

Snowdonia Aerospace Airspace Change Proposal, ACP-2019-58, Llanbedr Danger Area (DA) – Public Consultation Easy Read Guide



1. There has been an airfield at Llanbedr since 1941, during which time it has seen a wide range of different civil and military flying operations, most notably the research, development, test and evaluation (RDT&E) activities using the Jindivik target drones. There were approximately 9500 aircraft movements per year prior to QinetiQ / MOD vacating the site in 2004.



2. In terms of airspace, these activities were previously supported by an Aerodrome Traffic Zone (ATZ) and local Danger Area (D202) that connected Llanbedr to the larger Cardigan Bay Danger Area (D201). The ATZ and D202 lapsed when QinetiQ / MOD vacated the site. *NB - a Danger Area is an airspace safety mechanism that keeps RDT&E activities physically segregated from other aircraft.*



3. Snowdonia Aerospace Centre (SAC) continues to focus on RDT&E activities for next-generation aerospace – e.g. “drones-for-good”, electric aircraft, urban and regional air mobility vehicles, balloons, airships and near-space testing vehicles. There are currently about 1000 aircraft movements per year in total. The Airfield also supports General Aviation including a local Flying School.



4. To facilitate current RDT&E activities, a Temporary Danger Area (TDA) was previously consulted on in 2014 and has been activated via Notice to Airmen (NOTAM) as and when required, either in whole or in part, on multiple occasions since 2015. Continuing with the TDA is the “do nothing” baseline option for the proposed airspace change, but this is very limiting and not guaranteed.

5. Snowdonia Aerospace Centre is a recognised UK national asset and there are very few locations across the country that can provide a similar range of capabilities. The airfield is seeing an increase in demand for flight testing of various novel aerospace systems and future flight technologies, aligned with UK Government Aerospace Industrial Strategy:



“Environmentally-friendly aircraft will increasingly incorporate electric technologies, and we anticipate more aircraft operating autonomously in the future. New markets for drones and Urban Air Mobility vehicles will be developed. We want the UK to be at the cutting edge of these exciting developments much as we were when Sir Frank Whittle developed the world’s first jet engine”.



6. The ACP-2019-58, is to create a permanent Danger Area (permanent in terms of its designation but not its use) that will enable Llanbedr Aerodrome to increase support to the RDT&E for next-generation UK aerospace. The DA will be “active” (*i.e.* in use) only as and when required, otherwise it will remain open to all air traffic. The proposal is not associated with enabling military activity.



7. The ACP puts forward two design options for the permanent Danger Area, both of which cover an area of segregated airspace around Llanbedr to support local RDT&E activities together with a corridor to the south-west connecting to the existing D201. Both are divided into sub-areas so we can minimise segregation by activating airspace volumes based on need rather than by set times.
8. The shapes have been designed to be easy to interpret and implement and the size has been designed to accommodate a range of different novel aerospace systems. Whilst specific geographic locations may nominally sit within the DA, procedures can be put in place to ensure any flying activities are constrained to non-sensitive areas and managed via Letters of Agreement.
9. SAC has constructed a model for anticipated DA utilisation. We are forecasting approximately 100 days of DA activation per year and a corresponding 200 flights per year. Roughly 90% of flights will be over the aerodrome or out over the sea and the vehicle size (the majority less than 150kg) and propulsion type (50%+ electric) will also mitigate any environmental factors.
10. The noise profile for an estimated 66% of the novel aerospace systems that will operate at Llanbedr will be below the ambient daytime baseline experienced by local residents and effectively inaudible beyond the airfield boundary. For the remaining 33%, it is unlikely that noise will be noticeably different from any other general aviation or helicopters that use the airfield.
11. Snowdonia Aerospace Centre has also been designated as a candidate UK Horizontal Launch Spaceport. "Horizontal Launch" means a mothership (aircraft or balloon) will take-off from Llanbedr and carry a launch vehicle out over Cardigan Bay via the DA before any rockets are fired to achieve near-space altitudes. This will also utilise Range Control facilities at QinetiQ / MOD Aberporth.
12. Our proposition is to differentiate Spaceport Snowdonia by developing the site as a flexible and multi-use campus that supports space-related RDT&E and maximise the potential across a range of aerospace uses. We have developed a Masterplan featuring two new technology parks situated within the airfield boundary. The proposed DA will act as a business catalyst in support of Masterplan.
13. An Economic Impact Assessment (EIA) has supported our proposition to address both the emerging aviation technology and space markets with links to local tourism. The EIA estimated that successful development of the Masterplan could contribute 515 jobs and £19.5m/annum Gross Value Added (GVA) locally and 765 jobs and £34m/annum GVA in Wales.



14. The assessments to date have highlighted a strong economic case for implementation of a permanent Danger Area on the basis that it will (a) significantly enhance the UK aerospace and space RDT&E capability, and (b) generate jobs and related economic benefit in local communities. Spaceport Snowdonia will also be an internationally recognised flagship for Wales.



15. We have produced a Consultation Document that explains the changes that SAC is proposing to make, including more detailed maps and environmental analysis, and how they may impact communities on the ground. This document can be found on the CAA airspace change portal by clicking the following link:

<https://airspacechange.caa.co.uk/PublicProposalArea?pid=193>



16. We will also be hosting public drop-in sessions for anyone to come along and find out more about the proposals. These will be held in the SAC Main Hangar (with appropriate Covid-19 measures in place):

- Thu 10th December 2020, 10am to 4pm
- Fri 11th December 2020, 10am to 4pm (Welsh speaking available)
- Sat 12th December 2020, 10am to 2pm



17. We are asking you to consider any impact this proposal could have on you as an individual, your community as a whole or your organisation's activities. This is your opportunity to review the proposed procedures and influence the final airspace designs that SAC will submit to the CAA. We would welcome any feedback and suggestions that you may have.



18. You can respond online via the CAA online consultation portal (<https://airspacechange.caa.co.uk/PublicProposalArea?pid=193>) but postal responses can also be submitted to:

Airspace Change
Snowdonia Aerospace Centre
Llanbedr, LA45 2PX

The consultation begins on Monday 7th December 2020 and runs for 7 weeks. All comments must be received by 12 noon on Friday 22nd January 2021.