



Defence
Infrastructure
Organisation

[Redacted]

Winchester District Council
By Email only

Mobile: [Redacted]

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11th October 2024

Proposed Submission Local Plan (Reg 19)

DIO reference:10054623

Dear Sir/Madam

I write to confirm the statutory safeguarding position of the Ministry of Defence (MOD) in relation to Winchester District Council's Local Plan Proposed Submission at Regulation 19 consultation document.

The Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) Safeguarding Team represents the MOD as a statutory consultee in the UK planning system to ensure designated zones around key operational defence sites such as aerodromes, explosives storage sites, air weapon ranges, and technical sites are not adversely affected by development outside the MOD estate. For clarity, this response relates to MOD Safeguarding concerns only and should be read in conjunction with any other submissions that might be provided by other MOD sites or departments.

Paragraph 101 of the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2023) requires that planning policies and decisions take into account defence requirements by '*ensuring that operational sites are not affected adversely by the impact of other development proposed in the area.*' Statutory consultation of the MOD occurs as a result of the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (Safeguarded aerodromes, technical sites and military explosives storage areas) Direction 2002 (DfT/ODPM Circular 01/2003) and the location data and criteria set out on safeguarding maps issued to Local Planning Authorities by the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG) in accordance with the provisions of that Direction.

Copies of these relevant plans, in both GIS shapefile and .pdf format are issued to Local Planning Authorities by MHCLG. An assurance review was conducted by the

MOD in 2023 which confirmed that, at that time, Local Planning Authorities held the most recent relevant safeguarding data. Any subsequent updates to those plans were then issued by MHCLG. If there is a requirement for replacement data, a request can be made through the above email address.

The area covered by any Winchester District Council's Local Plan, will both contain and be washed over by safeguarding zones that are designated to preserve the operation and capability of defence assets and sites (including RAF Odiham, DARA Fleetlands heliport, AAC Middle Wallop, and the Central WAM (Wide Area Multilateration) Network).

The review or drafting of planning policy provides an opportunity to better inform developers of the statutory requirement that MOD is consulted on development that triggers the criteria set out on Safeguarding Plans, and the constraints that might be applied to development as a result of the requirement to ensure defence capability and operations are not adversely affected.

Central WAM Network is a new technical asset, which contributes to aviation safety by feeding into the air traffic management system in the Central areas of England. There is the potential for development to impact on the operation and/or capability of this new technical asset which consists of nodes and connecting pathways, each of which have their own consultation criteria. Elements of this asset pass through Winchester District Council's Local Plan authority area.

To provide an illustration of the various issues that might be fundamental to MOD assessment carried out in response to statutory consultation, a brief summary of the main safeguarding areas of concern is provided below. Depending on the statutory safeguarding zone within which a site allocation or proposed development falls, different considerations will apply.

The airspace above and surrounding aerodromes is safeguarded to ensure that development does not form a physical obstruction to the safe operation of aircraft using that aerodrome. Colour coded zones are marked on safeguarding maps that provide heights which, if proposed development would reach or exceed them, would trigger MOD consultation. These zones also indicate areas where development might reduce the capability or otherwise compromise the operation of technical assets such as communications, navigation, or surveillance systems including radar. In addition to permanent physical development within these zones, the change of use of land to allow/facilitate flying activities; and the use of cranes, piling rigs or other tall plant or equipment to implement development may also be of concern.

Birdstrike safeguarding zones with a radius of 12.87km are designated around certain military aerodromes and marked on safeguarding maps with a heavy dotted line. Aircraft within these zones are most likely to be approaching or departing aerodromes and would be at critical stages of flight. Within these statutory consultation zones the creation or enhancement of environments attractive to those large and flocking bird species that pose a hazard to aviation safety can have a significant effect. This can include:

- the landscaping schemes associated with developments including the provision of green/brown roofs, and/or the creation of new waterbodies such as reservoirs, wetlands, ponds and/or attenuation basins and other elements associated with sustainable drainage systems.
- This would also include both on and off-site provision of Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG). Where off-site provision is to provide BNG, the locations of both the host

development and any other site should both/all be assessed against statutory safeguarding zones and MOD consulted where any element falls within the marked statutory safeguarding zone.

Finally, those technical assets that facilitate air traffic management, primarily radar, navigation, and communications systems are safeguarded to limit the impact of development on their capability and operation. The height, massing and materials used to finish a development may all be factors in assessing the impact of a given scheme. Developments that incorporate renewable energy systems may be of particular concern given their potential to provide large expanses of metal at height, for example in the case of a wind turbine or a solar PV system mounted on a roof

Where development falls outside designated safeguarding zones the MOD may have an interest where development is of a type likely to have any impact on operational capability. Usually this will be by virtue of the scale, height, or other physical property of a development. Examples these types of development include, but are not limited to

- Solar PV development which can impact on the operation and capability of communications and other technical assets by introducing substantial areas of metal or sources of electromagnetic interference. Depending on the location of development, solar panels may also produce glint and glare which can affect aircrew or air traffic controllers.
- Wind turbines may impact on the operation of surveillance systems such as radar where the rotating motion of their blades can degrade and cause interference to the effective operation of these types of installations, potentially resulting in detriment to aviation safety and operational capability. This potential is recognised in the Government's online Planning Practice Guidance which contains, within the Renewable and Low Carbon Energy section, specific guidance that both developers and Local Planning Authorities should consult the MOD where a proposed turbine has a tip height of, or exceeding 11m, and/or has a rotor diameter of, or exceeding 2m;
- Any development that would exceed a height of 50m above ground level. Both tall (of or exceeding a height of 50m above ground level) structures and wind turbine development introduce physical obstacles to low flying aircraft; and
- Any development, including changes of use and regardless of height, outside MOD safeguarding zones but in the vicinity of military training estate or property.

The proposed Policy NE5 Biodiversity identifies that "The Local Planning Authority will require, in accordance with the Environment Act 2021, development to deliver a minimum of 10% measurable net gain in biodiversity to be maintained for a period of 30 years in accordance with the Environment Act and to the latest Statutory Biodiversity Metric."

The MOD request that; when drafting policy and guidance which addresses biodiversity, ecology, and Biodiversity Net Gain; the Council bear in mind that some forms of environmental improvement or enhancement may not be compatible with aviation safety. Where off-site provision is to provide BNG, the locations of both the host development and any other site should both/all be assessed against statutory safeguarding zones and the MOD should be consulted where any element falls within the marked statutory safeguarding zone.

The MOD welcome the provision at Pg 317 (12.27) Housing Allocations: Sir John Moore Barracks: Ensure that any development or the use of the land do not interfere, compromise or degrade an air traffic control signal that runs between a series of ground radio antennas which are used by the Ministry of Defence.

The MOD note proposed Policy CN5 Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Schemes.

The MOD has, in principle, no objection to any renewable energy development, though some infrastructure enabling renewable energy production, for example wind turbine generators or solar photo voltaic panels can, by virtue of their physical dimensions and properties, impact upon military aviation activities, cause obstruction to protected critical airspace surrounding military aerodromes, or impede the operation of safeguarded defence technical installations. In addition, where turbines are erected in line of sight to defence radars and other types of defence technical installations, the rotating motion of their blades can degrade and cause interference to the effective operation of these types of installations potentially resulting in detriment to aviation safety and operational capability.

The MOD request that the wording of Policy CN5 is broadened to inform developers that only those applications for development which would not compromise, restrict or otherwise degrade the operational capability of safeguarded MOD sites and/or assets will be supported.

Within any new Local Plan, policies and the reasoned justification supporting them should, ideally, refer to the presence of safeguarding zones and/or provide a developer with an indication as to potential limitations that might apply to certain development types. In order to provide a broader representation of MOD interests, and to ensure prospective developers are aware of the implications of developing within an area containing MOD safeguarded zones, it is requested that the Regulation 19 Winchester District Council's Local Plan Proposed Submission contains policy wording that makes clear that only those applications for development which would not compromise, restrict or otherwise degrade the operational capability of safeguarded MOD sites and/or assets will be supported.

I trust this clearly explains our position on this update. Please do not hesitate to contact me should you wish to consider these points further.

Yours sincerely

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