

NERL LAMP Deployment 1 ACP Reference ACP-2017-70

In early 2021 the CAA, as co-sponsors of airspace modernisation, made a decision to allow NERL to proceed to a stage 2 CAP1616 gateway assessment in the absence of a masterplan. This was a temporary arrangement whilst a number of potentially interdependent airport sponsors had paused their ACPs in light of the Covid-19 pandemic. In the CAA's decision letter of 23rd February 2021, the CAA noted 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.”

Following the recent announcement of the establishment of the Department for Transport's FASI Programme Support Grant which enables the remobilisation of ACPs within scope of both the FASI-S and FASI-N programmes, the CAA provided ACOG with further guidance which set out a framework for ACOG to advise whether an ACP could progress independently of the masterplan development process.

The objective of the NERL LAMP Deployment 1 (LD1) ACP is to systemise the network in the South-West of the UK by deploying new Performance-based Navigation (PBN) routes that are operated on the principle of systemisation and to integrate the future low-level airspace designs of FASI-S airports in this region. There are significant benefits of delivering the upper-level changes as early as possible as this first stage of network airspace modernisation in the South of the UK enables additional changes by airports and NERL in subsequent years. The LD1 ACP is co-ordinated with the second deployment of the NERL Free Route Airspace (FRA) programme due to the interdependencies that exist between the ACPs. The LD1 and FRA Deployment 2 ACPs have been designed together to maximise benefit, reduce implementation costs and reduce complexity for stakeholders.

The airport ACPs in this region (Bristol, Cardiff and Exeter) have been paused for approximately 18 months. Airports are in the process of remobilising their teams and restarting their respective ACPs at the start of stage 2 of the CAP1616 process. At this stage the airports have not completed enough work on options development for NERL to be able to understand and, if required, address the low-level integration elements of the ACP until further work has been undertaken. Bristol, Cardiff and Exeter are not planning to complete options development activities until Q1 2022.

As requested by the CAA ACOG have monitored this situation and have worked closely with NERL in order to address the risks of delaying modernisation whilst avoiding undermining the co-ordinated masterplan process. As a result, NERL now propose to duplicate the existing ACP and progress the network and low-level integration elements on different timelines. NERL have continued to engage with Bristol, Cardiff and Exeter throughout the programme pause which has led to a good understanding of airport requirements and it is proposed that the duplicate ACPs will build on the work completed to date with any dependencies managed as part of the low-level integration ACP.

It is the network element that NERL wish to take forward independently of the masterplan process timescales and ACOG's advice is included on this basis below. A duplicate ACP will remain to ensure that any low-level integration elements can be addressed if required. The low-level integration ACP will be coordinated and progressed in accordance with the masterplan.

It is hoped that this proposed approach and advice will enable airspace modernisation benefits to be delivered early, subject to the CAP1616 process, whilst addressing the concerns of co-ordination required under the masterplan process. Subject to your response, NERL intend to target a CAP1616 stage 3 gateway assessment in August for the network element.

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| ACP Reference: ACP-2017-70 | Date: 02 July 2021 |
| Sponsor: NATS En Route Limited (NERL) | Stage 3 Gateway Date: 27 Aug 2021 |

The 'Airspace Change Masterplan – Coordination Assurance' letter from the CAA (dated 8th April 2021) requests that four issues are covered before progression to a gateway assessment.

ACOG have worked with NERL to address each of the issues.

1 – Whether the airspace design options proposed have the potential to constrain the options available to any interdependent FASI ACPs.

NERL are proposing to progress the network element separately to the low-level integration element.

The options developed as part of the network element of the LD1 ACP will modernise the ATS route structure in the South-West and do not fundamentally change the general traffic orientation that exists in the airspace and extends into adjacent airspace in the UK. LD1 proposals will fully permit the adherence to current traffic patterns below 7000ft and does not require changes below 7000ft to support the safe and effective operation of the new airspace proposals. LD1 options include the creation of additional routes to today which will increase the number of options available to airport ACP sponsors when designing connectivity to the route network and will therefore not unreasonably constrain their design options.

A duplicate ACP will remain in the system to cater for any low-level changes that are required to integrate Bristol, Cardiff and Exeter airport proposals to modernise airspace below 7,000ft. The low-level integration ACP may include further changes to the network above 7000ft if required, dependent on how the change proposals of airport sponsors mature.

2 – Whether there are risks that a consultation on the airspace design options proposed may not represent the true potential impact because information about the potential impacts on related proposals or cumulative impacts is not sufficiently mature.

The consultation for the network element of the LD1 ACP will focus on aviation stakeholders and ensure they are given the opportunity to respond with their views. Apart from aviation stakeholders, the groups of relevant stakeholders will be different for the network element of the LD1 ACP and the airport ACPs.

The potential impacts of the design options for the network element of the LD1 ACP will be made clear through the CAP1616 process. This information will need to be incorporated into the consultation activities of future proposals, i.e. the duplicate low-level integration LD1 ACP, to ensure stakeholders are clear on the cumulative impact of the overall change.

ACOG would expect NERL to explain how the network and low-level integration elements of the LD1 ACP work to ensure stakeholders fully understand the proposed approach. As part of the consultation for the network element of the ACP, NERL will need to explain how the related duplicate ACP may make further changes in the future and that this will be aligned with the consultation activities Bristol, Cardiff and Exeter airports undertake as part of their change proposals.

3 – Whether further changes may need to be made after related ACP sponsors have developed their proposals, and how the sponsor would ensure that any further changes would be implemented in a timely manner. Note: the CAA may consider advising the Secretary of State regarding using the proposed powers contained in the ATMUA Bill if required and available in the future.

NERL has taken into account the future aspirations of the airports when creating its airspace design options and have acknowledged that further changes to the network above 7000ft in

the LD1 region are likely to be required to support the change proposals of Bristol, Cardiff and Exeter airports. This was clearly stated and accepted in the Design Options and Evaluation Document which was submitted ahead of the LD1 stage 2 gateway assessment.

NERL has therefore proposed to duplicate the existing ACP into two elements to address this issue which would allow the network ACP to progress independently of the masterplan development process.

ACOG have received formal statements from Bristol, Cardiff and Exeter highlighting that there are no objections for the network element of the LD1 ACP proceeding to a stage 3 gateway assessment and moving ahead on an individual timeline. The airports believe that any dependencies that exist can be managed by the duplicate low-level integration ACP being coordinated through the masterplan development process.

NERL has given a commitment to Bristol, Cardiff and Exeter airports to support their modernisation proposals, in line with its licence obligations. The duplicate ACP, which is proposed to address the low-level integration element will ensure any changes required to accommodate airports needs are addressed in a timely manner. NERL is including financial provisions within its NR23 Service and Investment Plan proposals in order to commit to this work.

NERL and ACOG are aware that the powers in the ATMUA Act are also now available.

4 – Why it is necessary for the CAA to consider now, whether the ACP can leave the Masterplan process, rather than wait for this to be demonstrated collaboratively by iteration 2 of the Masterplan.

The FASI-S programme pause due to the Covid-19 pandemic resulted in ACOG being unable to deliver Iteration 2 of the masterplan which was planned for Summer 2020. Following the recent announcement of the establishment of the DfT’s FASI Programme Support Grant the programme is remobilising and ACOG are now planning to submit Iteration 2 of the masterplan in Q4 2021 with acceptance expected by the end of the year.

As per the current LD1 ACP timeline the expected implementation date for the change is March 2023 which is ahead of the planned NERL En-Route technology deployment and due to the size and scale of the technology programme, NERL have determined that it will not be possible to deliver major airspace change in 2024. If the LD1 ACP was to be coordinated as part of the masterplan development process it would delay the LD1 ACP timeline by over two years leading to a knock-on effect to the delivery of the wider programme (including the implementation of multiple airport-led and NERL-led network ACPs) and the associated benefits for all stakeholders.

The proposed approach of duplicating the LD1 ACP will ensure that the benefits associated with the network element of the ACP can be realised as soon as practicable whilst not undermining the masterplan process.

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| <p>Sponsor Rep: [REDACTED] Manager, Airspace Change Compliance & Delivery – NERL</p> | <p>Date: 02/07/21</p> |
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