



DAP1916 - Statement of Need

Tracking Code: **QH9M2U**

CHANGE

1. Category of Airspace Change

Does your proposal concern Changes to Notified Airspace Design or Planned and Permanent Redistribution of Air Traffic? *

- ☒ Changes to Notified Airspace Design ☐ Planned and Permanent Redistribution of Air Traffic

2. Title of proposal

Please enter a title for this intended change, (max 80 characters): *

BVLOS project over the East West Railway

☐ Have you previously submitted a Statement of Need ?

SPONSOR

3. Change Sponsor Details

Please select the appropriate category and complete. *

- ☒ A Company
☐ An Unincorporated Association or other body
☐ Individual (including sole traders and partnerships)

3a. A Company

Registered Company name (in full) *

Network Rail Infrastructure Ltd

Registered Company Number

02904587

Country of Company Registration

United Kingdom

Registered Office Address

[REDACTED]

Postcode

[REDACTED]

E-mail

[REDACTED]

Trading name (if applicable)

Trading Address (primary site)

Country

United Kingdom

Postcode

[REDACTED]

Website address

[REDACTED]

Primary Point of Contact Name *

[REDACTED]

☒ Requires Airspace Portal Access ?

Telephone *

Mobile Number (for Airspace Portal) *

Email *

Additional Contacts

You can add up to 4 additional contacts

STATEMENT OF NEED

4. Independent Aviation/Airspace Consultancy

☐ Is an Independent Aviation/Airspace Consultancy involved in this proposal?

5. Statement of Need

Please provide a brief 'Statement of Need' clearly explaining what issue or opportunity this proposal is seeking to address.

*Further information can be found in CAP1616 **

Network Rail have been using Aerial Inspection tools now for over fifteen years. In the last six years this has included UAS. Initially this was through a framework of four companies then the introduction of Internal UAS in the last four years. The latter has only been VLOS operations, but has allowed Network Rail to be able to carry out various use case studies, to identify what aspects of Inspection work could be undertaken by UAS alone, flown away from the track environment. Because Network Rail has sold off so much of its land in its previous guise of British Rail this means that track access is very limited and the use of UAS under VLOS conditions is unachievable, especially when some of these track access locations are kilometres apart.

Within the last four years four people have lost their lives whilst working in the track environment. One in the last week. These people were on track for various reasons but the primary reason for most people being on the track is visual inspections or responding to incidents. Both use cases that have been highlighted that could be carried out by UAS in a large proportion of the 20,000 miles of track that Network Rail manage. Network Rail know that UAS will not be able to access all of the 20,000 miles of track due to the proximity of the assets, airspace restrictions and weather parameters that UAS may not be able to operate in, however Network Rail need to change its Inspection methods to reduce the risk of people having to enter the extremely hazardous track environment, and utilising a UAS that can fly BVLOS is one very strong possibility. Network Rail is a Safety Critical company and so as such would need to prove the case that it can be carried out over the environment we manage and not just look at data that is in the public domain with other organisations like the Windracer project in the South or the Skyports project in Scotland. The rail environment comes with an extremely different set of problems over other environments and Air Operations have captured a lot of these learnings, however now need to carry on capturing data as safely and expeditiously as possible to try and progress this use case. There is an element of urgency on these tests so as a company we can look at this as an option as soon as possible.

Network Rail Air Operations who has a pedigree of Manned and Unmanned Aviation, would like to carry out test flights over a 20 kilometre piece of track that is still under construction between Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire, to prove the case to the companies Executive Leadership Team that it can be achieved in a safe way, but also can reduce the need to place people at risk for the elements of work that are just visual inspections and responding to incidents.

The Airspace we would like to request falls under Class G and is along a rail corridor that is being upgraded over the coming 24 months. There is one Airspace User that is mainly affected, which is Bicester Aerodrome, where we will be situated during the test flights once we have an agreement. There is one other very small grass strip which is very difficult to find ownership of during these challenging times, however will be consulted with during this process. We have a planned area that is as small as safely possible to effect as little air users as possible but large enough to allow for safe flight, including emergencies.

6. Administrative Changes

☐ Does your proposal represent an administrative change to the Aeronautical Information Publication (Proposed Level 0 change)?

7. Instrument Flight Procedures

☐ Does your proposal have the potential to include a change to and/or new IFPs?

8. Five-Letter Name Codes (5LNC)

☐ Does this request solely concern the reservation of new Five-Letter Name Codes (5LNC) in advance of a future proposal?

9. Additional Information

Please use the box below to add any further information which the CAA should be aware of when considering this submission (for example dependencies on other airspace change proposals and/or funding deadlines):

As per our statement of needs above, the key reason for this project is Safety and that of our track workers carrying out inspections that could be carried out in a much safer way. We do not have a deadline as such however the longer this process takes the higher the risk of another injury or worst for these employees.

We have already engaged with the main airspace user in the area of operation, however fully understand the process of engaging with the correct and relevant stakeholders in a timely manner.

SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

Submission

Date and Time: 16 Feb 2021 12:43:54 PM

Your form has been successfully submitted. Please keep a copy of this acknowledgement for your records.

Application
Submission
Number: DAP1916V2-196

Please note that the Airspace Regulation team will contact you to acknowledge receipt of your Statement of Need and to confirm the unique ACP reference number (ACP-YYYY-NNN) allocated to this submission. Following receipt of your unique ACP reference number, you will be required to create an associated airspace change proposal on the [CAA's Airspace Change Portal](#). Please refer to CAP 1706: CAA Airspace Change Portal Sponsor Training Manual provides for further information/guidance on how to use the Airspace Change Portal.

Once your submission has been assigned, arrangements will be made for you to attend an Assessment Meeting. One of the key outputs from this meeting will be an indicative timeline for the proposed airspace change. To enable the CAA to consider your proposed timescales, you will be expected to present dates for the following milestones at the Assessment Meeting:

- DEFINE Gateway
- DEVELOP & ASSESS Gateway
- CONSULT Gateway
- Formal Airspace Change Proposal Submission
- Target AIRAC

The CAA holds Gateway Assessment Meetings on a monthly basis and the annual schedule is published on the [CAA website](#).

Finally, you should also note that from September 2018 any amendments submitted by a Data Originator or ANSP for onward promulgation in the UK IAIP will be subject to the Aeronautical Data Quality Requirements. See [Commission Regulation \(EU\) No 73/2010](#) (updated by 1029/2014) and [CAP 1054: Aeronautical Information Management](#) guidance material for further information. These requirements will be discussed in greater detail during the course of your initial meeting with the CAA.

When you have completed this form, click this button to submit the form for processing. Do not click this button more than once. You will then be provided with further instructions.