

MINUTES OF ACP-2022-002: RAFAT (RAF SYERSTON) TEMPORARY DANGER AREA (TDA) LOCAL GENERAL AVIATION USERS MEETING AT RECTORY FARM AIRFIELD ON 13 JULY 2022

13 July 2022

Distribution List:
All attendees

Present	Appointment	Representing
	TDA Lead	MOD
	TDA Support	MOD
	Rectory Farm Airfield	
	BMAA Team Lead	BMAA
	Calverton Airfield	
	Calverton Airfield	
	LAA	LAA
	Caunton Flying Club	
	Watnall Airfield	
	Temple Bruer Airfield	
	Lambley Airfield	
	Orston Airfield	
	Hougham Airfield	
	Hougham Airfield	
	Stapleford Airfield	
Oxton Airfield		
Oxton Airfield		
Oxton Airfield		

Meeting Opening Statement

The purpose of this meeting was to pass a consistent narrative of the proposal across to local aviation stakeholders and provide a better understanding of why RAF Syerston is being considered for a TDA to enable the Royal Air Force Aerobatics Team (RAFAT) training, whilst also offering an opportunity for local aviation stakeholders to engage directly with the TDA project officers.

	ACTION
<p>Item 1 – Introduction</p> <p>The TDA Lead welcomed all attendees, prior to introductions around the room.</p>	
<p>Item 2 – Background to RAFAT Basing & Caveat Removal</p> <p>The TDA Lead provided a detailed brief on the history of the proposed sale of RAF Scampton, highlighting the issue of the removal of all caveats to the</p>	

sale and the consequent impact that this has on the future availability of EG R313.

Since R313 may become unavailable from 1 April 2023, the **TDA Lead** explained that an airspace feasibility study was commissioned by the MOD to identify possible alternative training locations for RAFAT. This study presented its conclusions in late 2021 including an assessment of risks, reputational Impact and costs while making a number of recommendations. It was highlighted that following a basing study in 2019, RAF Waddington was selected as the new home for RAFAT and this would not be revisited should R313 be lost. Since RAF Waddington is currently assessed as unsuitable for Synchro Pair training, an alternate training location could be required. The **TDA Lead** went on to explain that after a review of multiple potential sites, RAF Syerston was decided upon as the best option for RAFAT Synchro Pair early season training and that no other realistic options currently exist.

- The **TDA Lead** was asked if R313 would be used at the same time as any RAFAT activity at RAF Syerston or RAF Waddington. The **TDA Lead** confirmed that no concurrent training activity would occur at split locations.

RAF Syerston Specifics

The **TDA Lead** illustrated the local area using 1:500,000 military and civilian flying charts, pointing out that there were a number of sensitive locations within and around the proposed TDA. The **TDA Lead** explained that there will inevitably be impacts on local communities and businesses and this was being taken very seriously by the MOD. In addition, local hazards were being reviewed and considered.

The **TDA Lead** was asked if any consideration had been made regarding the impact on local equine activity, particularly Southwell Racecourse. The **TDA Lead** explained that he was already scheduled to engage with Mr [REDACTED], the manager at Southwell Racecourse. He also assured the attendees that any impact on such activity would be taken into consideration.

When reviewing both flying charts, the entire audience were critical as to why the military flying chart lacked some of the light aircraft and microlight sites which were depicted on the civilian charts. The consensus was that this could be a flight safety issue especially for military aircraft transiting at low level and potentially unaware of General Aviation activity and further comment was made that this was a problem across the entirety of UK mapping. The **TDA Lead** agreed that this was confusing and agreed that this would be passed back to the MOD for further investigation and action.

The **TDA Lead** presented slides to highlight the current situation and likely funneling of General Aviation traffic influenced by the proposed TDA at RAF Syerston. This included images of HEAT maps of GA and Glider activity. The **TDA Lead** welcomed any comments on current traffic patterns and what impact the TDA would have.

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The **attendees** asked what would happen long term if the TDA became permanent airspace with regard to the future status of EG R313.

The **TDA Lead** explained that if R313 becomes unusable for RAFAT following the sale of RAF Scampton, then a full ACP would need to be carried out for RAF Syerston, however this would only be for regular Synchro Pair use along similar lines to this TDA, for limited use during winter only. As with the TDA, the aim would be to provide the Synchro Pair with safe airspace in which to conduct early line feature training until such time that it could be transferred elsewhere, currently assessed as RAF Donna Nook Air Weapons Range on the East Coast. This ACP would only occur if R313 is lost permanently and would be contingent on the removal of EG R313.

Local Area Traffic Patterns and concerns

The attendees emphasized that the Trent Valley was a main throughfare for traffic from North to South and vice versa. The three main concerns were:

- Impact on activity at airfields located under the TDA.
- Choke points either side of the TDA.
- RAFAT fast jet aircraft transiting to and from the TDA through the choke points multiple times per week.

The **BMAA** associated the risk of MAC during RAFAT transit flying to/from the TDA as SEVERE. The BMAA were unable to quantify this risk level, however they explained that the current situation was considered adequate and safe. Also, since many GA users cannot predict when they will be near the airspace when it is NOTAM'd to be active then they would not want to risk flying near the airspace which could consequently limit their activity. The opinion was that the GA community would usually assume the worst (TDA active) if unable to confirm its status by other means.

Local Air Traffic and Airspace Management

With regard to deconfliction, DACS and traffic avoidance, the **TDA Lead** explained that RAFAT aircraft would be under a traffic service from RAF Waddington Radar and that other airspace users could receive traffic updates, TDA updates and where necessary a Danger Area Crossing Service (DACs) from RAF Waddington on their LARS frequency (to be confirmed). There was a general concern amongst the attendees that the RAF Waddington LARS was not to the standard that it was several years ago, and quite often users were unable to raise anyone on frequency, particularly on Friday afternoons. The attendees emphasised that the DACs must be adequately resourced and reliable throughout the day. The **TDA Lead** commented that this feedback would be passed to RAF Waddington ATC.

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The **TDA Lead** further explained that RAF Waddington Radar would always be staffed during slot activation since they would in turn be providing a Traffic Service to RAFAT, however he would raise these potential issues regarding GA users and LARS availability with RAF Waddington ATC. The **TDA Lead** also explained that any traffic under the control of EMA to the west could also be provided with TDA status and RAFAT positional updates. Furthermore, where necessary and especially if there are any priority movements, then RAFAT could cease their activity and avoid any conflicting traffic.

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It was also explained that a Letter of Agreement (LOA) was being drafted between local Airfield participants including RAF Waddington, Nottingham Airport and EMA. The LOA would include a process whereby the status of the TDA would be communicated by RAF Waddington as and when the TDA changed HOT/COLD. The **TDA Lead** explained that the Danger Area Control Authority would be RAF Waddington ATC who would communicate the status of the TDA both when RAFAT taxi prior to its use (HOT) and when on recovery (COLD). In the event that any NOTAM'd slots were no longer required, the message would again be communicated to all signatories of the LOA. Any airspace users communicating with local ATC such as East Midlands Airport or Doncaster would be updated where necessary on the status of the TDA.

The attendees highlighted that the risk of inadvertent transgression of the restricted airspace could lead to prosecution/Airspace Awareness Course attendance. As such they must treat the airspace as HOT without any other information. The **TDA Lead** explained that this information could be relayed by ATC and would also be available to users of the Skydemon App as planned use of slots will be NOTAM'd in advance by RAFAT.

The **TDA Lead** explained the likely transit route and height for the RAFAT Hawks which would depart RAF Waddington and transit between 500' and 1000' south of Newark into the proposed TDA.

The **TDA Lead** was asked if the RAFAT aircraft have transponders. The **TDA Lead** confirmed this however that they do not have TCAS (to the surprise of the audience).

- This raised concern from the attendees, particularly since most GA activity was conducted at around 1000' – 2000'.
- The **TDA Lead** suggested that the RAFAT Hawks could transit at 500' AGL to provide some element of separation in combination with a traffic service from RAF Waddington and that this would be confirmed with RAFAT. If GA users contacted RAF Waddington LARS they could receive updates on the status of the TDA and the location of the Hawks. This was accepted by the audience as a suitable mitigation to MAC and would lead to little increased risk over current levels.

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A question was raised on whether RAF Waddington had an Air Traffic Information Service (ATIS) and if so, could the status of the TDA be

published on this frequency. The **TDA Lead** welcomed this idea and will follow up on the status of a RAF Waddington ATIS and the ability to publish TDA status.

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The **TDA Lead** was asked why so much airspace was required for the Synchro Pair. The **TDA Lead** illustrated the display lines around RAF Syerston and described the Synchro Pair training profile and the need for the TDA to have a 5nm radius. It was however emphasized that if for an extreme reason there was a pressing need to enter the TDA, for instance an aircraft delivery for maintenance at Rectory Farm airfield, and this activity could not be time deconflicted in advance, then users could contact RAFAT Ops and they would happily deconflict themselves. Suitable contact details would be provided in due course once a decision on the TDA is made by the CAA and the numbers are confirmed following the Teams relocation to RAF Waddington.

The **TDA Lead** made it clear that although using RAF Syerston would be kept to a minimum, it was appreciated that the funneling effects caused by the TDA, particularly to the west of Syerston could be severely limiting to both RW and FW activity and could prove a challenge to local users and businesses. The **TDA Lead** went on to highlight the impact that the TDA would have on GA including pinch points either side. This was illustrated using historical information including HEAT maps of GA and Glider activity.

The **TDA lead** acknowledged the restrictions that the TDA would cause and explained that the latest proposal was to drop the top height to 5000' from the original 9500' AGL. The **TDA lead** asked if this would be preferable good for GA.

The attendees responded that they can get up to 6000' (most operate at around 2000') however microlights using MOGAS are limited to 6000ft due to fuel limitations.

The **TDA Lead** followed this up asking if the top height dropped down to 3000' would this be acceptable. There was a unanimously positive response to this as it would enable the vast majority of GA to transit over the top of the TDA whereas 5000' would prove more challenging. The lower option would alleviate much of the choke point issues currently envisaged, although on the day, the cloud base would of course affect this option to transit overhead the TDA.

The **TDA Lead** explained that the RAFAT aircraft would need to conduct a 'Trimming Run' prior to their practice which would require 5000' top height. Options to enable the 'Trimming Run' to be executed whilst maintaining a 3000' TDA top height would be investigated, for instance Radar Service updates to the RAFAT aircraft. The **TDA Lead** would follow this up for consideration by RAFAT.

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The attendees asked how many slots would be used per day and when. The **TDA Lead** explained the proposed time period that the TDA would be utilised as follows and that potentially all 3 slots 5 days a week could be utilised:

- Mon-Fri only, slots (deconflicted with Syerston flying programme):
 - 0830-0915 local (45 mins)
 - 1200-1245 local (45 mins)
 - 1450-1530 local (40 mins)

Slots would be front loaded during the first 4-8 weeks of the TDA and RAFAT would aim to only fly the minimum number of sorties to achieve their aim of reaching a minimum level of competence, after which training could be safely conducted at RAF Donna Nook. RAF Donna Nook is currently assessed as unsuitable for Synchro Pair early training, hence the requirement to use a runway site.

The **TDA Lead** explained that although the planned slots to be used would be NOTAM'd at least 24 hours in advance, a weekly RAFAT flying programme could be issued to an email mailing list so that all airspace users could plan ahead. The **TDA Lead** reiterated that if any airspace users have a special activity or request that would otherwise be prevented by activation of the TDA, for instance a time sensitive transit, they could contact RAFAT Ops directly who would consider cancelling the slot and reverting back to using R313. Again, contact details for RAFAT Ops would be provided to all local airspace users in due course.

The attendees agreed that effective and timely communication were critical to enable appropriate messaging and relaxing of airspace limitations imposed on their activities.

Threats/Objections Addressed

The **TDA Lead** summarised the threats and objections that had been received regarding the proposed TDA and confirmed that all considerations had already been covered off during the meeting discussion.

Item 6 – Next steps

The **TDA Lead** concluded the presentation and meeting by highlighting all of the concerns raised in previous engagement responses for the proposed TDA and its impact on other airspace users, population, and business. It was highlighted that mitigations were being made as far as possible and that RAFAT activity at RAF Syerston could be safely achieved, but only with the understanding and support of the GA community.

The attendees were unanimous in stating that effective communications would be critical to confirming when RAFAT plan on using the airspace and providing information to other airspace users when airborne with the provision of accurate and timely updates from a reliable and suitably resourced LARS/DACS from RAF Waddington. This would of course rely on GA using these planned services.

<p>Item 7 – Any other business</p> <p>The Chair/TDA Support thanked everybody for attending and confirmed that everything had been covered. Minutes covering the detail of the meeting would be written and uploaded onto the CAA ACP-2022-002 portal.</p>	<p>MOD</p>

ACTIONS ARISING FROM ACP-2022-002: RAFAT (RAF SYERSTON) TEMPORARY DANGER AREA (TDA) LOCAL GENERAL AVIATION USERS MEETING AT RECTORY FARM AIRFIELD ON 13 JULY 2022

Subject	Name	Action	Deadline
Meeting Minutes	TDA Lead/Support	Write draft minutes within two weeks of meeting.	27 July 2022
RAF Waddington LARS	TDA Lead/Support	Report feedback on the poor service received by GA users on RAF Waddington LARS.	27 July 2022
RAFAT Synchro Transit Height	TDA Lead/Support	Recommend that RAFAT Hawks transit to TDA 2022-002 at 500' AGL. Confirmation will be sought from RAFAT.	31 Aug 2022
RAF Waddington ATIS	TDA Lead/Support	Confirm status of RAF Waddington ATIS and ability to provide TDA HOT/COLD updates.	31 Aug 2022
RAFAT Flying Programme	TDA Lead/Support	Investigate the ability for RAFAT Programmers to distribute an advanced flying programme to a local airspace users email contact list.	31 Aug 2022
RAFAT Height Block Options	TDA Lead/Support	Liaise with RAFAT on best management of vertical airspace restrictions and Air Traffic Management to allow Trimming Run to be safely achieved.	31 Aug 2022
Military ½ Mil Low Flying Charts	TDA Lead/Support	Report back to AIDU/MOD on Light Airfields and Microlight sites missing from LFC	31 Aug 2022

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