

Airspace Change Organising Group

ACOG Advice to the Co-sponsors (CAA and DfT) on the proposed withdrawal of Aberdeen Airport from the UK Airspace Modernisation Masterplan.

Proposal

ACOG propose that Aberdeen airport withdraw from the Masterplan and develop their airspace change plans, which will contribute to the Airspace Modernisation Strategy (AMS), directly through the CAP1616 process. Aberdeen's lack of interactions with Edinburgh and Glasgow does not require oversight and coordination through the Masterplan. We believe withdrawal removes any potential risk of delay caused by progressing in step with other SctMA airports and enables Aberdeen to continue at its own pace, enabling benefits for air passengers and the environment to be delivered without hindrance from external factors. The reasoning behind this proposal is set out below.

Background

The Scottish Masterplan is currently composed of 3 airports: Edinburgh, Glasgow and Aberdeen.

Aberdeen airport is located approximately 95 miles to the north-east of Edinburgh airport in an area of relatively low traffic volumes and with modest airspace complexity.

Aberdeen's inclusion within the cluster was originally determined by NERL to facilitate coordination of airspace changes needed to upgrade the network in the low to medium level airspace, including NERL led network ACP's and airport led lower altitude ACPs where collaboration between individual airports to produce optimum route design options within shared airspace was thought to be needed.

Since their appointment to the Masterplan, a number of changes have occurred whereby Aberdeen no longer satisfies the requirements for inclusion within the programme coordinated through the Masterplan and further, that their continued participation may be adding undue complexity and potential delay in delivering benefit towards the strategic goals of the AMS. With the consent of all parties involved, we are minded to propose their withdrawal from the Masterplan for the following reasons;

- **Network Coordination**

In 2021, NERL sponsored ACP-2021-020 proposing alterations to Airway P18 that would require changes below 7000ft, necessitating coordination with Aberdeen Airport and hence prompting their inclusion in the Masterplan. NERL subsequently withdrew their ACP due to increased costs and risks associated with the requirement to undertake a Level 1 consultation on a lightly used conditional route delivering small-scale improvement, removing a key requirement for inclusion in the Masterplan. It is understood no network changes are needed to facilitate Aberdeen's ACP and no interactions with Glasgow and Edinburgh proposals.

- **Airspace Route Interdependencies**

Aberdeen airport is located 95 miles N of Edinburgh airport, 125 miles NE of Glasgow Airport and is physically isolated from these or any other airports of appreciable size. Traffic volumes are low with a high proportion consisting of East / West overwater flights to N Sea oil rigs. Current and anticipated operations at Aberdeen require no interaction between the approach and departure routes of either Edinburgh or Glasgow, removing this requirement for inclusion in the Masterplan.

- **Strategic Importance**

An ACP can be considered of strategic importance if it will make a significant contribution towards achieving the vision of the Airspace Modernisation Strategy. Aberdeen's ACP-2019-

82 (currently the sole ACP they are progressing) will introduce PBN procedures with associated adjustment to holds and remove reliance on ground-based nav aids. Although this is likely to contribute towards AMS goals, ACOG assert that this can be achieved by following the CAP1616 process and will still deliver benefit outside the Masterplan.

ACOG have discussed the changed circumstances with NERL and Aberdeen Airport management and both parties support the proposal. We therefore recommend Aberdeen withdraw from the Masterplan programme and progress their ACP through the normal CAP1616 process.

[REDACTED] – ACOG Airspace Change Technical Analyst	3 May 2023
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