



Ministry
of Defence

**Defence Airspace and Air Traffic
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Dear stakeholders,

**DECISION TO SPLIT ACP-2021-078 TO ADDRESS HALE AND MALE AIRSPACE
REQUIREMENTS SEPARATELY**

Rationale

Over the last few months, it has become increasingly apparent that the complexity introduced by the requirement for segregated transit corridors (TC) to facilitate lateral transit of MALE RPAs across UK airspace could create delays to ACP-2021-078 as a whole and jeopardise the planned introduction of RPA operations from RAF Fairford. Although the requirement for both MALE and HALE operations still exists, the sponsor and ACP team consider that splitting the ACP into two separate elements would enable more expeditious progress towards establishing airspace within which RPAs can climb/descend between the airfield at RAF Fairford and their requested high-level transit, which will allow for commencement of HALE operations in the desired timeframe. The new ACP to introduce segregated airspace to support MALE RPAs, through a combination of climb/descent airspace and medium-level TCs, will progress according to a timeline that allows for the extensive planning needed to propose an airspace design that meets operational requirements and also minimises impact on the ATS network.

Work Completed So Far

The SoN for ACP-2021-078 described a requirement for segregated airspace to facilitate climb/descent for HALE and MALE RPAs and onward transit for MALE RPAs. The work carried out to complete Stages 1 and 2 has included everything necessary to capture all requirements. This request does not introduce any new requirement, it only changes the method of managing the airspace design and implementation by allowing the team to work to different timelines for HALE and MALE elements.

What Happens Now?

ACP-2022-083¹ has now been initiated to continue work on establishing suitable segregated airspace for MALE RPAs. All of the work completed so far for ACP-2021-078 has been uploaded to the new ACP portal area along with this letter. The sponsor will propose a new timeline for progression through the remaining ACP stages. This ACP will include climb/descent airspace, but if ACP-2021-078² is successful, the climb/descent element may be dropped from this ACP.

¹ [ACP-2022-083 - Enabling RPA Operations from RAF Fairford - MALE](#)

² [ACP-2021-078 - Enabling RPA Operations from RAF Fairford - HALE](#)

ACP-2021-078 has been renamed to capture the new focus of HALE operations. The sponsor will establish a new timeline for progression through the remaining ACP stages.

The CAA has agreed that both ACPs can move forward from a starting point of Stage 3, Step A. There is no change to previously proposed activation timings (between 1hr after sunset and 1hr before sunrise) or overall frequency of airspace activation, therefore the Sponsor does not anticipate any unanticipated impacts on extant stakeholders due to this ACP split. **If you believe that the split does affect your operations, please get in touch with us as soon as possible to discuss.**

Temporary Airspace Change

ACP-2022-008 was initiated to establish temporary, segregated airspace to support an initial operating capability (IOC) from May 23, with full operating capability (FOC) from Sep 23. With ongoing timeline delays now expected to deliver HALE FOC from Feb 24 (to align with NATS' quarterly systems updates), the TDA timeline will also need to be delayed³, or it may be that there is no longer a TDA requirement. More work is still required to fully understand this aspect.

³ TDAs are generally only valid for 90 days, though extensions can be agreed in certain circumstances.