

Date of Screening Opinion 19 August 2021

REF 21/SCR/04

**THE TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT (SCOTLAND) REGULATIONS 2017  
SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT CIRCULAR 01/2017**

**RESPONSE OF SOUTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL TO A REQUEST FOR A SCREENING OPINION SUBMITTED UNDER THE TOWN AND COUNTRY  
PLANNING ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT (SCOTLAND) REGULATIONS 2017. THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT SITE IS LOCATED AT  
GLASGOW PRESTWICK AIRPORT (NORTH SITE)**

The proposal is for infrastructure and associated facilities for a horizontal launch spaceport. The proposed development includes a building to house a 'payload processing facility', control post, a building to house the 'launch vehicle integration facility', apron, taxiways & turning pads for aircraft, solid fuel storage bunkers, blast walls & bunds, an access road, fencing and landscaping and ancillary services. The proposed development site extends to 75 hectares. The proposal is Schedule 2 development under the terms of the above Regulations and must therefore be screened in order to determine whether the proposal constitutes 'EIA development'.

This determination is referred to as a '**screening opinion**'. In each case, the basic question to be asked is: 'would this particular development be likely to have significant effects on the environment?'

For many types of development, perhaps the majority, it will be necessary to consider the characteristics of the development in combination with its proposed location in order to identify the potential for interactions between a development and its environment and therefore determine whether there are likely to be significant environmental effects. In determining whether a particular development is likely to have such effects, the Council has taken account of the selection criteria in Schedule 3 to the Regulations (reproduced at Annex A to Circular 01/2017). Three categories of criteria are listed:-

- Characteristics of the development
- Location of the development
- Characteristics of the potential impact

Consideration of the third of these categories is designed to help in determining whether any interactions between the first two categories (i.e. between a development and its environment) are likely to be significant.

The content of this checklist meets the requirements of the Town and Country Planning (Environment Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017 – Schedule 3 selection criteria for screening Schedule 2 development.

	Yes/No	Briefly describe	Is effect likely to be significant? Significance should be considered in terms of the extent, transboundary nature, magnitude and complexity, probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of any impact(s).
<b>1. Characteristics of the Development</b>			
<b>(a) Scale of the development</b>			
Will the development be out of scale with the existing environment?	N	The Payload Processing Facility building will measure 30m x 25m x 12m high (to ridge) and the Launch Vehicle Integration Facility building will measure 58m x 55m x 18.5m high (to ridge). The two buildings are of similar scale to the existing industrial buildings located at the airport.	
Will it lead to further consequential development or works (e.g. new roads, extraction of aggregate, generation or transmission of power)?	N		
<b>(b) Cumulation with other development</b>			
Are there potential cumulative impacts with other existing development or for proposed development in the planning system?	N	The activities to be undertaken are not likely to give rise to significant emissions to air, land or water and will have a similar noise profile to the existing uses within the airport. No cumulative impacts are therefore anticipated having regard to the existing surrounding airport and manufacturing activities.	
Should the application for this development be regarded as an integral part of a more substantial project? If so, can related developments which are subject to separate applications proceed independently?	N		
<b>(c) Use of natural resources</b>			
Will construction or operation of the development use natural resources i.e. land (especially undeveloped or agricultural land)? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• water or fisheries?</li> <li>• minerals or aggregates?</li> <li>• agriculture, forests and timber?</li> <li>• energy including electricity and fuels?</li> <li>• any other resources?</li> </ul>	Y	The construction of the buildings, aprons and taxiway will require the use of minerals and aggregates. Energy will be required to power the building and operate machinery.	No. The volumes concerned are not considered to be significant in terms of EIA.
<b>(d) Production of waste</b>			

	Yes/No	Briefly describe	Is effect likely to be significant? Significance should be considered in terms of the extent, transboundary nature, magnitude and complexity, probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of any impact(s).
Will the development produce wastes during construction or operation or decommissioning?	Y	The construction phase will produce standard construction wastes which can be largely be recycled.	No. The volume of wastes generate are unlikely to be significant in terms of EIA.
<b>(e) Pollution and nuisances</b>			
Will the development cause noise and vibration or release of leachates, light, heat energy or electromagnetic radiation during construction, operation or decommissioning?	Y	The construction phase will produce noise from the operational construction vehicles and machinery. The take-off of aircraft carrying the launch vehicle and assembly work will be sources of noise during the operational phase.	No. The noise levels coupled with the distance from noise sensitive receptors indicate that noise nuisance is unlikely to arise during construction. The assembly work will be undertaken inside of the proposed buildings and given this and the nature of the operation it is not anticipated that significant noise levels will be generated at the proposal. Whilst there will be noise from aircraft during take-off this is characteristic of the existing airport. Rocket launches will take place out a sea at a considerable distance from Prestwick/South Ayrshire.
<b>(f) Risk of accidents, having regard in particular to substances technologies used</b>			
Will there be a risk of accidents during construction or operation of the development which could have effects on people or the environment?	Y	Solid rocket fuel will be delivered to the site by air and will be stored within specially designed bunker(s). The fuel will be stored on site a few days prior to a launch and there will not therefore be a permanent presence of fuel within the facility. During the assembly stage, the fuel will be transported from the bunker(s) to the Launch Vehicle Integration Facility building. The storage and handling of solid rocket fuel is a potential fire/explosion hazard.	No. The project is subject to regulatory compliance by the HSE and CAA, who will licence activities at the Spaceport. As part of the licence criteria, the Spaceport will be developed and regulated in line with guidance set out in the Explosives Regulations (2014) and Space Industry Regulations (2021). The site will also be required to be regulated under the Control of Major Accident Hazard (CoMAH) Regulations (2015).
<b>(g) Other characteristics: potential physical changes (topography, land use, changes in waterbodies etc) from construction, operation or decommissioning of the development</b>			

	Yes/No	Briefly describe	Is effect likely to be significant? Significance should be considered in terms of the extent, transboundary nature, magnitude and complexity, probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of any impact(s).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>permanent or temporary change in land use, landcover or topography including increases in intensity of land use?</li> </ul>	Y	The majority of the land is airport operational land. However, the portion of the eastern side the site is agricultural land. The proposal will result in the permanent change in land use from agricultural to industrial. It is noted that whilst the application site boundary has been drawn widely around the location of the development, the actual land take will be significantly less	No. The area of agricultural land that will be lost is not likely to be significant. and the loss of agricultural land is not considered to be significant in terms of EIA.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>peat land disturbance and/ or degradation leading to: carbon release, damage to habitats, affecting land stability or hydrology?</li> </ul>	N		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>pre-construction investigations e.g. boreholes, soil testing?</li> </ul>	Y	The ground conditions will require to be investigated prior to development taking place.	The likely extent of ground investigations are not considered to be significant in terms of EIA.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>construction, demolition, reclamation or excavation works?</li> </ul>	Y	Construction work will be required for the provision of the buildings and taxiway and aprons	The scale of the construction work is not considered to be significant in terms of EIA.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>underground works ?</li> </ul>	N		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>facilities for storage of goods or materials?</li> </ul>	Y	Bunded storage compounds will be required for storing solid rocket fuel within the site.	No. The extent of storage is not considered to be significant in terms of EIA.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>new road, rail, air or sea traffic or infrastructure during construction or operation or decommissioning?</li> </ul>	Y	Additional aprons, taxiway and turning pads for aircraft will be required. There are no proposals to extend the length of the runways. The additional aprons, etc will facilitate the movement of the type of aircraft which currently use the airport.	No. The additional aprons, etc are not of a significant scale and will not lead to larger aircraft using the airport in comparison with the existing types of aircraft using the airport.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>new or diverted transmission lines or pipelines?</li> </ul>	n		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>any works requiring an authorisation under the Water Environment (Controlled Activities)(Scotland) Regulations 2005</li> </ul>	n		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>long-term/ongoing activity during restoration or decommissioning which could have an impact on the environment?</li> </ul>	n		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>influx of people to an area either temporarily or permanently?</li> </ul>	n		

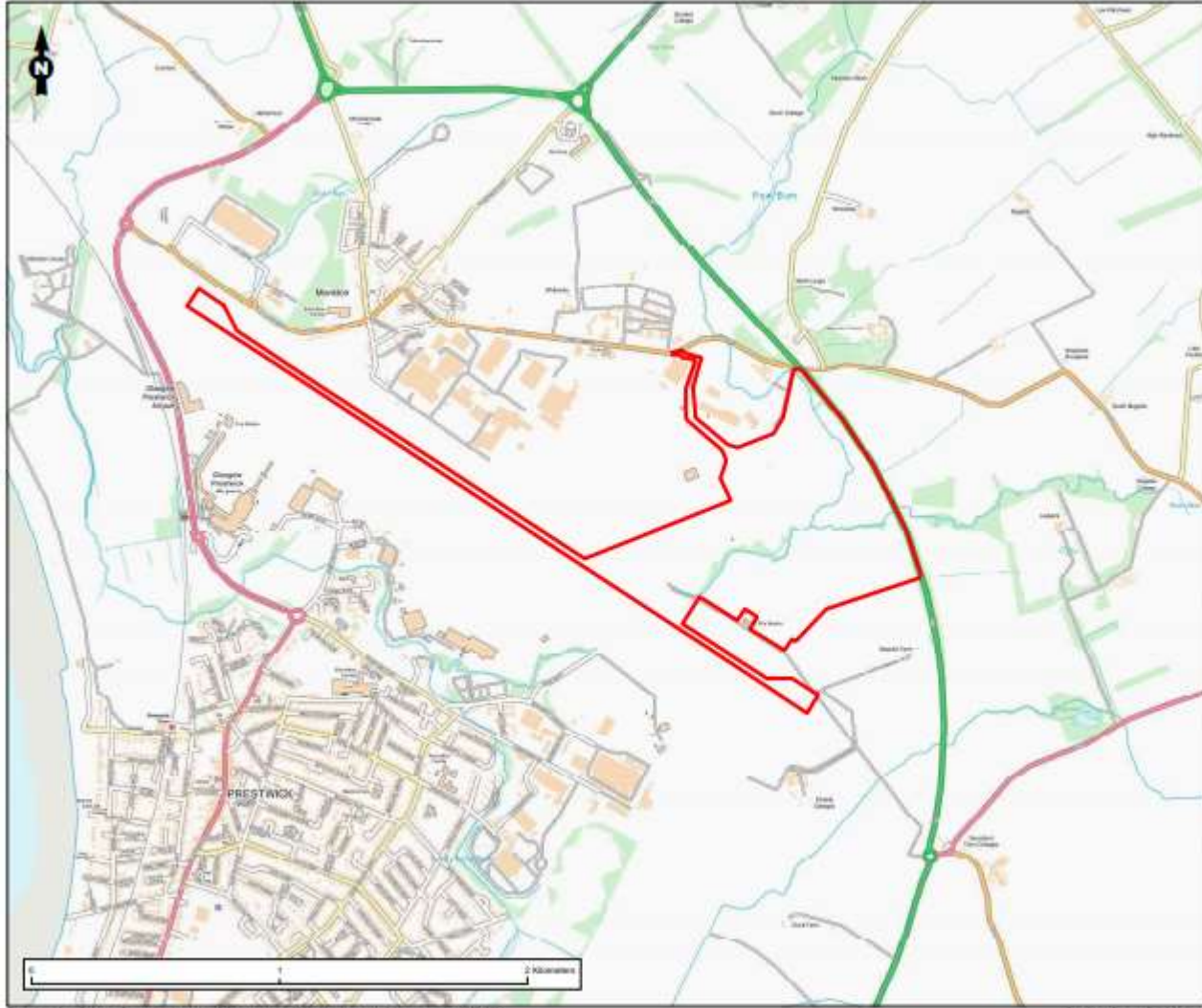
	Yes/No	Briefly describe	Is effect likely to be significant? Significance should be considered in terms of the extent, transboundary nature, magnitude and complexity, probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of any impact(s).
• any other changes?	n		
<b>2. Location of the Development</b>			
<b>(a) Existing land use</b>			
Are there existing land uses on or around the location which could be affected by the development, e.g. undeveloped land, greenfield land, homes, other private property, industry, commerce, tourism and recreation, public open space, community facilities, agriculture, forestry, tourism, water catchments, functional floodplains, mining or quarrying?	Y	The majority of the site lies within the existing operational area of the airport. An amount of agricultural land will be developed to accommodate the development. The site is near to the settlements of Monkton and Prestwick and there are a number of residential properties scattered throughout the surrounding area.	No. The existing airport dominates the noise environment and it is not anticipated that the propose development will introduce any significant additional source of noise.
<b>(b) Relative abundance, quality and regenerative capacity of natural resources in the area</b>			
Are there any areas on or around the location which contain important, high quality or scarce resources which could be affected by the development?	N		
<b>(c) Absorption capacity of the natural environment</b>			
Are there any areas on or around the location which are protected under international or national or local legislation for their ecological, landscape and visual, cultural or other value, which could be affected by the development? Particular attention should be paid to wetlands, watercourses or other waterbodies, the coastal zone, mountains, forests or woodlands, nature reserves and parks.	N		
Are there any groundwater source protection zones or areas that contribute to the recharge of groundwater resources?	N		
Are there protected species in or around the location, for example European Protected Species, which could be affected?	Y	There is potential for EPS to use the site and the surrounding landscape.	No. The site contains no habitats of high conservation value. EPS may transit through the site, however, the impact of the development on such species can be adequately assed through the submission of appropriate protected species surveys with the planning application.

	Yes/No	Briefly describe	Is effect likely to be significant? Significance should be considered in terms of the extent, transboundary nature, magnitude and complexity, probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of any impact(s).
Are there any routes or facilities on or around the location which are used by the public for access to recreation or other facilities, which could be affected?	n		
Are there any areas or features of historic or cultural importance on or around the location which could be affected?	Y	There is potential for indirect effects to occur on the settings of heritage assets in the surroundings of the site.	No. Given the scale and nature of the proposed structures, the separation distances between the site and these assets, it is not considered that the impact of the development on cultural heritage will be significant in terms of EIA.
Are there any areas on or around the location which are already subject to pollution or environmental damage e.g. where existing legal environmental standards are exceeded, which could be affected?	n		
Is the development in a location where it is likely to be highly visible to many people?	Y	The location of the development is open to view from the A77 trunk road.	No. The appearance of the application site is dominated by the airport and adjoining industrial estate. The impact on the appearance of the landscape is unlikely to be significant in terms of EIA.
Is the location of the development susceptible to earthquakes, subsidence, landslides, erosion, flooding or extreme or adverse climatic conditions which could cause the development to present environmental problems?	Y	The site includes an area with potential for river flooding.	No. The development is not of a scale which merits investigation of flooding through EIA. The issue of flooding can be adequately assessed through submission of a Flood Risk Assessment.

## **Conclusions**

The checklist is a useful tool for the purposes of identifying the wide range of environmental receptors which could be affected by proposed development. The main issues which have emerged from the checklist are: operational noise, risk of accidents and potential for impact on European protected species. However, having regard to the scale of the proposed development and the nature of the intended uses it is considered that these issues can be adequately assessed through the submission of appropriate studies and supporting information and they are not of sufficient complexity to merit assessment through EIA.

From the assessment undertaken in accordance with the Regulations and Circular 01/2017, and taking into account the submitted screening report, the Council concludes that the proposed development at, Glasgow Prestwick Airport, South Ayrshire, as shown on the map attached to this document, is not likely to result in effects on the environment which are sufficiently significant to require the submission of an environmental impact assessment.



**Legend**

Site Boundary

---

Figure Title  
North Site Boundary

---

Project Name  
Prestwick Space Port

---

Project Number 1620010493	Figure No. 1.1
Date January 2021	Prepared By RE
Scale 1:14,592 @A3	Issue 1

---

Client  
**Gardiner and Theobald**

---

**RAMBOLL**

Reproduced from Ordnance Survey digital map data © Crown copyright 2020. All rights reserved. Licence number: 100016311

Coordinate System: British National Grid Projection: Transverse Mercator Datum: OSG 1936