



Highland Gliding Club Ltd

Chairman,

[REDACTED]

Tel:

Email:

[REDACTED]

25th April 2022

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your letter dated the 29th of March.

Following our meeting in December 2021, I had hoped that our concerns and questions about the need for your airspace proposal were heard and understood. However, judging from the document sent, nothing that we spoke about appears to have been considered nor is discussed in your consultation document. Indeed, there is not a single reference to other aviation stakeholders beyond Lossiemouth and Inverness radar controllers.

The British Gliding Association have produced a response which we at Highland Gliding Club wholly agree with so this response is focussed more on the direct impact your proposal will have on our airfield and users.

The Highland Gliding Club has been operating from Easterton Airfield since 1991. We have approximately 24 aircraft based on our site split between gliders and power. About half of the fleet is equipped with transponders. Gliding is mainly but not exclusively carried out at weekends but powered aircraft operate 7 days a week routinely. Gliding competitions are held occasionally involving up to 25 gliders and we can have visiting aircraft at any time of the year. Only about half of the glider pilots on site have RT licenses.

On most flying days, gliders are towed to the southwest of the airfield in order to access the better soaring conditions found there. From release, they will usually operate in and around that area until established in lift and then move on once they have gained height. Light aircraft based at Easterton are equally likely to route through this area on a regular basis.

The proposed TMZ will deny access to Class G airspace that we have been using regularly for over 30 years and which is essential to the club as a primary soaring area. For us, this is not a small area, it would become a significant barrier which would prevent most people from soaring cross country on many days. Clearly, this will have a significant and detrimental effect on the club for no discernible safety benefit. Indeed, it is likely to

reduce safety for us as pilots are forced to avoid this TMZ to the west taking them over higher and wider unlandable terrain.

The argument made in your document does not make sense to us. Both Lossiemouth and Inverness are based at sea level and have high ground to the south of them. The area behind the hill is blank to radar cover already as a result. We know from experience that radar cannot see any aircraft anywhere in the Spey valley up to about 2000' and radio communications are unreliable at best. This does not seem to have been a cause for concern for the last 30 years. It has been accepted that pop up traffic can appear from behind the hill.

Your consultation document makes no reference to the adverse impact that the proposed TMZ would have on other stakeholders. It does not even specify what altitude or flight level the TMZ would extend to. Looking at the TMZ in the Moray Firth we expect it will be at least up to FL100 but could extend all the way up to FL195.

The Highland Gliding Club cannot support this proposal in any way. It will have a significant and detrimental effect on our safety, operation, income and membership. We can foresee no benefit whatsoever to us or indeed any other airspace users.

We would like to help in terms of finding other, less impactful solutions that can address the concerns raised by Inverness and Lossiemouth radar.

Yours



Chairman

Highland Gliding Club Ltd