

Statement of Need: Shoreham Helicopter Training Circuit

Shoreham Airport is located on the South Coast bounded by the South Downs (rising ground to the north), the Adur River and town of Shoreham to the east and the Brighton & Hove football training ground and Lancing/Worthing to the west. An Air Traffic Zone (ATZ) is formed about the airfield with a fixed-wing visual circuit pattern (left-hand) established to the main hard Runway 20/02. In addition, there are grass runways 13/31 and 06/24 which are used periodically (when the wind dictates) and these have associated visual circuit patterns. Helicopter training circuits are established to the north and west of the main runway predicated on the Helicopter Training Area (HTA) Whisky (located west of Runway 20/02). Occasionally HTA X-ray is used (this is located mid-field) for circuits when the declared runway in use is Runway 24/06. The schematic of the nominal track of the helicopter circuits is published in the UK AIP (AD2-EGKA-4-1). Instrument Approach Procedures (Non-Precision RNP) are published in the UK AIP (AD2-EGKA-8-1 and 8-2) for Runway 02/20. All visual and instrument flight procedures are contained within Class G airspace.

The Airport operates 7 days per week (Mon-Fri 0800-2000, Sat 0900-2000 and Sun 0900-1900) with full ATC Mon-Sat between 1000-2000 and an Air Ground Control Service each morning from opening until 1000 and also all-day Sunday. The Airport handles circa 45-48000 movements per annum of which circa 12% account for helicopter movements and approximately a third of those are flying the helicopter circuit. Most training circuit usage occurs during the working week and this usage has been reasonably stable (excluding impact of COVID-19 during 2020 and 2021). Any growth potential in the use of the helicopter circuit is limited by the local airspace and fixed-wing activity.

This change proposal is about a minor adjustment to the helicopter training circuits as published in the UK AIP. Generally, the nominal track that lies outside of the airfield boundary will be sustained and the flight profiles will remain as-is. The proposed adjustment of the nominal track (that sits mainly inside the airfield boundary) is required so that the proposed New Monks Farm (NMF) development to the west of the Airport would not be routinely overflown when the houses are built and occupied. This proposal is not part of, nor does it conflict with, the UK Airspace Modernisation Strategy. It is required in order to allow the developer of NMF to meet a planning application restriction imposed on the development.

Whilst the movement of the nominal track of the helicopter circuit will alleviate the environmental impact (noise) on the new housing community, there is no technical, safety, operational or economic factor that is relevant to this proposal.