

## Aviation, Maritime, Freight & Canals

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CÒMHHDHAIL ALBA

Ms Sheila Foggon

Our ref:  
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Dear Ms Foggon,

Thank you for your emails of 27 April and 2 May 2017 to Humza Yousaf MSP, Minister for Transport and the Islands, regarding Edinburgh Airport's Airspace Change Proposal. I have been asked to respond.

Airspace management is reserved to the UK Government and as such not something in which the Scottish Government can intervene.

Edinburgh Airport says that as more passengers travel through Scottish airports, and more new destinations are offered, the airspace capacity above Central Scotland also needs to increase to cater for this growth. The aim is to begin upgrading the airspace above Edinburgh Airport to accommodate growth and introduce RNAV navigational technology.

Airspace change decisions must be taken by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA), as it has the expertise to ensure that decisions prioritise safety while balancing all of the factors that must be taken into account, including local views through public consultation.

The Airspace Change Proposal being presented to the CAA followed analysis of the feedback received through the 'Let's Go Further' consultation. The airport will present what it views as the most viable options in relation to increased safety and operational benefits as well as the reduction of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and noise impacts on local communities.

Edinburgh Airport's Airspace Change Proposal has to provide the CAA with evidence of public engagement as part of the design process, and is required to produce clear evidence about the impacts of different options, including the impact of noise. The CAA will use the evidence presented by Edinburgh Airport to assess the proposed airspace change and make a decision on its merits.

As you are aware, Edinburgh Airport's consultation was discussed in the Scottish Parliament on 27 April 2017. The Minister for Transport and the Islands said: 'I urge Edinburgh Airport Ltd—as I have already done—to consult local communities further. It has held 24 public meetings, which more than 1,000 people have attended. I understand from people who attended the meetings

that constituents have put their views robustly to Edinburgh Airport Ltd. It is absolutely correct for them to have done so.'

Edinburgh Airport, like every other major airport, must have in place measures to mitigate the impact of noise. You may be aware that there is already a regime in place to mitigate the impact of noise from Scottish airports. The Environmental Noise (Scotland) Regulations 2006 require that Edinburgh Airport produce a strategic noise map and a Noise Action Plan setting out how it plans to mitigate the impact of noise from the airport. I attach a link to Edinburgh Airport's current Noise Action Plan:

<http://www.edinburghairport.com/about-us/community-and-environment/edinburgh-airport-noise-lab/edinburgh-airport-noise-action-plan>

There is a requirement under the Regulations for an airport to use all reasonable endeavours to take the actions set out in their Action Plan. These Action Plans are required to be updated at least every 5 years and Edinburgh Airport will be consulting on their new Noise Action Plan for the period 2018 to 2023 later this year. This will represent an opportunity for the public to have their say on what the airport is doing to specifically mitigate against noise.

We realise that airspace decisions won't always be popular with local communities and often a change which reduces impacts for one community may create more for another. However, the role of the CAA is to ensure that the people affected by a change have an opportunity to have their say, and that whatever the final outcome, there is confidence in the fairness and transparency of the decision-making process.

I hope this response is useful.

Yours sincerely,

Wendy Nicol  
**Aviation Team**