

Designing safe, efficient and sustainable airspace

Stage 2: Developing and Assessing design options

About RSP and Manston Airport

RiverOak Strategic Partners (RSP) has plans to revive Manston Airport on the Isle of Thanet in Kent as a successful freight hub, with complementary passenger and engineering services.

RSP is awaiting a decision from the Government on its application for a Development Consent Order (DCO) to reopen Manston. In the meantime, as part of the Government's Airspace Modernisation Strategy, RSP is developing an Airspace Change Proposal to establish airspace and operating procedures for flights to and from Manston if the DCO is approved.

About the airspace change process

The airspace change process is a lengthy one and can take more than two years to complete. By starting this process now, we can ensure that, should permission be given to reopen Manston, flights will operate as safely, efficiently, and sustainably as possible from the start. It is also important to coordinate this process with the wider airspace modernisation programme, as there is a high degree of interconnectedness between each piece in the UK's airspace jigsaw.

Airspace change is overseen by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA), the UK's aviation regulator, following the guidance set out in its CAP1616 publication and led by a change sponsor – in this case, RSP.

The story so far

The CAP1616 guidance consists of seven stages and a series of gateways at which CAA approval is required before moving on to the next part of the process.

Step 1b of stage 1, in which design principles were identified, was completed for Manston in February 2020 following engagement with representatives of the aviation sector and local communities.

We are now progressing stage 2, during which a comprehensive list of options for airspace change will be developed and an initial appraisal made of the impacts of each option.

We are seeking your input again as we develop design options which align with the design principles you helped us shape in stage 1. It is important that we understand and consider any concerns you have related to the design options.



Design options for consideration

Our proposed design options are set out in detail in *Appendix A – Manston Airport Airspace Design and Procedures*.

In line with the requirements to consider a comprehensive list of options, this document shows all possible options for departures from and arrivals to runway 28 and runway 10 (the designations for Manston's runway when operated in each direction).

Our commitment to stakeholder engagement

Effective stakeholder engagement underpins the airspace change process.

The CAA suggests that contact in the early stages of the process (ahead of a wider public consultation in stage 3) is primarily with stakeholders' representatives, such as local authorities and industry groups.

Throughout the process, documents will be shared on the CAA's online portal (<https://airspacechange.caa.co.uk/>)

At the outset of this stage we sought initial feedback from air navigation service providers at neighbouring airports to ensure any critical technical and operational interdependencies have been considered. We would now like to hear from the wider aviation community and local community representatives with any views on our long list of options.



How to have your say

Please send any comments to manstonairspace@communityrelations.co.uk by 22 May.

Your feedback will enable us to further refine the design options ahead of focus groups for aviation and community representatives which we plan to hold in June.

An invitation to join the focus groups will follow later this month, including details of how these focus groups will be held given the need to comply with current constraints on face-to-face meetings.



What happens next?

Having considered feedback on the long list of design options and evaluated them against the design principles developed in step 1b, we will carry out an initial appraisal of the impacts of each option identified.

The CAA will review work undertaken at this stage before approving progress to stage 3 (consultation).