

ACP-2021-088 – English Channel BVLOS Search and Rescue Operations

Stage 1 Gateway Outcome – 29 July 2022

[STATEMENT]

As part of Stage 1 of the CAP 1616 airspace change process, the UK Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) has completed a Stage 1 Gateway Assessment of the Bristow Helicopters Ltd airspace change proposal (ACP) – ACP-2021-088 – English Channel BVLOS Search and Rescue Operations.

In order for the CAA to allow an ACP to pass through the Stage 1:

1. the change sponsor must have produced a Statement of Need and the CAA has determined that an airspace change is an appropriate option to consider against the requirements in Appendix A
2. the change sponsor must have met with the CAA to discuss the airspace change process (unless a meeting was not required) and demonstrated that it understands what will be required of it
3. the CAA must have agreed the change sponsor's proposed timescales
4. the change sponsor must have produced design principles
5. the change sponsor must have explained to the CAA's satisfaction how the design principles were influenced through stakeholder engagement against the requirements in Appendix D
6. the CAA must have accepted the process and approach used to develop the design principles against the requirements in Appendix D
7. the CAA must have accepted the design principles as a well-founded shortlist of principles to inform the development of airspace design option

At the Gateway assessment for this proposal, the CAA concluded that Criteria 5, 6, and 7 were not met for the following reasons:

Criterion 5: Insufficient information was provided in the submission documents as to how the stakeholders were identified and it is not clear if the guidance in CAP1616 paragraphs 113 and 121 has been applied. The submission did not include all required elements of paragraph D8. As such it is not clear why some stakeholders were targeted, and others were not; some relevant stakeholders may have been missed. Whilst there was some evidence of design principles being influenced through stakeholder engagement, it has not been possible to ascertain the appropriateness of these adjustments.

Criterion 6: The submission is not clear on how the draft design principles were developed or how they might impact on or conflict with each other (paragraphs 115, C25, D2). In considering the approach taken by the Sponsor, it was not evident that effective 2-way engagement had been achieved (paragraph 116), with the targeted stakeholders receiving little information on the technical and regulatory considerations (paragraphs D2, D4, D9).

Criterion 7: Due to the limited information provided relating to the development of the design principles, it has not been possible to confirm their suitability to this ACP, and some would be difficult to use for comparing options in Stage 2 (paragraphs 119, D6).

The CAA has informed the change sponsor of this decision. In line with CAP 1616, the change sponsor is now able to reconsider its submission before resubmitting it for further review by the CAA at a future Gateway.

It is important to note that whether an ACP passes a gateway successfully or not does not predetermine the CAA's later final decision on whether to approve the airspace change proposal. This decision is not an explicit or implicit comment on the merits or otherwise of this ACP. This will come at the decision-making stage (Stage 5 - DECIDE).

[END STATEMENT]