



Civil Aviation Authority Information Notice Number: IN-2015/037



Issued: 8 May 2015

Airspace Change Process Regulatory Support

This Information Notice contains information that is for guidance and/or awareness.

Recipients are asked to ensure that this Information Notice is copied to all members of their staff who may have an interest in the information (including any 'in-house' or contracted maintenance organisations and relevant outside contractors).

Applicability:	
Aerodromes:	All Licensed Aerodromes with Instrument Flight Procedures
Air Traffic:	All Air Traffic Service Providers
Airspace:	All NATMAC Representatives
Airworthiness:	Not primarily affected
Flight Operations:	Not primarily affected
Licensed/Unlicensed Personnel:	Not primarily affected

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The CAA's Safety and Airspace Regulation Group (SARG), as the national airspace approval and regulatory authority, is responsible for airspace policy and planning in the UK. As such the Group Director SARG is charged with approving changes to the notified dimensions, classification or use of the UK airspace. These changes can vary from simple modifications that are relatively easy to implement with little impact on airspace users to large and complex changes that impact on a variety of airspace users, aerodromes and the general public.
- 1.2 The process to be followed for amending the notified airspace structure through an airspace change proposal is set out in the [CAP 724 Airspace Charter and CAP 725 Guidance on the Application of the Airspace Change Process \(ACP\)](#). The Airspace Change Process reflects the CAA's statutory duties as set out under section 66 of the Transport Act 2000. The CAA owns the process, but rarely airspace change proposals made in accordance with it. The CAA will, on request, provide technical advice to sponsors developing a proposal. Once submitted, the CAA assesses the final formal change application and any associated consultation, and is ultimately accountable for the regulatory decision to approve or reject the proposal.
- 1.3 Following a Transport Select Committee inquiry into airspace in 2008, the CAA led the development of the UK's Future Airspace Strategy (FAS). The strategy describes the UK's ambition to modernise the airspace structure and the routes that aircraft fly. The FAS Industry Implementation Group (FASIIG) was established to join up the investment plans of the many different organisations involved in deploying FAS (including airports, airlines, Air Navigation Service Providers, the CAA and MoD). The FAS Deployment Plan was published by FASIIG in December 2012 and implementation of the various FAS initiatives increased during 2013.

More recently the Future Airspace Strategy VFR Implementation Group (FASVIG) produced the Future Airspace Strategy VFR Implementation Programme (FASVIP). Many of the initiatives involve the first UK implementation of advanced airspace concepts. As a direct result, the frequency and complexity of the airspace related requests being managed by CAA's specialist resources has increased significantly. Such requests will continue to rise as delivery against the FAS Deployment Plan progresses up to 2020 and as any short term measures emanating from the Airport's Commission report are brought forward.

- 1.4 This IN supersedes IN-2014/034.

2 Scope

- 2.1 SARG is committed to the delivery of a robust Airspace Change Process supporting the airspace change sponsor to meet CAA's regulatory requirements and ensuring an informed and impartial regulatory decision. This was reinforced by the 2014 update to the 'Guidance to the Civil Aviation Authority on Environmental Objectives Relating to the Exercise of its Air Navigation Functions' provided by the Department for Transport to the CAA.

- 2.2 The CAA has completed the first two phases of restructuring, establishing SARG, with current and future demands in mind. One of the objectives of the re-organisation is to provide an effective and efficient structure that makes the very best use of specialist resources while continuing to identify cost savings. As a consequence of the significant increase in proposal activity and these efficiency measures, SARG will continue to use all reasonable endeavours to ensure that proposal requests are progressed in a timely manner. Early, joint planning of proposed implementation timelines will be required to ensure that available capacity is managed properly. As such, requests for support will be prioritised and sequenced – based on the need, complexity and sensitivity of a proposal – maintaining equity as far as possible for all sponsors.

- 2.3 In order to ensure that sponsors' timelines are not unduly affected by the regulatory process, sponsors should engage with SARG in sufficient time to meet proposal's project timescales. Earliest possible engagement with the SARG Airspace Regulation section is strongly recommended to avoid the support provided by the Airspace Regulation section becoming a hurdle on the critical path of any particular proposal. The Airspace Regulation section has taken proactive steps to define the likely pipeline of future requests from across industry as part of the FAS Programme Management activity to help inform any necessary prioritisation decisions.

3 Queries

- 3.1 Any queries or requests for further guidance as a result of this communication should be addressed to:

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4 Cancellation

- 4.1 This Information Notice will remain in force until 31 May 2016.