

SOUTHEND BIDS FOR LEBENSRAUM

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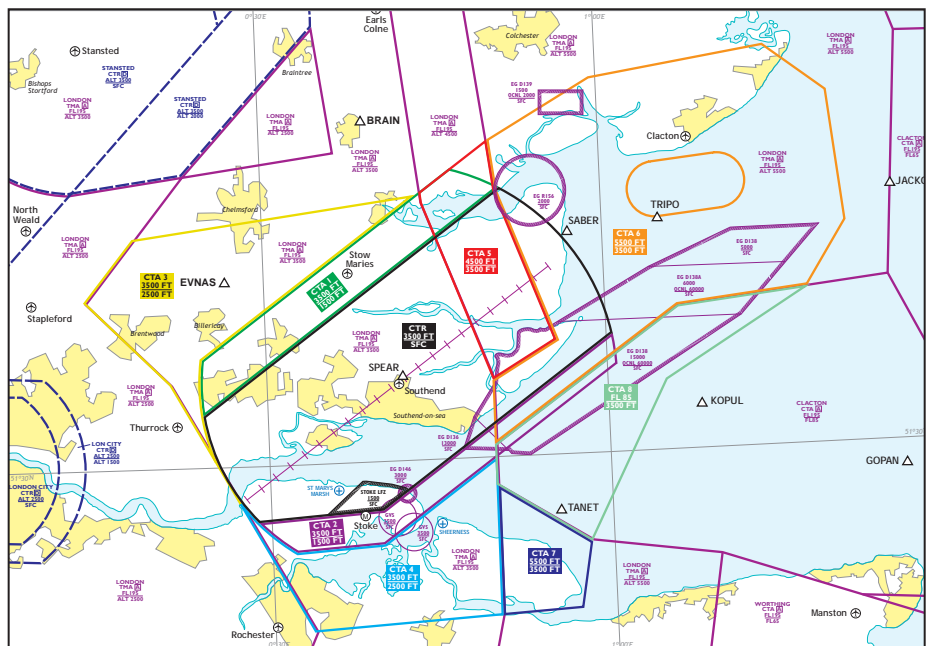


This year and last we asked you to help the easyJet traffic operating through Class G airspace into Southend by calling Southend ATC if you were flying anywhere near them and you responded magnificently. Earlier this year easyJet told us that this had been a good news story and that there had been no safety reports involving conflict with GA and the procedures were working well. It would seem that the awareness campaign has been very successful and we were contributing to the safe operation at Southend.

But now Southend has published an Airspace Change Proposal to establish a vast expanse of controlled airspace which would have a significant impact on non-commercial aviation. The consultation document says that the *publicity campaign has been met with some limited success* – a slightly different interpretation of the *very successful* previously reported!

We would expect aircraft using Southend to make the maximum use of the existing controlled airspace by not taking off until they had a clearance to climb directly into controlled airspace and not descending out of controlled airspace until they absolutely had to. But the proposal appears to suggest that Southend wants to own a large slice of UK airspace underneath the existing London TMA where its aircraft will fly at low levels – that at a time when huge resources are being expended on the Future Airspace Strategy to implement continuous climbs and descents as being the prime means to reduce fuel consumption, emissions and noise. This design would appear to go completely against the vision of the FAS.

You can see the shape of the airspace on the chart – sorry it is not overlaid on a normal 500 mil chart but we were unable to obtain one. You can find the consultation document on the Southend website at tinyurl.com/SouthendACP. Having only just received the proposal we have not had time to analyse it properly but below are some approximate figures for the scale of the proposal compared to equivalent figures for London Gatwick, both single runway airports. The Air Transport Movement (ATM) figures are the total for 2012 and the dimensions are approximate from a quick look. We will publish accurate figures when we have reviewed the proposal.



Southend could take a significant slice of UK airspace...

Airport	CTR size (sq.km)	CTA (sq.km)	FW ATM (1000)	CTR Efficiency (sq.km)/1000 ATM	CTA Efficiency (sq.km)/1000 ATM
Gatwick	463	920	240	1.93	3.8
Southend	725	1210	7.2	100.7	168.0

This is an extraordinary difference in efficiency of airspace use: The Southend CTR would be some 50% larger than Gatwick and whereas Gatwick uses only 1.93sq.km of controlled airspace for its CTR for each 1,000 movements, Southend expects to use 100.7sq.km. Hence the title of this piece!

The comfort given in the consultation that GA aircraft will be able to obtain a crossing of CAS on request is fanciful. With the change to UK Rules of Air resulting from EU regulation, VFR in Class D airspace will no longer allow you to fly clear of cloud and in sight of the surface when below 3,000ft so you will have to fly 10,00ft and 1,500m clear of cloud. That means in typical UK cloudbases you would not be

able to enter controlled airspace without flying unreasonably low. Whilst you can ask for a special VFR clearance, the ATC unit is obliged to provide standard separation between IFR and SVFR aircraft which is likely to make such clearances rare.

This is not just an issue for local aircraft; taken with the expected airspace demand from Farnborough and Southampton, the Southend bid has the potential to all but isolate the body of the UK from the south east counties and the continent.

The outcome of this consultation will be important to us all so if you are able to help with the substantial work we will need to do to defend on your behalf, please get in touch by offering your services at consultation@laa.uk.com. ■