



MINUTES OF ACP-2020-24 E-7 WEDGETAIL AIRBORNE EARLY WARNING (AEW) MK 1 UK ORBIT AREAS ASSESSMENT MEETING HELD VIA SKYPE ON 9 JULY 2020

22 July 2020

Distribution List: All attendees and apologies

Present	Appointment	Representing
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	CAA
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	CAA
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	CAA
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	CAA
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	CAA
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	MOD
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	MOD
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	MOD
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	MOD
Apologies	[REDACTED]	CAA

CAA Assessment Meeting Opening Statement

CAA noted that the following documents were received in advance of the Assessment Meeting and confirmed that the documents must be published by the sponsor, together with minutes of the meeting, on the Airspace Change portal page:

- Assessment Meeting Agenda;
- Assessment Meeting Presentation.

CAA explained the purpose of the meeting and confirmed that the meeting was an Assessment Meeting and not a Gateway. The CAA reinforced that the sponsor was required to provide a broad description of their proposed approach to meeting the CAA's CAP 1616 requirements, but the CAA was not deciding whether the proposed approach met the detailed requirements of the CAA's process at this stage. The purpose of the Assessment Meeting (set out in detail in CAP 1616) was broadly:


- for the Sponsor to present and discuss their Statement of Need,
- to enable the CAA to consider whether the proposal concerned falls within the scope of the formal airspace change process,
- to enable the CAA to consider the appropriate provisional Level to assign to the change proposal.

Additionally, the sponsor was required to provide information on how it intended to proceed to fulfil the requirements of the airspace change process and to provide information on timescales. Lastly,

the sponsor was required to provide information on how it intended to meet the engagement requirements of the various stage of the airspace change process.

	ACTION
<p>Item 1 – Introduction</p> <p>All attendees were introduced. Apologies were made and the mandatory statement was read. The sponsor described the relationship between the MOD and the Defence Unmanned Air Systems Capability Development Centre (UAS CDC) and explained that the UAS CDC was managing the initial aspects of the ACP on behalf of the MOD. The sponsor also explained that whilst the MOD had embarked on the CAP 1616 process for the implementation of new orbit areas for E-7, it would like to explore whether a CAP 1618 process or a scalable CAP 1616 process might be more appropriate. Preliminary discussions had been conducted with National Air Traffic Services (NATS), who is believed to be the only key stakeholder. It was agreed to follow the CAP 1616 agenda and open the CAP 1618 debate at a later stage in the meeting.</p>	
<p>Item 2 – Statement of Need (discussion and review)</p> <p>The MOD introduced its Statement of Need as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Currently the E-3D Sentry AEW Mk 1 utilises the UK AEW areas for UK training and operations. In 2023 the E-7 Airborne Early Warning Wedgetail Mk 1 will enter RAF service. Though fulfilling the same role as the Sentry, advances in technology mean that the Wedgetail will not be able to utilise the same orbits, although existing ones may still be utilised by our NATO/visiting forces partners. The Wedgetail will be required to fly 100 nm by 20 nm racetracks. In some UK AEW areas such as UK 1, 7 and 9 these racetrack parameters can be accommodated in the existing airspace structure. However, agreed structures /routes or suitable orbit/racetrack areas will be required in the North Sea area where the current Orbit Areas are not sufficient.”; • Altitudes affected: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 20,000 ft and above; • Proposed submission date: by Oct 2022. <p>Key information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main Operating Base - RAF Waddington; • In-Service date – [REDACTED] <p>There were no further comments.</p>	

<p>Item 3 – Issues or opportunities arising from proposed change</p> <p>For information the sponsor outlined that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • E-7 is a modified Boeing 737 and will be used in the Intelligence, Surveillance, Target Acquisition and Reconnaissance (ISTAR) role • E-7 Wedgetail is the military designation for the aircraft; • E-7 will replace the UK E-3D (Sentry). <p>The MOD outlined that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A number of E-7 orbit areas are required within the UK Flight Information Region (FIR) in order to achieve its operational and training objectives. E-7 has an optimum level block in which it will operate but it can be reasonably flexible in the level selection / allocation in a day-to-day, task-by-task basis; • Whilst there are some smaller E-3D orbit areas on the eastern side of the UK, currently none are adequate in size for an E-7 orbit. It is thought that significant trade will be operating along the east coast Managed Danger Areas (MDAs) so it is essential to have some E-7 areas located there; • The racetrack pattern flown by an on-task E-7 is approximately 100 x 20 NMs. Whilst it may not require Non-Deviating Status (NDS), it may not always be possible for the E-7 to turn short or long to accommodate a conflicting civil track; • There will usually be only 1 ac on task at a time, although there could be 2, especially if one of the NATO E-3s is tasked simultaneously. They may not be in the same area, as locations will be dependent on where the on-task aircraft are that require the ISTAR asset's services. There could be 2 occupied levels in the same area or 2 areas simultaneously active; • The MOD has confirmed that the NATO E-3 orbit areas in the UK will need to remain available for use as there is a continuing commitment and requirement for NATO E3 support; • The E-7's optimum operating levels are between FL 270 and FL 330 and are likely to be outside the airways structure in Class C airspace; • There may be some overlap with existing E-3 orbit areas in the UK since some are big enough to accommodate a 100 NM racetrack. Whilst this may be useful, it could also be beneficial to introduce new E-7 orbit areas in a certain parts of the FIR by orienting the racetrack in a certain way to best accommodate the commercial traffic flow; • Likewise it could be possible to locate some new orbit areas coincident with existing segregated airspace. This is made possible by the joint and integrated approach to airspace management via the Airspace Management Cell (AMC). The MOD is content that the processes are already in place to enable this. 	
<p>Item 4 – Options to exploit opportunities or address issues identified</p> <p>The sponsor opened the discussion as to whether this change could be handled by means of the CAP 1618 process, since it believes that NATS is</p>	

<p>the MOD's only stakeholder. Alternatively, the MOD wanted to understand if the change could be scaled under the CAP 1616 process (targeted engagement). It was acknowledged that there might be some engagement with Air Navigation Service Providers (ANSPs) from adjacent FIRs, but this would only become clear as the airspace design process takes place.</p> <p>The Airspace Regulator (Technical) explained that the CAP 1618 process is not appropriate. Although CAP 1618 lists military orbit areas as one of the changes that may be managed under its process, it also limits the types of change that can be carried out. It is geared towards the modification of an existing structure as opposed to the introduction of new airspace structures. It was felt that what was being proposed was appropriate to be managed under the CAP 1616 process, but that certain elements of the process could be scaled. The sponsor was advised to decide which elements it would like to scale and approach the CAA with an argument to support the reduction in scale. Particularly with the potential for just one key stakeholder, it might be clear that the engagement and consultation processes may be scalable.</p>	
<p>Item 5 – Provisional indication of the scale level and process requirements*</p> <p>It was agreed that an airspace change via CAP 1616 was an appropriate means to address the issues presented. The following comments were made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The ACP was set as a provisional Level M2, but was to be left on the portal as TBC. The level would be confirmed at the Stage 2b Gateway.• If the sponsor wished to pursue targeted engagement, it should present the case with appropriate justification to the Airspace Change Account Manager. The Account Manager would then present the case for consideration to the principal airspace regulators for a decision.• The Airspace Regulator (Environmental) stated that ACPs affecting altitudes of 20,000+ ft are generally only required to consider the fuel burn and emissions impact and not noise or local air quality. That said, as a sponsor the military is not required to undertake any environmental assessment beyond assessment of the effects any proposal might have on civil traffic.• ██████████ asked how any economic impact should be measured. The Airspace Regulator (Environmental) stated that the only instance when the sponsor would have to measure the economic impact of the change would be if any of the areas overlapped with an airway. In that case both the Airspace Regulators (Environmental) and (Economic) would be interested in the impact on civil operations. The use of the DfT tool WebTag would be the tool to be used in collaboration with NATS.• ██████████ asked if NATS would need to support any targeted engagement justification in writing. The Airspace Regulator (Engagement & Consultation) felt that such support would not be required at this stage and that the MOD should present the case on its own.• The Airspace Change Account Manager suggested that any questions regarding the Options Appraisal requirements be emailed to her, since the Airspace Regulator (Economic) was not present at the meeting.	

<p><i>* When the sponsor submits their gateway materials for each Gateway at the agreed submission deadline, the period between this and the gateway decision will be an analysis by the CAA Airspace Regulatory team (Airspace Regulation) of the documentation submitted, for the purposes of making a recommendation to the CAA Gateway decision maker(s). In conducting the gateway assessment, the CAA is assessing the process employed and its compliance with the guidance stipulated within CAP1616. It is not an assessment of the merits of the submission itself, which is reviewed at Stage 5 - Decision. We may request, documentation from the sponsor that is referred to in the gateway submission but has not been provided as part of the Gateway submission materials. We may also request the sponsor to provide information by way of clarification relating to statements or assumptions made in the submission. Any further information sought by Airspace Regulation at this stage is for clarificatory purposes and is only for determining compliance with the CAP 1616 process.</i></p> <p><i>In any instance where a sponsor has not met the requirements of the process, we will inform them after the gateway decision and advise of next steps.</i></p>															
<p>Item 6 – Provisional process timescales*</p> <p>The following timeline was proposed:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="180 712 911 958"> <thead> <tr> <th>Gateway</th> <th>Date</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Define Gateway</td> <td>Jan 21</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Develop and Assess Gateway</td> <td>Jan 22</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Consult Gateway</td> <td>Mar 22</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Update and Submit</td> <td>Sep 22</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Decide Gateway</td> <td>Feb 23</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Implementation</td> <td>Q2 23</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>The following comments were made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Airspace Change Account Manager would formally analyse the dates proposed above after the meeting and present them to Airspace Regulation management for final agreement; • The intended AIRAC submission date should be passed to the Airspace Change Account Manager; • The sponsor would be required to submit all necessary documents at least 2 weeks prior to any agreed Gateway; • The Define, Develop & Assess and Consult Gateways take place the last Friday of the month. <p><i>* The timeline agreed may become subject to change by the CAA. This is because the Secretary of State for Transport has directed the CAA to prioritise GNSS applications and this may have an impact on your ACP if we need to direct resource accordingly.</i></p>	Gateway	Date	Define Gateway	Jan 21	Develop and Assess Gateway	Jan 22	Consult Gateway	Mar 22	Update and Submit	Sep 22	Decide Gateway	Feb 23	Implementation	Q2 23	<p>ACP ATM Lead</p>
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<p>Item 7 – Next steps</p> <p>A draft copy of the minutes of this meeting should be sent to the Airspace Change Account Manager by 17 Jul 20. The minutes of the meeting were to be published and uploaded onto the portal within 2 weeks of this Assessment Meeting. A complete version was to be agreed and presented to the CAA, whilst a redacted version was to be placed on the portal.</p>	<p>ACP ATM Lead</p>														

Item 8 – Any other business

██████████ was concerned that timescales might be subject to change in light of current COVID-19 restrictions. The sponsor would keep an eye on this and advise the CAA as soon as possible if dates had to change.

██████████ stated that the MOD was currently unaware of how many orbit areas will be required to be implemented, but it was thought that NATS might prefer a phased introduction of any new areas rather than all going live at once. This could be particularly beneficial considering the significant changes to be made to UK ATM with the introduction of Free Route Airspace and DP-ER airspace. The Airspace Regulator (Technical) thought that this could be considered if it becomes apparent that it would be beneficial.

ACTIONS ARISING FROM ACP-2020-24 E-7 WEDGETAIL AIRBORNE EARLY WARNING (AEW) MK 1 UK ORBIT AREAS ASSESSMENT MEETING

Subject	Name	Action	Deadline
Engagement	[REDACTED]	The case for targeted engagement was to be presented to the CAA with appropriate justification.	ASAP
Timeline	ACP ATM Lead	The intended AIRAC submission date was to be passed to the Airspace Change Account Manager	ASAP
Minutes	ACP ATM Lead	The minutes of the meeting were to be published and uploaded onto the portal within 2 weeks of this Assessment Meeting	23 Jul 20

MOD
ACP Sponsor