

Airfield guidance for local authorities

Ministry of Aviation provides valuable outline specification for unlicensed aerodromes

By courtesy of the Ministry of Aviation, we are able to publish the following Note, circulated to local authorities, and made available to Chambers of Commerce by the Ministry. It provides much valuable guidance on the subject of local airfield establishment – an activity which is rapidly growing in importance as more and more large industrial and business organisations turn towards aircraft as a practical means of transport for its executives.

The Note, and the outline specification which accompanies it, are aimed at the possible setting-up of unlicensed airfields, which are more likely to be considered by local authorities than are elaborate, licensed aerodromes such as are already operated by many of the larger municipalities and which, in most cases, can accommodate domestic schedule flights of national and privately owned air lines. The

2 draws attention to the probable increase in the use of business executive aircraft, either owned or chartered. In thus assisting the forward-thinking local authority in providing flying facilities, which will have even greater value when a community is developing as an industrial or business centre, the Ministry is pursuing a course parallel to that advocated so strongly and successfully by the Business Aircraft Users Association, Ltd., of Artillery Mansions, 75 Victoria Street, London, S.W.1, and of which no fewer than 76 companies are active members.

Speaking to this journal, the Association's Chief Executive, Mr. R. R. Stephenson, expressed his organisation's keen appreciation of the fillip which this move by the Ministry is certain to give to local authority airfields and that this crystallisation by M.O.A. experts of the needs of business fliers should do much to bring nearer the time when every town, of even moderate size, will have adequate self-supporting airfield facilities and when the busy executive will think no more of taking an aircraft than he would of taking a taxi.

act elsewhere in this issue we report the inauguration of an air-taxi service on the part of a well-known construction company long experienced in the use of executive flying.

The text of the Ministry of Aviation's Note is as follows:

Aerodromes for business fliers

(1) The use by business executives of small aircraft, either owned or chartered by their firms, for journeys to destinations at home and abroad, is likely to increase considerably in future. Full advantage can only be taken of the speed of air travel, however, if the relatively slow surface journeys between business premises and aerodromes, before and after flights, can be reduced to the minimum.

(2) The pattern of civil aerodromes in the country has, in the main, been determined by the needs of public service transport and, except for Heathrow (London Airport), where facilities for private fliers are subject to restriction, the public service aerodromes are available for business users. A number of other suitable aerodromes catering for small aircraft may be used by prior permission of the operator; there are also 57 service airfields open to civil fliers on conditions laid down in 'Air Pilot,' but these are not generally able to offer hangarage or servicing facilities.

(3) Many firms, however, find themselves so far from the nearest suitable aerodrome that flying as a normal means of executive travel is out of the question. It will be feasible only in

certain cases for them to establish their own flying strips and the obvious way to meet the need is the establishment of suitably placed small aerodromes each to serve a number of interests. This can be done either by associations of business interests or alternatively by local authorities, who may consider that an aerodrome of this sort is a facility which could and should be provided by the community.

(4) The attached 'Outline Specification' gives a broad indication of the minimum requirements of an aerodrome for this purpose; the precise pattern of requirements will of course vary according to particular circumstances. For the specific purpose of providing facilities for small aircraft on private flights (and charter flights if the weight of the aircraft does not exceed 6,000 lb.) there would be no insistence upon the Ministry's aerodrome licensing requirements being met, but in general, it will probably be deemed prudent to plan in such a way that the requirements could be satisfied if necessary in the future. These requirements are contained in CAP. 168, 'The Licensing of Aerodromes,' price 15s. from H.M.S.O. Circumstances are likely to arise in which licensing would be essential (e.g., an increase in the chartering of larger executive aircraft).

(5) This Note is being circulated to local authorities and made available for distribution to Chambers of Commerce with a view to drawing attention to the general need for these facilities and with the suggestion that local needs should be considered. Where there are indications that interest in such an aerodrome exists, it will be necessary to investigate the possibilities offered by the district for development of a suitable site and consult the Ministry on its location in relation to other air interests.

In considering the requirements for such an aerodrome it will be convenient at the same time to assess the need which exists in the same area for aero club and gliding facilities. Where instructional flying is involved it will be necessary for the aerodrome to be licensed for that purpose.

The Ministry's three Divisional Controllers

will always be willing to advise both on the technical aspects of proposals and on factors associated with the establishment of aerodromes. Their addresses are:

Ministry of Aviation, Southern Divisional Office, Heston Aerodrome, Hounslow, Middlesex.
Ministry of Aviation, Scottish Divisional Office, Broomhouse Drive, Saughton, Edinburgh, 11.
Ministry of Aviation, Northern Divisional Office, 24-26 Grove Park, Liverpool, 8.

(6) From time to time, local planning authorities consider schemes put forward by individuals and other bodies to establish aerodromes of the kind dealt with in this Note. It would be most helpful if planning authorities could inform this Department of any such schemes at a stage prior to the decision for or against the granting of planning permission. Members of the other Associations to whom this Note is circulated would be well advised to contact this Department's Divisional Controllers, if they have in mind the establishment of an aerodrome of this kind.

After planning permission has been given, assuming that there is a reasonable prospect of continued and/or extended use of the site as an aerodrome, it will be highly desirable for the local planning authority to be fully advised of the essential operational characteristics of the environment, if the continued use or development of the site is to remain unprejudiced by development of adjacent land. The aerodrome owner should therefore provide the local planning authority with a safeguarding map to ensure that due consideration can be given to the aerodrome's present and future community value and operational needs when planning applications are being considered.

Outline specification for unlicensed aerodromes

I. INTRODUCTION

The recommendations and explanatory notes in Part II below are intended for guidance when siting and designing small aerodromes for use

The progressive local authority of Luton, Beds, have made their town well known for its airport, at which a successful Air Freight Conference was recently held. Here a light, single-engine, Helio Super Courier high-wing executive monoplane, operated by the Aviation Division of Sir Robert McAlpine and Sons, Ltd., whose hangars are in the background, is seen taking off on a business flight.

Elsewhere in this issue we report an important development in private flying.

