

GENERAL AVIATION ALLIANCE

Partnership in Aviation

President: Air Chief Marshal Sir John Allison KCB, CBE, FRAeS RAF(rtd)

Vice President: The Lord Rotherwick

Chacksfield House,
31 St Andrew's Road,
Leicester, LE2 8RE

Email: facilitator@gaalliance.org.uk

Web: www.gaalliance.org.uk

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Airport Development Coordinator

London Southend Airport

Southend-on-Sea

Essex

SS2 6YF

LONDON SOUTHEND AIRPORT SPONSOR CONSULTATION DOCUMENT

Dear Ms Petrie

I am writing on behalf of the General Aviation Alliance (GAA) in response to your airspace consultation dated 25 September 2013.

The GAA is a group of organisations representing, as far as possible, UK General Aviation (GA) and particularly Sports and Recreational Aviation (S&RA) interests. The Alliance coordinates some 72,000 subscription-paying members. These members represent the owners/operators of around 60% of the UK registered aircraft fleet rising to over 70% when unregulated aircraft are included. Activities cover parachuting, hang gliding, gliding, ballooning, plus sport and recreational flying in light and microlight aircraft and in helicopters. The objective of the GA Alliance is to co-operate and engage with government departments and other relevant organisations on regulatory and directly-related matters, to support and progress the activities of S&RA. This response has been agreed by the member bodies of the GA Alliance. Individual associations may also submit responses to deal with issues specific to their operation.

ABOUT OUR RESPONSE

We set out our position on certain subjects first and then deal with each section referencing the paragraph number from the consultation document. Where we object to a proposal or some proposition that you use to support a proposal we say so.

Context of the Proposed Airspace

Your consultation document set out a proposal for a substantial volume of controlled airspace beneath the existing London TMA to enable Southend CAT traffic to grow from the 2012 level of 8,086 movements to 26,400 by 2020. The airspace is designed to route CAT aircraft underneath the LTMA for some considerable distance inbound and outbound and you explain that this is because you have been unable to obtain agreement to utilise direct climbs and descents. This and other factors result in your design for a CTR of some 720 km² and a TMA of some 1,650 km² which is much larger than most other single runway airports, even those with significantly greater traffic levels.

The impact of this on our sector would be significant because, contrary to statements in the consultation, a substantial proportion of our aircraft would be unable to access the airspace, either because they are unable to accept a clearance, because they would be prohibited from

*British Balloon and Airship Club
British Gliding Association
British Hang Gliding and Paragliding Association
British Microlight Aircraft Association*

*British Parachute Association
Royal Aero Club of the United Kingdom
Helicopter Club of Great Britain
Light Aircraft Association
European Association of Instrument Rated Pilots*

entry by the VMC definition in EU923/2012 SERA.5001 or because the sheer volume of mixed traffic in such a large area of CAS would overwhelm Southend ATC. Given the importance of this area to our sector and the cursory treatment of access in the consultation, we believe that you have failed to properly address these issues

Moreover, we believe that lowering the base level of CAS over a substantial area in South-East England would have a significant environmental impact that would subvert the objectives of the Future Airspace Strategy which seeks to reduce intrusion so that the aviation sector can grow in a sustainable way to meet future demand. We cannot support your assertion that as a result of the introduction of the proposed airspace the environmental impact from Southend CAT traffic will reduce.

We therefore oppose the proposal set out in the consultation document and set out the reasons for our objections in the sections which follow.

POLICY ISSUES

Future Airspace Strategy (FAS) and London Airspace Management Plan (LAMP)

The FAS and LAMP seek to make our airspace more efficient. In particular they propose to introduce unrestricted climbs and continuous descents for airliners to reduce fuel use and delay and to reduce the noise and intrusion that air transport inflicts on those living below flight paths. By moving airliners higher their environmental impact will be reduced, enabling Government to permit commercial aviation to grow in a sustainable fashion so that we can all benefit from air travel in the future. The south-east of England is the most populous area with the most air traffic so it is the most important in delivering the FAS vision. Your proposal would establish substantial volumes of jet traffic routing at low level underneath the existing LTMA which is a de facto lowering of the base of controlled airspace over an area of some 2370 km². This would subvert that vision of the FAS and damage the future for all aviation in the UK. Your business plan for Southend Airport does not have regard to its impact on the objectives of FAS and LAMP and should be amended as we discuss later.

We object to the proposal because it would subvert the objectives of the FAS and the LAMP.

The Southend Airspace Development

You say that because you are unable to reach an agreement (with NATS) to allow your aircraft to climb immediately into the London TMA above or descend out of it onto final approach you have to have a have Class D airspace below the TMA to allow them to fly under it to and from places further away where access is possible. The area (and volume) of the proposed CAS is enormous; some 2370 km² (1650 km³). This apparent business dispute about access to the London TMA must be solved between you and the other ANSPs and airports and not by annexing the little remaining Class G airspace that is vital to other airspace users in the south-east. Your plan would destroy their activities and businesses whilst also destroying the objectives of the FAS. For this reason we oppose the establishment of all the proposed CTA sectors set out in your consultation.

We object to the proposal because it is an inappropriate and disproportionate business activity that would damage the activities of other airspace users.

Growth of Southend Traffic

Just as other airports have done, you predict sustained growth but you have produced no evidence to support this whatsoever. easyJet opened a base at Southend to benefit from lower costs and to put pressure on extant charges at Stansted but they have recently signed an

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agreement to double traffic at Stansted now that landing fees there have reduced. So although your business plan might have been valid whilst Stansted was owned by BAA, its sale to MAG with the competitive pricing it has introduced has changed the landscape. We can foresee that as MAG develops its business and increases terminal revenues, landing fees there will reduce further to encourage additional traffic and it could reach a point where airlines are paid to land there and deliver their passengers to airport profit centres that generate revenue. You may not want to recognise this threat but it is a likely outcome.

Gross overstatement of traffic growth is easy to do and common in ACPs as a standard mechanism for justification. However we would refer you to the ACP made by Robin Hood Airport Doncaster Sheffield (RHADS) in 2007 which was not dissimilar to your present proposition and indeed was produced by the same consultancy. The previous year terminal passenger figures given in the ACPs for both airports are quite similar (617,000 over 8 months for you – equivalent to 925,000 over a year and 840,000 over a year for RHADS). Both consultations predict a growth to exactly 2 million passengers and for that reason assert that CAS required. For RHADS, that prediction was proven to be fanciful as traffic levels declined steadily from 2007 and are now just 25% of the forecast on which their airspace design was based; significantly less than at the time of application. The unsupported statements about growth that underpin your airspace proposal are quite similar to those deployed by the same consultancy in support of RHADS. Without some evidence to the contrary we aver that your statements on growth are mere puffery and do not support an airspace change of this magnitude, or indeed any at all.

Later, in our comments on paragraph 2.2.11, we will demonstrate that the commercial environment against which your predictions might have been made has changed fundamentally, damaging the opportunity for traffic growth at Southend. For this reason we believe that the other options available for the management of traffic in the area are more appropriate and we discuss them later.

We oppose the establishment of all the proposed CAS because the business plan on which it is based is not credible.

Airspace Safety

Following a Light Aircraft Association initiative to tell GA about the expanding Southend operation and to get GA aircraft flying in the area to call Southend ATC to request a radar service for separation purposes, easyJet wrote that “it had been a good news story” and that “we have no safety reports involving conflict with GA and the procedures that we put in place with NATS to transit to and from the LTMA are working well”. In particular this initiative told GA about the timing of easyJet flights, which are grouped in specific periods of the day and told GA where the airliners would fly. This was something that was fundamental to airspace safety but that Southend Airport had not itself initiated. Southend Airport approved the draft LAA documents that publicised the nature of the easyJet/Southend operation and they were distributed to many thousands of GA pilots through magazines and the internet

However the consultation belittles this initiative and its safety outcome stating that it had “limited success”. This disingenuous statement is designed to divert attention from the clear fact that interaction with GA aircraft can be managed in a number of ways and does not necessarily need CAS to provide an adequate level of safety. This has been proven in practice by the GA community’s proactive airspace safety initiative.

We oppose the establishment of the proposed CAS because you have failed to take proper account of the range of other options available to manage your operation safely.

Access for GA

You aver that GA traffic can cross the proposed airspace any time it chooses but you fail to take account of the aircraft that cannot accept a clearance because of the nature of their activity or those that will be excluded by the new definition of VFR in Class D in EU923/2012 SERA.5001 which is coming into force in 2014. You do not appear to have carried out any proper analysis of current GA traffic distribution and volume nor of the real impact the proposal would have on that. You have not attempted to analyse the traffic over this large area and explain how you would be able to manage it if it were controlled airspace. You have not assessed the actual numbers of GA aircraft that could be managed at any one time within each sector. You have stated that aircraft such as gliders and hang gliders are easily able to access Class D airspace when that is untrue. Instead you rely on glib statements blaming GA pilots for not wishing to fly in controlled airspace. We refute your proposition absolutely and demand that you carry out a proper analysis of the impact of the proposal on all airspace users as you are required to do by CAP725 Stage 4 paragraph 42 d and e. Until we are able to see the results of your analysis neither we nor the CAA can properly determine the impact of the proposal.

We oppose the establishment of the proposed CAS because you have not properly assessed the impact of the proposal on other airspace users.

We have referred this issue to the CAA business managers.

Environmental Impact

You argue that the airspace will not have an adverse environmental impact even though its purpose is to increase jet movements (flying below the London TMA) from 8000 to 26,000. Clearly the total intrusion will increase by 325% even if there is no change to where aircraft fly but when we put that to you, you denied it. Moreover you told us that because the airport already has planning permission to increase movements to that level, the environmental consequences were already approved. We disagree with your position on both these matters.

We oppose the establishment of the proposed CAS because the environmental impact has not been correctly stated or consulted.

We have referred this issue to the CAA business managers.

ANALYSIS OF THE PROPOSAL BY PARAGRAPH HEADING AND NUMBER

Introduction

In paragraph 1.1.2 you say that *"The controlled airspace is needed to permit an increase in passenger aircraft"*. We have shown that safety can be managed by means other than CAS particularly if passenger aircraft are routed in a manner to minimise interaction with other traffic. You have not given these options due and balanced consideration

The proposed increase in passenger aircraft will increase noise and environmental impact over the whole area covered by the proposed airspace contrary to the statement in the environmental section at 11.1.4 (see our later comments for a full explanation)

There is no evidence presented to support the contention that passenger flights will actually increase; see section 2.2.11 below for evidence from us that it will not.

About London Southend Airport

In paragraph 2.2.11 you say that: *“The growth in passenger flights over the last 18 months is significant and this is set to continue”*. easyJet moved some existing routes to Southend from Stansted and it was reported in The Telegraph on 15 June that “EasyJet had reduced capacity at Stansted over the last 2-3 years in favour of Southend, which had a more competitive pricing structure”. However the ownership of Stansted has now passed from BAA to Manchester Airports Group (MAG) which has a much more competitive pricing structure than the previous owner. Also on 13 June, Stansted airport announced “a new long-term growth framework deal with easyJet to allow the airline to more than double its passenger numbers at Stansted from a current 2.8 million passengers to six million passengers a year over the next five years”. Paul Simmons, UK Director for easyJet, was quoted as saying that “We are pleased to have reached a new deal with the new owners of Stansted which gives us the ability to grow at the London airport. We look forward to working with MAG over the coming months and years.” So whilst Southend may have been useful to easyJet in applying pressure on Stansted charging there is now evidence that the situation has changed. There is documentary evidence of a new easyJet commitment to Stansted. You have not provided any evidence that Southend traffic will grow so we do not accept your proposition.

We oppose the establishment of the proposed CAS because the business case on which it is based is invalid.

In paragraph 2.3.1 you refer to: *“... substantial growth rising to a total of 8086 Air Transport Movements in 2012”*. Previously there were virtually no air transport movements at Southend so the addition of a modest number of movements can be said to be a substantial change but in absolute terms the traffic level is quite small for a public airport. The 8086 movements amount to 11 take-offs and 11 landings per day which should be quite manageable without Class D CAS. The total movements quoted of 27,715 relate to GA traffic and that is not relevant to the CAS issue.

We oppose the establishment of the proposed CAS because present traffic levels do not justify it and traffic growth predictions have no sound business basis.

Air Traffic Management

The overview of air traffic in the Southend area presented in paragraph 3.1 fails to note the GA transit traffic and the importance of access from the body of England to the South-East and to the Continent. It does not take this into consideration in its later analysis.

In paragraph 3.1.7 you say that: *“The complexity of the existing ATS routes and density of air traffic already operating at the lower levels of the LTMA means that entry into the LTMA by departing CAT flights cannot be immediately assumed and arriving CAT flights must descend below the LTMA much earlier than the optimum.”*

This is a fundamental issue that we would have expected you to resolve before committing to airport development but you appear to accept it as immutable. This suggests that your business plan assumes that other airspace users will be moved out of the airspace to make way for your operation but it will come as no surprise that we do not accept that.

Last year you told us that CAT flights would normally be held on the ground until they had a clearance to enter CAS and subsequently easyJet told us there had been no safety issues. Southend CAT flights should use continuous climbs and descents and if traffic density in the LTMA is too great for this the routings of other traffic should be adjusted if need be by reducing traffic levels at other airports. If this balance cannot be achieved then Southend airport should

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manage its operation so as to co-exist with the existing airspace users. They cannot co-exist if Class D airspace is established because contrary to your statements, most would be excluded.

We oppose the establishment of the proposed CAS because your solution to a conflict with LTC about access is to exclude other airspace users from a large area that is vital to their activities

In paragraph 3.2.5 you say that: *“controller co-ordination workload can be complex, in some circumstances requiring co-ordination with more than one sector for a single flight”*

ATC management is a complex subject and we would expect procedures to be in place to manage that safely. It does not of itself call for a change in airspace. Other sectors are at least as complex. If aircraft were held on the ground until they had a clearance, this issue would be solved.

We oppose the establishment of the proposed CAS because you are using irrelevant arguments to support it.

In paragraph 3.2.5 you say that: *“all conflict between LSA departures and other known or observed traffic operating below the LTMA must be resolved before they are transferred to LTC”*.

This reads as if an unworkable procedure has been put in place in order to justify an airspace change but it is undoubtedly dangerous. Keeping an aircraft in Class G airspace in a conflict situation solely because of an agreement with LTC is outrageous. If you are doing what this paragraph says you are doing then your CAT operations are unsafe and should cease immediately until this has been resolved.

CAT aircraft should be held on the ground until a LTC clearance is issued which would enable any conflicts to be resolved in complete safety. You previously told us you would normally do that. Clearing a CAT aircraft to take off with no onward clearance is less safe and could be regarded as cavalier. If there is a conflict with another aircraft once it is in Class G airspace, the quickest and best resolution is to continue the climb into the London TMA and a procedure for achieving this must be established. It should and must be resolved by agreement with LTC.

We oppose the establishment of the proposed CAS because you have established an unsafe practice and are using that to support your proposal.

3.2.6: *“A system of Preferred Departure Routes is published ... are not assessed for obstacle clearance and do not incorporate the airport's Noise Abatement Procedures”*.

We found it astonishing that you should have published departure routes that do not comply with your own procedures! Even more astonishing that you infer that the solution is to establish controlled airspace. If this is an issue then it should be dealt with immediately. It has nothing whatever to do with the need for controlled airspace or otherwise.

We oppose the establishment of the proposed CAS because the issue of preferred departure routes is irrelevant to it.

3.3.3: *“Area Navigation (RNAV) Global Navigation Satellite System (GNSS) IAPs ... will be introduced in Spring 2014”*.

RNAV procedures should overtake the old beacon based procedures and require less airspace for CAT operations but the proposal would establish controlled airspace to cover both sets of procedures! Whilst CAP725 Appendix A para 3 requires the airspace structure to fully contain flight activity in both radar and non-radar environments, it does not require it to contain all procedures. An RNAV approach and an identical radar vectored approach would satisfy those

criteria. So for example, NDB based procedures used by GA for training do not need to be contained within CAS. We understand that Stapleford Flight Centre, a major user of these procedures, has told you they do not require the protection of CAS.

Southend needs to embrace today's technology for CAT aircraft and those which cannot use RNAV procedures should go elsewhere in accordance with the "best equipped, best served" principle. We do not support the establishment of any type of airspace to enclose procedures for training or any purpose other than for public transport.

We oppose the establishment of the proposed CAS because it is designed to encompass both RNAV and legacy procedures which is not a requirement of CAP 725.

3.4.3: *"Whilst some (GA) pilots will elect to ask for a radar service when operating beneath the LTMA, by no means all of them do so"*.

It is very easy to make an unquantified and glib statement like this but it does you no credit. Southend should quantify the issue so we can all see what "by no means all of them" actually means. Is it 2 aircraft or 200? Is this raising an issue that is real or imaginary? Or is it just marketing? You should provide auditable data on the volume of traffic requesting a service and traffic which could do so but does not. Moreover, this data should differentiate between traffic which results in interaction with CAS and traffic which does not. Other CAS sponsors compile this data to fulfil their obligations and so should Southend.

Without data to support it this statement and the arguments that flow from it are meaningless and we object most strongly.

We oppose the establishment of the proposed CAS because access to it will be impossible for the majority of other airspace users.

3.4.5: *"separation minima can be reduced to 3NM laterally or 1000ft vertically only if the other traffic has been identified and its level information verified and its intentions have been co-ordinated against the subject traffic, which is the situation that will prevail within the proposed Class D airspace that is the subject of this consultation"*.

It is quite difficult to understand what this means. Clearly Southend ATC has to comply with the separation rules for Class G airspace. If Class D airspace was established there would be no standard separation requirement between IFR and VFR traffic.

The separation standard is 500ft with CAA permission.

We oppose the establishment of the proposed CAS because it is not necessary for separation purposes.

3.4.9: *"A publicity campaign in the aviation press by LSA to encourage aircraft operating below the LTMA in the vicinity of LSA to communicate with LSA and participate in the ATS available has been met with some limited success"*

A disingenuous statement! This was an LAA initiative which Southend and easyJet both said had been successful; details are in our initial paragraph headed "Airspace Safety". There is much more that could be done to manage CAT safety in Class G airspace but you seem to have focussed on obtaining controlled airspace and perhaps decided not to pursue other areas which might dilute your application. You could for example:

- Demand right of access to and from the LTMA and use legal process to obtain
- Hold aircraft on the ground until a clearance is available to enter CAS directly.

- Specify high flap retraction and acceleration altitudes to minimise track miles outside CAS.
- Demand that CAT aircraft are not ejected from CAS until ready
- Raise an MOR every time that happens.
- Be aggressive in reducing the track distance flown in Class G
- Apply for a temporary RMZ to protect these routes.
- Reduce the speed of inbound traffic early to reduce turn radius (210 kts clean in the pattern is much too fast and inappropriate in Class G).
- Provide a radar service to other airspace users throughout daylight hours to encourage participation.
- Employ sufficient controllers to deliver this service.
- If that is very successful provide and man a LARS frequency.
- Provide other value added services to GA aircraft such as activation and closure of 3rd party flight plans.
- Advertise the ATC service aggressively (or even at all) so that Southend service is as well known and used as Farnborough radar
- Invite GA to get to know the airport through free landing events.
- Be in every magazine and on every website.

The LAA initiative met with substantial success but Southend does not appear to have done anything proactive to engage with the wider GA community to deliver operational efficiency and safety. Before consideration of any Class D airspace Southend should initiate a programme of such safety measures and measure their effectiveness. Otherwise there is no safety analysis of the “do nothing” option and the application for CAS should be withdrawn forthwith.

We oppose the establishment of the proposed CAS because has ignored safety initiatives by the GA community and failed to take measures which would improve safety immediately and without the need to establish CAS.

3.5.2: “The need for CAT flights to be given extended routings or delayed to avoid other airspace activity has increased over the whole of the service area, whilst the need to re-route airline traffic around other traffic, when in the critical stages of flight immediately after take-off or prior to landing, has also increased.”

Of course the need has increased because previously there was no CAT traffic and now there is a modest amount. An increase from a very low base does not mean that anything needs to be done. An increase could be from 1 event a year to 2! Southend must provide verifiable data to support and quantify this statement otherwise it must be dismissed. Moreover this statement contradicts the previous statements about lack of conflicts and the lack of any safety issues reported.

Moreover, if this is a real issue that needs to be addressed it should first be dealt with through measures such as we list against para 3.4.9. If those do not fully address the issues an RMZ would and that should be included in the decision process.

We oppose the establishment of the proposed CAS because the Sponsor has produced no data to supports its contention that substantial disruption is caused by other airspace users.

3.5.4: “... the CAA published a Policy Statement regarding flight outside controlled airspace. ... wherever possible, public transport flights should be conducted inside controlled airspace”.

easyJet decided to move aircraft to Southend and operate its existing route sectors outside controlled airspace, for commercial reasons when there is already capacity at airports inside controlled airspace so it “is possible” to comply with this policy . The CAA policy should not be read as meaning that where CAT aircraft fly, CAS should be established. If easyJet wishes to

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comply with the CAA policy it can do so tomorrow; the fact that it does not do so negates the statement that CAS must be established at Southend.

We oppose the establishment of the proposed CAS because easyJet has chosen to operate outside controlled airspace for commercial reasons and which is not a justification for establishing CAS.

3.6.1: "Growth of has led to a significant increase in the requirement to integrate such flights within the LTMA "

Of course! One would expect an increase in traffic to result in an increase in the requirement to integrate. That is why ATC is there! The relationships with LTC should be established and audited. If the present ATC unit feels it is unable to provide integration of flights the airport owner should contract ATC services to a provider which can.

We oppose the establishment of the proposed CAS because the integration of flights is a routine activity for ANSPs and is not a justification for the establishment of CAS.

3.6.2: "wherever possible, public transport flights should be conducted within controlled airspace"

As in our response to 3.5.4, the CAA policy can be met by easyJet moving its flights elsewhere immediately. It has already signed a contract with Stansted to increase flights there and there is available capacity. Moving some flights to an airport with no CAS and then demanding it be established for safety reasons would appear to be contrary to the CAA policy! If Southend intends to implement the policy expressed in this statement it should require easyJet to move its flights back to Stansted with immediate effect.

We oppose the establishment of the proposed CAS because easyJet has chosen to operate outside controlled airspace for commercial reasons and which is not a justification for establishing CAS.

3.6.3 "With the increased utilisation of LSA by CAT operators it is now appropriate to re-introduce controlled airspace in line with the CAA Policy statement".

This does not follow. Clearly CAT operators could move elsewhere if the airport is judged unsafe and indeed must do so. If the airport is judged safe then CAS is not necessarily required. If CAS is required to allow traffic volumes to increase, an option is to restrict that volume and the consultation should include that as an option.

In relation to the statement that increased utilisation demands controlled airspace to maintain safety, we would draw your attention to the level of safety you currently provide using Class G airspace. Presently each individual passenger is exposed to a certain level of risk when using Southend flights. You and easyJet seem to have judged that this risk is acceptable. It is true that as utilisation increases the total risk to your business and to that of easyJet would increase but the risk exposure of each individual passenger would remain the same. Therefore from a passenger viewpoint, controlled airspace is not needed to maintain the present levels of safety with an increase in passenger aircraft numbers.

The CAS policy does not require the establishment of controlled airspace at any airport a CAT operator happens to use but places an obligation on them to plan to operate within controlled airspace where possible. This is not a justification for CAS so we reject it.

We oppose the establishment of the proposed CAS because this is a distortion of the CAS policy.

The Airspace Change Proposal

4.2.2 The basic principles:

- *“The volume of controlled airspace shall be the minimum necessary”*

It is quite clear that the volume of the proposed airspace is significantly larger than that needed for the arrival and departure of CAT flights. Moreover there is a range of options available using Class G airspace which would result in the volume of controlled airspace being reduced to zero. You have not given these any serious consideration so you have failed to comply with this principle.

- *“The classification shall be selected to permit safe access to as many classes of airspace user as possible”*

A large proportion of airspace users cannot access Class D airspace so you should have considered the options available in Class G airspace.

- *“The Flexible Use of Airspace (FUA) concept should be considered at every opportunity”*

We could find no material mention of this principle anywhere in the document. How do you propose to consider FUA?

We oppose the establishment of the proposed CAS because the design does not accord with the principles the sponsor has set out.

Existing Operational Constraints And Concerns

5.1.5 *“...separation minima frequently delays the onward clearance of departing aircraft into the controlled airspace above”.*

We have found no evidence of frequent delays and last year you told us you would normally hold aircraft on the ground until they had a clearance to enter controlled airspace. easyJet confirmed to us that was working well. If airborne clearance delays really are “frequent” then Southend is failing in its duty to provide a safe operation for its passengers.

Please provide us with data on airborne clearance delays related to separation minima in order that we may provide you with a substantive response to this point. We would expect to know the number and proportion of such delays and their length.

We oppose the establishment of the proposed CAS because “frequent delays” to onward clearances must be resolved immediately by the sponsor and LTC.

5.1.7 *“... an SSR position symbol does not indicate ... the identity or intentions of the aircraft nor is any altitude information validated as being accurate.”*

Given that the majority of GA aircraft in the area communicate with Southend ATC, information of identity is immediately available to the controller from Mode S (provided the airport has installed it) and intentions and validation is available by simple request. Clearly this information is available today from voluntary communication which could be formalised through an RMZ if that was proven necessary. Class D airspace is not required.

We oppose the establishment of the proposed CAS because it is not necessary to identify aircraft which are using a transponder. A TMZ has not been adequately considered as an alternative option.

5.1.8 *“Similarly, simple radio communication does not reduce the separation minima that the controller must apply unless the aircraft is formally identified and co-ordinated in relation to the other traffic by the controller.”*

Astonishing! Identification and coordination of traffic is what controllers are meant to do for a living. The classification of the airspace does not change the need for controller identification action to achieve separation standards. It applies in all airspace classifications.

We oppose the establishment of the proposed CAS because an RMZ has not been adequately considered.

5.2 The issue of the provision of a hold is clearly complex. However in 5.2.2 you argue that the hold overhead the airport is unsuitable because it blocks departures but your airspace design retains that hold and adds substantial airspace solely to provide protection for it. Moreover you appear to have another commercial disagreement, this time with London City Airport concerning the SPEAR hold. It would seem logical for both airports to share a hold much as Stansted and Luton do at LOREL; you should pursue that.

We oppose the establishment of the proposed CAS to protect a hold in the Southend overhead because you have stated that it needs to be moved away from the airport.

5.3 This is a complex paragraph saying that you have to share the arrival route with London City, Biggin Hill and Rochester and this is not optimum. Moreover you discuss the early descent below the existing CAS at DETLING. As we have said before, Southend aircraft should remain in the LTMA to the appropriate point of descent for final approach and you need to demand this from LTC. It would resolve all these issues and remove the majority of the requirement for additional CAS

We oppose the establishment of the proposed CAS because the complexity is generated by lack of agreement between the sponsor and LTC

5.4 You explain that London City departures get in the way of Southend departures and you have to coordinate. But that is what ATC is there for. Moreover this issue does not seem to drive any particular part of the proposed airspace so we believe it is irrelevant.

We oppose the establishment of the proposed CAS because a need for coordination is not a valid reason to establish it.

5.5 The paragraph on Danger Aarea D138 similarly explains a constraint but does not seem to link to a CAS requirement.

5.6 The wind farm to the north-east of Southend is cited as a reason for additional controlled airspace which you say is essential for radar deconfliction. Far from being “a small increase” this extends an already long proposed CTR to be even longer. However, today you manage to operate the airspace satisfactorily demonstrating that CAS is not required in this area.

We oppose the establishment of the proposed CAS because it is unnecessarily large for its intended purpose and the wind farm issue is irrelevant.

New Operational Considerations

6.1 London Airspace Management Programme (LAMP)

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You say that you considered delaying this airspace change to align with LAMP but have decided not to. You do not explain the consequences of this. If another airspace change would be required as a result of LAMP then presumably this is because it would require less CAS. We need to know this and if it would change the design we must be consulted.

Airspace Development Process

7. The paragraph explains that the majority of aircraft will be able to follow RNAV procedures so you do not need to develop non-RNAV procedures. But you have designed the airspace to be sufficient to also enclose all the existing old-fashioned procedures and for all aircraft speeds including the fastest and largest in the World. CAP725 Appendix A does not require this and any consideration should not extend beyond the requirement to accommodate existing CAT aircraft.

We oppose the establishment of the proposed CAS because it is designed to accommodate both RNAV and legacy procedures.

Design Proposal For Controlled Airspace

You propose to establish Class D airspace and explain how this will operate.

8.2.3 ***“Class D airspace is not an “exclusion zone” to VFR or IFR GA and S&R operations. However, it is acknowledged that a number of GA and S&R pilots prefer not to operate in controlled airspace, notwithstanding that they could do so if desired. LSA considers that the proposed airspace configuration detailed in this Section provides a suitable operating environment for both those pilots who are happy to operate in a known and managed environment and those who prefer to remain outside controlled airspace.”***

We disagree most strongly. There are a number of reasons why GA and S&RA aircraft are not able to fly in Controlled airspace:

Nature of the Operation: Many training tasks require freedom to manoeuvre and a quiet cockpit environment and without that they become impossible. Such tasks are incompatible with the requirements of controlled airspace. Similarly unpowered aircraft have to follow the energy in the atmosphere; they cannot maintain a level and need to change direction and climb to use that energy which is their motive power. They cannot comply with the requirements of Class D airspace. In addition aircraft which have no fixed structure generally have no means of communication. These aircraft are normally able to operate in controlled airspace under normal arrangements.

Number of Aircraft: In the UK there are some 15,500 light aircraft and microlights, 2,200 gliders, 7000 paragliders and paramotors. The gliders and paramotors cannot usually obtain or accept a clearance because most have no radio and none can maintain a cleared altitude or track. Of the 15,500 light aircraft and microlights, 2,300 have no radio so would not normally be offered a clearance. Out of the 24,700 S&RA aircraft, 11,500 could not cross the proposed controlled airspace. You make no attempt to quantify how this 46% of S&RA aircraft would be affected by the change, dismissing it in 2 sentences and blaming the matter on the pilots. You have also argued that this 46% of aircraft do not tend to operate in the Southend area anyway but you have produced no evidence to support that. This is unacceptable.

Definition of VFR: Presently the definition of VFR below 3000ft in Class D airspace requires aircraft to be clear of cloud and in sight of the surface. Under Standard Rules of the Air which come into force in December 2014 that changes to 1000ft and 1500m clear of cloud. So, for example, with significant cloud at 2000ft, VFR aircraft will have to fly below 1000ft.

You will appreciate the impact of this rule in typical UK weather and it will stop a significant number of aircraft using the proposed airspace. You should have assessed the impact of your airspace using the regulations which we know will be in force but you have ignored this. We put this to you at a meeting but you replied that as this change will affect all CAS, you do not need to take it in to account. We do not agree; the impact of the VFR rules as they would apply in this airspace must be analysed and taken into account (AP725 Appendix A para 7b refers).

We have referred this to the CAA business managers.

Overall Volume of Demand for the Airspace: You have made no attempt to measure the number of VFR aircraft using the proposed airspace today so you cannot quantify the impact of your proposal or set out the consequences for the adjacent airspace and its users. It is our belief that because of volume and variety of demand for this airspace, it will be extremely difficult to satisfy it with clearances but we do not have the data needed to quantify this; only you can provide that through traffic analysis.

This is unacceptable and needs to be done before the impact of the proposed airspace can be assessed by you or us (or indeed by the CAA).

We oppose the establishment of the proposed CAS because you have made no attempt to quantify the impact of the proposed CAS on other airspace users

The Control Zone (CTR)

8.3 The CTR would extend from the surface to 3500ft amsl, 10 nm wide and 22.75 nm long. Extending from Thurrock to the North Sea this would completely block overland access between those points for gliders and many other aircraft. In a large proportion of weather conditions it would block VFR access to all aircraft as SVFR clearances are unlikely to be available because of the separation standards required. These limitations would be removed if the airspace was established as a Radio Mandatory Zone (RMZ) but that option is dismissed in Annex A without substantial consideration. An RMZ is intended to be the first stage of regulated airspace that would allow all airspace users to operate whilst providing an ATC unit with sufficient traffic information to manage CAT flights more easily.

The proposed CTR should be replaced by a much smaller Class G RMZ.

CTA 1

8.4 This shoulder of CTA to the north is designed to protect a hold over the airport for use by local IFR training aircraft! CAT aircraft would have another hold out over the sea. The main user of the hold is Stapleford Flight Centre and they do not want controlled airspace. Note that it is not legally possible to obtain a SVFR clearance in a CTA so full VFR minima of 1000ft and 1500m clear of cloud would be required otherwise it would become a VFR exclusion zone.

We oppose the establishment of CTA 1 which should remain as Class G

CTA 2

8.5 This shoulder of CTA to the south protects radar circuits but the D138 danger area precludes those for most of the time. CAT aircraft should not be flying downwind at 2000ft but should be doing a continuous descent approach at 300ft per mile from touchdown. They should only reach 3000ft at 10nm on final approach!

We oppose the establishment of CTA 2 which should remain Class G

CTA 3

8.6 CTA 3 is a substantial issue for all of GA. Extending from 2500ft towards Stapleford and the Stansted CTR blocking the only area of open FIR used for training, aerobatics and general flying as well as being a busy transit lane. You say that this airspace has to be used for departures and arrivals so you want GA moved aside. The VFR rules in this CTA (SVFR is not allowed by law) and the need for GA to have freedom of manoeuvre would effectively close it to us. Clearly, CAT traffic could climb into the London TMA and not use this airspace but you say you have been unable to reach agreement with NATS. It appears that this is a commercial territorial dispute between businesses which is an unacceptable basis for the design of airspace procedures.

We oppose the establishment of CTA 3 which should remain Class G

CTA 4

8.7 CTA 4 extends from 2500 ft as far south as Rochester and Sittingbourne and is intended to enclose departures and arrivals. No Jet aircraft should be that low down that far from the airport so this is yet another result of the failure to agree airspace sharing with NATS about access to the LTMA. Again this is an important area for all GA operations and should not be changed to CAS which would exclude most of our operations. The argument with NATS should be resolved and this airspace left Class G.

We oppose the establishment of CTA 4 which should remain Class G

CTA 5

8.8 CTA 5 is above the CTR to join it to the LTMA above. For the same reasons that the CTR does not need to be Class D, so this should remain Class G too.

We oppose the establishment of CTA 5 which should remain Class G

CTA 6

8.9 CTA 6 is a large area of CAS extending to just south of Harwich. It is there to contain a hold at TRIPO which we think should not be there. It should be much higher and any CAS should be entirely over the sea. Again, an agreement must be reached with NATS. We oppose the establishment of CTA 6.

CTA 7

8.10 CTA 7 is over the Isle of Sheppey with a base of 3500ft. It is a very long distance from Southend airport and again is there because NATS have not agreed to proper access to the LTMA.

We oppose the establishment of CTA 7 which should remain Class G

CTA 8

8.11 CTA 8 is a large area to the south of danger area D138 for use when it is not active. As this is entirely over the sea and overlaps the danger area we do not object to it but cannot see what purpose it would serve if CAT traffic was routed properly and in accordance with the FAS.

We oppose the establishment of CTA 8 which should remain Class G

Impact On Airspace Users

10. Section 10 says it sets out the impact on the airspace users but it contains information which is substantially incorrect and is misleading.

10.2 Other LSA operators will not be able to utilise VFR flight in the CTR in many previously acceptable weather conditions and the number of aircraft that would be given a SVFR clearance will be limited by the need to apply standard separation. For example, with one aircraft in the circuit on a SVFR clearance because of cloud at 1900 ft, no other aircraft would be able to take-off or land. Standard separation would be required. The total number of aircraft that could be allowed in the CTR on SVFR clearances would be limited by separation standards and controller availability. As SVFR is not permitted in CTAs, the VFR rules would exclude aircraft from large parts of CTA 2 and 3 and parts of CTA 3 and 4 in common cloud conditions.

You must explain all these issues and advise those effected; it appears that what is presently written in this section is substantially incorrect and is misleading.

10.3 For similar reasons and because of the requirement for training flights to have freedom of manoeuvre, flying training would be severely curtailed by Class D airspace and would almost certainly become untenable as a business. The other operations covered by this paragraph would be severely restricted, notwithstanding the statements about “aiming to provide” and “to the maximum extent possible”. We all know that this means that access will be very difficult indeed and the businesses will be compromised. This is unacceptable and we oppose the establishment of the CTR and CTA because of it.

10.4 This paragraph is written to suggest that the Rochester airport operation will somehow be improved by the establishment of the CTR/CTA. This is nonsense and to protect the very important GA airfield at Rochester we oppose the establishment of the CTA/CTR.

10.5 It is certainly an understatement that the microlight operation at Stoke would not welcome the CTR/CTA but we do not agree with you that the airspace would not unduly curtail operations. It will change the nature of this valuable site completely and is likely to damage its business significantly.

10.6 promises that all will be well and other airspace users will be able to continue much as they do today but you know that is not true. The constraints of clearances and the change to VFR regulations in Class D airspace together with the need for SVFR separation will seriously damage access to this important area; even that part which is many miles from Southend and which would normally have no connection with you.

10.8 Whilst it is comforting to read that you have eased the issue of choke points, in fact you have moved from an earlier stance of denying VFR access for those aircraft which are unable to fly in the CTR/CTA to a point where access would be possible but be severely restricted and dangerous. The prospect of most of the VFR traffic between the body of the UK and the south-east and continent passing through a narrow gap in a largely built up area is horrifying. The risk of collision and airspace infringement would be increased. This has not been resolved satisfactorily so we oppose the establishment of the CTA/CTR in this area.

In response to questions you explained that you are able to accommodate the operation of various airfields and airspace users through LOA. From our contact with such groups it is clear that they are discussing LOA with you as a fallback in the event that the CAS is approved. It does not indicate that they agree or accept the proposal or that they agree that its impact is acceptable to them.

Impact On Airspace Users – GAA Benchmarking

The GAA has previously used a benchmark for comparing the efficiency of use of proposed airspace designs. For single airport runways we have compared airspace against that used by Gatwick. We are given to understand that post-RNAV implementation the requirement for CAS at Gatwick is likely to reduce. Our assessment of the airspace is:

Airport	CTR size km ²	CTA km ²	FW ATM (x1000)	CTR Efficiency km ² /1000 ATM	CTA Efficiency km ² /1000 ATM
Gatwick	463	920	240	1.93	3.8
Southend	725	1650	7.2	101	229

We oppose the establishment of the proposed CTA and CTR because in the crowded airspace of south-east England the Southend proposal is unreasonably large and inappropriate for the volume of traffic.

Environmental Considerations

11.1.4 Astonishingly, you claim that the introduction of the airspace will provide environmental benefits with reductions in noise impact. This is completely false and misleading and should be a reason for the CAA to reject the consultation and the application

In the introduction at para 1.1.2 you say that *“The controlled airspace is needed to permit an increase in passenger aircraft”*. In para 2.3.2 you list the present number of ATM as 8,086 and in para 2.3.6 you say that this traffic will grow to 26,400 ATM by 2020. So the purpose of the airspace is to facilitate an increase the number of jet movements operating beneath the base of the present LTMA by 326%. This will have a major environmental impact on those living under the proposed airspace. So we contend that the environmental statements are false and misleading.

Meanwhile the Future Airspace Strategy, which is the government’s flagship programme, seeks to:

“deliver significant benefits, including fuel savings for airlines which will also mean fewer CO2 emissions, and less noise overall for people living below. The net effect will be less noise – aircraft will climb higher, more quickly on departure and stay higher for longer on arrival.”

This reduction in overall environmental impact delivered by the FAS would enable airline operations to expand to meet customer demand but your proposal would see jet aircraft flying for quite long distances underneath the existing London controlled airspace negating this whole proposition. Far from getting higher, Southend’s aircraft will be staying low and there would be many more of them. From the viewpoint of the population, the base of controlled airspace over their homes will be lowered and filled with aircraft. The impact of this proposal on GA and S&RA will be to force their aircraft fly even lower and concentrate their routings into certain areas and we would not want to do that.

Perhaps most importantly for the UK, this proposal would damage the sustainability of its commercial aviation industry and limit growth which is the opposite of what the substantial investment in the FAS seeks to achieve.

We oppose the establishment of the proposed CAS because the environmental impact statements are misleading.

We have referred this issue to the CAA business managers.

Summary

Although you say that:

12.5 *“LSA has taken a balanced approach to the views of local airspace users, both based on and off the airport, and local environmental interested parties in the development of this proposal. In particular, the proposed airspace classification will facilitate the continued operation of GA and S&R airspace activities in their traditional areas of operation and with the minimum of operational impact on their activities”.*

And that

12.6 *“LSA believes there are no quantifiable adverse environmental impacts arising from the proposed introduction of controlled airspace. The potential for improved flight profiles to be realised for CAT flights inbound to or outbound from LSA will result in environmental benefit”.*

We do not agree with either of these summary statements; we believe them both to be false. You should be well aware that other airspace users would be seriously affected by this controlled airspace and that those who rely on this area for their business will be unable to do so. As to the environmental impact on residents, the increase of 325% in low level jet overflight which would be facilitated by the proposed airspace would be significant.

Appendix E

In E3 you consider RMZ and TMZ options but your reason for dismissing them is essentially because they are not CAS. Clearly, the characteristics of RMZ and TMZ are different to Class D airspace but they need to be considered in relation to the operational situation in which they might be applied and in the light of the other mitigating measures that you could apply in Class G airspace (see our comments on para 3.4.9). By just listing the differences you have not dealt with this matter at all.

We oppose the proposal to establish Class D airspace because you have not properly considered the available options.

CONCLUSION

The primary concern of the GAA must be for the impact the proposed airspace would have on Sports and Recreation Aviation. Notwithstanding the consultation statements to the effect that this airspace would remain accessible and would have minimal impact on adjacent airfields and GA operators, this is just not credible. The impact of this volume of Class D airspace would marginalize all the adjacent airfields and destroy their activities. Gliding activities in the area and flights between the south-east and central England would cease. Gliding competitions and competition training would become impracticable. Flying training organisations would be denied airspace with the freedom to operate and would lose business and perhaps close. Transit GA traffic would be funnelled through a single narrow choke point increasing the risk to aircraft and of airspace infringement. All this would be lost to enable a small number of commercial flights to operate from a cheaper base.

The concept of flying CAT jet aircraft in and out for long distances beneath the base of the existing LTMA would subvert the vision of the Future Airspace Strategy by increasing environmental impact and seriously damaging the future sustainability of both the commercial and GA aviation sectors.

The size of the proposed controlled airspace is much greater than that at other single runway airports with many times the traffic. We object to the size of the proposed CAS because it would

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exclude or constrain many other airspace users and would seriously damage businesses and the sector as a whole.

The proposal to establish controlled airspace is based on a business model of significant growth which is not substantiated in any way and which must now be challenged by the aggressive marketing strategy adopted by the new owner of Stansted and their agreement with easyJet. We object to the basis on which the proposal is founded because the business model is fundamentally flawed and does not support the need for controlled airspace in the near term.

The LAA took an initiative to improve airspace safety in the Southend area and although it had been reported to work well, you have belittled its success and taken none of the actions available to you that could make the Class G airspace safer and more efficient. We object to the establishment of controlled airspace because you have failed to implement measures which would meet most of your objectives with the existing Class G airspace.

You argue that the airspace will not have an adverse environmental impact although its purpose is to increase low level jet traffic by 325%. We object to the proposal because the environmental statements are false and misleading.

You state that you have been unable to secure agreement with LTC for entry and exit for your traffic from the LTMA at points suited to Southend Airport procedures so you have designed the large area of CAS beneath the TMA. We object to the proposal because this commercial dispute between yourselves and LTC must be resolved.

You cite the CAA policy requiring CAT flights to be conducted inside CAS where possible as a reason for establishing CAS at Southend. We object to the proposal because easyJet are operating in Class G airspace voluntarily having moved their operation from a Class D airport for commercial reasons. The policy does not propose that Class D airspace should be established where AOC holders choose to operate outside existing controlled airspace.

RECOMMENDATION

We consider that this proposal to establish controlled airspace has no merit and should be abandoned.

We would be grateful if you would acknowledge receipt of this document.

Yours Sincerely

John Brady

For the General Aviation Alliance