

Sent to Email: [REDACTED]

20 December 2022

Dear Mayor [REDACTED]

DONCASTER Sheffield Airport (“DSA”) Airspace

Thank you for your letter dated 13 December 2022.

The CAA is aware of your aspiration to see Doncaster-Sheffield Airport (DSA) re-open for commercial traffic as soon as possible. The CAA welcomes the opportunity to meet with you to provide and discuss information relevant to the regulatory steps (from an aviation safety perspective) that would need to be successfully completed before that can happen.

As the UK’s independent aviation safety and airspace regulator CAA’s role requires it to carry out its functions to assure a high standard of safety.

All civilian operators of Aerodromes handling commercial air transport flights require an Aerodrome Certificate or Licence from the CAA. DSA’s former Aerodrome Certificate holder has voluntarily surrendered its Aerodrome Certificate, taking effect from the 12 December 2022. Based on the nature and volume of aviation activity carried out at DSA, under the former aerodrome licence DSA:

- a. Proposed a volume of controlled airspace was established, which was approved by the CAA after an Airspace Change proposal; and
- b. was required to ensure that an air traffic service (ATS) was provided for, and to control, aircraft entering that volume of controlled airspace.

DSA’s former Aerodrome Certificate holder is no longer providing, or ensuring the provision of, the ATS. In order to assure safety the CAA has ensured that aviators are aware that the controlled airspace marked on aviation charts as controlled (and therefore actively serviced by an air traffic control unit) is in fact not controlled or benefitting from such a service. The method used to achieve this is known as a NOTAM. This is a time limited measure and in accordance with international standards (known as ICAO provisions which refer to UK’s international treaty obligations under the UN’s Chicago Convention) the CAA is required to proceed in a timely way to remove the airspace structure from aviation charts (known as the UK AIP). Before the CAA does so we are seeking views of stakeholders on safety and airspace related

considerations (which I would expect to include yourselves) and will take all these into account before we make a decision on our next steps.

We have given extensive thought to how best to capture those views and have now published information about how we are going to do this on the airspace change portal. As we can discuss further when we meet you, we will not take any further steps before we have considered those views. The closing date for stakeholders to provide us with their views is the 17 February 2023.

The CAA notes your policy of pursuing a purchase of DSA, potentially through a Compulsory Purchase Order and seeking a new operator for the airport, to restart operations. If you are successful in doing so, the CAA will work with the proposed new operator to enable them to apply for the necessary permissions such as the Aerodrome Certificate and Air Navigation Service Provider Certification and Designation.

As part of that work the potential Aerodrome operator will review their planned operations (i.e. aircraft types, destinations, volume) which will determine the type of air traffic services that are required, which will in turn determine the airspace arrangements or design that is required to facilitate those services.

To summarise this last point, the airspace currently in place around DSA is designed to safely accommodate the operations facilitated by the previous Aerodrome Certificate holder and the Air Traffic Control service provided by their sub-contractor (ATCSL) to accommodate those operations.

A new Aerodrome operator will need to consider those issues based on the operations they intend to facilitate; the airspace requirement will be determined by those considerations and that requirement will not necessarily be the same as for the previous operations DSA.

We look forward to discussing this further with you when we meet in the new year. If you are able to confirm your availability, I will look to arrange a meeting as soon as practicable.

On the final point in your letter, regarding DSA's status as a safeguarded aerodrome, the Department for Transport is responsible for the town and country planning (safeguarded aerodromes, technical sites and military explosives storage areas) direction 2002. This includes the list of officially safeguarded aerodromes. I am copying this response to colleagues at the Department who will be able to respond on this point

Yours faithfully/sincerely

A large black rectangular redaction box covering the signature of the sender.

Manager Airspace Regulation
Airspace, ATM & Aerodromes
Safety & Airspace Regulation Group