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DAP/CAS/DJD/DoncasterSheffieldACP



DECISION LETTER

INTRODUCTION OF CLASS D CONTROLLED AIRSPACE IN THE VICINITY OF ROBIN HOOD AIRPORT DONCASTER SHEFFIELD

INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In October 2007 the Directorate of Airspace Policy received a formal proposal from Robin Hood Airport to revise the airspace arrangements in their vicinity through the introduction of Class D Controlled Airspace, with implementation anticipated in March 2008. Analysis of the submission proved it necessary for the change sponsor to provide, inter alia, more detailed information on proposed Standard Instrument Departures (SIDs) and Standard Arrivals (STARs), a more rigorous analysis of consultation responses and additional supporting environmental evidence and to resubmit their proposal. This revised submission was received on 12 March 2008, with a target implementation date of 31 July 2008 (AIRAC 8/2008) being sought.
- 1.2 The purpose of this letter is to advise you of the proposal and my subsequent decision on it, based upon my statutory duties as set out in Section 70 of the Transport Act 2000 (the Act), the CAA (Air Navigation) Directions 2001, as varied in 2004 (the Directions), and Guidance to the CAA on Environmental Objectives relating to the Exercise of its Air Navigation Functions issued in 2002 by the then Department for Transport, Local Government and the Regions (the Guidance).
- 1.3 The Change Sponsor has sought, through the introduction of Control Zones (CTRs) and Control Areas (CTAs) and against a background of continued airport growth, to sustain and, where possible, enhance flight safety, improve the efficiency of aircraft operations to and from the airport and to minimise the environmental impacts of those operations upon local communities. Specifically, the proposal sought to enhance the protection of public transport movements in the critical arrival and departure phases of flight through better containment of current and proposed procedures within controlled airspace. Operational efficiency would be enhanced through the introduction of Standard Instrument Departure procedures (SIDs) and Standard Arrival Routes (STARs). Instrument Approach Procedures as currently published in the Aeronautical Information Publication (AIP) would remain unchanged.

- 1.4 In addition to operational gains, environmental benefits would accrue from the predictability of the proposed SIDs and a greater adherence to Noise Preferential Routes (NPRs) that would be afforded by the creation of a known traffic environment. Finally, the proposal would improve the opportunities for pilots to apply Continuous Descent Approach (CDA) techniques.
- 1.5 The CAA must exercise its air navigation functions so as to impose on providers of air traffic services the minimum restrictions that are consistent with the exercise of those functions.¹ Where there is a conflict between the application of the provisions, the CAA is given discretion to apply these in the manner it thinks reasonable having regard to the provisions as a whole.² In reaching a decision I have given careful consideration to whether the proposal is consistent with my statutory duties.

STATUTORY DUTIES

2 Transport Act 2000

2.1 Safety

- 2.1.1 My primary duty is to maintain a high standard of safety in the provision of air traffic services and this takes primacy over all other duties.³ In this respect I am satisfied that the proposed airspace design can be safely adopted. Operations to and from Doncaster Sheffield Airport are being conducted against a background of sustained airport growth, and whilst current operations are safe, the existing airspace arrangements are no longer considered to be adequate. Expanding the known traffic environment afforded by controlled airspace, whilst continuing to facilitate use of the airspace by adjacent airspace users and transit aircraft of all types through designating such airspace as Class D, will serve to enhance the safety of operations in the local area.

2.2 Airspace Efficiency

- 2.2.1 I am required to secure the most efficient use of the airspace consistent with the safe operation of aircraft and the expeditious flow of air traffic.⁴ The dimensions of the proposed CTR and the majority of CTAs are considered to be the minimum necessary to ensure that the required arrival sequence can be achieved without compromising the minimum separation between arriving aircraft whilst ensuring that such aircraft can both be contained within the boundaries of controlled airspace and separated from aircraft departing the Airport. The introduction of SIDs and STARs to the west (to and from which 80% of Doncaster Sheffield arrivals and departures operate) will have the added benefit of reducing pilot and controller workload, thus contributing further to the efficiency of the airspace.
- 2.2.2 Three CTAs to the east of the airport did not appear to add to efficiency or serve the need of all airspace users. We have no data to show that safety is at risk. The number of Commercial Air Transport (CAT) flights operating through the proposed easterly CTAs to and from the airport is few, and do so mainly at times when little conflicting traffic is present. In addition, the revised Air Traffic Control Services Outside Controlled Airspace (ATSOCAS) to be introduced in March 2009 has been designed largely to further enhance the safety of CAT in Class G airspace.

¹ Transport Act 2000, Section 70(4).

² Transport Act 2000, Section 70(3).

³ Transport Act 2000, Section 70(1).

⁴ Transport Act 2000, Section 70(2)(a).

Furthermore, it appears likely that aircraft inbound from the east will follow a direct route to the preferred arrival runway and will thus be outside the proposed CTAs.

- 2.2.3 Given that Commercial Air Transport is not the major user of the easterly airspace, the proposal did not strike the right balance between competing user demands and does not meet the principle that the lowest practical airspace classification should be applied. However, I am mindful of the airport's expectation of further traffic to and from the east at some point in the future and the CAA can react, if and when that materialises, to a further airspace change proposal. The airport will maintain statistics which might support any further proposal.
- 2.2.4 I have concluded that there is insufficient justification for these eastern CTAs on either an H24 or timed basis and thus the CTAs and their associated SID and STAR procedures will not be implemented as proposed.

2.3 Airspace Users

- 2.3.1 I am required to satisfy the requirements of operators and owners of all classes of aircraft.¹ For this purpose I take advice from the NATMAC membership and both the airspace change sponsor and this Directorate has consulted with them on the detail of this proposal.
- 2.3.2 Although some 50% of those sections of the aviation community engaged in consultation objected to the proposal as originally consulted on, this figure was significantly reduced (to 15% of aviation consultees) following proposal revisions and supplementary consultation by the change sponsor. A number of objections related to the loss of Class G airspace in general, rather than the specifics of this proposal, and were thus considered to be 'objections in principle'. By the time the proposal was resubmitted, two consultees continued to object to the proposal but had accepted operating agreements with the airport as sufficient mitigations of the impact of controlled airspace. A third consultee continued to object and had rejected a proposed operating agreement.
- 2.3.3 As the ATS provider, Doncaster Sheffield ATC have committed to provide access to the revised airspace, when safe and appropriate, and will maintain records of refusal of service that will be subject to scrutiny at periodic intervals. I am satisfied that the ATC unit will continue to provide the current level of service provision both within and outside the revised airspace, and that the revised structures will not be detrimental to airspace users as a whole.

2.4 Interests of Other Parties.

- 2.4.1 I am required to take account of the interests of any person (other than an owner or operator of an aircraft) in relation to the use of any particular airspace or the use of airspace generally.² The Change Sponsor has consulted widely with local government authorities and non-governmental organisations whose areas of responsibility or interest lie beneath the new airspace. I am therefore content that the interests of affected non-aviation parties have been satisfied.

2.5 Environmental Objectives and Impact

- 2.5.1 In performing my statutory duties, I am obliged to take account of the Guidance provided by the Secretary of State. In considering this airspace change proposal

¹ Transport Act 2000, Section 70(2)(b).

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

and following a robust assessment of the proposal by my expert Environmental Research and Consultancy Department, I determined that the evidence supporting the case for the establishment of SIDs and STARs was sufficiently robust to warrant their introduction at the same time as the airspace structure changes. My detailed considerations of the environmental aspects of Doncaster Sheffield's proposal are covered in section 3 below.

2.6 Integrated operation of ATS

2.6.1 I am required to facilitate the integrated operation of air traffic services provided by or on behalf of the armed forces of the Crown and other air traffic services.¹ In this respect, the Ministry of Defence has been involved in the consultation processes and have stated that they are satisfied that the impacts of the changes as proposed have been sufficiently mitigated.

2.7 National Security

2.7.1 I am required to take into account the impact any airspace change may have upon matters of national security.² The Doncaster Sheffield airspace change proposal has taken military airspace considerations into account and I am satisfied that national security requirements will not be jeopardised by its implementation.

2.8 International Obligations

2.8.1 I am required to take into account any international obligations entered into by the UK and notified by the Secretary of State.³ No new international obligations arise as a result of the Doncaster Sheffield airspace change proposal, neither have international interfaces been affected.

2.8.2 The new airspace has been designed in accordance with national regulatory requirements and complies with ICAO Standards and recommended practices.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

3 General

3.1 Environmental Assessment Report

3.1.1 The Environmental Research and Consultancy Department has delivered a comprehensive assessment of the environmental impact of this change. This concludes that:

- The noise impact immediately after implementation is not significantly different from the pre-implementation situation. The forecast position (in 2014) shows an increase in population that are likely to be annoyed by aircraft noise. This increase is due to both an anticipated increase in departures from the airport and larger aircraft using the airport.
- Based upon SEL footprints and the frequency of departures at night, there is unlikely to be an increase in sleep disturbances as a result of the airspace change.

¹ Transport Act 2000, Section 70(2)(e).

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

³ Transport Act 2000, Section 70(2)(g).

- It cannot be determined if there is a net increase or decrease in the populations overflown. Some assurance can be taken from both the 90 dB(A) SEL footprints and 57 $L_{eq\ 16\ hours}$ contours that there will be no significant increase in those most effected by the noise impact. However, it can also be seen that there will be redistributions of the noise impact, particularly to the south of the airport and therefore some residents will experience an increase in noise from departing aircraft whilst others will experience a reduction.
- The impact upon fuel burn and emissions was not assessed and therefore no conclusions can be made about this element of the environmental impact.
- There is unlikely to be a significant impact upon Local Air Quality as a result of the proposed change following implementation.
- Both tranquillity and visual intrusion may be affected to some extent, but it is not possible to measure to what extent. Some people are likely to experience a negative impact, whilst others may experience a positive impact.
- There is unlikely to be a direct impact upon biodiversity as a result of the proposed change.
- The change represents a redistribution of departing aircraft, and some residents will benefit from this whilst others are likely to experience an increase in noise and sightings. The one aspect that can be determined with a greater degree of certainty is that the numbers of those *most* affected are not likely to increase significantly upon implementation.

3.1.2 The revised airspace arrangements are expected to increase the scope for the application of CDA techniques. CDAs are associated with environmental benefits (reduced fuel burn and reduced noise), and their application at the airport would be expected to accrue local environmental benefits. The Change Sponsor has committed to facilitating the application of CDA techniques and has been reminded of this as a condition of the proposal's approval. The airport will need to devise CDA compliance monitoring methodology to quantify CDA-related environmental benefits.

3.1.3 Consequently, the environmental impact of the implementation of this change proposal is considered to be neutral and there is no requirement to refer this proposal to the Secretary of State. A copy of the ERCD report is attached.

CONSULTATION

- 4.1 In accordance with the requirements of CAPs 724 and 725, the Change Sponsor consulted with some 141 affected airspace users and NATMAC bodies, plus 122 non-aviation organisations, including all tiers of local government in the affected area down to parish level, and non-governmental organisations such as The Environment Agency, English Heritage, Natural England and The Countryside Agency.
- 4.2 Of these 263 consultees, 107 (76%) aviation and NATMAC bodies, plus 78 (64%) non-aviation organisations responded. Some 18% of the aviation consultees supported the original proposal and 50% responded negatively. After acknowledging each response and modifying the design options, a supplementary

consultation resulted in the number of objections being halved. Further work to develop post-implementation operating arrangements (by means of Letters of Agreement) served to mitigate the impacts of the proposed airspace to levels acceptable to most of the remaining aviation consultees. One objector remains, this being an operator of a farm strip close to the airport. If a Letter of Agreement with this operator cannot be secured, the flights to and from the farm strip will have to be subject to individual ATC clearances within the Class D airspace.

- 4.3 Only one non-aviation body objected to the proposals, while another two expressed 'concerns'. Proposal modifications and further explanation of the objectives of the proposal on the part of the change sponsor resulted in the objection and concerns either being withdrawn or mitigated. The Sponsor's analysis of consultation responses was considered to be satisfactory.
- 4.4 Reasonable steps taken to ensure all necessary consultees actually received the information. The Change Sponsor used SAEs, sent hastening letters and telephoned consultees in order to elicit responses. Meetings were held with consultees where requested or considered necessary. Details of the change proposal also appeared on the Doncaster Sheffield Airport website.
- 4.5 I have decided it would be appropriate for non-NATMAC consultees to be informed of my regulatory decision.

REGULATORY DECISIONS

- 5.1 The Doncaster Sheffield airspace change proposal is considered to be safe, which satisfies my principle statutory duty. In addition, I am satisfied that the proposed establishment of the CTR, adjoining CTAs and CTAs affording connectivity to the west will meet the needs of the principal users by affording the appropriate degree of containment to existing and proposed procedures within controlled airspace. Furthermore, the establishment of SIDs and STARs to the west will bring about operational efficiencies both to the aircraft operators serving the airports and the air traffic service providers and whilst not significantly disadvantaging others.
- 5.2 Three requested CTAs to the east of the airport and their associated SID and STAR procedures will not be implemented as proposed as they do not serve the needs of airspace users as a whole. There is insufficient justification of these CTAs on either an H24 or timed basis. However, I am mindful of the airport's expectation of further traffic to and from the east at some point in the future and we can react, if and when that materialises, to a further airspace change proposal.
- 5.3 I consider the environmental impact of the changes has been mitigated to the greatest extent possible consistent with the safe operation of aircraft and the most efficient use of the airspace and does not confer detrimental environmental impacts upon the community as a whole.
- 5.4 Therefore, I am satisfied that the Change Sponsor has met safety (in particular the protection of public transport flights), efficiency and environmental requirements and hereby approve the introduction of this change proposal. The changes will take effect from 28 August 2008 (AIRAC 9/2008) and will be subject to operational review by members of my staff approximately 12 months after implementation.
- 5.5 A description of the airspace revisions, a map illustrating these and a Glossary of Terms (for the benefit of non-aviation recipients of this letter) are enclosed.

*Yours sincerely,
John Arscott.*

J R D Arscott
Director

Enclosures:

1. Robin Hood Airport Doncaster Sheffield (RHADS) Airspace Change Proposal - Environmental Report For DAP.
2. Dimensions and design of forthcoming changes to Class D Controlled Airspace in the vicinity of Robin Hood Airport Doncaster Sheffield.
3. Robin Hood Airport Doncaster Sheffield Control Zones and Control Areas effective 28 August 2008 (map).
4. Glossary of Terms.

Distribution:

NATMAC Membership
Non-NATMAC Consultees