

Archived: 09 November 2021 13:34:53

From: [REDACTED]

Sent: Fri, 5 Nov 2021 18:15:52

To: Air-AirspaceTrial (MULTIUSER)

Cc: [REDACTED]

Subject: RE: 20211007-ACP-2021-007 and ACP-2021-048 Engagement

Sensitivity: Normal

Thank you for the opportunity to provide further feedback on the MODs Airspace Change Proposals (ACP) in support of large-scale military collective training exercises. NATS (NERL) offers the following feedback for ACP-2021-007 Future Combat Airspace Interim Solution, the Sep 2021 activation of TDA597, and ACP-2021-048 Future Combat Airspace - Interim Solution – 2022, future TDA597 activations in August and September 2022.

**In relation to ACP-2021-007 Sep 2021 activation:**

No NATS safety reports were submitted in September 2021 relating to the activation of TDA597 and/or Cobra Warrior. As such, the activation of TDA597 in September 2021 did not raise any safety reports or appear to have had any safety impact.

There was an increased impact on the operation in relation to the number of en-route aircraft affected by the activation of TDA597. Analysis provided reports that 277 aircraft were affected this time compared to 98 in Mar 21. This was anticipated due to the regeneration of traffic as a small recovery in aviation has taken place as the Coronavirus pandemic has progressed, as well as the increased days of activation.

Analysis also indicates, as was the case in Mar 21, a marginal overall network environmental performance improvement.

While traffic levels continue to operate at low levels, NERL operations were able to manage the event due to the operating protocols agreed previously and subsequently updated after the Mar 21 activation. As traffic continues to recover, these protocols will continue to be a critical part of safely managing the airspace and network to mitigate any cumulative effect of multiple/simultaneous activations of UK Special Use Areas (SUA) and other restrictive activities.

The agreed protocols meant that there were no issues relating to the Airspace Management Cell operations. The pre-tactical planning process has worked well.

**In relation to ACP-2021-048 proposed interim solution for Aug/Sep 2022 activation:**

All processes and constructs to support TDA597 activation remain in place within both our systems and those of the EU Network Manager (NM). Provided that no changes are made (including the name of approved airspace) then there is no technical reason why this interim solution could not be extended.

On the assumption that there are no changes to the airspace or operating protocols, there are no new safety concerns highlighted following the September 2021 activity.

That said, as traffic regeneration continues and, significantly, the expected increase in transatlantic traffic following the lifting of pandemic travel restrictions, we expect an increased impact on our operations. Future activations will need to consider this in the planning of the exercises to ensure continued review of any risks.

The requested total activations in Aug and Sep 22 are significantly larger than previous exercises, amounting to a total of 21 days. In August 2022 this amounts to most Tuesdays and Thursdays for the whole month and for September 2022, every weekday for the first 3 weeks. This latter half of the summer is peak network activity time. Again, planning will need to consider this and any other major activities in the airspace to deconflict and mitigate any increased cumulative effect of SUA on the network. NATS continues to seek, and welcomes, early planning engagement to explore opportunities for flexibility should network demand require it.

It is noted that this ACP is to support 2 large scale exercises in quick succession. This is an expansion on what the initial ACP conceived (two large force element exercises a year, one in Spring and one in Autumn). We would seek clarity on the MODs future use and whether this should be viewed as the intended direction of travel i.e., more use of this area than existing areas to support exercises, as opposed to day-to-day training activity in already established SUA. Whilst the airspace has evolved and resolved issues as each exercise using it took place, we would seek to confirm that future use is not outside of the spirit of previous work and engagement. We would also seek to ensure there are sufficient safeguards within the agreed airspace construct and procedures to ensure NATS' and our customers' interests are not unduly affected and any negative impacts are mitigated as much as possible.

As noted at the last activations, analysis indicates there is an overall fuel efficiency benefit associated to TDA597 activation. This is primarily because of suppression of other areas of SUA. As noted at the last post-activation wash up, we believe that the temporary protocols (now proven) should be established through a Letter Of Agreement (LoA) and we note that work has started to deliver this.

Given the increase in the number of days that are being proposed, anticipated traffic increases and the continuing requirement for military Air Traffic Service (ATS) provision to General Air Traffic (GAT) aircraft operating in and out of Newcastle and Teesside International Airports (in lieu of any connectivity and airspace solution that may come as part of the permanent ACP), we believe that this LoA would ensure any impact can be mitigated as far as possible.

The last activation included a participant planning focus on the procedures agreed which can be assumed to have been effective with a reduction of safety events (to zero) when compared to earlier activations. NATS advocates a similar approach for all future activations.

Finally, alongside the previous trial use of TDA597 analysis, MOD should use the planned activation in Mar 22 to assess the impact to the network following the introduction of Free Route Airspace operations in conjunction with any increased traffic. This will enable further insight as to the impact of the airspace and enable refinement of protocols if required.

Please do not hesitate to get in touch if you require anything further and we look forward to continuing early planning and engagement.

On behalf of NATS (NERL), regards

**NATS**

Military Interface Lead  
Airspace & Future Operations

Working remotely until further notice

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**From:** Air-AirspaceTrial (MULTIUSER) <Air-AirspaceTrial@mod.gov.uk>  
**Sent:** 07 October 2021 13:36  
**Subject:** 20211007-ACP-2021-007 and ACP-2021-048 Engagement

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Dear Airspace Stakeholders,

Please find attached a letter requesting engagement for ACP-2021-007 and ACP-2021-048. Please send any replies or enquiries to this address,

Best wishes,



**I am routinely working from home. Please use e-mail or Skype as the primary methods of contact.**

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