



Ministry of Defence

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Ministry of Defence
Safeguarding Department
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Your reference: Bradford Abbas & Clifton Maybank
Neighbourhood Plan Consultation on the Submitted Plan

Mobile: [REDACTED]

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Our reference: DIO 10071633

Planning Policy
Dorset Council
County Hall
Colliton Park
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DT1 1XJ

28th August 2026

Dear Sir/Madam

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) understands Dorset Council are consulting on the submitted plan for the Bradford Abbas & Clifton Maybank Neighbourhood Plan.

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 parts of the MOD.

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.

It should be noted that the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), published in August 2026, contains a number of policies relevant to plan making and defence which include:

- *'Policy P1: Planning for clean and safe places'* requires that development plans identify whether certain forms of development should be restricted where they may fall within *'safeguarding areas around aerodromes, technical sites or military explosives storage areas'*.

- *'Policy P4: Impact of development on existing activities'* sets out the agent of change principle, identifying that development proposals should not result in unreasonable restrictions being placed on the current and permitted operation of existing businesses and activities and identifies defence sites as one of those existing businesses and activities.
- *'Policy P6: Land and operations for defence and public safety'* highlights the substantial weight that *'should be attached to the importance of sites, activities, facilities and infrastructure required to maintain and enhance defence capability'* and directs that this be considered where development is proposed which could affect operational activity and capability. In addition, decision makers are guided to consider the importance of these sites when considering proposals for *'modernisation, intensification, redevelopment or expansion for operational and related purposes'* of defence sites, facilities, and infrastructure.

The Bradford Abbas & Clifton Maybank Neighbourhood Plan authority area both contains and is washed over by safeguarding zones that are designated to preserve the operation and capability of defence assets and sites including RNAS Yeovilton and Yeovil Airport.

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.

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 relevant safeguarding zone 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. Within designated zones proposed development that exceeds given trigger heights necessitates that statutory consultation of the MOD takes place. This consultation allows the MOD to carry out assessment of development and to understand how the height of development would impact on the protected airspace above and surrounding an aerodrome and whether any form of mitigation is necessary or viable. These zones also indicate areas where development, by virtue of its height, scale, massing, or external materials 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 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. Aircraft within these zones are most likely to be approaching or departing aerodromes and therefore being at critical stages of flight. These statutory consultation zones are designed to allow birdstrike risk created by or increased by proposed development to be identified and mitigated. The creation 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 landscaping schemes associated with large developments, as well as the creation of new waterbodies such as ponds, wetlands and/or attenuation basins. This would also include both on and off-site provision of Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG). The creation of open water, whether permanent and temporary, may provide a range of habitats for wildlife, including potentially increasing the creation of attractant environments for large and flocking bird species hazardous to aviation and therefore may be subject to design requirements or for management plans to be applied.

- 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.

In addition to the safeguarding zones identified, the MOD may also 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:

- 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.
- Development, regardless of height, outside MOD safeguarding zones but in the vicinity of military training estate or property.

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The MOD notes the provision within Project P6 for the potential support for the generation of community-based Renewable Energy.

The MOD has, in principle, no objection to any renewable energy development, though some infrastructure enabling renewable energy production, for example wind turbine generators 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.

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. 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.

Solar PV development can compromise the operation of communications and other technical assets by introducing substantial areas of metal that degrade signals and, depending on the location of development, may produce glint and glare to the detriment of aviation safety.

Additionally, it may be necessary in certain circumstances for MOD to require the removal of permitted development rights, where the use of these rights introduces elements that would not be compatible with MOD safeguarding requirements.

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.



Chris Waldron
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