

Safety and Airspace Regulation Group



All NATMAC Representatives

03 January 2014

Dear Stakeholders,

CAA DECISION LETTER

EXTENDED OPERATING HOURS TO AIRWAY N601 CLASS C EXTENSION

The introduction of the Class C extensions to airway N601 was implemented on 12 March 2009 (AIRAC 03/2009). The change provided greater airspace efficiency by reducing complexity and delay and by meeting the needs of the principal users whilst not disadvantaging others. The Class C extension below FL195 comprised two fillets of airspace, Area A: FL115-155 and Area B: FL145-195, (see Enclosure 1 – magenta areas), which were introduced under flexible use of airspace (FUA) arrangements. In each 24-hour period they were either being used for military operations or delegated to NATS for en-route GAT. Overlying H24 Class C airspace above FL195 is in place above and to the north of Area B.

With the closure of RAF Cottesmore and RAF Wittering, and the discontinuation of the associated flying operations associated with these two aerodromes, the MoD has concluded there is no longer a justifiable requirement for access to these fillets under FUA. NATS has, therefore, submitted an airspace change proposal to request an extension to their operational hours to H24 en-route GAT operation; this will provide greater efficiency for traffic routeing. They have determined that better climb profiles from the LTMA airports together with improved climb and descent profiles from the Midlands' airports will be achieved through deconfliction that can be accomplished with access to this airspace on a permanent basis. Although the extended operating hours have not been introduced to provide increased capacity, nor do they offer alternative flight planning options, there is a potential environmental benefit in that the more efficient climb and descent profiles, when offered, will be more fuel efficient and thereby reduce CO₂ emissions.

I am satisfied that the H24 operation will contribute to greater airspace efficiency and further reduce complexity. I am also content that any environmental impact has been satisfactorily mitigated by the potential reduction in CO₂ emissions achieved through improved climb and descent profiles. The MoD has formally approved the extended operating hours and as there is no impact on any other unit or stakeholder group, no other consultation was considered to be necessary or appropriate. NATS must however consider that Class C controlled airspace allows access to other eligible airspace user groups through an appropriate clearance.

