

# Public Document Pack

## Argyll and Bute Council

Comhairle Earra-Ghàidheal Agus Bhòid

Executive Director: Douglas Hendry



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22 August 2022

## NOTICE OF MEETING

A meeting of the **ARGYLL AND BUTE LOCAL REVIEW BODY** will be held **BY MICROSOFT TEAMS** on **MONDAY, 29 AUGUST 2022** at **2:00 PM**, which you are requested to attend.

Douglas Hendry  
Executive Director

## BUSINESS

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**
3. **CONSIDER NOTICE OF REVIEW REQUEST: GLENFORSA AIRFIELD, GLENFORSA, ISLE OF MULL, PA72 6JN (REF: 22/0003/LRB)**
  - (a) Further Information Received from Applicant (Pages 3 - 4)
  - (b) Further Information Received from Planning (Pages 5 - 8)
  - (c) Comments from Interested Parties on Further Information (Pages 9 - 16)

## Argyll and Bute Local Review Body

Councillor Kieron Green (Chair)  
Councillor Liz McCabe

Councillor Mark Irvine

Contact: Fiona McCallum Tel: 01546 604392

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**McCallum, Fiona**

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**From:** paul@houghtonplanning.co.uk  
**Sent:** 29 July 2022 12:10  
**To:** McCallum, Fiona; Bain, Peter (Planning); Williams, Tim  
**Cc:** localreviewprocess  
**Subject:** RE: Request for Further Written Submissions Notice of Review Reference 22/0003/LRB (Planning Ref: 21/00018/PP) - Glenforsa Airfield, Glenforsa, Isle of Mull, PA72 6JN [OFFICIAL]

Dear Fiona,

The response from the Applicant to the question he has been asked is as follows.

“Over a five-year period, the Applicant spoke to the various case officers, and explained why he needed the building. He also emailed on several occasions, with information, and met case officers on site. He thought that would suffice, particularly as so much of his case related to the requirement to have a building for airfield uses on an operational airfield, which he thought case officers understood. It was only when the application was refused that it dawned on him that it wasn’t. Unfortunately, due to an IT issue, he doesn’t have his emails to the case officers, but assumes that the Planning Service will have those”.

We will be replying to the planning officer’s response next week.

Regards Paul

**Paul Houghton MRTPI**  
**Houghton Planning Ltd**

**m:** 07780 117708

**e:** [paul@houghtonplanning.co.uk](mailto:paul@houghtonplanning.co.uk) **w:** [www.houghtonplanning.co.uk](http://www.houghtonplanning.co.uk)

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Argyll and Bute Council  
Comhairle Earra Gháidheal agus Bhóid



**Development and Infrastructure Services**  
**Executive Director: Kirsty Flanagan**

David Logan  
Head of Legal and Regulatory Support  
Argyll and Bute Council

**Development & Infrastructure Services**  
**Development & Economic Growth, 1A Manse Brae,**  
**Lochgilphead, Argyll, PA31 8RD**  
**Tel: 01546 604204**  
**e mail : Peter.Bain@argyll-bute.gov.uk**  
**Website: www.argyll-bute.gov.uk**

**Ask For:** Peter Bain  
**Our Ref:** 21/00018/PP  
**Your Ref:** 22/0003/LRB  
**Date:** 27<sup>th</sup> July 2022

Dear Sir,

**TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997 AS AMENDED**  
**LOCAL REVIEW BODY REFERENCE: 22/0003/LRB**  
**PLANNING APPLICATION REFERENCE: 21/00018/PP**  
**PROPOSAL: ERECTION OF A STEEL BUILDING FOR THE STORAGE OF AIRCRAFT**  
**MAINTENANCE EQUIPMENT AND AIRCRAFT AND FORMATION OF HARDSTANDING**  
**AREA**  
**SITE ADDRESS: GLENFORSA AIRFIELD, GLENFORSA, ISLE OF MULL, PA72 6JN**

I refer to the request for further written information issued by the Argyll and Bute Local Review Body dated 4<sup>th</sup> July 2022 in respect of the above; I am now in a position to respond as follows.

**Information Requested:**

To request the Planning Officer to submit in writing their assessment of the exceptional case information submitted by the Applicant as part of this Review and to extend the time for receipt of this information to 31 July 2022.

**Officer Response:**

Officers have previously advised of their concerns in relation to the acceptance of new information by the LRB having regards to S.43B(1) of the Act, particularly as the applicant had declined to provide the requested information during the consideration of the original application. It is however recognised and accepted that it is for the LRB as the decision maker to reach a view on whether the subsequent submission of this information amounts to a 'new matter' in their determination of the Local Review.

**General Operational Requirement:**

The further information submitted identifies an operational requirement for the provision of covered storage of a tractor and other small machinery including a grass mower, telehandler, small mowers, a roller, a harrow and a mini digger that are claimed to be essential to the continued maintenance and operation of the airfield; it is claimed that no such storage facility currently exists at the airfield. It is also claimed that the proposed hanger would provide year round covered storage for the applicant's own vintage biplane in addition to being an enhancement of the current airfield facilities for any planes stranded at the airfield during periods of severe weather.

Whilst it is accepted that the provision of a building to accommodate equipment essential to the operation of the airfield would amount to an operational requirement it is highlighted that the submitted statement does not clarify what the existing storage arrangements for housing



of essential airfield maintenance machinery/equipment are (it is assumed that some storage arrangements must be in place for existing equipment utilised at the site), nor does it provide any explanation as to why any existing arrangements are no longer available and/or considered to be suitable for the continued operation of the airfield.

The provision of a year round storage facility for the applicant's personal plane whilst desirable to the applicant, does not appear to be a matter that is in itself essential for the continued operation of the airfield although it is recognised that delivery of this personal objective would also deliver an enhancement of existing facilities for the wider users of the airfield, particularly during periods of adverse weather.

**Economic Benefit:**

The statement outlines that the airfield provides economic benefits through facilitating access to the Isle of Mull by general fliers including day trippers and persons visiting the island for a longer stay with use including planes, micro-lights and helicopters. The statement also highlights that organised events also attract additional visitors to the island and thereby that this results in tourism spend on the island. The airfield is also identified as a lifeline medical facility as it is utilised by the air ambulance helicopter. The statement does not however directly attribute any specific requirement for the new building in relation to these particular matters although it would not be unreasonable to accept that any development identified as being essential for the continued operation/maintenance of the airfield would also sustain these existing activities and wider economic benefits.

The statement does not provide detail of any direct local employment that the airfield sustains or that might be increased or secured as a result of the proposed development.

**Locational Requirement for a 'Countryside' Site:**

The submitted information identifies that the location has been chosen by the Applicant to be:

- *"away from the operational part of the airfield",*
- *"in an area less useful for farming but still accessible by vehicles";*
- that it is *"sited away from the Glenforsa Hotel and houses that border the airfield" "to avoid noise intrusion",*
- and in a *"location that is visually discreet".*

Whilst these factors are of some relevance they do, based on the information submitted to date, however appear to be matters of the applicant's preference as opposed to matters of operational/locational necessity. The submitted information does not include detail to inform how the choice of location impacts upon the operation of the airfield/management of agricultural land, nor does it identify how a building which is primarily identified as being required for storage would be likely to have a significant adverse impact upon the existing amenity of the locale/residential property.

Prior to accepting any operational argument for the development of an 'open' 'countryside' location it would also be appropriate to consider the suitability and availability of any land designated as 'Rural Opportunity Area (ROA), or any alternative locations within 'Countryside' where the proposed building might reasonably fall under the definition of 'infill', 'rounding-off' or, 're-development'.

The statement provided does not satisfactorily evidence any operational necessity or any other overriding factor that would require that the development be located at the specific location proposed within the 'countryside zone', or demonstrate that other locations within the airfield planning unit or any other adjacent land within the applicant's control that would be viewed more favourably within the context of the LDP Settlement Strategy have been considered prior to being discounted as either unsuitable or unavailable. (The relevant provisions of the LDP Settlement Strategy are set out under policy LDP DM 1 however SG LDP BUS 2 and Schedule B3 would also be an appropriate reference in assessing this aspect as this sets out in more detail a sequential approach to Use Class 6 development outwith defined 'settlement areas' and allocations).



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## LOCAL REVIEW STATEMENT

**Reference No: 21/00018/PP**

**Applicant: Mr Brendan Walsh**

**Proposal: Erection of a steel building for the storage of airfield maintenance equipment and aircraft and formation of hardstanding area**

**Site Address: Glenforsa Airfield,  
Glenforsa, Isle of Mull**

### Preliminaries

This further statement has been prepared in response to the Planning Officer's comments on the case presented in the Applicant's original Local Review Statement.

It should be stressed that the Applicant never declined to submit supporting information, as again suggested by the Planning Officer. His response to the question he was asked by councillors explains this.

*"Over a five-year period, the Applicant spoke to the various case officers, and explained why he needed the building. He also emailed on several occasions, with information, and met case officers on site. He thought that would suffice, particularly as so much of his case related to the requirement to have a building for airfield uses on an operational airfield, which he thought case officers understood. It was only when the application was refused that it dawned on him that it wasn't. Unfortunately, due to an IT issue, he doesn't have his emails to the case officers, but assumes that the Planning Service will have those."*

The remainder of this statement responds to the comments made by the Planning officer in the order they appear in his statement.

**General Operational Requirement**– The Applicant currently stores his machinery and tools outside under tarpaulins, or in the open (see below), with some small tools kept in a storage container in the hotel car park. This temporary solution has sufficed up to now. However, being stored outside has led to deterioration to machinery and tools, and additional maintenance issues and costs, which would be avoided if everything could be kept inside and dry in a purpose-built hangar.



The Applicant's aircraft cannot be stored at the airfield because there is no hangar. Allowing one will, therefore, allow this aircraft, and others that may be trapped at the airfield in bad weather, to be stored in the dry. As many of these aircraft are vintage, they are susceptible to damage, and not having a hangar means that many vintage flyers are wary in flying to Mull other than in perfect weather conditions. If they knew that a hangar existed, they would be more prepared to fly to the island where weather conditions are a bit more changeable.

***Economic Benefit*** – None of the events listed in the original Local Review Statement, nor the tourism and business visits, could happen without the Applicant having the machinery available to maintain the airfield, which need to be stored somewhere, and preferable not outside at risk from inclement weather, damage and theft.

The airfield has no fulltime employees, but does employ various people on a part time basis who otherwise work at the Applicant's hotel. Taken together, it supports the equivalent of 1.5 fulltime posts. If the Applicant can encourage more visitors, and hold more events, then this may increase.

The use also supports other jobs on the island in that the Applicant often needs to employ local mechanics to maintain his equipment, and contractors to undertake specialist tasks such as fencing, drainage etc.



***Locational Requirement for a 'Countryside' Site*** – The reasons why the Applicant chose the site are sound planning reasons. If you exclude the area of the operational airfield, and the areas that are important for agriculture, which includes the Rural Opportunity Area, you are left with very few locations where a hangar could go.

The site chosen has direct access to the airfield, and also has the benefit of a backdrop of trees, so is visually discreet, which again is a planning consideration.

Locating the building away from the hotel and houses is also obvious in that moving and maintaining machinery can be noisy, and the Applicant does not want to compromise the residential amenity of his neighbours.

The only part of the Rural Opportunity Area that the Applicant could have put the hangar on is the field that lies between the site chosen and the hotel and houses. This is used by the farmer as grazing land, and a holding area for livestock, so is part of the ground that is best for agriculture, and so best avoided. Also, the Applicant would struggle to persuade the farmer to allow him to use this land whereas the prospect is better for that agreement to be forthcoming on the site chosen instead, which is of lesser importance to the farmer.

It should also be noted that the Rural Opportunity Area will disappear, once the new Local Development Plan 2 comes into play, with this land, and the application site, having the same status as 'Countryside Area'.

**Area Capacity Evaluation (ACE)** – The Applicant does not understand why an ACE cannot be undertaken, given that planning officers have visited the site, so have presumably taken site notes, and taken photographs.

The application site is the subject of no landscape or biodiversity designations. It is a flat area of land that has the operational airfield to the front, with the coast beyond that, and an area of woodland to the rear (see below).



From the site you can see across the airfield to the coast. The only views of the building will be from the front (airfield), and from offshore at a considerable distance. There are no formal core paths, or informal footpaths, from which the building would be visible.

The building will have a permanent impact on the landscape that is true. However, in terms of the ACE guidance, and the ‘receptors’ in this area, which we say are the local residents, and to a lesser extent hotel residents and users of the airfield, the impact will be ‘low’ to ‘negligible.’ Even that impact can be mitigated by careful colour choice for the building, and some planting around the building.

**Summary** – It is gratifying that the Planning Officer accepts that *“there could well be a genuine operational requirement for a new hanger/storage building”* on the airfield, and hopefully the further information provided in this statement will be seen by him as sufficient to now support the proposal.

There is a clear locational necessity and economic benefit that supports the proposed building, as set out in the original Local Review Statement, and this further one, and a cogent case for why the Rural Opportunity Area is not available or suitable.

It is considered that the information provided to councillors by the Applicant demonstrates a clear 'exceptional case' for this development on the airfield as required by policy LDP DM 1 (E).

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**McCallum, Fiona**

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**From:** Vic Norman <  
**Sent:** 27 July 2022 14:54  
**To:** Bain, Peter (Planning); hotel@glenforsa.com  
**Cc:** McCallum, Fiona  
**Subject:** Glenforsa Airfield

Dear Mr Bain,

I have read with interest your comments regarding the proposed planning application for a Hangar to be erected on the airfield.

- 1/ i have been associated with light aircraft General Aviation for 55 years and i make the following observations.
- 2/ I know of no other Airfield in the UK that does not have a Hangar to be used at storage and maintenance of aircraft and associated equipment as is the case of most houses in the countryside also have garage or shed to store essential working equipment to maintain the property.
- 3/My understanding is that there is no intention for the proposed building to increase the use of the airfield but for the building to be used if required for essential repairs to aircraft the could develop a problem having to work outside in bad weather is not a satisfactory solution.
- 4/I can't see any reason other than[ complainers ]kicking up a fuss or any negative reasons why the planning for a hangar should be turned down .On the grounds of safety while working on aircraft if required and basic common sense the use of the proposed building when aircraft fly in and crew spend time holidays on Mull spending money with the local community must be a very positive asset to the island and a bonus for local tourism .

Your Sincerely

Victor Norman Air Commodore 614Sq Cardiff.

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