Benhall.

Requirement for modern facilities
The majority of the buildings on the Oakley site no longer provide suitable facilities to meet the needs of a modern intelligence and security organisation. They are uneconomic to operate and maintain, meaning they do not provide good value for money for the taxpayer.

However, the most recently constructed of the buildings at Oakley does provide a cost effective solution for the centralisation of some currently fragmented operations. Retention of this building features in GCHQ’s overall accommodation strategy.

The solution
To achieve consolidation, and in doing so recognising the development limitations of the Benhall site, we need to provide additional accommodation at Benhall and move a significant number of contractors to an off-site facility, within reasonable distance of Cheltenham.

Details of the additional accommodation and replacement car park we propose to develop at Benhall to enable these workforce changes are presented on the following exhibition boards.

“You serve the nation with great distinction and are recognised around the world as the best intelligence agency”

Gordon Brown, Prime Minister
Additional office accommodation and replacement car park

We are now proposing to develop two additional office buildings and a replacement car park on the Benhall site.

The proposed location of the two offices and replacement car park are shown on the aerial photograph opposite.

Office accommodation
We propose that two three-storey office buildings are developed on the area of the existing car parking adjacent to the A40. These will help provide the additional accommodation space required at Benhall to house personnel moving from Oakley and ease the current overcrowding on site.

The additional office buildings have been designed to be in keeping with the form and finish of the existing main building. The exterior finish will be similar to the main building to ensure it is in-keeping with its surroundings.

Replacement car park
The site on which it is proposed the additional office buildings are located is currently a car park, so a replacement area of car parking is required. To meet this need, it is proposed that a two and a half level car park is developed on the open ground on the eastern boundary of the site. Our plan is for the car park to be cut into the land so as to ensure that the top tier is at ground-level. This will minimise its visual impact.
5. WHAT WOULD THE NEW OFFICES LOOK LIKE?

Views A and B and cross section 1

The images below are photomontages showing what the proposed offices would look like when viewed from the A40 and Hubble Road.

The cross section to the right shows how the security requirements for the new buildings would be landscaped along the A40 corridor.

A: View of the proposed office accommodation from the A40

B: View of the rear of the proposed office accommodation from Hubble Road

1: Cross section of landscaping along the A40
6. WHAT WOULD THE REPLACEMENT CAR PARK LOOK LIKE?

Views C and D

The images below are photomontages showing what the proposed replacement car park would look like when viewed from Hubble Road and the rear of properties on Havanah Walk.

C: View of the proposed replacement car park from Hubble Road

D: View of the proposed replacement car park from the rear of properties on Havanah Walk
7. WHAT WOULD THE REPLACEMENT CAR PARK LOOK LIKE?

Cross Sections 2a and 2b

The cross sections to the right illustrate the difference between the new proposals and those consulted on in November 2008. They show the distance between the car park and adjacent housing, how the area between the two will be landscaped and the security requirements.

The main concerns raised by residents to our previous plans for the development of a replacement car park in this location have been addressed in these revised proposals. The car park is now located further away from the residential properties and we are now proposing to use this car park in a different way, meaning there will be no changes to the existing security perimeter. The land between the car park edge and rear of properties on Havanah Walk will also be landscaped and planted.

2a: Cross section from the new proposal showing distance between properties on Havanah Walk and the replacement car park, lights, landscaping, planting and security fencing.

2b: Cross section from previous proposal showing distance between properties on Havanah Walk and the replacement car park, lights, landscaping, planting, security fencing and cameras.
Replacement on-site car park

Our proposed development includes the provision of a replacement car park, which will compensate for the loss of spaces resulting from the construction of the new offices. This, together with further optimisation of the existing on-site car parking management scheme will ensure the balance between the ratio of available spaces to car park users remains the same.

Reducing on-street parking

GCHQ is committed to resolving the issues caused by on street parking around the Benhall site – the majority of which is known to relate to GCHQ workers. Working with Gloucestershire County Council, Gloucestershire Police and Cheltenham Borough Council a survey of the scale of on-street parking around the site was conducted and a consultation undertaken with local residents to share ideas and discuss possible solutions. Following this, the following measures have been implemented:

- Ongoing monitoring and enforcement of existing restrictions, dangerous parking and obstruction
- First phase of scheme to improve car park management on-site
- Monitoring of ‘free’ spaces on site to increase utilisation
- Additional cross-town shuttle bus to make better use of parking at Oakley
- Consultation on new parking restrictions in Edendale Approach, Hubble Road, Whitlington Road, Stanway Road, Coberley Road and Hatherley Lane

In the following months, a number of additional activities will also be implemented:

- Green Transport survey to identify opportunities to increase use of public transport, cycling and walking as methods of getting to the Benhall site
- Second phase of scheme to improve car park management on-site
- Discussions on possible parking measures to be implemented in areas to the east of Princess Elizabeth Way
- Funding of improvements at Arle Court Park and Ride and use of spare spaces to provide additional parking for GCHQ
- Green Transport improvements introduced
9. REDUCING OUR IMPACTS

Transport and the environment

The potential impacts of our proposal can be divided between those which relate to the construction phase and are therefore temporary (which are addressed on Board 9) and those which may result from the operation of the new building.

Local transport routes and the environment are the two areas most likely to be affected by the proposed development. In-depth Transport and Environmental Assessments are being carried out as part of the application process to fully understand the implications of the workforce changes and the construction of the new development.

The results of these assessments will be used to create a strategy to reduce impacts on the local transport system and the environment.

Revised Green Travel Plan

GCHQ already operates a successful Green Travel Plan for the Benhall site. This is designed to minimise the number of single occupancy vehicle journeys made by staff and visitors to the site, while maximising the uptake of more sustainable travel.

A direct aim of this is to limit the impact on local roads, improve air quality and reduce the risk of problems associated with parking provision.

The Transport Assessment will look to build on the progress made by the existing Green Travel Plan in relation to the proposed workforce changes at Benhall.
Considerate construction

We are aware that our proposed development of the Benhall site may have a number of potential impacts on our neighbours and the wider Cheltenham community.

As part of the process of developing these proposals, independent consultants have carried out detailed Transport and Environmental Assessments. Our final application will take into account the findings of these assessments and a number of measures have already been incorporated to reduce the potential impact of the proposed development.

10. REDUCING OUR IMPACTS

Reducing the impact of construction:

- All boundaries to the site will be made secure and safe to prevent public access
- All construction traffic will enter and exit the site using Hubble Road and Princess Elizabeth Way to minimise traffic congestion
- Vehicle cleaning will be implemented at the point of exit from the site to reduce transfer of dirt onto the surrounding roads
- The construction site itself will be self contained with an on-site compound providing key parking and storage
- Off-site parking will be provided for the majority of contractor with minibus facility to transport them to the site
- All deliveries to the site will be scheduled to prevent congestion on surrounding roads and ensure efficient use of the site compound and storage facilities
- Construction vehicles waiting to enter the site will be held at a location away from the immediate residential area to minimise disruption to the local area
- A dust prevention system will be used on site
- Vehicles and machinery to be used on site will be specifically selected to try and minimise the amount of noise produced
- Site boundaries will include provision for measures to be implemented to reduce the impact on surrounding properties of noise created by construction works
- Site waste will be managed to prevent, reduce, reuse and recycle where possible

All of the above measures were successfully utilised during the construction of the main GCHQ building.
11. PROPOSED SCHEDULE OF WORK

The main phases of development

Phase 1:
Construction of replacement car park
Duration: 7 months

- Removal of earth from site so car park can be cut into the ground to reduce visual impact. Some of this earth will be stored off-site for the use in landscaping around new office buildings.
- Construction of the structure of the replacement car park.
- Internal finishing, installation of services and landscaping of surrounding area.
- New car park will remain outside the main perimeter of the site, so will not require full security measures (i.e., there will be a swipe control for access/egress and there will be cameras on the car decks).

Phase 2:
Construction of new office buildings
Duration: 21 months

- Start of use of replacement car park and construction of site compound required for office building work.
- Construction of main external structure of new office buildings.
- Internal finishing and installation of services.
- Commissioning of the new building.
- External finishing and landscaping works.

It is proposed that during the development of the additional office accommodation at Benhall, the Oakley park and ride facility would be extended to provide additional capacity to make-up for any temporary parking shortfall on the Benhall site.

Key:
- Red: Area of car park construction
- Blue: Area of office buildings construction and site compound
- Arrow: Movement of construction traffic
If you have any comments on our proposal, please complete one of the feedback forms available today and post in the box provided.

12. NEXT STEPS

Finalising our application

Following this exhibition, we will review all of the comments we receive and the findings of the transport and Environmental Assessments which are being carried out before finalising our application.

We hope to submit our final application to Cheltenham Borough Council before the end of the year. Once the application has been submitted, there will be a further opportunity to comment on our plans during the Council’s formal consultation period for the application. It is anticipated that the Council’s planning committee will make a decision on the application in Spring 2010.
Helping us work more efficiently

At this stage our objective is to achieve planning permission for additional accommodation and replacement car park facilities to meet our business requirements.

Detailed design of the accommodation will take place at the next stage if planning consent is achieved and Board approval is gained to implement the proposal. However, facilities standards for any additional office accommodation will be in line with the standards set by the current Benhall main operation building. As such, it is likely that any additional accommodation would include facilities such as showers, lockers, a shop and coffee bar.

There are also currently proposals for 30 motorcycle parking spaces and 160 new cycle racks to be provided in conjunction with the new office building. However, these figures will need to be confirmed during the formal planning application process.