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Pre-Stage 2 Gateway Assessment Co-ordination Advice: ACP 2017-70

The CAA has stated¹ that it will use ACOG's advice to decide, in the CAA's role as owner of the Airspace Modernisation Strategy and co-sponsor of the airspace modernisation programme, whether it would be appropriate for a sponsor to proceed to a CAP1616 Stage 2 gateway assessment or not in the absence of an accepted masterplan. This decision does not remove the requirements of CAP 1616, nor does it remove the ability for the CAA to request further information and evidence as part of the CAP 1616 process.

The best course for delivery remains a single, coordinated masterplan. We will therefore only consider taking advice from ACOG, when there is an immediate risk that the inability of an individual sponsor to proceed to the next stage, in the absence of a masterplan, would delay modernisation.

We have now considered advice in relation to Airspace Change Proposal (ACP) reference 2017-70, which is sponsored by NERL and relates to proposed network changes above 7,000ft. There are also several airports' ACPs siting below this proposed network change that are currently paused due to the pandemic. The advice we have received from ACOG is, whilst there are dependencies with the airport ACPs below 7,000ft, these airports will not be constrained in terms of their existing procedures or their development of potential design options in accordance with CAP 1616. Evidence on the CAA's Airspace Change Portal demonstrates that relevant airport stakeholders currently have no objections to NERL progressing to a Stage 2 gateway assessment. These are important factors in deciding on whether it would be appropriate for the ACP to proceed to the Stage 2 gateway assessment.

We are therefore content for ACP 2017-70 to progress towards the Stage 2 Gateway Assessment. However, the advice we have received also suggests that some elements of ACP 2017-70 above 7,000ft may be reliant on the development of the airport ACPs below. If this is the case and relevant airport ACPs restart following the current pause, then NERL must understand the risk that they are unlikely to be able to progress any further (e.g. to a Stage 3 assessment) without co-ordinating development timelines. We expect ACOG to continue to monitor this situation.

Regards

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¹ <https://www.caa.co.uk/Commercial-industry/Airspace/Airspace-Modernisation-Strategy/Airspace-Modernisation-Update/>