


MINUTES OF ACP-2022-002: RAFAT (RAF SYERSTON) TEMPORARY DANGER AREA (TDA) MEETING WITH LIGHT AIRCRAFT ASSOCIATION (LAA) & BRITISH GLIDING ASSOCIATION (BGA) AT LAA, TURWESTON AIRFIELD ON 21 JULY 2022

21 July 2022

Distribution List:
All attendees

Present	Appointment	Representing
	TDA Lead	MOD
	TDA Support	MOD
	CEO, LAA	LAA
		LAA
		BGA

Meeting Opening Statement

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

	ACTION
<p>Introduction</p> <p>The TDA Lead welcomed the LAA and BGA attendees, prior to introductions around the room.</p>	
<p>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 sale and the consequent impact that this has on the future availability of EG R313.</p> <p>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 (Proximity of A15 in addition to construction work close to 'crowd centre'), an alternate training location could be required. The TDA Lead went on to explain that after a review of</p>	

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 by the LAA if there was an implication for traffic on the A46 at RAF Syerston? The **TDA Lead** confirmed that the general feeling was that there were no concerns due to the road being in a cutting adjacent to the airfield, proximity of trees which would visually shield any traffic from RAFAT activity and also the direction of travel of the aircraft in relation to the road. Previous RAFAT displays at RAF Syerston corroborate this analysis.
- The **TDA Lead** was asked by the BGA what were the discounting reasons for the decision not to choose other locations for Synchro training? The **TDA Lead** explained the decisions were based on a mix of considerations including how busy a flying station was and any likely growth; Head of Establishment and Operations Wings assessing any likely noise footprint; and among other things there were also various contractual and regulatory limitations which prevented some other locations being considered suitable.

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 such as Southwell Racecourse.

When introducing 1:500,000 civilian and military low flying charts, the TDA Lead highlighted the concerns that were raised at the Rectory Farm meeting on 13 July in which the entire audience were critical as to why the military flying charts lacked some of the light aircraft and microlight sites which were depicted on the civilian charts. The **LAA** and **BGA** concurred with these concerns and the **TDA Lead** explained that follow up work to highlight this to the MOD will be actioned.

Local Area Traffic Patterns and concerns

The **TDA Lead** presented slides to highlight the current situation and likely choke points and 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.

- The **LAA** asked what opportunity there was to re-design the footprint of the TDA to reduce the impact it would have on traffic transiting to the West? It was suggested that by slicing some of the geographic footprint to the West in vicinity of Newton (disused), less traffic would be forced near or overhead Nottingham Airport whilst also easing the

likely flow of traffic to the East of the TDA and thus also reducing any conflict with RAFAT aircraft transiting from the East. The **TDA Lead** explained this had been previously considered and discounted due to concerns over separation between General Aviation and RAFAT aircraft. It would however be reviewed with RAFAT for any other airspace design options.

- The LAA enquired whether engagement had been made with the British Helicopter Association? The TDA Lead confirmed that engagement had been made and no negative feedback had been received.

The **TDA Lead** explained the transit route and height for the RAFAT Hawks which would depart RAF Waddington and transit at 500' passing to the south of Newark into the proposed TDA whilst under a Traffic Service from RAF Waddington ATC. The audience agreed that this was a sensible solution.

- The **BGA** asked about the Slot timings and likely use of RAF Syerston in the summer, explaining that the proposed Winter dates in the engagement letter are not an issue for gliding activity however they need to understand how often the Synchro Pair would be using RAF Syerston in the summer. The **TDA Lead** explained that there would very rarely be any individual practice any other time during the year and that the focus of the TDA was for initial Synchro training in winter only.
- The **BGA** then asked what would happen at RAF Syerston in the future if R313 closes and if the TDA would become a permanent Danger Area? 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 complete removal of EG R313.
- The **BGA** asked if RAFAT aircraft carried any conspicuity devices that would aide awareness and deconfliction with other airspace users. The **TDA Lead** confirmed that no such equipment was carried although this has been an aspiration for many years and that integration is being looked at. The **LAA** and **BGA** explained the various commercially available products that provided real-time situational awareness to their members including FLARM and other similar tools.

Local Air Traffic and Airspace Management

MOD

Following on from the discussions at the Rectory Farm Local Air Users meeting on 13 July 22, the **LAA** emphasised concerns on the reliability of the RAF Waddington LARS. 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). The **TDA Lead** emphasised that the DACS must be adequately resourced and reliable throughout the day and that feedback had already been passed to RAF Waddington ATC as follow up action from the Rectory Farm meeting.

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 acceptable for GA? The **LAA** explained that if the weather conditions were CAVOK or for traffic cleared IMC then this was bearable. However since 80% of LAA pilots are cleared VFR only then many of their members would be impacted.
- The **BGA** was asked at what height is most gliding activity conducted? The **BGA** confirmed that gliding would generally be conducted between 1500' and 5000'.

When discussing HEAT charts and airspace activity, the **BGA** confirmed that the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) has a tool for identifying airspace activity and recommended the **TDA Lead** liaise with Mr Stu Wain at the CAA who could assist in any relevant material and products.

Threats and Objections Addressed

The **TDA Lead** re-emphasised that the proposed TDA and any future activity at RAF Syerston would be for Winter use only.

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)

Following engagement with other local airspace users, the **TDA Lead** acknowledged that Slot 1 would have the least impact on local activity, followed by Slot 3. It was highlighted that Slot 2 was expected to have the greatest impact on local airspace users and businesses.

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 following feedback, although the planned slots to be used would be NOTAM'd at least 24 hours in advance, a weekly RAFAT flying programme would be issued a week in advance to an email mailing list so that all airspace users could plan ahead. Information would also include periods of activation, vertical limitations and RAFAT transit details.

The **TDA Lead** re-iterated the need for a reliable and resilient LARS and DACS from RAF Waddington ATC and explained that a Letter of Agreement (LOA) had been 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** re-iterated 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. Contact details for RAFAT Ops would be provided to all local airspace users in due course.

The **TDA Support** asked the **LAA** and **BGA** if an Air Traffic Information Service (ATIS) that provided live updates on the status of the TDA would be of value? This was welcomed by the **LAA** and **BGA** and was considered to be a very useful idea.

The **TDA Lead** re-iterated the reasoning behind why 2 ACPs were in progress for RAF Waddington and RAF Syerston. The **BGA** and **LAA** were content for the reasoning behind this as explained earlier in the meeting however the **BGA** highlighted that the reasoning by the MOD was not convincing enough on why other sites with a runway line feature could not be used for Synchro Pair training. The **TDA Lead** explained that RAF Syerston has been selected by the MOD as it was considered the best option, however other sites would need to be re-evaluated should RAF Syerston be deemed unsuitable.

The **TDA Lead** explained that if TDA 2022-002 is refused by the CAA, there will be no follow up attempt by the MOD to use the airspace overhead RAF Syerston using RA(T)s.

The **TDA Lead** went on to clarify that should TDA 2022-002 be approved by the CAA then the airspace will be used by the Synchro Pair to test the site at RAF Syerston as a suitable future training location. Only if considered suitable AND if future use of R313 is lost, would a full ACP be

<p>submitted to the CAA. The BGA made it very clear that they would want absolute clarity in writing that any future ACP would only entail Winter training and that it would not involve summer activity.</p> <p>The TDA Lead concluded the presentation and meeting. The LAA and BGA commented that all engagement concerns had been captured during the meeting. The BGA were very concerned about any future ACP however TDA 2022-002 was certainly workable from their perspective.</p>	
<p>Any other business</p> <p>The TDA Lead thanked the LAA and BGA for attending the meeting 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) MEETING WITH LIGHT AIRCRAFT ASSOCIATION (LAA) & BRITISH GLIDING ASSOCIATION (BGA) AT LAA, TURWESTON AIRFIELD ON 21 JULY 2022

Subject	Name	Action	Deadline
Meeting Minutes	TDA Lead/Support	Write draft minutes within two weeks of meeting.	4 August 2022
RAFAT Airspace requirements	TDA Lead	Conduct a review with RAFAT on TDA design and any other airspace design options.	31 Aug 2022

MOD
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