



Safety and Airspace Regulation Group

All NATMAC Representatives

22nd May 2015

Dear Colleagues,

CAA DECISION LETTER

RELEASE OF CONTROLLED AIRSPACE - RAISING BASE LEVELS OF ATS ROUTE N560

1. In undertaking its Statutory Duties, the Civil Aviation Authority must exercise its air navigation functions to secure the most efficient use of airspace. In carrying out this function, Director SARG is cognisant of the need that to satisfy all airspace users requirements, if it is considered that areas of existing controlled airspace are no longer required for the purpose for which they were designed, they could revert to airspace that better reflects the Statutory Duties. Controlled Airspace is established to provide additional protection for specific activities. If those activities do not fully reflect the need for such airspace, it represents an unnecessary restriction on other airspace users that should be addressed.
2. UK airspace classifications have been established in accordance with ICAO Annex 2 (Rules of the Air) and Annex 11 (Air Traffic Services) airspace and European Commission Airspace Classification Regulation 730/2006. The requirement to rationalise Class F airspace in the UK was introduced in EU legislation by Commission Regulation EU 923/2012, the Standardised European Rules of the Air (SERA). Consequently on 13 November 2014 Class F airspace in the UK FIRs was replaced by either Class E +TMZ controlled airspace or returned to Class G.
3. Following the rationalisation of Class F airspace, advisory route N560D between Glasgow and Inverness became Class E +TMZ ATS route N560. In the CAA Decision Letter dated 30 July 2014, Director SARG indicated that the replacement of Class F airspace would be subject to a post-implementation review on an on-going basis. Analysed monthly, traffic figures for N560 indicate that less IFR traffic was flight-planning to use the route at the lower flight levels than had been anticipated. When reviewed for effectiveness of the revised arrangements the traffic figures identified that the under-utilisation by IFR traffic indicated certain segments at specific levels of this route were not being used for the purpose for which they were intended.

4. Any Release of Controlled and Segregated Airspace (RCSA) proposal will not be subject to the full Airspace Change Process (ACP) as such proposals represent a return of airspace to its most basic state, uncontrolled airspace. However, the release of any controlled airspace does constitute a change to airspace arrangements and, as such, it will be necessary to determine what degree of consultation, if any, is required. As the volume of IFR traffic affected is particularly low and can be largely accommodated within the remaining controlled airspace and the GA user community has been actively engaged in the discussions, it has been determined that all airspace users shall be informed via this Decision Letter and an Information Notice that will be promulgated through the appropriate channels.
5. The degree of resulting activity within the released airspace volume is unlikely to be quantifiable in meaningful terms and so it is difficult to predict the environmental impact of any given revision. However, in the case of N560, the existing Class E+TMZ airspace does not restrict access to any VFR traffic fitted with a serviceable transponder and procedures are in place to give approval for access to any other airspace user who cannot comply with this condition. To that end, it is considered that there will be little, if any, change to the volume and type of traffic operating in the areas that are to be revised and, as a consequence, there is unlikely to be any discernible impact.
6. In reaching a decision on a proposal to release controlled airspace, SARG need to be assured that there are no resulting changes to airspace arrangements within the remaining controlled airspace. It is anticipated that participating IFR traffic will continue to flight plan as they do today. However, during large-scale military exercises such as 'Joint Warrior', where a considerable volume of the extant route structure over the Western Isles is closed due to activation of the Fast Jet Areas (North or South), a contingency route structure has to be available for Glasgow and Edinburgh traffic flight-planning trans-Atlantic Oceanic tracks.
7. On such occasions, the route structure that is in place prior to the release of airspace will be reinstated, with base levels and airspace classifications as they are at present, operated as a Conditional Route (CDR2). This will accommodate any requirement for transatlantic ScTMA northerly departures unable to access the westerly route structure. The Scotland 1:500,000 VFR Chart will therefore not be updated until the next scheduled amendment on 23 June 2016, but an adhesive panel will be produced by AIS, detailing the changes, and will be made available without charge to all VFR chart users.
8. I have therefore decided that the revised volume of Class E+TMZ controlled airspace will be introduced at AIRAC 08/2015 on 23 Jul 15. The enclosed chart illustrates the revised base flight levels on N560 between the northern edge of the ScTMA boundary at FOYLE and at INBAS, near Loch Rannoch. These are as follows: **FOYLE to ERSON - FL195¹**; **ERSON to INBAS - FL125**. North of INBAS the base levels will remain unchanged. An AIC will be issued concurrently with the AIRAC schedule to amplify the details of the airspace contingency arrangements during certain military exercises and how the route will be reactivated through the UK AMC and published in the UK AIP as a Conditional Route (CDR2). These changes will result in a reduction of over 20% of Class E TMZ airspace for N560 between FOYLE and Inverness.

¹ Class C controlled airspace above FL195. Class E+ TMZ reinstated when notified through an AIC.

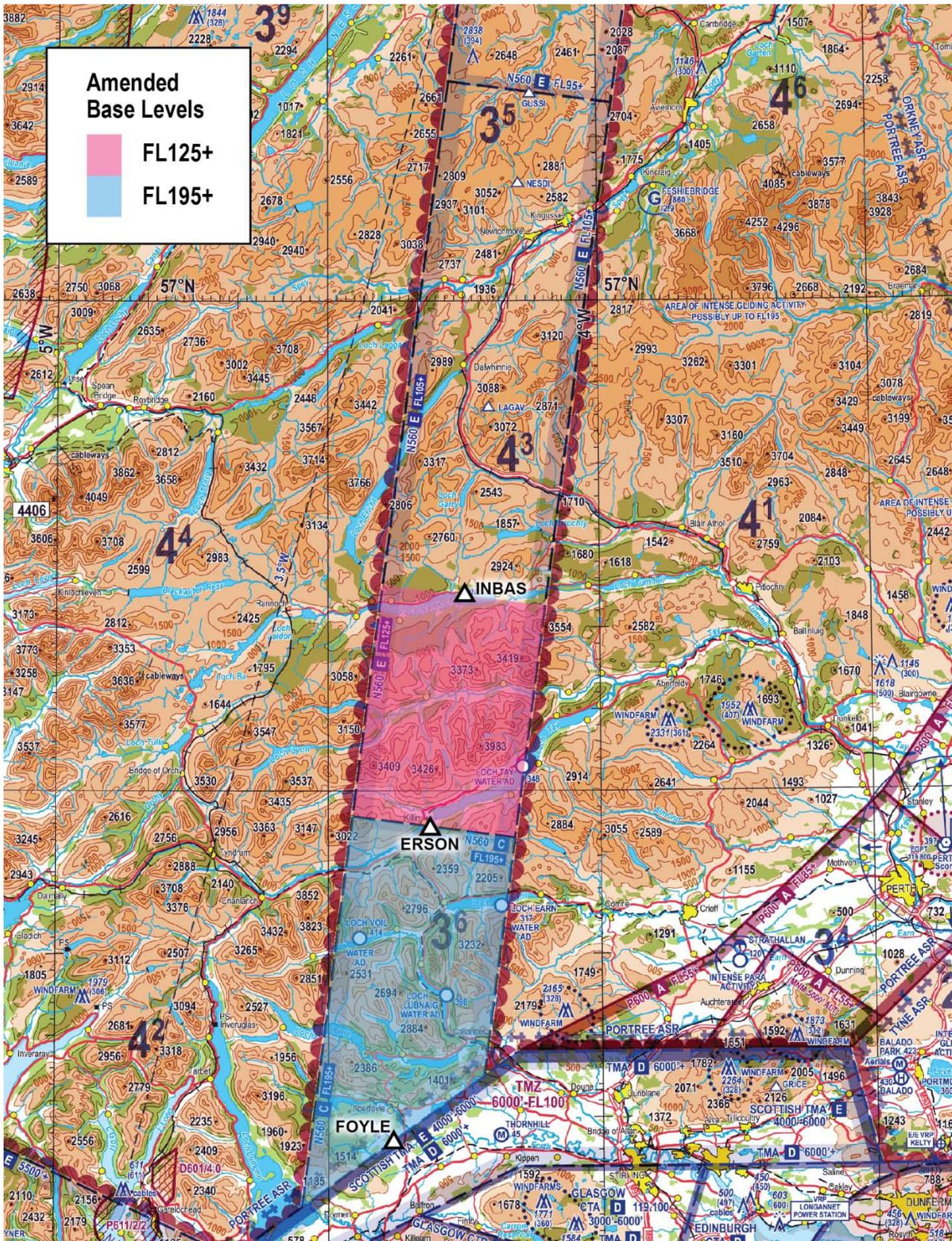
9. In order to satisfy its Statutory Duties, SARG will continue to monitor the airspace to ensure that the planned revision and new arrangements continue to be fit for purpose.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mark Swan". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a single horizontal line.

M SWAN
Director SARG

Enclosure:

1. Map to show ATS Route N560 Base Flight Level Restrictions between FOYLE and INBAS.



Enclosure 1: ATS Route N560 Base Flight Level Revisions between FOYLE and INBAS