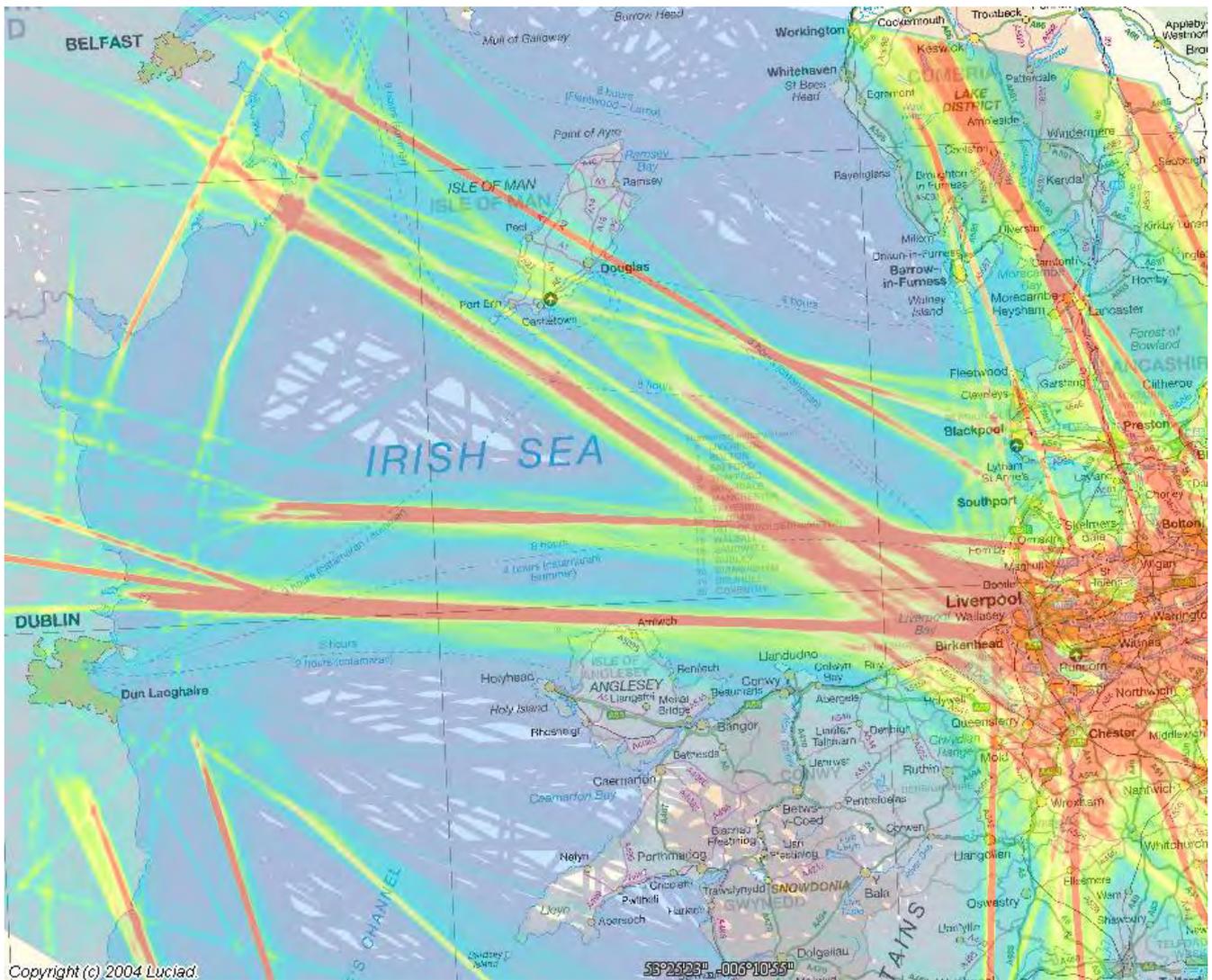


IRISH SEA AIRSPACE CHANGE PROPOSAL

PART A: Introduction



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Introduction

- 1. Air travel is integral to the success of the UK economy and has become an important part of modern life; for business or pleasure, more of us are flying more frequently than ever before. More flights mean busier skies, and how we use and manage our airspace is a matter of great responsibility. The expertly controlled passage of aircraft above us ensures safety and keeps aircraft flowing efficiently. The more efficient we can make it, the more we can reduce its impact on the environment. For these reasons, NATS undertakes constant reviews of UK airspace and, when necessary, recommends changes to how it should be managed.
- 2. This is a NATS consultation document for a change to parts of the airspace structure within the UK Flight Information Region (FIR) from the Midlands, stretching across North Wales into the Irish Sea, northwards to Blackpool and out towards the Isle of Man as shown on the front cover. The proposal is designed to support changes being made in adjacent Irish airspace around Dublin, whilst also improving the efficiency of the UK airspace structure. The air navigation service provider in Ireland, the Irish Aviation Authority (IAA) and NATS each operate their respective FIRs and are partnered in what is described as a Functional Airspace Block (FAB). The FAB considers the two FIRs as one continuum and this proposal is one example of the efficiencies to be gained from the cooperation between NATS and the IAA.

NATS and the IAA

- 3. NATS provides air traffic control services to aircraft flying through UK airspace, over the eastern part of the North Atlantic, and at 15 UK airports. Our responsibility is for the safe and efficient management of some of the most complex airspace in the world. Last year, NATS handled some 2.1 million flights carrying around 200 million passengers. Safety is NATS’ first and foremost priority but we also aim to provide our service in an efficient and cost-effective way.
- 4. Air traffic control services for aircraft travelling between airports are known as ‘en route’ air traffic control services. We provide en route air traffic services under licence to the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA). This licence requires us to ensure the provision of a safe service, make the most efficient use of airspace and be capable of meeting reasonable levels of demand.
- 5. Whilst NATS is responsible for providing a safe and efficient service, we do not control the demand placed upon UK airspace, the numbers of flights or the times of flights. These are determined by the demand for air travel from businesses and the general public within the Government’s aviation policy

and the airspace policy set out by the Directorate of Airspace Policy (DAP) at the CAA.

6. To find out more about NATS go to www.nats.co.uk.
7. The Irish Aviation Authority (IAA) is a commercial state-sponsored company which was established on 1 January 1994 to provide air navigation services in Irish-controlled airspace, and to regulate safety standards within the Irish civil aviation industry. It provides en route air traffic control services at Dublin, Shannon and also within airspace over some of the North Atlantic ocean.
8. The primary objective of the IAA is to ensure safety for air traffic management of the 451,000 square kilometres of Irish controlled airspace.
9. To find out more about the IAA go to www.iaa.ie.
10. Note that whilst this proposal has been developed collaboratively as part of the NATS/IAA FAB, the proposed changes are all within UK airspace and are therefore being proposed by NATS as the UK air traffic service provider (albeit fully supported by the IAA). The aviation and environmental impacts described in this consultation relate to the proposed changes within UK airspace; this consultation does not attempt to cover impacts of changes within Irish airspace being progressed by the IAA. Responses to this consultation should be submitted to NATS (see paragraph 35 for details).

Why review the way airspace is managed?

11. There are a number of reasons for reviewing the way airspace is managed:
Safety. Our overriding priority is to ensure the safe movement of aircraft. As the skies become busier we review the way airspace is managed to maintain or enhance our high safety standards.
Delay. We are required under our licence from the CAA to be capable of meeting any reasonable level of overall demand. Busier, congested skies lead to flight delays which airspace change proposals are designed to address.
Environment. We recognise the impact of aviation on the environment and a key aim of the airspace change process is to mitigate that impact wherever possible.
12. This airspace change proposal is the latest in a rolling programme of UK airspace reviews. Fulfilling safety, delay and environmental objectives requires us to consider UK airspace efficiency, and also the efficiency of our interfaces with neighbouring states, in this case Ireland.

Objective

13. The main driver for this proposal is the need to ensure that the airspace structure in the UK FIR meets the needs of changes being made by the IAA in the Dublin Terminal Manoeuvring Area (TMA). The IAA seeks to improve its operational and environmental efficiency by radically changing their airspace structure around Dublin Airport, including new departure routes and implementation of a new method of managing arrival streams called Point-Merge (Point-Merge is discussed in more detail in Part B). The proximity of the Dublin TMA to the UK FIR boundary means that changes in UK airspace are required to support those in the Ireland FIR and continue the development of the UK-Ireland FAB.
14. This proposal was initiated collectively from within the UK-Ireland FAB and it seeks to ensure overall network efficiency without border constraints between the UK and Ireland FIRs.
15. Given the changes required at the FIR boundary NATS has taken the opportunity to review the procedures and practices for the UK Isle of Man (IoM) Air Traffic Control (ATC) region which feeds westbound traffic into, and receives eastbound traffic from Ireland. This has highlighted 4 areas where we believe overall network and environmental efficiency can be improved in addition to the changes required to support the IAA Point-Merge implementation.
16. The resultant proposal for this airspace change comprises five distinct sub-proposals, each relating to a particular change with its own particular justification and impacts. These are:
 - Sub proposal 1: Provide Controlled Airspace (CAS) to protect Dublin Point-Merge Operations
 - Sub proposal 2: Airways designated L70/L975 CAS amendments west of reporting point PENIL
 - Sub proposal 3: Establishment of conditional route (U)Y124
 - Sub proposal 4: Lower L70 between reporting points KOLID – PENIL
 - Sub proposal 5: Airway (U)L6 extension and lowering

Design options

17. As each sub proposal is relatively small, and because each must knit into the existing airspace system, the opportunity for radically different options to achieve the objectives is limited. As a consequence the options presented in this consultation are in general, either to progress with changes as proposed or to leave the airspace as it is (a do nothing option). In certain specific circumstances there may be opportunities to consider adjustment of the final design in terms of precise levels, route alignments and airspace boundaries. All suggestions received through this consultation will be fully considered prior to submission of the formal proposal.

Consultation Purpose

18. The purpose of consultation is to identify whether NATS has considered all the relevant issues when preparing this proposal so far. As such, feedback is sought from stakeholders that NATS will consider in the further development of this proposal before a formal submission for change is submitted to the CAA for their approval under their CAP725 process (Ref 1). The consultation follows the code of practice set out in Appendix A.
19. This consultation material is split into four Parts and a set of Appendices, each of which is available for download at www.consultation.nats.co.uk:
- Part A:** Introduction (this document)
 - Part B:** Technical Details of Proposal (all five* sub-proposals)
 - Part C:** Potential environmental impact of proposals affecting Snowdonia National Park, Anglesey Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and Clwydian Range AONB (Sub-proposal 3)
 - Part D:** Potential environmental impact of sub-proposals affecting Southport, Formby, Ormskirk, Skelmersdale and surrounding areas (Sub-proposals 4 & 5)
- Appendices** provide supplementary detail referred to in the four Parts.

*Note that Sub-proposals 1 and 2 only affect airspace over the Irish Sea, and do not have any environmental impact over the ground. Hence they are addressed only in Part B, the Technical document.

Aviation Stakeholders

20. A link to the consultation document has been sent by email directly to all National Air Traffic Management Advisory Committee (NATMAC) members with an obligation to disseminate to local aviation groups as required. Airlines that are the primary users of the associated routes (based on 2010 usage) have also been sent a link.
21. Direct engagement with MoD and affected airports has been undertaken prior to this consultation exercise.
22. Appendix B lists all the stakeholders that have been sent a link to the consultation document.

Environmental stakeholders

23. Government guidance (Ref 2) states that “visual intrusion by aircraft above 7,000ft may be a consideration in exceptional circumstances, such as over-flight of National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs)”. Part C of the consultation material relates to changes over Snowdonia National Park, Anglesey AONB and Clwydian Range AONB.
24. Government guidance (Ref 2) also states that “consultation will usually be necessary where the proposed changes concern controlled airspace ... at or below a height of 7,000ft” above ground level. This proposal includes changes to controlled airspace which may potentially affect traffic patterns around 7,000ft over western parts of Lancashire. Therefore, Part D of the

consultation material is provided to describe this potential environmental impact.

25. Parts C and D identify geographical areas where there is a potential local environmental effect. Notification of this consultation has been sent to key local representative bodies such as county and borough councils, as well as Members of Parliament.
26. Consultation relating to the effect of the proposal on climate change is also undertaken with local environmental stakeholders and with national representative bodies such as Environmental Protection UK and Friends of the Earth.
27. A complete list of stakeholders can be found in Appendix B.

Next Steps

28. The period of consultation commences on 15/04/2011 and closes on 22/07/2011, a period of 14 weeks. You are invited to submit your feedback on the form presented in paragraph 35. When responding, consultees must specify the grounds for supporting or objecting to the proposal. Feedback either in favour of, or objecting to, the proposal without supporting reasons will be reported to the CAA but NATS will not be in a position to consider the merits of the feedback.

Consultation feedback

29. The feedback will be analysed by NATS and summarised in a post-consultation report. This will be made available via the NATS website and notification will be sent to the consultees identified in Appendix B. This report will also update stakeholders on subsequent phases of the development process such as any further consultation required, the submission of a formal proposal to the CAA and its consideration of that proposal, all of which will depend on the outcome of this consultation exercise.
30. Any matters raised during the consultation period that have not been adequately considered during the development of the proposed changes may require NATS to make changes to the proposal. Any such changes may require further consultation.

Airspace change proposal and implementation

31. Details of the consultation exercise will form part of the airspace change proposal that NATS will submit to the CAA for its consideration. Copies of all responses will be provided to the CAA, including any personal information contained in them, except where a response requests otherwise.
32. The airspace change proposal submitted to the CAA following the consultation exercise will present a design for each of the five distinct elements ("sub-proposals") that constitute the overall proposal. Through the case study process, the CAA may determine that the case for going ahead with some

elements may be stronger than others. The proposal may therefore be implemented in part, or in phases if there are outstanding issues associated with elements that require further work before the CAA is prepared to approve them for implementation.

33. Once the entire proposal is, or elements of the proposal are, accepted by the CAA, NATS will implement the airspace change at an appropriate opportunity. Implementation is planned for spring 2012 onwards. Implementation of the changes may be phased on the basis of:
- a) the length of time taken by the CAA in reaching its decision;
 - b) the need for any revision of the airspace change proposal identified by the consultation process and any further period of consultation required for such revisions and;
 - c) Operational constraints.

34. **References**

Ref 1: CAP 725, CAA Guidance On The Application Of The Airspace Change Process, March 2007, CAA Directorate of Airspace Policy

Ref 2: Guidance To The Civil Aviation Authority On Environmental Objectives Relating To The Exercise Of Its Air Navigation Functions, January 2002, Department for Transport, Local Government and the Regions

Responding to the consultation

35. A response form suitable for emailing may be found at www.consultation.nats.co.uk

A similar response form suitable for printing on paper and filling in manually is provided on pages 7-9 along with a postal address.

Please complete and return as per the instructions provided on the form.

Response Form (paper)

Please use block capitals when writing, and post the completed form to:

*IAA/IoM Consultation Coordinator
NATS, CTC, Mailbox 9A,
4,000 Parkway,
Whiteley, Fareham
Hampshire, PO15 7FL*

Name:

Email:

Organisation (please state "individual" if the response is from a personal point of view rather than the formal response for an organisation):

Postal address:

Data Protection compliance: Please tick this box if you **do not agree** that any personal details contained in your response may be sent to the CAA as part of the Airspace Change Proposal

Question 1: Is there any information that NATS should consider when finalising the proposal for "Sub-proposal 1: Provide Controlled Airspace (CAS) to protect Dublin Point-Merge Operations"? (*see Part B for details*)

I/we support / object / do not object to Sub-proposal 1
Grounds for my/our response:

Question 2: Is there any information that NATS should consider when finalising the proposal for “Sub-proposal 2: L70/L975 CAS amendments west of PENIL”? *(see Part B for details)*

I/we support / object / do not object to Sub-proposal 2
Grounds for my/our response:

Question 3: Is there any information that NATS should consider when finalising the proposal for “Sub-proposal 3: Conditional Route (U)Y124”? *(see Part B for details and Part C for the potential environmental impact to Snowdonia National Park and Anglesey and Clwydian Range AONBs)*

I/we support / object / do not object to Sub-proposal 3
Grounds for my/our response:

Question 4: Is there any information that NATS should consider when finalising the proposal for “Sub-proposal 4: Lower L70 at KOLID – PENIL”? *(see Part B for details and Part D for the potential environmental impact to Southport, Formby, Ormskirk, Skelmersdale and surrounding areas)*

I/we support / object / do not object to Sub-proposal 4
Grounds for my/our response:

Question 5: Is there any information that NATS should consider when finalising the proposal for “Sub-proposal 5: (U)L6 extension and lowering”? (see Part B for details and Part C for the potential environmental impact to Snowdonia National Park and Anglesey and Clwydian Range AONBs)

I/we support / object / do not object to Sub-proposal 5
Grounds for my/our response:

Question 6: Is there any information that NATS should consider when finalising the combined proposal consisting of all five sub-proposals?

Additional information:

Should you require more space to complete your responses to any of these questions, please use a blank sheet of paper and clearly title each response with the relevant question number.

Note that comments regarding our compliance with the consultation process as set out in the CAA's guidelines for airspace change (Ref 1) should be directed to the CAA at:

Business Coordinator
Directorate of Airspace Policy
CAA House
45-59 Kingsway
London WC2B 6TE
E-mail: businessmanagement@caa.co.uk

**THIS CAA ADDRESS IS FOR COMMENTS ON PROCESS, NOT FOR
RESPONSES WITH REGARD TO THE PROPOSED CHANGES**