

**MINUTES OF ENABLING RPAS OPERATIONS OUT OF RAF FAIRFORD ASSESSMENT MEETING
HELD VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS ON 7 DEC 2021**

7 December 2021

All invitees

| Present | Appointment | Representing |
|----------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| [REDACTED] | [REDACTED] | CAA |
| [REDACTED] | [REDACTED] | CAA |
| [REDACTED] | [REDACTED] | CAA |
| [REDACTED] | [REDACTED] | CAA |
| [REDACTED] | [REDACTED] | CAA |
| [REDACTED] | [REDACTED] | CAA |
| [REDACTED] | [REDACTED] | CAA |
| [REDACTED] | [REDACTED] | CAA |
| [REDACTED] | [REDACTED] | CAA |
| [REDACTED] | [REDACTED] | CAA |
| [REDACTED] | [REDACTED] | CAA |
| [REDACTED] | [REDACTED] | CAA |
| [REDACTED] | [REDACTED] | CAA |
| [REDACTED] | [REDACTED] | MOD |
| [REDACTED] | [REDACTED] | MOD |
| [REDACTED] | [REDACTED] | USAFE |
| [REDACTED] | [REDACTED] | USAFE |
| [REDACTED] | [REDACTED] | USAFE |

CAA

Apologies

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|--------------|------------|-------|
| J [REDACTED] | [REDACTED] | USAFE |
| [REDACTED] | [REDACTED] | USAFE |

CAA Assessment Meeting Opening Statement

CAA noted that the following were received in advance of the Assessment Meeting and confirmed that the documents must be published by the sponsor, together with minutes of the meeting, on the Airspace Change Portal page:

- Assessment Meeting Agenda
- Assessment Meeting Presentation

The CAA explained the purpose of the meeting and confirmed that the meeting was an Assessment Meeting and not a Gateway. The CAA reinforced that the sponsor was required to provide a broad description of their proposed approach to meeting the CAA's CAP 1616 requirements, but the CAA was not deciding whether the proposed approach met the detailed requirements of the CAA's process at this stage. The purpose of the Assessment Meeting (set out in detail in CAP 1616) was broadly:

- for the Sponsor to present and discuss their Statement of Need,
- to enable the CAA to consider whether the proposal concerned falls within the scope of the formal airspace change process
- to enable the CAA to consider the appropriate provisional Level to assign to the change proposal.

Additionally, the sponsor was required to provide information on how it intended to proceed to fulfil the requirements of the airspace change process and to provide information on timescales. Lastly, the sponsor was required to provide information on how it intended to meet the engagement requirements of the various stages of the airspace change process.

| | ACTION |
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| <p>Item 1 – Introduction</p> <p>All attendees were introduced and the opening statement was read.</p> | |
| <p>Item 2 – Statement of Need (discussion and review)</p> <p>The MOD introduced the Statement of Need as follows:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">In order to support NATO’s Agile Combat Employment concept, the US Air Force is making significant infrastructure investments on airbases in the UK and other allied nations. There is an emerging requirement for military aircraft, including Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems (RPAS), to operate regularly from RAF Fairford. In accordance with CAP 722 – Unmanned Aircraft System Operations in UK Airspace – Guidance and Policy, beyond visual line of sight (BVLOS) operations require either a CAA-approved Detect and Avoid (DAA) capability or to remain within a block of airspace that is segregated from other airspace users. This ACP aims to establish suitable segregated airspace to enable RPAS transition between RAF Fairford and medium- or high-altitude transit.</p> <p>There were no comments.</p> | |
| <p>Item 3 – Issues or opportunities arising from proposed change</p> <p>The MOD outlined that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The intended implementation would be summer 2023, which was acknowledged as being a potentially challenging timeline. • For planning purposes, it is assumed that there will be no CAA-certified Detect and Avoid capability, thus segregation required. • There may be the requirement for a large volume of segregated airspace, which will increase both complexity and the scope of engagement. • There may be the opportunity to better understand BVLOS activity in the UK • The ACP is important to UK and US commitment to NATO. | |
| <p>Item 4 – Options to exploit opportunities or address issues identified</p> <p>The MOD used chart excerpts to show the complexity of the airspace in the vicinity of RAF Fairford, in particular the ATS network directly above. It was suggested that, in addition to considering options close to the operating base, use of extant Danger Areas could be explored as part of options development. The Sponsor highlighted airspace structures in the south west, over Wales and over the North Sea that might be suitable. It was noted that use of those areas would bring its own issues as it would still require additional segregated transit routes established to connect them to RAF Fairford, potential changes of activity designator and deconfliction from other activity.</p> | |
| <p>Item 5 – Provisional indication of the scale level and process requirements*</p> <p>The Case Officer indicated that, due to impact on traffic patterns below 7000ft, this would be a Level M1 ACP.</p> <p>The CAA Consultation/Engagement Regulator outlined the engagement requirements for the ACP, stressing the need to demonstrate a strategy for inclusive, transparent and</p> | |

robust engagement throughout Stages 1-3. They gave advice on potential stakeholder categories and the importance of keeping records and evidence of engagement.

The CAA Environment Regulator stated that as a Level M1 ACP, the consequential impact on civil traffic would need to be assessed in accordance with the Level 1 requirements shown in CAP1616 Appendix B. The CAA Environment Regulator identified that the requirements for environmental assessment include a number of specific metrics, however, if the sponsor believes a quantitative assessment will result in no difference in the outputs for a metric then a qualitative assessment of that impact may be used instead. In such circumstances, the sponsor must present its rationale plus supporting evidence to the CAA, otherwise, the specific metrics and requirements must be presented within the submission. The requirement for options appraisal and cost-benefit analysis was discussed. The Sponsor asked for clarification that this would all be only with reference to civil traffic, which the Economic Regulator confirmed.

Given RAF Fairford's proximity to RAF Brize Norton, and RAF Brize Norton's previous rejected ACP to amend its CTR, there was discussion about the potential impact of two adjacent ACPs being initiated without a full understanding of the impact on each other. The Sponsor stated that RAF Brize Norton is still data gathering to determine what its requirements are and that MOD will ensure full internal engagement to ensure a cohesive approach.

**** When the sponsor submits their gateway materials for each Gateway at the agreed submission deadline, the period between this and the gateway decision will be an analysis by the CAA Airspace Regulatory team (Airspace Regulation) of the documentation submitted, for the purposes of making a recommendation to the CAA Gateway decision maker(s). In conducting the gateway assessment, the CAA is assessing the process employed and its compliance with the guidance stipulated within CAP 1616. It is not an assessment of the merits of the submission itself, which is reviewed at Stage 5 - Decision. We may request documentation from the sponsor that is referred to in the gateway submission but has not been provided as part of the Gateway submission materials. We may also request the sponsor to provide information by way of clarification relating to statements or assumptions made in the submission. Any further information sought by Airspace Regulation at this stage is for clarificatory purposes and is only for determining compliance with the CAP 1616 process.***

In any instance where a sponsor has not met the requirements of the process, we will inform them after the gateway decision and advise of next steps.

Item 6 – Provisional process timescales*

The MOD proposed the following timeline, based on AIRAC 08/2023 (submission by 12 May 23):

| Gateway | Date | Weeks** |
|----------------------------|-----------|---------|
| Define Gateway | 28 Jan 22 | 11 |
| Develop and Assess Gateway | 29 Apr 22 | 13 |
| Consult Gateway | 24 Jun 22 | 13 |
| Update and Submit | 21 Oct 22 | 12 |
| Decide Gateway | 28 Apr 23 | 27 |
| Implementation | 10 Aug 23 | 15 |

The Case Officer asked for further clarification of the time (weeks) being allowed for each stage**.

The Sponsor stated that the timeline was based on minimum recommended duration for each stage, taken from CAP1616, in order to support the required implementation date. Should the ACP not be achievable in that timeframe, an interim solution would be required

Sponsor

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| <p>to enable the RPAS operations. It was acknowledged again that the timeline was potentially challenging, both in terms of being able to comprehensively undertake each stage and due to extant CAA case load, and that options for more resource (military or contracted) to conduct activities were being explored ahead of Stage 2.</p> <p>The Case Officer confirmed that the CAA does currently have a significant number of ACPs in progress, including priority MOD ACPs, but that the proposed timeline would be reviewed internally.</p> <p>CAA Comment: The timeline above is not approved at the time of publication of these minutes. Following CAA analysis against other work streams a mtg to discuss timeline options is scheduled for early Jan to allow a more realistic timeline to be proposed and approved.</p> <p>* The timeline agreed may become subject to change by the CAA. This is because the Secretary of State for Transport has directed the CAA to prioritise RNP Instrument Approach Procedures (IAPs) without an Approach Control proposals; this may impact Airspace Regulation resource and consequently timelines.</p> | |
| <p>Item 7 – Next steps</p> <p>The Case Officer advised that the draft minutes should be provided for review within the next week. Once agreed, a complete version should be saved, and a redacted version uploaded to the airspace change portal.</p> | Sponsor |
| <p>Item 8 – Any other business</p> <p>The Consultation/Engagement Regulator advised that any engagement already conducted can and should be recorded as part of the Stage 1 submission.</p> <p>The Sponsor confirmed that NATS have been notified of the ACP and that an initial scoping meeting is being planned for the New Year. Early guidance from NATS has been to plan with consideration for their large-scale ACPs (LD1.1 and FRA02) rather than the current airspace structure. The Case Officer advised that, as the NATS ACPs are not yet decided, they can be used as a stated planning assumption but that this ACP would need to be feasible regardless of outcome. Other CAA attendees iterated the same points.</p> <p>The Airspace Regulator involved in RPAS Airspace Integration offered to hold a separate session to discuss other RPAS work that may be useful knowledge to assist with this ACP.</p> <p>The Case Officer thanked everybody for attending and advised the Sponsor that the CAA team would be available for advice throughout the process.</p> | |

ACTIONS ARISING FROM CP-2021-078 ASSESSMENT MEETING

| Subject | Name | Action | Deadline |
|----------------|-------------|---|-----------------|
| Timeline | ██████ | Provide more clarification of the proposed duration of each stage, in weeks. | 14 Dec 21 |
| Minutes | ██████ | Provide draft minutes to Case Officer within one week and upload agreed version to airspace change portal within two weeks. | 21 Dec 21 |

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ACP Sponsor