Directorate of Airspace Policy

All NATMAC Representatives
Environmental Consultees

24 September 2012

ERM/NATS-IAA IRISH SEA ACP Pt1

Dear Stakeholders,

CAA DECISION LETTER

INTRODUCTION OF DUBLIN POINT MERGE - ADDITIONAL AIRSPACE REQUIREMENTS IN UK AIRSPACE

1. INTRODUCTION AND PROPOSAL OVERVIEW

1.1 On 11th February 2011, Information Notice IN-2011/08 provided details of a NATS and Directorate of Airspace Policy Framework Briefing on a proposal to introduce improvements to the Irish Sea airspace structure. The scope of the proposal was split into 5 largely separate sub-proposals in the same geographic area, centred on the Isle of Man ATC Sector. Each sub-proposal has its own specific objectives. This proposal has been developed in accordance with the UK/Ireland Functional Airspace Block (FAB) principles. A FAB is an airspace block based on operational requirements and established regardless of State boundaries, where the provision of air navigation services and related functions are performance-driven and optimized with a view to introducing, in each functional airspace block, enhanced cooperation among air navigation service providers or, where appropriate, an integrated provider. The main driver for this proposal is the need to ensure that the airspace structure in the UK Flight Information Region (FIR) meets the needs of changes being made by the Irish Aviation Authority (IAA), the Irish air navigation service provider (ANSP), 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 (PM). The proximity of the Dublin TMA to the London and Scottish boundaries means that changes in UK airspace are required to support those in the Shannon FIR and continue the development of the UK/Ireland FAB.

1.2 Point-Merge is a method of managing arrival streams by positioning aircraft on arcs rather than in holds. The chart at Enclosure 1 shows the proposed positioning of the PM arcs for Dublin westerly arrivals onto sequencing legs, for runway 28, denoted by the blue curved lines. The objective of this particular proposal is to provide controlled airspace for the PM sequencing legs without over-complicating the airspace structure. This additional CAS will be achieved

by lowering the existing base of L975 from flight level FL75 (approx 7500 feet) to flight level FL35 (approx 3500 feet), denoted by the yellow areas.

2. AIRSPACE EFFICIENCY

2.1 I am required to secure the most efficient use of airspace consistent with the safe operation of aircraft and the expeditious flow of air traffic. I am satisfied that protection of the new CAS will provide the necessary containment and contribute to the efficient operation of the Dublin PM by enabling aircraft on the outer sequencing leg to fly at the most favourable altitude before turning in to the merge point and commence their arrival at Dublin airport.

2.2 The numbers of aircraft on each of the two sequencing legs, the length of time each aircraft remains on the leg and their navigational accuracy will determine how many aircraft are likely to use the new airspace proposed in the UK FIR. It is however beyond the scope of this proposal to analyse the Point-Merge operation as it is a procedure that is to solely benefit Dublin operations.

3. AIRSPACE USERS

3.1 I am required to satisfy the requirements of operators and owners of all classes of aircraft. Although objections were received from the general aviation (GA) community to the initial proposal to introduce the additional Class A CAS, which would exclude their operators, the development was reconsidered and the new airspace is now to be introduced as Class C. This will enable all other airspace user groups to request a crossing in accordance with visual flight rules (VFR) being maintained.

4. INTERESTS OF OTHER PARTIES

4.1 The Ministry of Defence (MoD) danger area D201B abuts the new airspace structure. The MoD has been fully involved in the development of this proposal and the ongoing consultation between stakeholders has satisfactorily resolved any outstanding issues that had existed. When D201B is activated, an internal buffer will be applied to any aviation activity, whilst for other operational activity, Dublin PM Traffic will remain to the west of the FIR boundary. These new procedures will be included in a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the MoD and Dublin ATC.

5. ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

5.1 I have considered the environmental impact of air operations and concluded that although there is a very slight overall unquantifiable environmental disbenefit for the operation of aircraft in the small area of the new airspace in the UK FIR, this small negative impact can be outweighed by other factors, not least the operational requirement to offer protection to traffic on the Point-Merge procedure.

6. SAFETY

6.1 As my primary duty is to maintain a high degree of safety in the provision of air traffic services, my staff, together with colleagues from the Safety Regulation

Group of the CAA have confirmed that the proposed airspace design and associated management arrangements can be safely adopted. The appropriate safety management processes resulting from this airspace change will be completed prior to the introduction of any operational change and thus safety levels will be assured.

7. NATIONAL SECURITY

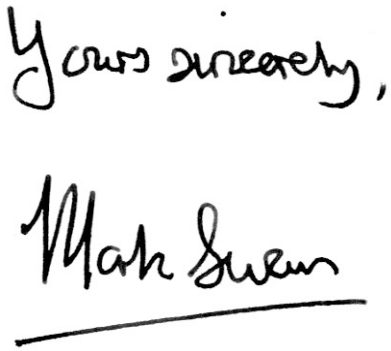
7.1 I am satisfied that national security will not be impacted by this proposal and the specific consultation requirements with the Secretary of State for Defence have been discharged by correspondence with the MoD who has confirmed it is content with the proposal.

8. REGULATORY DECISION

8.1 I am satisfied that the new airspace arrangements will help support greater efficiency in the Dublin TMA, and should not disadvantage other airspace users. I am also satisfied that the revised option put forward following changes made after completion of the consultation was the appropriate option, as it satisfied all stakeholder requirements whilst complementing the new IAA procedures in the Dublin TMA. These changes also contribute to overall improvements in performance within the UK/Ireland FAB.

8.2 I have therefore decided to approve the revised UK airspace requirements to support the introduction of the IAA's Dublin Point Merge. The revised airspace will become effective from 13 December 2012. My staff will review the effectiveness of the arrangements not before 12 months after introduction and the results of this review will be published.

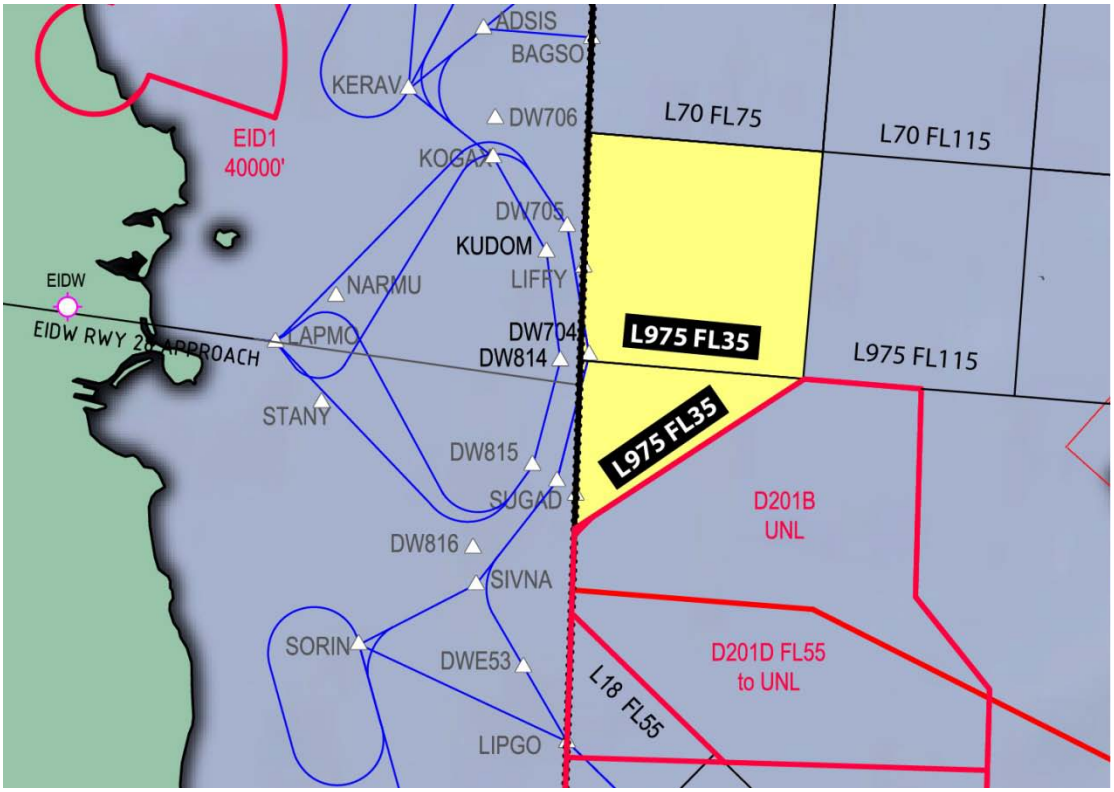
8.3 If you have any queries, the DAP Project Leader is Mac Mackay, who can be contacted on 020 7453 6552, mac.mackay@caa.co.uk



Mark Swan

Director

Enclosure: 1. Dublin Point Merge/L975



Dublin Point-Merge/L975