Ministry of Defence

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AIRSPACE CHANGE PROPOSAL - ACP-2022-040

Introduction

At RAF Brize Norton, the MOD intends to redesign the current controlled airspace to the appropriate volume to support RAF Brize Norton's operations, release unrequired airspace and enable safe, efficient access for other air space users.

The dimensions of the Controlled Airspace (CAS) surrounding RAF Brize Norton has been in place for over 40 years, with very few amendments. With the change of aircraft types now using the aerodrome, coupled with the criteria used to design the procedures, the current design is no longer appropriate for current arrival and departure profiles. Elements of these profiles regularly leave the protected confines of CAS. Military operations are not mandated to comply with CAA Containment Policy however, the policy exists for sound rationale and the MOD wishes to conform to CAA guidelines as much as possible. The MOD wishes to contain redesigned and new procedures, thus future proofing operations at RAF Brize Norton; this modernisation also allows RAF Brize Norton to change with the Airspace Modernisation Strategy (AMS) and London Airspace Modernisation Programme (LAMP).

AMS

As with Brize, the UK airspace is dated. Over the years, it has accommodated the growth in demand for air transport by adding significant complexity to the UK's airspace system, primarily over South-East England where volumes of traffic are highest. This has made UK Airspace some of the most complex in the world. Despite the increase in complexity, 'many air routes and air traffic management practices are not utilising the modern technologies available and aircraft continue to use flightpaths that are outdated,' resulting in inefficiencies and greater fuel burn and emissions. Unlocking the benefits of modernisation will make journeys faster and more environmentally friendly.

LAMP

Airports that are affected by the LAMP are looking to modernise their low-level arrival and departure routes, to ensure they can meet the needs for the sustainable future growth. The MOD wants to introduce Performance Based Navigation (PBN) procedures in harmony with LAMP. LAMP has been incorporated into Future Airspace Strategy Implementation – South (FASI-S) programme under the AMS. RAF Brize Norton has not been included as part of the FASI-S programme, but its aircraft must be able to integrate with the airways network both now and in the future.

Aircraft at RAF Brize Norton

The station has a mixed fleet of aircraft to provide rapid global mobility in support of UK overseas operations and exercises, as well as AAR (Air to Air Refuelling) support for fast jet aircraft, both on operations and in support of UK Homeland Defence. Aircraft stationed at RAF Brize Norton:

Voyager is the RAF's sole air-to-air refuelling (AAR) tanker and also operates as a strategic air transport. Fuel offloaded during AAR is taken from the aircraft's standard wing and fuselage tanks, leaving the cabin free for up to 291 personnel and the hold available for freight.

Hercules (C-130J) is the RAF's primary tactical transport aircraft and has been the backbone of UK operational tactical mobility tasks since it was brought into service in 1999. It is frequently employed to operate into countries or regions where there is a threat to aircraft; its performance, tactics and defensive systems make it the ideal platform for such tasks. The aircraft is highly flexible, with the ability to airdrop a variety of stores and paratroopers and operate from natural surface landing zones.

Globemaster (C-17) is capable of rapid, strategic delivery of troops and all types of cargo to main operating bases anywhere in the world. The Globemaster's load-bearing rear ramp and digitally controlled loading systems, combined with the skills of its crews and ground handlers, enable large, complex items of equipment, including Chinook helicopters, military vehicles, etc to be loaded.

Atlas C.1 (A400m) provides airlift and strategic oversized lift capabilities complementing those of the Hercules and C-17 fleets. It can accommodate as many as 116 fully equipped troops or a combination of vehicles, pallets, and personnel, up to a payload of 37 tonnes. Loads are delivered by parachute, gravity extraction or by landing. Paratroops will be dropped from the aircraft's dedicated paratroop doors, or from the rear ramp.

Airspace Change Proposal (ACP)

The MOD has initiated an Airspace Change Proposal (ACP) to enhance a safe operating environment for all airspace users and to modernise and contain procedures.

Changes to UK airspace are legally required to follow the process laid down in the CAP1616, details of which can be found online. This process aims to ensure a fair and transparent dialogue between the Change Sponsor and any affected stakeholders. It also ensures that the changes are not arbitrarily applied without full engagement and formal consultations. The CAA, as an impartial regulator, will hold Change Sponsors to account and ensure that CAP1616 is followed correctly as part of its decision-making responsibility.

The CAP1616 process encompasses seven stages. Each stage is considered separately and sequentially by the CAA based on a pre-agreed timeline. The process is not solution driven and each stage informs the next. In this instance, the requirement is to modernise and contain new procedures**.** This was presented to the CAA at the first stage of the ACP process and the CAA has agreed that an airspace change is an appropriate means by which to achieve this. All documentation relating to the ACP can be found on the CAA's Airspace Portal.

Design Principles – Stage 1: Define Step b: Design Principles

The creation of any new airspace or procedures first requires airspace design principles to be developed, which are then taken forward when developing design options later in the process. The MOD is keen to engage with stakeholders and is asking for your feedback on the initial draft principles. The Sponsor will then submit a final Design Principles document to the CAA after all feedback has been received.

The MOD will engage with NATMAC members and has also selected local stakeholders from an area within a radius approximately 30 miles of RAF Brize Norton.

The MOD has compiled a set of draft design principles. At this stage we are not seeking feedback on the wider proposal, stakeholders will have an opportunity to do this later in the Airspace Change process once the proposal has been developed in greater detail. The MOD would like to understand which elements of the airspace design principles you, as another airspace user, deem important and would like to be considered. As a stakeholder you are now invited to consider the draft design principles. The list is not exhaustive, but you may wish to comment on the following:

- Are there any other design principles you would like the MOD to consider?
- Would you like the MOD to discount any of its draft design principles?
- Should the MOD prioritise some design principles ahead of others?
- Would you like any more detail to be included in the design principles?

Any additional detail and reasoning behind your feedback is encouraged.

Draft Design Principles

Letter	DP	Rationale
a	Provide a safe environment for all airspace users	Provide a safely designed airspace structure to ensure the safe operation of all air systems
b	Provide a safe operating environment for high-risk military activities.	Provide a safely designed airspace structure to ensure the safe operation of high-risk military activities in the delivery of Defence of the Realm. This includes the equivalent of passenger jets with hundreds of individuals on. It considers the severity of the outcome, not the probability.
c	Must ensure continuation of military and governmental operational activity	RAF Brize Norton must be able to operate to its current commitments and future Defence requirements.
d	Should facilitate design using modern navigational technology	RAF Brize Norton's airspace is legacy; it is 40+ years old. The MOD wants to update Brize's approaches to meet the requirement of current and future air systems.
e	Conform to the principles of the CAA's Policy for the Design of Controlled Airspace Structures.	The current design is no loner appropriate for current arrival and departure profiles. Elements of these profiles regularly leave the protected confines of CAS. The MOD wishes to contain redesigned and new procedures.
f	Use standard airspace structure where possible (conformity, simplicity and safety)	Airspace structures and associated usage rules vary and can be difficult to understand. Standard and simple airspace structures are preferred.
g	Draw direction from the Airspace Modernisation Strategy.	It is important to the MOD to embrace the new and emerging strategy since it may lead to a means to reduce impact on other airspace users and to minimise the need to implement further changes as the strategy matures.
h	Minimise the impact to other airspace users.	A change in airspace does not need to increase complexity. Airspace that is returned should be usable.
i	Use Flexible Use of Airspace (FUA) principles to manage the airspace.	UK airspace is congested and has many users. It is important to make airspace available to the greatest extent possible and minimise restrictions.

Feedback

All the details of this airspace change proposal are available on the CAA's Airspace Change Portal. The ACP identification number is ACP-2022-040.

Feedback can be provided in the following ways:

- Email: BZN-TATCCS-ACP@mod.gov.uk
- Letter: ACP, ATC, Building 150, RAF Brize Norton, Carterton, Oxfordshire, OX18 3LX
- Word Documentation: see email attachment
- Microsoft Forms Link: Form

The use of forms or word documentation is not mandatory. We appreciate feedback in your preferred method.

Please advise if you require further engagement and, if so, your preferred point of contact.

Reponses regarding the draft Design Principles must be received by 30 Apr 23.