



Defence
Infrastructure
Organisation

Planning Application Q&A Response



Planning Application Document | September 2013

Defence College of Technical Training **Lyneham**

Defence College of Technical Training (DCTT) Planning Application: Q&A Response

Purpose of Note

The Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) submitted the planning application for the proposed Defence College of Technical Training (DCTT) at Lyneham, on behalf of the Secretary of State for Defence, on the 24th May 2013. This application was validated by Wiltshire Council on the 7th June 2013.

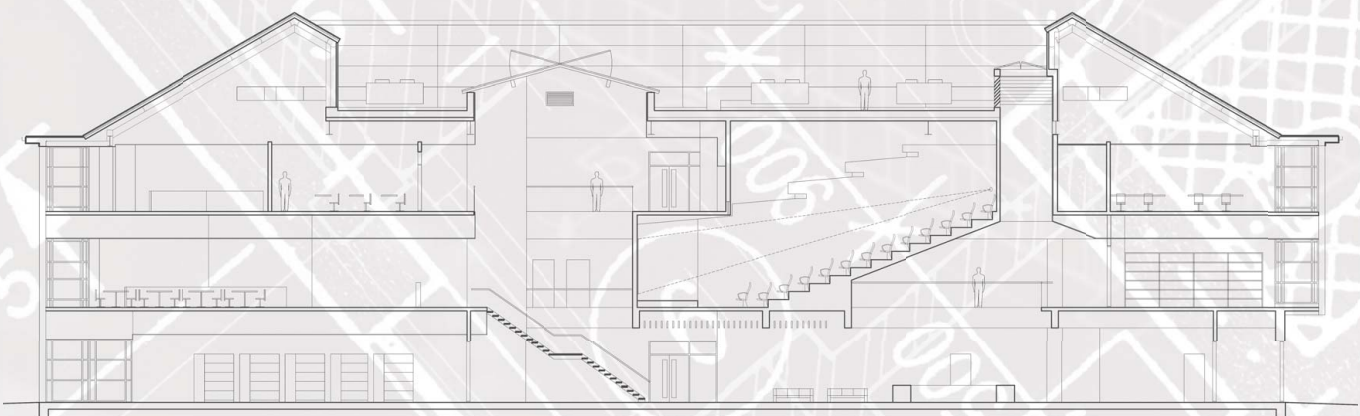
Following validation of the planning application, the Council organised a period of consultation to invite comments on the proposals. A number of comments have been made by members of the public.

In light of these, this note has been prepared to provide further clarification on some of the main issues raised in relation to the new development and the nature of the activities proposed.

For what activities and development is DIO seeking planning permission?

MOD Lyneham is an operational military site and has been so since the early 1930s. The site has undergone many changes since this time and the latest proposals to create the new DCTT as a centre of excellence are the latest in a long established and historically important use of the site by the military.

The phased development of the site over many years leaves the legacy of a built estate which reflects its historical use. To manage the transition from an active airfield site to become the new home of the DCTT requires significant investment in the built estate. The majority of living accommodation on the site does not meet current military standards and requires refurbishment or new development. Many of the former technical buildings are suitable for conversion for use as training buildings for activities requiring larger spaces, but with few existing purpose built training buildings some new development is required to provide appropriate classroom environments for trainees. It is this new development that is the subject of the planning application.





The Secretary of State for Defence is required to secure planning permission for new built development, just like anyone else who is proposing a building project.

The planning application submitted by DIO provides a detailed description of the new development which is accompanied by a series of technical assessments to explain how the designs have been formulated.

As full a picture as possible has been presented on all aspects of the development and activities that will be undertaken on site. This includes details of those uses and activities, such as the majority of the external training, which do not involve significant new development or engineering works, and as a consequence do not require planning permission.

Why can't the external training activities take place on Salisbury Plain?

The development proposed is to provide a largely classroom based training environment. There will often be a need for trainees to move between the classroom and practical external / outdoor training areas during the training day. So it is essential that this external / outdoor training is adjacent to the classrooms, otherwise training quality, course lengths and costs would be adversely affected. The ability to provide both classroom and practical training scenarios was one of the primary reasons why Lyneham was chosen as the location

for DCTT. It is essential that trainees are not limited to learning how to repair equipment in a comfortable classroom environment, but are given an opportunity to learn in safe practical training areas, before being confronted with more complex training or operations situations. Many of the men and women who will train at Lyneham will deploy on operations in a very short space of time after completing their courses and it is essential that they are prepared in the best possible manner to perform their duties effectively.

The outdoor training areas will not be used for the type of full combat training that currently takes place on Salisbury Plain, e.g. tank firing. The tank recovery training area is used for training in the use of equipment and techniques to recover armoured vehicles that have been disabled in different ground conditions (sand, mud, steep slopes etc.). The armoured vehicles used for recovery practice do not have engines or working armaments, so will be left outside in the training area. The recovery vehicles (CRARRVs) are fitted with winches and recovery equipment and the vast majority of the training (at least 90%) is undertaken with the CRARRV engine either off or idling. This training will take place during the normal training day (08:00-17:00), with only very occasional use outwith these hours.



There is an existing 25m firing range on the site and this has been used frequently for many years. This facility will continue to be used, largely (>90%) during the normal training day. There will be some evening and weekend use, but any requirement for night time use (after 23:00) will be met off-site.

The site has a long history of use for aircraft movements, having been an operational airfield and RAF Station for more than 70 years. None of the training activities will involve flying and aircraft will be limited to taxiing around a specific part of the site, as part of aircraft management training to help create a realistic training environment. This is expected to be no more than 20 days during each 10 week term (and is not part of the first Tranche of the development). During these times, normally two, but up to six aircraft, will taxi using one power-limited engine for two periods of approximately 1.5hrs. This will take place during the normal training day. This requirement is being re-examined to seek to reduce these amounts, so the amount assessed in the planning application represents a maximum level of use which the assessments show are within acceptable limits.

Whilst the primary use of the outdoor training area is to support the technical training activities described in the planning application, it is essential that trainees remain competent in the basic military skills they will have acquired during their Phase 1 training. This is a mandatory requirement. Much of this training is undertaken using dry-drills (non firing), but as described in the application there will be some use of blank firing and limited close battle simulation elements intended to provide realism. These activities are regularly undertaken on MOD sites across the UK, a number of which are located close to residential areas. Similar activities have also taken place at Lyneham and historically these were focused on the Pepper Alley Wood and Fire Training Ground areas of the site.

What noise mitigation measures have been included in the proposals?

A number of options have been examined to identify how best to meet the requirements whilst minimising environmental impacts. In comparison with the initial concept schemes, the proposals that are the subject of the planning application have a much reduced building footprint with a number of the activities focused in the central parts of the site. In some areas the need to conserve and enhance stand-off distances between the site and adjacent residential areas was considered to outweigh the potential operational and cost benefits of using these for training purposes.

In a number of locations it has been proposed to use physical noise barriers such as HESCO style fencing (up to 4.2m in height) to create a physical noise barrier around the outdoor training areas used for the blank firing exercises as well as the aircraft taxiing.

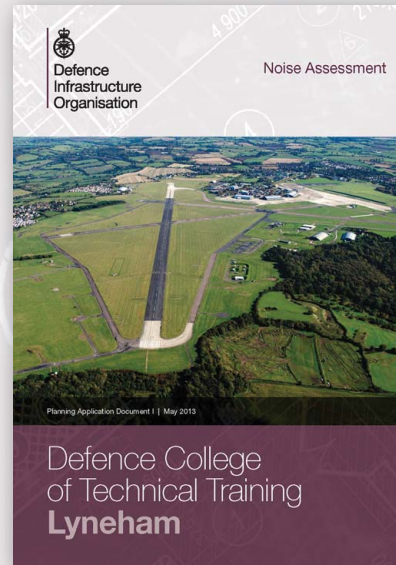
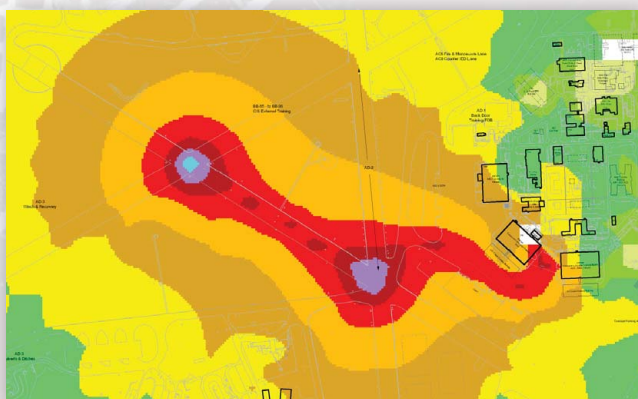


Similar fencing is proposed along the eastern side of the existing firing range which is currently open and in close proximity to some of the new Single Living Accommodation blocks. The HESCO style fencing (or equivalent) will be filled with sand or similar building material to create an effective sound barrier. The position of the barriers has been deliberately selected in locations close to the noise sources (rather than at the boundary of the site) because it is more effective to control noise levels close to the source.

The vast majority of the training will take place during the normal training day (08:00-17:00). For the relatively infrequent occasions where the training objectives require training in the outdoor training areas during the night time period, the MOD will discuss with the Parish Councils as part of its ongoing liaison whether there is a need to inform local residents by publicising when these activities are likely to take place.

How accurate is the method used by the noise assessment?

The planning application was accompanied by a number of technical assessments including a noise assessment which indicates that, overall, the proposed noise generating activities will be within accepted levels. Such assessments are complex by their nature. The report is based on outputs from a highly regarded and widely used computer model for noise modelling (LimA).



The same computer model was recently used for the Government's noise mapping work required under the Environmental Noise Directive. The extent of the maps included is in line with standard practice and reflects the pattern of the noise levels predicted.

The inputs to the model are all based on accurate and in many cases 'worse case' assumptions of the noise levels from the noise generating activities. The assessment methodology follows standard industry practice and the baseline monitoring positions, the assessment method, and application of the British Standard methods, was agreed with the Council's Environmental Health Officer prior to completion of the assessment.

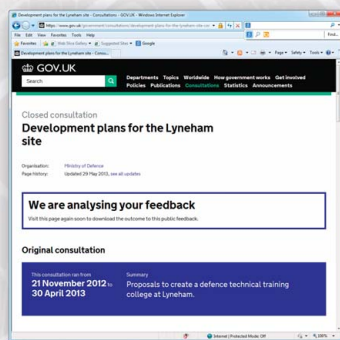
The outputs are mapped using the standard model colouring to present predicted maximum and hourly average noise levels for each of the main noise generating activities. It is difficult comparing the characteristics of noise levels from different activities, but for reference, some familiar noise levels are described in the Noise Assessment (Table 2.1). For example, 60db(A) is equivalent to department store or typical restaurant speech levels; this is included in the zone coloured red on the noise maps.

How has the MOD consulted on the proposals?

There has been a high level of interest in the future of former RAF Lyneham since the base closure was announced in 2003. The announcement in 2011 that the site was identified as the preferred location for DCTT was well publicised both nationally and locally, however DIO recognised that there remained a need to communicate details of the proposals for the site as they emerged.

During the period up to the submission of the planning application DIO has sought to inform residents of the proposals and to provide opportunities for residents to discuss the plans. The approach to public consultation was agreed with Wiltshire Council and included regular briefings to the Royal Wootton Bassett Area Board, Lyneham Steering Group, and Lyneham and Bradenstoke Parish Council as well as press articles and a public exhibition.

A project website (www.mod.uk/lynehamplanning) was established to provide a central point of reference for all members of the public and stakeholders with access to the internet. This website provided background to the scheme, presented project updates, advertised events, and made consultation material available to download.



A public consultation exhibition was held on 12 March 2013 (14:00-20:00) and 13 March 2013 (10:00-14:00) at St Andrews Church Hall, Lyneham. This was preceded by a preview event for Parish and Ward Councilors on the morning of the 12 March 2013.



The event used a 'drop-in' format and was staffed by both military and civilian members of the DCTT project team who were available to discuss any aspect of the proposals.

Copies of the exhibition boards were available for download from the project website, the Lyneham village website, and the Royal Wootton Bassett Area Board website after the event. Copies were also sent to residents that had requested further information but could not attend the event.

This information was also sent to the clerks of the surrounding Parish Councils, including Lyneham and Bradenstoke, Hilmarton, Bremhill, Christian Malford and Dauntsey. Following the exhibition in Lyneham, the exhibition boards were displayed at Calne Community Hub on Calne High Street and at the entrance to MOD Lyneham site.

DIO notified the same Parish Council clerks that the planning application had been submitted. Following this, and the application's validation by Wiltshire Council, the Council has been responsible for managing the consultation process to inform the determination of the planning application.

DIO is continuing to work closely with the Council and other statutory consultees to provide any clarification of the proposals required.

