Directorate of Airspace Policy

All NATMAC Representatives

19 December 2012

ERM/DAP/OffRouteAirspaceStructure/ATZs/LeeOnSolent

CAA DECISION LETTER

Dear Colleagues,

ESTABLISHMENT OF AN AERODROME TRAFFIC ZONE (ATZ) AT LEE-ON-SOLENT

During September 2012, we wrote to seek your views on the proposed establishment of an ATZ at Lee-on-Solent as sought by Bly BN Ltd. You will recall that the case for establishing the ATZ was to mitigate flight safety concerns generated by the routine occurrence of aircraft passing close to the Aerodrome without contacting the resident air/ground facility. Of particular concern is that the Aerodrome's geographical location and runway orientation means that a steady flow of transit aircraft operating legitimately within Class G airspace and following the adjacent coastline, pass through the visual circuit and either the RW 05 final approach area or the RW 23 climb-out lane.

The consultation period closed on 7 December. Of the responses received, none expressed clear opposition to the ATZ establishment; most were wholly supportive. Given the NATMAC consultative response, coupled with the previously detailed input of local aviation stakeholders[1]all of whom were generally supportive, I remain satisfied that, in this particular geographical scenario, the ATZ would provide a proportionate solution. As I previously highlighted, it is recognised that the close geographical relationship between the ATZ and nearby controlled airspace may result in pilots flying closer to the boundary of Southampton Control Zone (CTR) and the Solent Control Area (CTA) than would have previously been the case. Such amendment to flight profiles might have the potential to increase the likelihood of infringements of controlled airspace. An element of the GA community therefore proposed that introduction of the ATZ should be commensurate with a reduction in the dimensions of the Southampton CTR.

Whilst I understand the reasoning behind such a suggestion, I believe that it would be inappropriate to review this particular aspect of the CTR's dimensions only in relation to this proposal and do not believe that the introduction of the Lee-on-Solent ATZ should be delayed pending a wider review of Southampton-related controlled airspace. That said, I will ensure that any future review of the Southampton CTR/Solent CTA examines the feasibility of reducing the dimensions of controlled airspace in the vicinity of the Lee-on-Solent/Fleetlands ATZ complex. Additionally, I will invite NATS Southampton to review and update the Solent Airspace VFR Guide to reflect the new airspace development. I will also ask NATS Southampton to make particular record any occurrences of aircraft being refused access to the CTR in the vicinity of the Lee-on-Solent ATZ.

[1] Fleetlands Aerodrome, NATS (Southampton ATC), relevant military regulators and CAA Safety Regulation Group Aerodrome & Air Traffic Services Division (AATSD).

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As previously indicated, the Lee-on-Solent ATZ will have a 2nm radius centred on 504856.65N 0011223.55W and extend vertically from the surface to 2000ft above aerodrome level. The ATZ will be active Monday – Friday (Summer 0800-1600Z, Winter 0900-1700Z) and weekends (Summer 0800-1700Z, Winter 0900-1700). ATZ activation will be supported throughout by an Air / Ground operation (118.925 Mhz). There will be no associated change in airspace classification, which will remain Class G.

In terms of timescales, you may recall that the request for an ATZ was co-incidental with an aerodrome licensing application. Indeed, as the aerodrome is served by an air/ground facility, an ATZ could not be introduced prior to the aerodrome achieving licensed status. Therefore the ATZ will be established as and when the Aerodrome becomes licensed. Promulgation will initially be through the publication of a NOTAM and longer term through the Lee-on-Solent aerodrome entry within the Aeronautical Information Publication. VFR charts will be appropriately amended in accordance with the normal publication cycle.

The notification of the Lee-on-Solent ATZ will be further supported by an AIC that will highlight concerns related to the ATZ's close proximity to the Southampton Control Zone (CTR) and the Solent Control Area (CTA). Specifically, by intending to avoid transit of the new ATZ, which abuts the Fleetlands ATZ, pilots might necessarily fly closer to the boundary of the Southampton CTR/Solent CTA than would have previously been the case, potentially increasing the likelihood of infringements of controlled airspace. The AIC will provide advice to pilots intending to operate within the vicinity of Lee-on-Solent and Southampton including:

- Encouragement to facilitate an ATZ crossing rather than aiming to transit through the narrow gap between the western edge of the ATZ and the Southampton CTR/Solent CTA.

- Encourage pilots electing to operate close to the lateral and vertical limits of the Southampton CTR/Solent CTA, but not crossing the new ATZ, to utilise the Solent Frequency Monitoring SSR code (0011) and monitor 120.225 MHz.

- Reference to Southampton CTR/ Solent CTA Guide that is lodged on the Fly On Track website.

If you have any queries concerning the detail of this proposal, your point of contact is Mark Smailes, Airspace Regulation (020 7453 6545) here at CAA House.

Yours sincerely,

Mark Swan

M Swan
Director

Enclosure:

1. Charts showing proposed NDB/DME and RNAV (GNSS) Non-precision Approach procedures.

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