

Directorate of Airspace Policy



Air Traffic Services Outside Controlled Airspace – Consultation Paper

AIR TRAFFIC SERVICES OUTSIDE CONTROLLED AIRSPACE – CONSULTATION PAPER

1 INTRODUCTION

This paper and associated documents are being sent to you as part of an ongoing review undertaken by the CAA into the provision of Air Traffic Services Outside Controlled Airspace (ATSOCAS); the unique set of services developed progressively to suit the comparatively large volumes of Class G airspace available in the UK. Over time, ATSOCAS has evolved and there is now a perception that it has become increasingly complicated in its application and may have diverged from its initial aims. Furthermore, in some cases, ATSOCAS providers are offering subtly different interpretations of types of service leading to potential confusion over where responsibilities fall between ATS providers and airspace users.

2 AIM

The aim of this paper is to initiate formal development of a Statement of User Requirement, which we can then progress into forming the foundation for any further refinement and development of ATSOCAS. The overall goal that we hope to achieve with the entire ATSOCAS Review process is to provide airspace users with an agreed and unambiguous ATS when operating in uncontrolled airspace whether under VFR or IFR.

3 SUMMARY OF ATSOCAS REVIEW TO DATE

- 3.1 Phase One of the ATSOCAS review entailed the analysis of all the military and civil high level documents pertaining to ATSOCAS. As is stated in the end of Phase One report, this service provision has evolved over time such that it now differs between agencies. The first part of this review was aimed at quantifying the disparity between service providers; this report was most comprehensive and highlighted a number of deficiencies. Indeed, it was circulated to the prime service providers (NATS and MoD) for comment and various aspects have already been addressed. Nevertheless, it was recommended that *“In order to resolve long-established, but somewhat outdated, preconceptions, it may be necessary to develop replacement services for RAS and RIS and dispense with the existing names and acronyms. A new ATSOCAS Scheme, based, primarily, on the users’ requirements, should be developed, simulated and tested under controlled conditions. This would have the advantage of delivering revised ATSOCAS that meet the needs of the aviation community and are within the ability of all service providers to deliver to a common standard”*. Furthermore it was stated that *“in order to prevent future divergence between policy documents, ATSOCAS should be governed by a single CAA-controlled policy document that provides the regulations, conditions, phraseology, pilot and controller responsibilities and guidance on service provision techniques. Deviation from ATSOCAS policy would only be authorized through the issue of a formal dispensation. Finally, the CAA will need to ensure that service providers do not modify the replacement services or provide them selectively due to commercial imperatives. There are existing mechanisms that could be utilized to achieve this provided an effective CAA-MOD regulatory regime was established”*. Working on the premise that there remains a requirement to provide ATS in uncontrolled airspace, there is a need to ensure a common, safe, efficient and deliverable ATSOCAS that aspires to meet user requirements.
- 3.2 It is worth emphasising that there is no set agenda in this review and any proposed changes to the current system will be considered. The review of a system that has evolved over many years is a significant task and it will obviously take some time to complete. Moreover, it is inevitable that various users will have differing requirements and it is only by following a full and open consultation process that we can assure the best possible level of satisfaction for all interested parties.

4 CONSULTATION PROCESS

- 4.1 At <http://www.caa.co.uk/default.aspx?categoryid=7&pagetype=68> you will find a comprehensive document detailing the work completed so far under Phase One. This document aims to highlight the specific discrepancies and to stimulate further debate. For example, it is apparent that differences of application of ATSOCAS between civil and military ATS providers exist and some units have a local, questionable, policy of not providing a RAS to traffic routing in uncontrolled airspace. It is essential that, at very least, an agreed, common policy for ATSOCAS provision be developed, allowing for military and civil agencies to provide a consistency of application to all airspace users.
- 4.2 However, in order to achieve this common policy we first need to produce a Statement of User Requirement. It is important that any changes to ATSOCAS are based on the actual requirements of the airspace users and not driven primarily by the service providers. Nevertheless, it is obvious that there will be a need to recognise any ATS provision limitations when developing ATSOCAS requirements and service providers will continue to be actively involved in this review.
- 4.3 We are now seeking your views on the format and provision of the future ATSOCAS. We may find that users are content with the current system; conversely, overwhelming opinion may wish a fresh start. At Annex A, is a brief questionnaire, which is aimed a stimulating thought on the subject; however, we would encourage you comment on all aspects of ATSOCAS and not just those listed. This consultation paper is being given the widest possible distribution in order to allow for all airspace users to voice their opinions and we would encourage organisations to consult widely with their members. Inevitably, due to the wide distribution we are aiming for, some organisations may receive duplicate copies of this document. In such circumstances, we would ask that any responses submitted indicate the route through which you are wishing to make your representation. Organisations such as AOPA, BALPA, PFA, etc are requested to distribute this paper amongst their members, coordinate a joint response, where possible, and indicate if they are willing to take part in future consultative working groups. Clearly, we would also welcome responses from individuals. The Review's work-to-date and this consultation paper are published on the CAA website at: <http://www.caa.co.uk/default.aspx?categoryid=7&pagetype=68>. The consultation process will be coordinated by Manager Off-Route Airspace (ORA), Wing Commander Lou Braham, Directorate of Airspace Policy, at CAA House on 0207 453 6540 and Off-Route Airspace 2 (ORA2), Squadron Leader Al Dunbar at CAA House on 0207 453 6542. However, in order to manage the large number of responses expected and to enable us to correlate the information accurately, we prefer that you send your comments via e-mail to the following address atsocas@dap.caa.co.uk. Postal responses should be addressed to 'ATSOCAS Review', ORA, DAP, CAA House, 45-59 Kingsway, London WC2B 6TE. The closing date for responses to this consultation paper is 11 November 2005. Because of the sheer volume of work that we anticipate will be generated by this consultation, please do not expect a reply from the Directorate to your responses.

Lou Braham
Wg Cdr
DAP (Mgr ORA)

Annex:

- A. ATSOCAS Consultation Questionnaire.

AIR TRAFFIC SERVICES OUTSIDE CONTROLLED AIR SPACE (ATSOCAS) REVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

This is not an exhaustive list of questions but merely designed to stimulate thought on the subject; however, we would encourage you comment on all aspects of ATSOCAS and not just those listed.

QUESTION	YOUR VIEW
What area of the aviation community do you represent (ie GA, Commercial, Police, Military, Service Provider etc)?	
What elements of the current ATSOCAS do you value?	
What elements of the current ATSOCAS do you feel are inappropriate, confusing or unnecessary?	
What information/guidance would you like from ATC if operating under VFR? Would this depend on other factors such as airspace, traffic or weather conditions?	
What information/guidance would you like from ATC if IMC/IFR?	
Do you perceive there to be a minimum safe miss distance from other aircraft (both VFR and IFR) outside of controlled airspace?	
Where would you wish to see responsibility for terrain clearance to lie?	
How effective/consistent is provision of RAS/RIS/FIS across the UK?	
Do you notice a difference in service provision between individual agencies and/or military/civil units? Please qualify.	
How would you see technological developments such as Mode S contributing towards or complimenting ATSOCAS?	
Have you experienced similar services in other countries and, if so, what was your impression?	
General thoughts not covered above?	

Replies (by 11 November 2005) to:

**ATSOCAS Review
CAA House K6 G3
45-59 Kingsway
LONDON
WC2B 6TE**

or atsocas@dap.caa.co.uk