



Ministry  
of Defence

## Defence Infrastructure Organisation

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Dear Sir/Madam

06 June 2014

### **Preferred Option for the Sefton Local Development Plan**

Further to our useful meeting on the 8<sup>th</sup> April, I write to provide further detail relating to the objection registered by the Ministry of Defence (MOD) with respect to the allocation of land at site SR4.09 (Segars Farm, Coastal Road, Ainsdale) for the future development of housing in the local plan.

Please find attached a statement summarising our assessment of the proposed allocation of the site for housing development upon aerodrome operations at RAF Woodvale.

I would be grateful if you could keep me informed on how the proposals included in the plan progress so that we can take account of them in relation to our departmental interests in the area.

I trust this adequately explains our position on this matter. Please do not hesitate to contact me should you require further information.

Yours sincerely





# Defence Infrastructure Organisation

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A statement on the Ministry of Defence safeguarding position in relation to the allocation of land at Seagars Farm, Ainsdale for housing in the Local Plan for Sefton

**PREPARED BY JON WILSON  
ON BEHALF OF  
THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DEFENCE**

Dated 30th May 2014



## **1 Introduction: The Role of the Defence Infrastructure Organisation**

1.1 Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) was formed on 1 April 2011, when the former Defence Estates organisation was brought together with other infrastructure functions in the MOD to form a single organisation.

1.2 DIO manages the military estate, including accommodation for Service personnel and their families, on behalf of the MOD. DIO Safeguarding manages, on behalf of the MOD, the formal consultation process through which the MOD is engaged on development proposals, including those for wind turbines. It ensures operational facilities such as aerodromes, explosives stores, radar facilities and range areas are not compromised by development either on or offshore. This safeguarding responsibility includes maintaining the effective operation of military radars.

1.3 DIO Safeguarding receives consultations from Local Planning Authorities and consenting authorities on behalf of the MOD. DIO Safeguarding then consults a range of technical experts across the Department and a response is provided to the Local Planning Authority or consenting authority that addresses all MOD interests, including military aerodromes and associated air traffic navigational aids.

## **2. The preparation of Sefton Local Development Plan**

2.1 Sefton Borough Council consulted DIO in the preparation of a new local development plan for Sefton for the period 2015 -2030. The plan includes the allocation of areas of land to support the growth of the area during the plan period.

2.2 To meet the forecasted demand for new housing the council has evaluated a number of sites nominated for housing development. A number of sites have been identified for future housing in the preferred options for the Sefton Local Development Plan. Of these sites, 10 are in the vicinity of RAF Woodvale occupying the statutory safeguarding consultation zone encompassing the aerodrome.

## **3. The Role of RAF Woodvale**

3.1 RAF Woodvale is a MOD aerodrome which is used to support defence flying training. There are currently four flying units based at RAF Woodvale: Liverpool University Air Squadron, Manchester and Salford Universities Air Squadron, No 10 Air Experience Flight and No 631 Volunteer Gliding Squadron. RAF Woodvale is used to deliver basic flying tuition and to maintain the flying experience of students in the University Air Squadrons. This serves as an induction

before personnel progress to elementary military flight training. The aerodrome is currently one of the busiest MOD training airfields being used 7 days per week. During 2013 the aerodrome was used for approximately 22,000 take-off and landings by air traffic. The aerodrome is used primarily by light aircraft and gliders used in defence training. However, the aerodrome has a runway of sufficient length to support movements of larger and more powerful aircraft if this were required. At present the MOD plans to continue the current defence aviation training role of RAF Woodvale and has committed to retaining the University Air Squadrons training element at the aerodrome.

#### **4. Safeguarding RAF Woodvale**

4.1 Strategically important civil and military aerodromes in the UK are statutorily safeguarded. The MOD maintains statutory safeguarding of RAF Woodvale aerodrome to retain its optimal capabilities because of its role in supporting defence aviation training.

4.2 In accordance with the arrangements set out in planning circular 01/03: The Town and Country Planning (Safeguarded Aerodromes, Technical Sites and Military Explosives Storage Areas) Direction 2002; the MOD retains an aerodrome safeguarding map for RAF Woodvale. This defines height consultation zones relative to the topography of the land surrounding the aerodrome. These serve to define height consultation thresholds in order to regulate development to ensure that the runway approaches and the critical airspace surrounding the aerodrome are not impeded by development.

#### **5. Technical Assessment**

5.1 When DIO was consulted on the preferred options for the development plan, a basic appraisal was carried out to determine if the development of the land parcels identified would impact on the effective operation of MOD assets including RAF Woodvale. This is the normal process conducted for all forms of planning consultations received by the MOD that relate to sites occupying statutory safeguarding consultation zones.

5.2 At this stage the dimensions and layout of residential properties that might be erected at any of these sites is not known. DIO has therefore completed an initial aerodrome safeguarding assessment on the presumption that the sites would be developed with typical 2 storey housing approximately 7m high.

5.3 Each of the 10 housing sites occupying the RAF Woodvale aerodrome height safeguarding zones, defined in the current safeguarding plan, were evaluated on this basis. Sites SR4.05, SR4.07, SR4.08, SR4.10 SR4.11, SR4.12, SR4.13, SR4.15 and SR4.44 all occupy aerodrome height safeguarding zones in which the planning authority would only need to consult the MOD upon developments exceeding 45.7m in height. Site SR4.06 occupies an aerodrome height safeguarding zone in which the MOD must be consulted upon developments exceeding 15.2m in height. It was therefore concluded that it can be reasonably expected that the use of these sites for housing will not cause a physical obstruction to the operation of the aerodrome. As such, the inclusion of these sites in the local development plan is not a safeguarding concern to the MOD.

5.4 One of the sites identified as potentially viable for inclusion in the plan is a parcel of land at Segars Farm, to the south of Coastal road (identified as site SR4.09). This site is situated immediately north of RAF Woodvale, approximately 150m north of the end of the main runway and occupies an aerodrome height safeguarding zone in which the planning authority must consult the MOD on all forms of development. This is because the site is directly beneath the extended runway approach. Aircraft taking off from the main runway will therefore be in the initial phase of their ascent as they pass over this area of land. Similarly aircraft landing on to this runway will descend over this site and be entering the final phase of the landing process prior to touching down on the runway as they pass over the site. Aircraft using the main runway for landing and take-offs are therefore passing over the site at relatively low levels

5.5 The MOD has evaluated the implication of structures approximately 7m in height being developed on this site. Taking into account the proximity of the site to the end of the main runway, it has been concluded that such development over any part of this site would cause a physical obstruction to the assured safe movement of aircraft at a critical stage of flight.

5.6 A secondary consideration is the potential implications of an aircraft taking off from the main runway experiencing engine failure during the initial phase of take-off. In such a scenario the aircraft would need to complete an emergency landing but having gained little height would have

limited scope to glide to open land. Current air traffic circuits and procedures for aircraft using RAF Woodvale are managed to align the critical stages of flight with the available open space so that aircraft have the maximum opportunity to safely complete an emergency landing if this became necessary. The Segars Farm site is currently open farmland. If this land, immediately adjacent to the end of the main runway were to be used for housing then it could have potential safety implications.

5.7 A further consideration relevant to the allocation of this site for housing are the potential impacts of the ongoing flight movements to and from RAF Woodvale on the amenity of the householders.

Aircraft will use their engines at full power during take-off which produces the most significant phase of noise emissions associated with aerodrome operations. Residential properties located so close to the end of the runway would be subject to noise disturbance caused by aircraft using this runway.

## **6. Conclusion**

6.1 The MOD considers that assigning the site at Segars Farm for housing would introduce an unnecessary impediment to the safe and effective operation of the aerodrome at RAF Woodvale in its ongoing role as an establishment providing defence flying training. The use of this land for housing would also expose the occupants to regular disturbance from aircraft noise due to its proximity to the runway and position directly beneath the principal take-off and landing and approach.

6.2 The MOD therefore maintains its safeguarding objection to the allocation of the SR4.09 Segars Farm site for housing.