



Department  
for Transport

Rt Hon Grant Shapps MP  
House of Commons  
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**Baroness Sugg**  
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*Dear Grant,*

27 March 2019

Thank you for your letter of 27 February 2019, about the recent Air Navigation Amendment Order 2019. I am pleased that the APPG on General Aviation broadly welcomes the new provisions which are designed to increase the safety and security of our aircraft and airports.

The extended restriction zone was developed in response to our recent consultation, 'Taking Flight: The Future of Drones in the UK'. The consultation received 5,061 responses, highlighting the large interest in this area. 1,947 of respondents categorised themselves as model aircraft fliers, a large proportion. I would like to assure you that all views collected during the consultation process were evaluated and considered during the formulation of policy. The new measure was announced as part of the Government Response to the consultation on 8 January earlier this year, prior to being laid before Parliament on 20 February and coming into force on 13 March.

Further to the consultation process, officials at the Department for Transport are in regular contact with representatives from the British Model Flying Association, to offer engagement on a wide range of topics. I would like to reassure you that this commitment will continue to remain now and in the future.

Regarding your concern about how the new regulation will affect model flying, the new legislation takes the same approach as the former regulation by allowing any small unmanned aircraft, including model aircraft, flight within the restriction zone where the relevant permission to fly has been received. When an Air Traffic Control Unit (ATCU) is operational, permission needs to be sought from this unit. Outside of operational hours, permission of the aerodrome operator is required.

I appreciate that there may be some existing model aircraft club locations which now fall within the new restriction zone. However, these clubs are able to apply for permission to fly in accordance with the guidance above. I would also like to reassure you that the Department for Transport, alongside the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA), will be closely examining how the permissions process is embedded by airports and will review this later in the year, to ensure that drones and model aircraft are being used safely. It is not the intention to completely ban flight, but to put in place a process that allows the ATCU and the aerodrome to maintain the ability to manage its airspace.

I recognise that model aircraft clubs promote an exemplary safety culture and I fully support and encourage the work undertaken to achieve this. The CAA has previously granted British Model Flying Association members exemptions, for example, to fly above 400ft as long as certain conditions are met in recognition of this.

Whilst I am keen to minimise the legislative impacts on legitimate and responsible model aircraft fliers, there are risks which must continue to be managed. It is important that ATCUs have full knowledge of all flights within the restriction zone to manage this risk effectively to ensure safety.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sugg', with a stylized, cursive flourish.

**BARONESS SUGG**