

**All NATMAC Representatives
Environmental Consultees**

02 October 2012

ERM/NATS-IAA IRISH SEA ACP Pt4

Dear Stakeholders,

CAA DECISION LETTER

CHANGES TO AIRWAYS L70 AND (U)Y70 IN NORTHWEST ENGLAND

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. The proposals have 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 primary driver for this sub-proposal however, is to introduce a lowered portion of airway L70 off the Lancashire coast, between KOLID and PENIL, to provide a more fuel efficient route for Manchester arrivals from the northwest. Additionally, (U)Y70¹ will also be extended to link with L70, from POL to KOLID, to provide better connectivity for Leeds Bradford and Doncaster departures to the northwest. The new airspace structure is denoted as the yellow areas at Enclosure 1.
- 1.2 The lowering of L70 will be from Flight Level (FL)175 down to FL85 to enable the MIRSI standard arrival route (STAR) for Manchester to fly a more direct route from (U)L10. However, that additional portion of L70 will be introduced as a Class C conditional route (CDR), whereby the airspace can be switched off at relatively short notice under flexible use of airspace (FUA) arrangements to accommodate BAE Systems, Warton operations in that area. This would mean

¹ Airways are from their designated base (DB) up to FL245 (24,500 feet). Upper Air Routes are routes above FL245. When a route is indicated by a letter in parenthesis, it is referring to an airway and the corresponding Upper Air Route.

the airspace reverting back to Class G uncontrolled airspace and the existing procedures for Manchester, Leeds Bradford and Doncaster, would be used. In the areas where the L70 Class C CDR intersects any Class A airway, that area will be designated as Class A controlled airspace.

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 the new airspace will provide a more direct flight plan route for Manchester, with aircraft now being able to route from PENIL to MIRSI rather than having to route via Wallasey and increase the interaction with traffic on other routes in this busy area. The extension to (U)Y70 will result in a shorter flight plan route for Leeds Bradford and Doncaster traffic requesting FL90 and above; traffic below FL90 will continue to route via Wallasey. The extension to Y70 will be as a Class A airway and will be directly linked to the operation of the new L70 Class C CDR, up to FL195. Above FL195 the new (U)Y70 extension will be introduced as a permanent route. The additional airspace will also provide additional vectoring airspace for the Prestwick Centre (PC) Wallasey Sector, which will help reduce the complexity of the air traffic control operation.
- 2.2 In developing this proposal, NATS first considered defining the additional L70 airspace as Class A, but this was dismissed due to other airspace users' requirements. No further options, other than the 'do-nothing' option, have been considered. I am satisfied that the 'do-nothing' option would not present the operational gains and would not provide any reduction in CO₂ emissions.

3. AIRSPACE USERS

- 3.1 I am required to satisfy the requirements of operators and owners of all classes of aircraft. Due to the nature of this proposal, NATS completed a comprehensive consultation with all affected stakeholder groups. Initially, objections were raised by BAE Systems, Warton and the MoD (representing RAF Woodvale) regarding the proposed classification of the new L70 airspace as Class A. As a consequence of this objection, NATS amended the requirements of this sub-proposal and this airspace will now be introduced as Class C. This will enable increased flexibility for Warton operations and for general aviation (GA) requesting to cross the airway in accordance with visual flight rules (VFR) conditions. Additionally, when Warton require the tactical freedom for some of their complex flight test activities, this FUA airspace can be switched off under a 30-minute clawback arrangement. A similar arrangement will be applied for RAF Woodvale operations up to 10,000feet.

4. INTERESTS OF OTHER PARTIES

- 4.1 I am also required to take account of the interests of any other person (other than an operator or owner of an aircraft) in relation to the use of any particular airspace or the use of airspace generally. Although the route overflies a Site of Special Scientific Interest and over two National Trust Properties, NATS considers that the impact of this new airspace will be relatively low because of the height that traffic overflies this portion of the Lancashire coast and the relatively low frequency of additional overflights. I am therefore satisfied that the operational benefits and the reduction in CO₂ emissions provided by this change outweigh the concerns over tranquillity, especially as all traffic will be above FL85.

5. ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 5.1 I have considered the environmental impact of the proposal and it is reasonable to conclude that as the new airspace does not overfly an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty or a National Park, the key environmental impact will be a modest reduction in CO₂ emissions, with an estimated saving of 110 tonnes for 2013.

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 maintained. As the additional volume of L70 airspace will be promulgated as an active Class C CDR, any other airspace users requesting access will automatically call for a crossing clearance, which means that this is a fail-safe environment.

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 under the agreed FUA arrangements.

8. REGULATORY DECISION

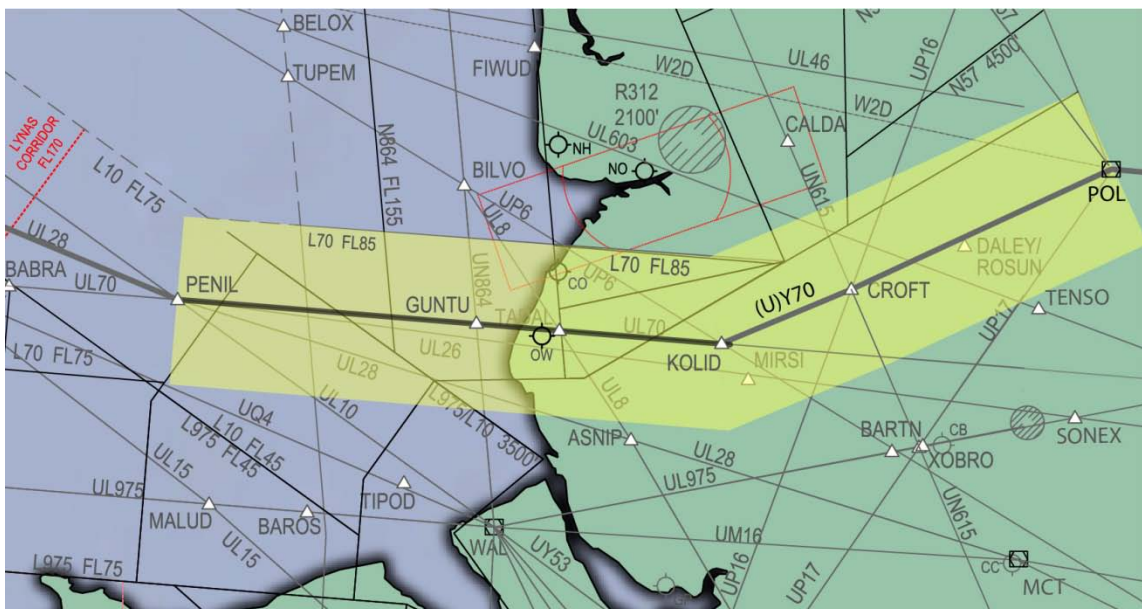
- 8.1 I am satisfied that the new airspace arrangements will help provide more fuel-efficient routings for Manchester arrivals and Leeds Bradford and Doncaster departures, and will not necessarily disadvantage other airspace users. I am also satisfied that the revised option that was agreed following the initial concern raised by BAE Systems, Warton and RAF Woodvale following consultation, was the only viable option, as it provided better flexibility and a reduction in fuel emissions.
- 8.2 I have therefore decided to approve the lowering of these CDRs and to the extension of UY70. I approve the clawback arrangement put in place to accommodate BAE Systems, Warton and RAF Woodvale's requirements, and consider the new arrangements will not disadvantage other airspace users. 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 Leaders are Mac Mackay and Clive Grant, who can be contacted on 020 7453 6552/6551, mac.mackay@caa.co.uk or clive.grant@caa.co.uk

Yours sincerely,
Mark Swan

Mark Swan
Director

Enclosure: 1. Lowering of L70 and Extension of (U)Y70



Lowering of L70 and Extension to (U)Y70