

All NATMAC Representatives

15 April 2010

NATMAC CONSULTATIVE LETTER

Dear Colleagues,

RELEASE OF CONTROLLED AND SEGREGATED AIRSPACE

It has become increasingly apparent that there are areas of existing controlled and segregated airspace that may no longer be required for the purpose for which it was first established. Given my statutory duties to secure the most efficient use of airspace consistent with the safe operation of aircraft and the expeditious flow of air traffic¹ and to satisfy the requirements of operators and owners of all classes of aircraft², we have determined a process for the release of such airspace to unrestricted Class G.

The Airspace Change Process as described in the CAP724 (The Airspace Charter) and CAP725 (CAA Guidance on the Application of the Airspace Change Process) provides the means by which airspace could be released. It is widely recognised that airspace controlling authorities or other interested bodies potentially could be unwilling to invest the time and resources necessary to undertake an Airspace Change when, at face value, there was no benefit to them. To provide a less costly and time-consuming mechanism for change sponsors, an additional means for the release of controlled and segregated airspace has been developed; the detail of which is contained within the Release of Controlled and Segregated Airspace (RCSA) Policy Statement at Enclosure 1.

Sponsors wishing to release controlled or segregated airspace would initially be required to submit a brief summary of the change and its potential impact, as specified in the Policy Statement, to the Directorate of Airspace Policy. The Directorate would subsequently determine if the proposal warranted progression to a formal Framework Briefing stage. The Framework Briefing would be conducted along similar lines to that of an Airspace Change Proposal, reduced as appropriate to the circumstances of the airspace under consideration, and ultimately confirm the viability of continuing with the RCSA proposal.

If the proposal did not meet the requirements of RCSA, sponsors may choose to continue with the change under the Airspace Change Process. For those proposals that merit RCSA consideration, consultation would be necessary with airspace users as the change represents a revision of airspace arrangements. Given the nature of the change and in the interests of proportionality, consultation is expected to be limited to NATMAC members. Unless

¹ Transport Act 2000, Section 70 (2)(a)

² Transport Act 2000, Section 70(2)(b).

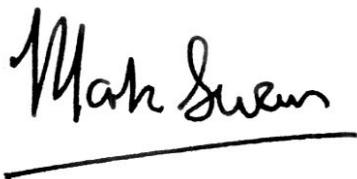
particular circumstances warranted it, environmental consultation is not considered to be necessary or appropriate. A minimum of 12 weeks would be allowed for consultation.

Consultation feedback would be analysed by DAP staff and subsequently forwarded to me for regulatory decision. The Change Sponsor and NATMAC would be notified of the decision. Further necessary publication and promulgation of the change would be conducted in a manner similar to the Airspace Change Process. The released airspace would be Class G and therefore it is not likely to be possible to predict with any degree of accuracy the number of pilots who would choose to fly in it, or to monitor its utilisation. It would be unlikely that any post implementation analysis could be undertaken and as a consequence no formal post removal review is anticipated.

The RCSA Policy Statement would form an Annex to the CAP 724.

The purpose of this letter is to ask for your views on the RCSA Policy Statement. If you require clarification or further information please contact Dean Miller in the first instance at dean.miller@caa.co.uk or 0207 453 6554. I would appreciate it if you would forward your comments to Dean Miller before 16 July 2010. After consideration of comments I will update NATMAC members on the direction foreseen for the RCSA policy.

Yours sincerely,



M SWAN
Director

Enclosure:

1. Release of Controlled and Segregated Airspace Policy Document.

15 April 2010

Policy Statement

RELEASE OF CONTROLLED AND SEGREGATED AIRSPACE

1. Introduction

- 1.1 In undertaking its Statutory Duties¹, the Civil Aviation Authority must exercise its air navigation functions in the manner it thinks best to: secure the most efficient use of airspace, satisfy the requirements of all airspace users and take account of the interests of any person in relation to the use of any particular airspace or the use of airspace generally.
- 1.2 In carrying out this function, the Directorate of Airspace Policy (DAP) has become increasingly aware that there are areas of existing controlled and segregated airspace that may no longer be required for the purpose for which it was designed and therefore could revert to airspace that better reflects the Duties noted above. Controlled and segregated airspace is established to provide additional protection for specified activities. Once those specified activities no longer utilise or require such airspace, it represents an unnecessary restriction on other airspace users that the CAA has a statutory obligation to address.

2. Scope

- 2.1 The purpose of this policy statement is to provide direction to those controlling authorities or other parties that have identified, either independently or as part of a CAA initiated review, sections of controlled airspace that may be returned to Class G airspace. Similarly, it is also aimed at controlling authorities of segregated airspace with a background classification of Class G, such as Danger Areas, that no longer require access restrictions to apply to all or part of such airspace.

3. Policy

- 3.1 Any Release of Controlled and Segregated Airspace (RCSA) proposals will not be subject to the full Airspace Change Process (ACP) as such proposals represent a return of airspace to its most basic state, i.e. uncontrolled airspace. However, the release of controlled or segregated airspace does constitute a change to airspace arrangements and, as such, a degree of consultation will be necessary. The level of consultation will need to be proportionate to the change being proposed and will be decided on a case-by-case basis.
- 3.2 The degree of resulting activity within released airspace may not be quantifiable and so it may be difficult to predict the environmental impact of any given revision. Where it is not possible to determine the environmental impact a full environmental assessment will not be required by DAP for RCSA. In such cases it will be necessary

¹ Transport Act 2000 Section 70(1)

for sponsors to provide an environmental statement on the anticipated environmental impact based on the likely activity that might be experienced in the released airspace. This statement should also explain why a full environmental assessment is not possible.

3.3 Any proposal for RCSA will need to include the following information in the Sponsor's submission to DAP:

- Full description of the change.
- Rationale for the change.
- Satisfactory evidence of the safety and operational impact.
- Statement regarding the likely activity that might be experienced in the released airspace.
- Environmental Statement.
- Details of arrangements with adjacent aerodromes impacted as a consequence of the change (including LoAs/MoUs).
- Planned implementation timelines.

3.4 In reaching a decision on a proposal to release controlled or segregated airspace, DAP will need to be assured that there are no resulting changes to airspace arrangements within the remaining controlled or segregated airspace, such as changes to flight patterns. If there were to be an impact on existing arrangements within controlled airspace, then the full Airspace Change Process would apply, as set out in CAP724 and the associated guidance within CAP725. Both CAP724 (The Airspace Charter) and CAP725 (CAA Guidance on the Application of the Airspace Change Process) are available for free download from the CAA website².

3.5 DAP will inform the National Air Traffic Management Advisory Committee of any release of controlled or segregated airspace and publish the details on the CAA website.

4. DAP Review

4.1 In order to satisfy its Statutory Duties, DAP may also require controlling authorities to carry out a RCSA review of their airspace to ensure that existing arrangements continue to be fit for purpose.

5. Amendment of CAPs 724 & 725

5.1 This Policy Statement is complementary to the Airspace Change Process currently described in CAP724 and it will be incorporated within the next amendment to the Airspace Charter. The guidance contained within CAP725 will be amended in due course to reflect this clarification of policy.

6. DAP Point of Contact

6.1 Hd Controlled Airspace Section
Directorate of Airspace Policy
CAA House
45-59 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6TE

² <http://www.caa.co.uk>