



Issued: 1 November 2016

## **Telecommunications Code Operators: General Permitted Development Order (GPDO)**

**This Information Notice contains information that is for guidance and/or awareness.**

Recipients are asked to ensure that this Information Notice is copied to all members of their staff who may have an interest in the information (including any 'in-house' or contracted maintenance organisations and relevant outside contractors).

<b>Applicability:</b>	
<b>Aerodromes:</b>	Aerodrome operators
<b>Air Traffic:</b>	Not primarily affected
<b>Airspace:</b>	Not primarily affected
<b>Airworthiness:</b>	Not primarily affected
<b>Flight Operations:</b>	Not primarily affected
<b>Licensed/Unlicensed Personnel:</b>	Not primarily affected

### **1 Introduction**

- 1.1 It has come to light that the Government's 'Department for Culture, Media & Sport' (DCMS) is in the last stages of updating the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development (England) Order 2015 [No 596]), which will result in changes to the notification process where telecommunication mast extensions are proposed.
- 1.2 The purpose of this Information Notice (IN) is to draw your attention to the key change to remove the prior approval process for extensions to existing masts. This may impact the aviation sector.
- 1.3 This change removes the opportunity for aerodromes to be consulted on extensions to existing mobile masts where the extension is up to 5 m in height, providing a maximum height of 25 m AGL (details of which are currently contained in Part 18, B1(a-c). Although Telecom Code Operators are required to 'notify' the CAA and aerodrome operators, this does not constitute 'consultation' and there is no requirement on the Code Operator to act on any objection or request for a reduction in height.
- 1.4 The CAA, MoD and NATS had met with DCMS and DfT to raise their concerns regarding the removal of the prior approval process and its potential impact on aviation safety, especially where a telecom mast extension is positioned close to the boundary of an aerodrome; the DCMS was sympathetic to concerns raised, but advised that Ministers had already agreed the change, concluding its consultation process.

- 1.5 To mitigate against any potential risk to aviation the CAA, MoD and NATS have contributed to the code operators 'Code of Best Practice on Mobile Network Development in England'. This can be found at <http://mobileuk.org/pdf/cobp-mobile-network-development.pdf>. This contains strongly worded guidance that mirrors the original intent of consultation where an extension to an existing mast is proposed and asks that planning authorities consult with aerodromes whenever they are notified of an extension being proposed. Whilst this is not as robust as the system previously in place, it does provide an opportunity for consultation. The DCMS has agreed to meet with CAA, MoD and NATS in approximately 12 months time to review the impact of these changes to the General Permitted Development Order.

## 2 Scope

- 2.1 Aerodrome operators are asked to be diligent in their safeguarding processes and mindful of the fact that a telecom mast extension may appear without prior warning. Where such a situation arises, the operator should conduct a safeguarding assessment and, if it is identified the mast presents an unacceptable risk to aviation, take action to ensure aviation safety is not compromised until such time as a further evaluation can take place or arrangements are in place to reduce/remove the mast. The CAA will be interested to learn of any situation, similar to that identified above, that has been experienced by an aerodrome operator. In such cases, please inform [asddocs@caa.co.uk](mailto:asddocs@caa.co.uk).

## 3 Queries

- 3.1 Any queries or requests for further guidance as a result of this communication should be addressed to [asddocs@caa.co.uk](mailto:asddocs@caa.co.uk).

## 4 Cancellation

- 4.1 This Information Notice will remain in force until further notice.