



Airfield Safeguarding

March 2020

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Introduction

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The purpose of safeguarding an airfield is to protect both the airspace over and around it from the effects of possible adverse developments that may affect safe operation by controlling the use of land. Scottish Government Circular 2/2003 *Safeguarding of Aerodromes, Technical Sites and Military Explosives Storage Areas* recommends that “*operators of licensed aerodromes which are not officially safeguarded, and operators of unlicensed aerodromes and sites for other aviation activities (for example gliding or parachuting) should take steps to protect their locations from the effects of possible adverse development by establishing an agreed consultation procedure between themselves and the planning authority.*”

Perth Airport is a licensed airfield and is safeguarded in line with CAA document *CAP 168 Licensing of Aerodromes* and is not subject to this Guidance.

In order to provide clarity the Council have designated safeguarding zones for each unlicensed airfield in Perth and Kinross. These are at Balado, Errol, Methven, Portmoak and Strathallan (note however that planning permission has been granted for residential development within the boundaries of Errol airfield and if this permission is implemented the airfield safeguarding for Errol airfield will no longer apply). CAA guidelines, *CAP 793 Safe Operating Procedures for Unlicensed Aerodromes* sets out sound practice for operators of unlicensed airfields. Safeguarding will assist the Planning authority to make reasonable decisions in response to local development proposals. It is a basic principle, that in order to be clearly reasonable a planning decision has to be taken in the knowledge of how it will affect the interested parties in the area in question. Consultation about such development proposals will allow the airfield operator to explain how aviation interests might be affected.

Assessing Development in Airfield Safeguarding Zones

The '*Airfield Safeguarding Zones*' are defined as a 2,000 metre radius from the centre point of the airfield runway or where no runway is defined the centre point of the airfield.

Planning applications lodged with the Council within the '*Airfield Safeguarding Zone*' which may impact on operations will be referred to the airfield operator for consultation. Where objections are raised the airfield operator is required to specify how the proposal would impact on existing operations.

In order to provide a balanced view, where objections are raised, the applicant may be required to provide an independent assessment of the impact on the safe operation of the existing facility, prepared by a suitably qualified person.

All consultations from airfield operators and independent assessments will be considered as a material consideration in determining planning applications but the final decision rests with the Council as Planning Authority.

Prejudicial Developments

A general rule of the CAA is that *“if possible there shall be no obstruction within a radius of 2,000 metres of a runway central line of a greater height than 46 metres”*.

This is a ‘*counsel of perfection*’ and rarely achieved in the real world. However, there are non-aviation activities and types of development that may be prejudicial to the operators of an aviation site.

Three problem areas can be identified with some accuracy:

(a) Vertical Obstructions

The deliberate construction or inadvertent growing of tall objects into the flight line of aircraft clearly constitutes a hazard. Aircraft taking off and landing are operating with restricted options. To project a solid object into this take-off and landing space creates an unacceptable danger and can effectively shut down an airfield operation.

Limitations of Vertical Obstructions

The height of vertical obstructions should ideally be limited. The actual safe height is dependent upon its horizontal distance along the approach and take-off surfaces.

Long-term progressive encroachments into areas of land or airspaces by landscape valuable trees can be problematic to airfield operations. Each metre of growth can reduce the available runway length by 20 metres.

(b) Surface Obstructions

The options available to a pilot abandoning a take-off or landing are dependent in measure upon the unobstructed surface available to the aircraft. Surface obstructions such as fences, walls, ditches or buildings in areas close to airfields constitute real hazards and can dramatically undermine the safety of an airfield and its operations.

Limitations of Surface Obstructions

The following illustrative, but not exhaustive list, are all material considerations in relation to a site of aviation activity:

- Buildings
- Overhead power lines
- Electrical transmission lines
- Roads
- Drains
- Fences
- Hedges
- Wind turbines
- Anemometer and other meteorological masts

Clearly there is a question of degree and proximity with all of these, but there would be certain scenarios which would be less favourable than others, and will be assessed appropriately by the airfield operator and the Council.

(c) Incompatible Activities

Uncontrolled or unregulated activities taking place near the boundaries and take-off and landing thresholds constitute degrees of hazard to aviators and those taking part alike.

Limitations of Incompatible Activities

- *Shooting - any area above a shooting area should be treated as extremely hazardous.*
- *Archery - activity of this nature will be incompatible with aviation.*
- *Kite flying - activity of this nature would be a hazard in close proximity and counter to the 'Air Navigation Order 1995'.*
- *Ballooning - activity in the immediate airfield activity would be a hazard.*
- *Equestrian activities - activities of this nature are considered as hazardous to the riding participants if animals are not 'bombproof' to unexpected sounds or sights, eg an aircraft on approach or take-off.*
- *Outdoor gatherings - subject to the rules of the air, aircraft are not permitted to overfly below a minimum height events of a specific number of persons.*

The above is presented as representative of incompatible activities and is intended to illustrate, but is not exclusive.

All applications proposing incompatible activities within the airfield safeguarding zone will be assessed appropriately by the airfield operator and the Council.

Bird Hazards

In addition to structures, any planning application that is likely to attract increased bird activity will also be referred to the aerodrome operator. This includes waste management facilities, lakes and landscaping that could encourage roosting.

Neighbour Agreements

The importance of good neighbours to the operators of the airfield cannot be overstated.

Maintaining the goodwill of people and businesses close to airfield boundaries is fundamental to the long-term operation and development.

Applicants seeking planning permission on land which lies within an airfield safeguarding zone are encouraged to liaise with the airfield operator prior to submitting a planning application. This will allow any concerns with regards to impact on airfield operation to be identified at an early stage.

Airfield Safeguarding Background Information

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Scottish Government

- (i) *Planning Circular 2/2003 'Safeguarding of Aerodromes, Technical sites and Military Explosives Storage Areas'*

Civil Aviation Authority

- (i) *CAP 168 'Licensing of Aerodromes', January 2019*
- (ii) *CAP 393 'Air Navigation Order 2016 and Regulations', 5th edition amendment September 2018*
- (iii) *CAP 738 'Safeguarding of Aerodromes', December 2006*
- (iv) *CAP 764 'CAA Policy and Guidelines on Wind Turbines', 6th edition February 2016*
- (v) *CAP 793 'Safe Operating Practices at Unlicensed Aerodromes', July 2010*

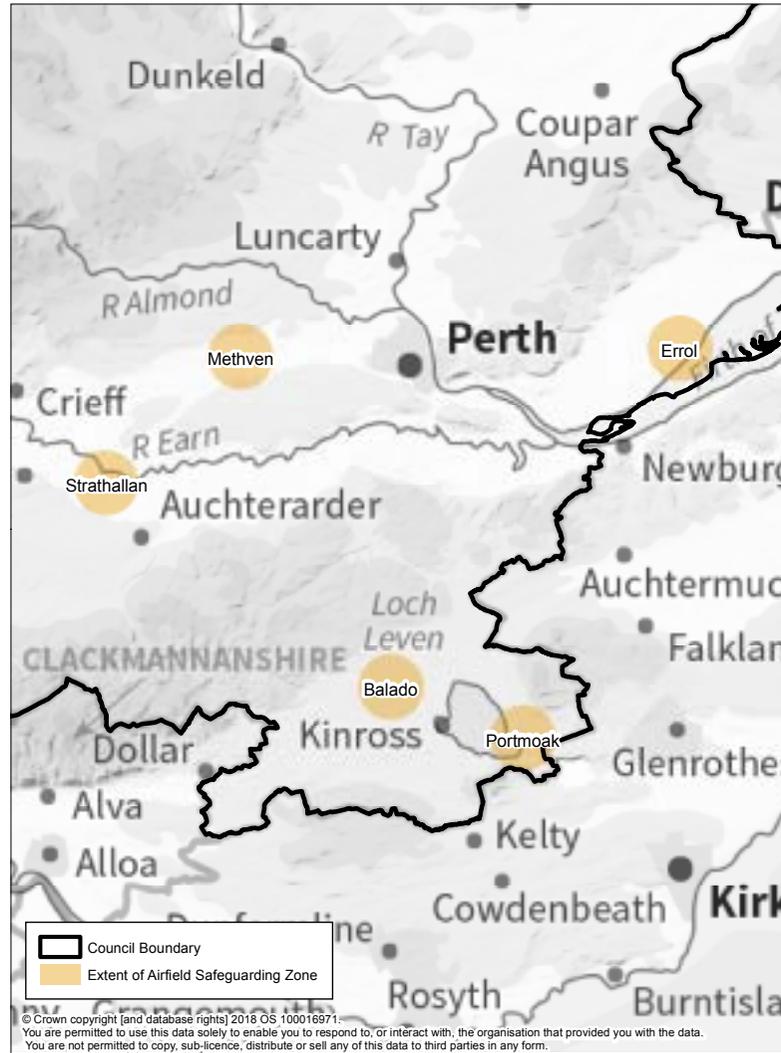
British Gliding Association

- (i) *'Aerodrome Safeguarding', 2005*
- (ii) *Safety Management System Manual 10.2, February 2018*

General Aviation Awareness Council

- (i) *Leaflet 'Your Local Aerodrome', 2011*
- (ii) *Factsheet 3 'Safeguarding Your Flying Site', November 2015*
- (iii) *Factsheet 4 'Airfield Safeguarding for Local Planning Authorities', January 2015*

Airfield Safeguarding Zones



Airfield Safeguarding Zones Consultation draft January 2019	↑ Scale: 1:250,000	
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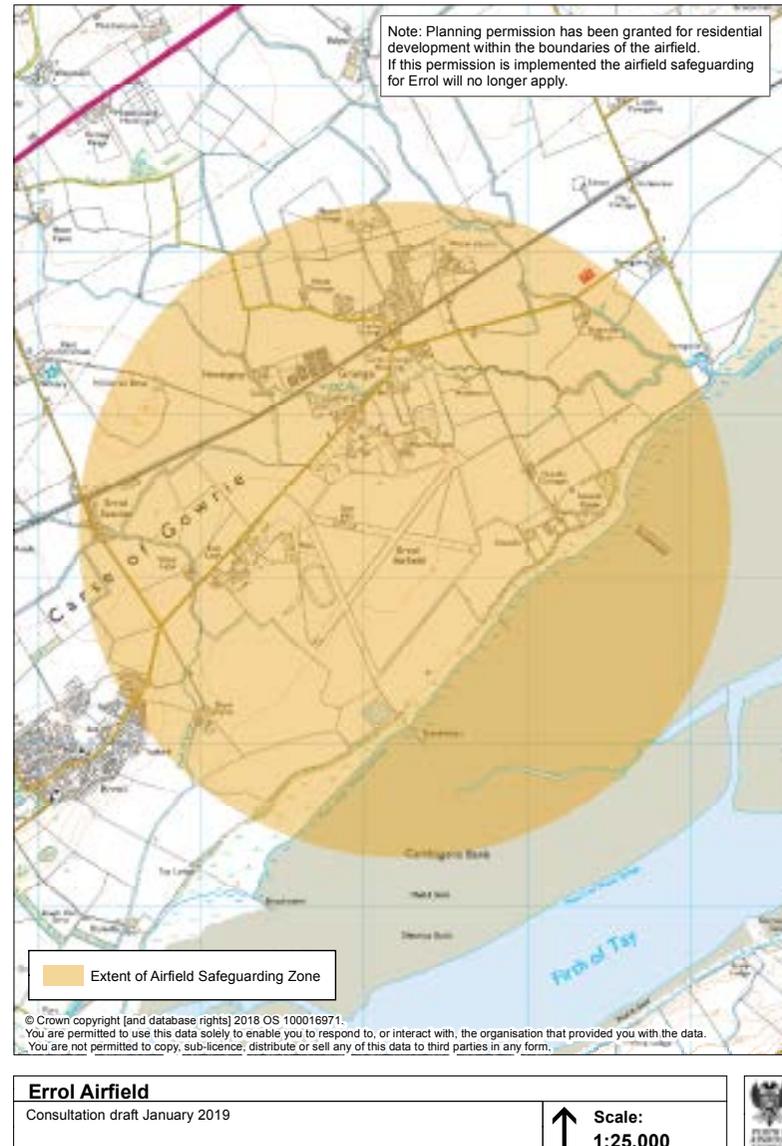
Balado Airfield



Balado Airfield	↑ Scale: 1:25,000	
Consultation draft January 2019		

Errol Airfield

Note: *Planning permission has been granted for residential development within the boundaries of the airfield. If this permission is implemented the airfield safeguarding for Errol will no longer apply.*

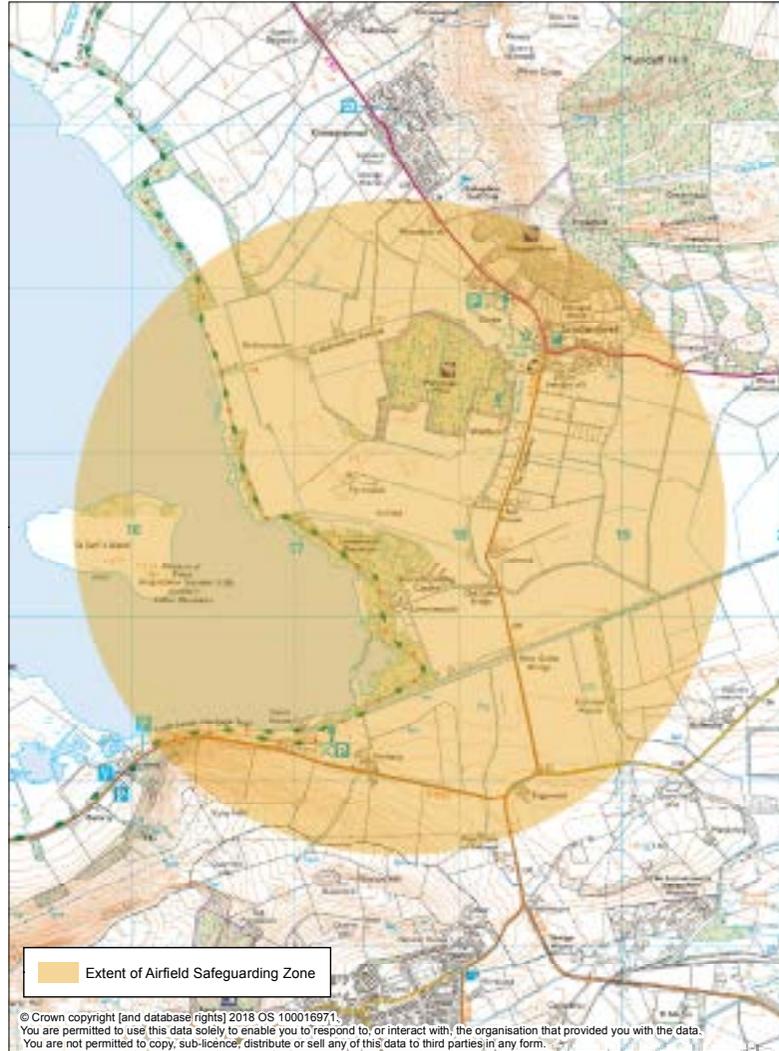


Methven Airfield



Methven Airfield	↑ Scale: 1:25,000	
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Portmoak Airfield



Portmoak Airfield	 Scale: 1:25,000	
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Strathallan Airfield



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