

23 August 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 should be addressed.

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, it will be necessary to determine what 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. Where consultation is necessary, 12 weeks will be allowed for the consultation period.
- 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. As there are likely to be changes to published mapping/charting and other aeronautical data associated with the RCSA promulgation of the change will be coordinated through the AIRAC process.

4. DAP Review

4.1 In order to satisfy its Statutory Duties, DAP may also require controlling authorities to initiate 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

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² <http://www.caa.co.uk>