

Newcastle Airport Response to Combat Air training ACP

When active the proposed airspace will see some aircraft operating from Newcastle International Airport having to operate with a reduced payload and all aircraft having to route significant additional track miles to current practise; in some cases this could make routes unviable and with it damage the regional economy'. Please can you amplify these comments with examples of how the proposed airspace structure will have this effect? You mention later in the letter that these are 'potential route loss and potential reduction in regional growth'. Are these impacts potential or does the proposed airspace structure have a direct impact?

The proposed airspace structure has a direct impact on some airlines and routes. This will impact either fuel load or maximum passenger load factor of the aircraft, and with it route profitability and viability. Currently aircraft plan to route towards OTR and airlines will continue to route in this general direction, for example towards NEPSO and ROKAN. To continue to operate these routes Newcastle would need to expand their controlled airspace to the south east and establish a link to the upper air in this direction. The proposed Combat Air Training ACP provides a block to these routes, when active, and airlines would need to route around this airspace adding track miles, cost, uncertainty in planning and an environmental impact alongside commercial damage to route profitability. This puts significant uncertainty into some routes and therefore the statement "potential route loss and potential reduction in regional growth" is a reasonable one to make. We already have the odd occasion under certain meteorological conditions where aircraft have to make a tech stop to get to their final destination. The ACP as proposed will only make this situation worse.

You also state that 'a future Newcastle ACP could accommodate requirements from our airlines working positively towards solving the issues we currently have with the derogated airspace to the south east of Newcastle being withdrawn on a regular basis'. Does this mean that the issues you currently have are with the regularly withdrawn derogated services to the south east, or are they solely relating to the proposed airspace structure?

The issues we currently have is with the withdrawal of the derogated services to the south east of Newcastle and the complete lack of awareness on its impact to NCL's operation and passenger experience. There have been occasions where passengers or their baggage has had to be offloaded due to the lack of military resource and planning. Airline planning for fuel and seat sales takes place long before the ad-hoc military users decide if they need military ATC Services. We seem to be in a situation where an individual pilot's needs, sea state, front line maintenance dictate and other similar factors decide whether or not derogates services are available. We have made representation to the CAA, through Mark Swan on this topic and were informed the NASC were looking at the problem and failure of the MOU between NATS and the MoD to work as intended. A potential solution is for the MoD to include within the ACP further controlled airspace to the south east connecting routes out of Newcastle to the upper airspace structure. Delivering a coherent solution rather than trying to promise a process that has not been delivered for decades, that being the effective management and utilisation of military danger areas has to be the way forward. NCL is happy to work with the MoD to deliver a solution that works for both parties and not just the military. This coming back to the point that national security and propensity both need to be achieved for the success of the nation. The current MoD proposals do not achieve this.

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