

Alignment of Strangford CTA 3 ACP

Gateway Documentation:
Stage 4 Update and Submit
Airspace Change Proposal
ACP-2024-025

NATS

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Change History

Issue	Month Year	Change in this issue
Issue 1	November 2024	First issue.
Issue 1.1	December 2024	Second issue which includes additional rationale within Section 5.4, summarising the anticipated safety impacts.

Referenced Documents

Ref Number	Name	Link
1.	Airspace Modernisation Strategy (AMS)	Link
2.	SARG Policy 126: Policy for the Design of Controlled Airspace Structures	Link
3.	DfT Air Navigation Guidance 2017	Link
4.	ACP-2024-025 Stage 4 Engagement Evidence	Provided to the CAA and uploaded to the portal (link)
5.	ACP-2024-025 Strangford CTA 3 – AeroData v1.090	Provided to the CAA

1. Executive Summary

1.1. Introduction

This document has been produced by NATS En Route Limited (NERL) in accordance with the requirements of the UK Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) CAP1616 Airspace Change Process. This Airspace Change Proposal (ACP) has been assessed by the CAA as a Level 3 change. This document aims to provide adequate evidence to satisfy the requirements of CAP1616h.

The intention of this ACP is to resolve a historical anomaly in airspace design - whereby Belfast City and Belfast International Airport arrivals/ departures leave and re-enter Controlled Airspace (CAS) in the vertical plane - and produce a contiguous airspace volume.

1.2. Drivers for Change

There is presently a CAS coverage gap to the northwest of the Belfast TMA due to the Strangford CTA 3 dimensions not aligning with the Belfast TMA 1. Belfast arrivals and departures are required to leave CAS in both the climb and descent. This design irregularity increases pilot and controller workload as Air Traffic Services switch between Radar Control and UK Flight Information Services.

1.3. Aims of the Proposal

This ACP seeks to resolve this historic design irregularity through the introduction of a simpler and contiguous airspace design. The aims of this proposal are to:

- 1) **Reduce controller and pilot workload:** the present airspace design results in an unnecessary level of radiotelephony (RT) and associated workload from Air Traffic Service (ATS) changes. Aircraft are currently asked what type of Flight Information Service (FIS) they require which is not always clear, and superfluous as they re-enter CAS shortly afterwards anyway.
- 2) **Produce a simpler and contiguous airspace design:** this change would resolve a long-standing discrepancy and better reflect the current airspace usage. This ACP seeks to make this permanent in the UK AIP. Flights in and out of Belfast City and International Airports will continue to fly and be controlled as extant.
- 3) **Future proof:** enhances operational resilience of the air traffic service system for continually higher performing aircraft.

This change will deliver against the following Airspace Modernisation Strategy aims:

- Maintain and, where possible, improve the UK's high level of aviation safety.
- Reduce ATC complexity.
- Simplification of airspace through reducing complexity and improving efficiency.
- Satisfy the requirements of operators and owners of all classes of aircraft.
- Provide operationally efficient airspace volumes for users.

This ACP will demonstrate that these aims will be fully achieved by the final design option being proposed, which will have limited impact on the overall airspace design, operation, and other airspace users.

1.3.1. Assumptions and Constraints

This change is limited to revising the Strangford CTA 3 at and above FL105.

1.4. Summary of Proposed Changes

The current Belfast TMA 1 (2,000ft ALT – FL105) and Strangford CTA 3 (FL105 – FL195) dimensions do not align. This ACP will revise the lateral dimensions of the Strangford CTA 3 to align with the Belfast TMA 1.

No other changes are proposed, and Belfast City and Belfast International Airport arrivals/ departures will continue to fly and be controlled as per today, but within a contiguous CTA volume.

There are limited viable design options to alleviate the current workload issue: either leave as today or align the airspace structures.

1.4.1. Timeline for implementation

Presuming approval by the CAA, this ACP will be implemented in June 2025 (AIRAC 06/2025).

2. Stage 1: Define

2.1. Statement of Need

The Statement of Need (DAP1916) submitted to the CAA in June 2024 states that:

NATS is seeking to resolve a historic anomaly in airspace design whereby Belfast City and Belfast International Airport arrivals/ departures are required to leave and then re-enter Controlled Airspace (CAS) in the vertical plane. A resolution of this issue will produce a contiguous airspace volume. This ACP will not amend any existing procedures or associated track profiles, such as the small number of routes which exist within the Belfast Terminal Manoeuvring Area (TMA).

Issue to be addressed:

The anomaly is due to the Strangford Control Area (CTA) 3 (FL105 – FL195) dimensions not overlapping with the Belfast TMA (2,000ft ALT – FL105). This design irregularity has existed for over 60 years, although it's more prevalent today due to higher performance aircraft. This increases pilot and controller workload as Air Traffic Services switch between Radar Control Service to UK Flight Information Services (and then back again) during the initial climb or final descent phases of flight.

Current Situation:

The dimensions of Strangford CTA 3 (FL105 – FL195) do not overlap with the Belfast TMA 1 (2,000ft ALT – FL105). This produces a gap in CAS coverage to the West and Northern areas of the Belfast TMA. Aircraft departing EGAA/AC are required to leave CAS in the climb between FL105 and FL195. Similarly, aircraft arriving EGAA/ AC are required to leave CAS in the decent between FL195 and FL105. This ACP will not introduce any changes to existing procedures.

This ACP supports the Airspace Modernisation Strategy ^(see Ref 1) and specifically its objectives which relate to enhancing current safety levels, simplifying airspace design, and reducing complexity. Although this ACP does not directly promote the Airspace Modernisation Strategy objectives of user integration and environmental sustainability, it is not inconsistent with them.

2.2. Area of Scope

Figure 1 shows the area of change, described in the Statement of Need. This shows the existing applicable airspace structures which are described in further detail below. Relevant airspace structures have been highlighted.

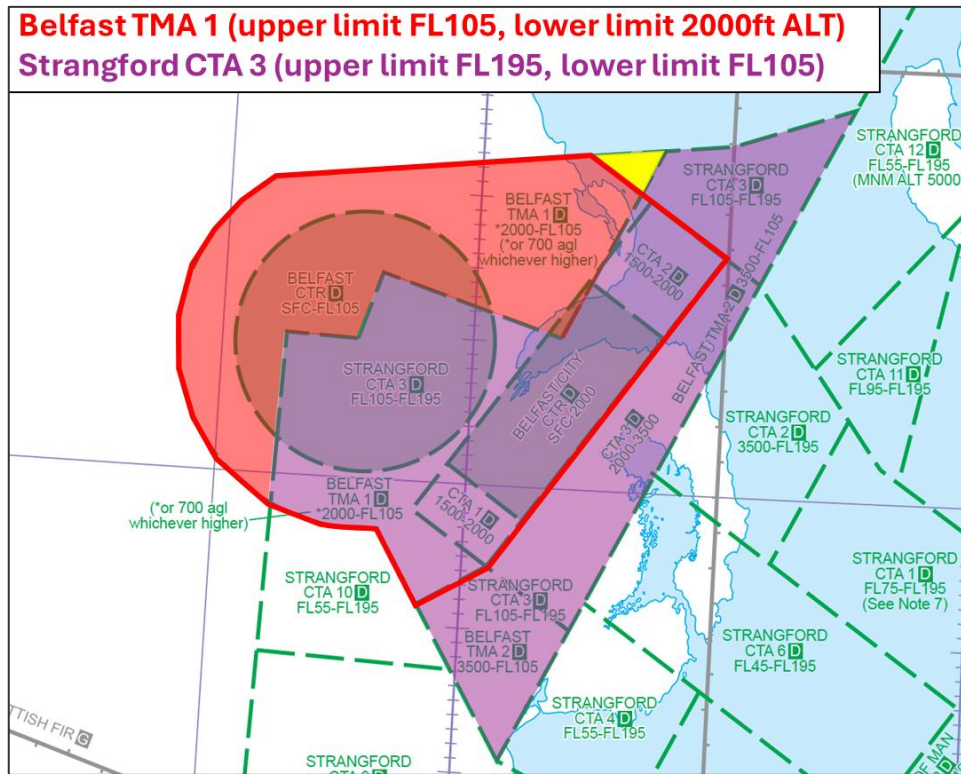


Figure 1: Current Airspace Structures and Area of Scope

2.3. Current Airspace

The Belfast TMA 1 (shown in red in Figure 1) has an upper limit of FL105 and lower limit of 2,000ft ALT. It is Class D airspace and operated H24 by Aldergrove Radar. The Strangford CTA 3 (shown in purple in Figure 1) has an upper limit of FL195 and a lower limit of FL105. It is Class D airspace and operated H24 by Scottish Control. The small section of CAS highlighted in yellow is part of the Belfast TMA 2 and is not relevant to this ACP.

The Strangford CTA 3 dimensions do not currently overlap with the Belfast TMA 1 dimensions which results in a CAS coverage gap to the north and western areas of the Belfast TMA. This design irregularity increases pilot and controller workload as Air Traffic Services switch between Radar Control Service and UK Flight Information Services.

2.3.1. Current Procedures

Within the Belfast TMA there exists the Belfast Hold, Runway 07 Required Navigation (RNP) Approach, and a small number of RNAV ATS routes, shown in Figure 2 below.

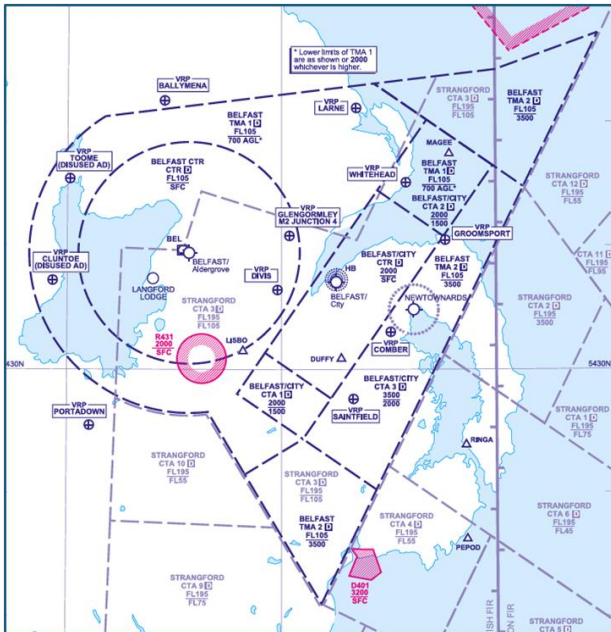


Figure 2: Belfast TMA - Current Airspace and Routes



There are no published SIDs or STARs in the Belfast TMA; arrival and departure routing requirements are contained in the AIP aerodromes section. Figure 3 below shows an example AIP extract for Belfast International Airport.

3 PROCEDURES FOR OUTBOUND AIRCRAFT

a. The standard routes for outbound aircraft are detailed in the following table. Routes may be varied at ATC discretion according to the prevailing traffic conditions.

Departing to	Via	Route
SE	L10, Q39	BEL VOR RDL 154° - LISBO - RINGA
EGNS	L15, L603, Q38	BEL VOR RDL 154° - LISBO - PEPOD
S	L10	DCT - SLYDA - L10 - IOM - DCT
N	P620	BEL VOR RDL 154° - LISBO
	P600	BEL VOR RDL 075° - BLACA

Note: See also UK Standard Route Document. Available online from NATS/AIS website: <http://www.nats.aero/ais>.

Figure 3: Belfast International Airport - AIP Example

2.3.2. Provision of Air Traffic Services

Within the UK, NERL provide the ATC service up to the London and Scottish FIR boundary. The provision of ATC services is delegated from NERL to Belfast Aldergrove Approach Control for the Belfast TMA 1 below FL105. NERL (Scottish Area Control Center) provides ATC services for the Strangford CTA 3.

2.4. Airspace Usage

Radar flight data was used to identify 15,149 Belfast City and Belfast International flights (arrivals/ departures) which routed via the waypoint BLACA between 1st September 2023 – 31st August 2024. Flights via BLACA were focussed on, as they are specifically impacted by the existing airspace anomaly.

The following tables summarise the most common airlines, aircraft types, origin, and destination airports pertaining to the 15,149 flights, within the 98% percentile.

easyJet made up over half of all applicable flights, and the vast majority (~78%) of flights were to or from Scottish Airports.

Airline/ Airspace User	Count	Percentage
easyJet	7,648	50.5%
Emerald Airlines (Aer Lingus)	4,033	26.6%
General Aviation (no callsign)	1,777	11.7%
Loganair	1,038	6.9%
Ryanair	186	1.2%
Woodgate Aviation	152	1.0%

Origin Airport	Count	Percentage
Edinburgh	3,272	43.4%
Glasgow International	2,095	27.8%
Newcastle	1,377	18.3%
Aberdeen	286	3.8%
Inverness	239	3.2%
Gdansk	133	1.8%

Aircraft Type	Count	Percentage
AT76 - Heavy Turboprop	4,273	28.2%
A320 - Medium Airbus	3,569	23.6%
A319 - Medium Airbus	2,382	15.7%
A20N - Medium Airbus	1,704	11.3%
B738 - Medium Boeing	1,348	8.9%
AT45 - Medium Turboprop	471	3.1%
E145 - 2 Engine Small Jet	467	3.1%
PC12 - Small Turboprop	374	2.5%
BE20 - Small Turboprop	182	1.2%

Destination Airport	Count	Percentage
Edinburgh	3,285	43.2%
Glasgow International	2,114	27.8%
Newcastle	1,360	17.9%
Aberdeen	291	3.8%
Inverness	238	3.1%
Gdansk	131	1.7%

Table 1: Belfast City and International arrivals/ departures which routed via BLACA - most common airlines, aircraft types, origin, and destinations in the 98% percentile.

2.4.1. Traffic Patterns

The radar whisker plots in Figure 4 and Figure 5 below demonstrate flights leaving and re-entering CAS around Belfast in August 2024, using actual flight data.

This data was filtered for Belfast International arrivals (Figure 4) and departures (Figure 5) which flightplanned via BLACA (blue triangle) and has been split by Flight Level (FL). The Belfast TMA 1 (2,000ft ALT – FL105) is outlined in red and the Strangford CTA 3 (FL105 – FL195) in purple.

These traffic flows are known to be affected by the airspace anomaly and demonstrate the extant issue. The yellow lines captured within the Belfast TMA 1 indicate where the flight has left CAS and then re-entered, as a result of the existing airspace anomaly.

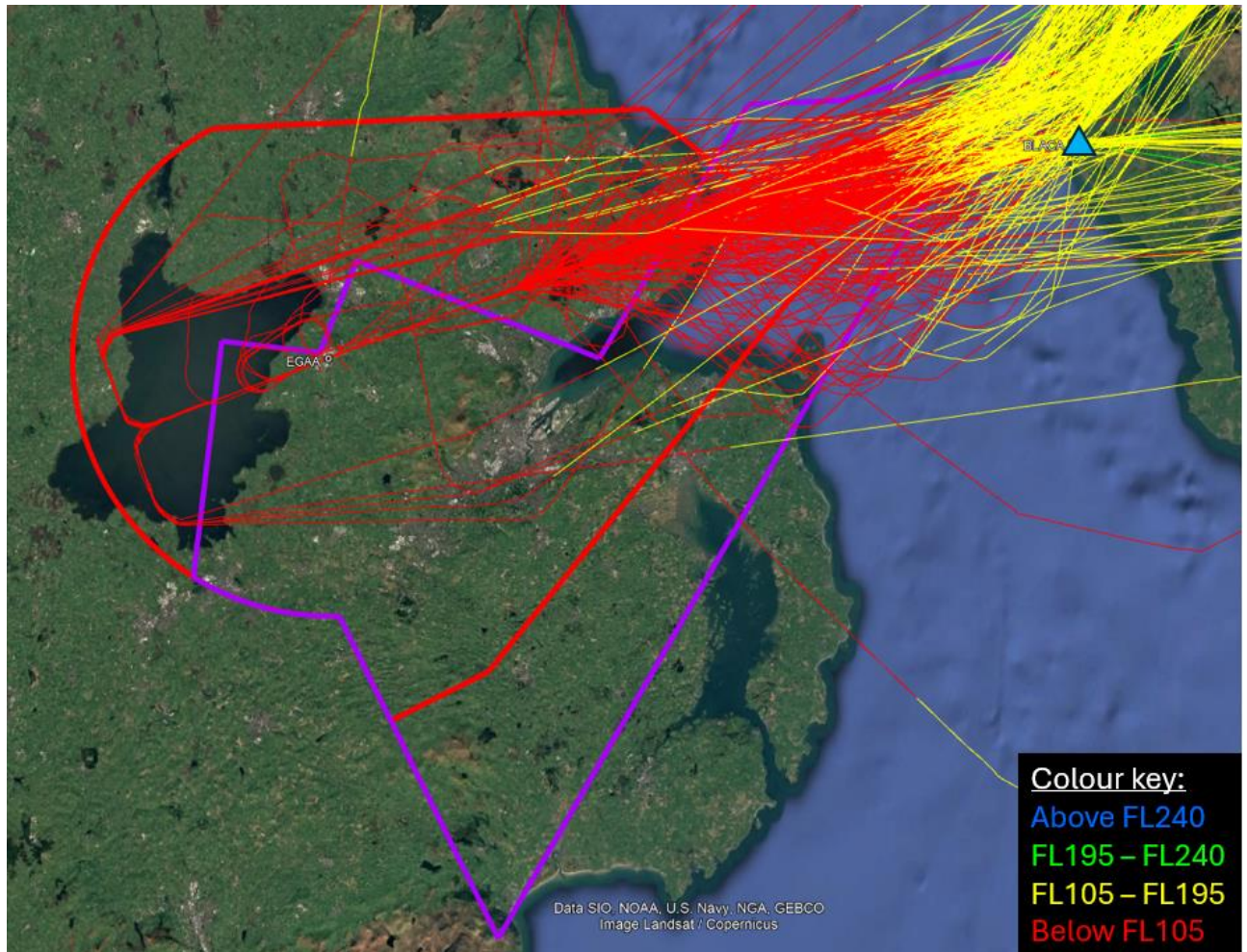


Figure 4: Belfast International arrivals (August 2024), filtered for traffic which flightplanned via BLACA (blue triangle).

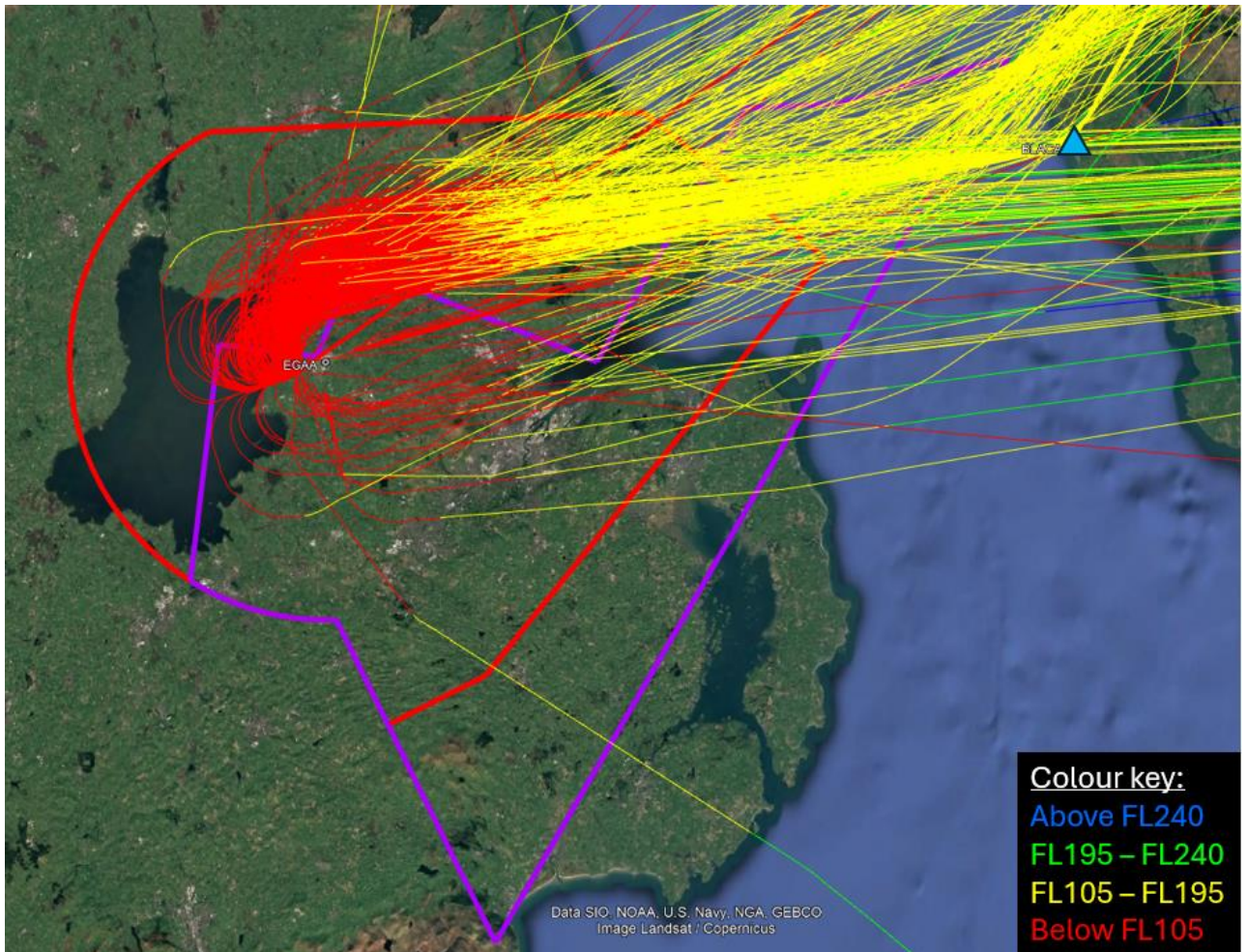


Figure 5: Belfast International departures (August 2024), filtered for traffic which flightplanned via BLACA (blue triangle).

2.5. Design Principles

This ACP has been categorised as a Level 3 change and is progressing under CAP1616 edition 5. CAP1616 and CAP1616h states sponsors must use the three Mandatory Design Principles (MDP) to provide a framework against which design options can be developed and evaluated.

The three Mandatory Design Principles (MDP) are:

- 1) **MDP Safety:** The airspace change proposal must maintain a high standard of safety and should seek to enhance current levels of safety.
- 2) **MDP Policy:** The airspace change proposal should not be inconsistent with relevant legislation, the CAA's airspace modernisation strategy or Secretary of State and CAA's policy and guidance.
- 3) **MDP Environment:** The airspace change proposal should deliver the Government's key environmental objectives with respect to air navigation as set out in the Government's Air Navigation Guidance 2017 (ANG).

The design option described in Section 3.1 has been qualitatively assessed against each of the three Mandatory Design Principles required by CAP1616h; this assessment can be found in Section 3.3.

3. Stage 2: Develop and Assess

3.1. Design Option Development

A single design option for this ACP was developed, which was discussed with Belfast International Airport. The proposed change is governed by the published procedures within the AIP; there is no intention to change these or introduce any new procedures.

This ACP proposes to update the lateral dimensions of Strangford CTA 3 (FL105 – FL195) to align with Belfast TMA 1 (2,000ft ALT – FL105). The vertical limits of the Strangford CTA 3 will not change from today and there will be no changes to Belfast TMA 1, laterally or vertically.

Belfast TMA 1 can be seen in red and the Strangford CTA 3 in purple, in Figure 6 below. The small yellow section of CAS is part of the Belfast TMA 2 (3,500ft – FL105) which will not be changed.

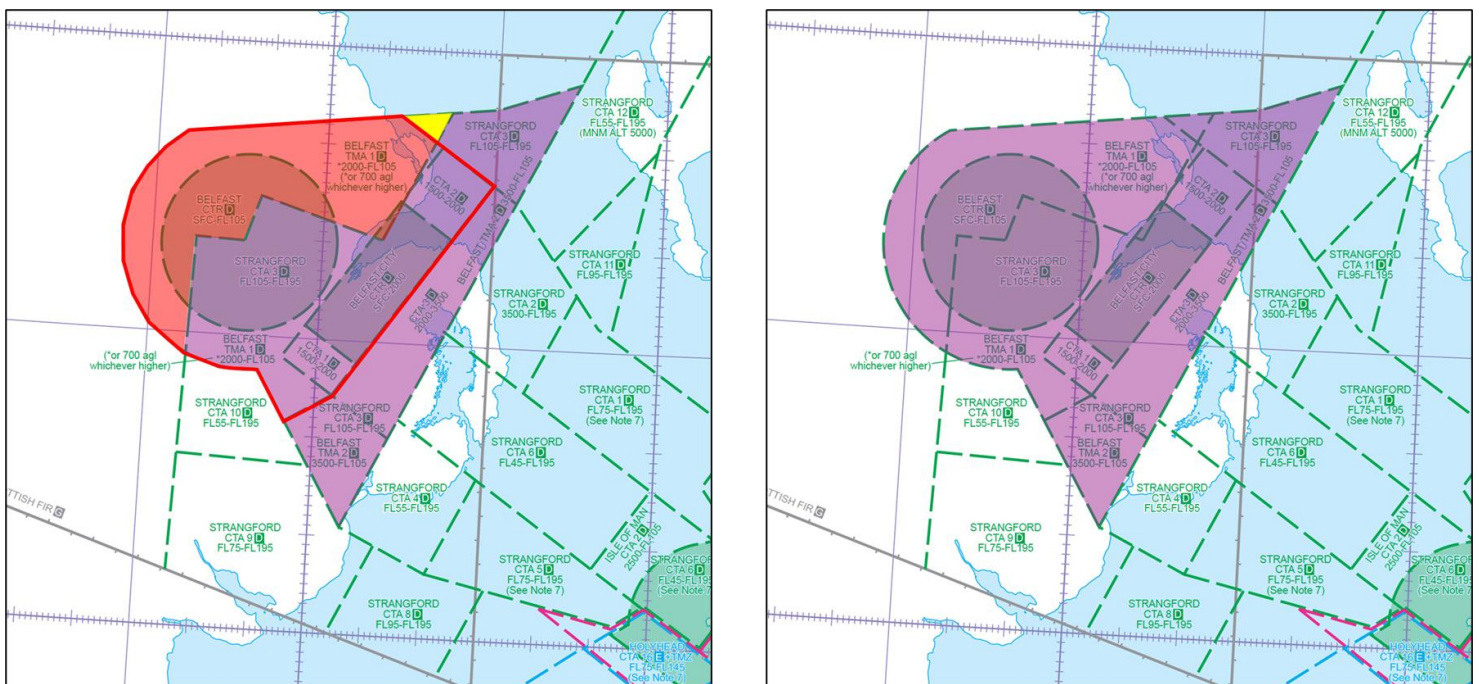


Figure 6: Current airspace on the left and proposed lateral change to Strangford CTA 3 (shown in purple) on the right

A single design option was developed to resolve the airspace design anomaly and produce a contiguous airspace volume. There would be no anticipated change to extant flight profiles or traffic mix as a consequence of this change as current procedural and tactical flight behaviours would not change.

3.2. Design Option Development: Not in Scope

During the Stage 1 Assessment Meeting, the CAA raised two suggestions which have not been developed into design changes. This section has been included to provide a response to both suggestions, and rationale for not progressing them.

3.2.1. Change Existing Routings

The first suggestion made in the Assessment Meeting was for NERL to change all current routings which are impacted by the CAS anomaly, such that they remain within existing CAS.

The routings between the Scottish TMA and Belfast TMA have been in use for over 60 years. Changing current routings to avoid the airspace anomaly would have a detrimental environmental impact as aircraft would be required to fly a large 'Dog Leg' to avoid the current airspace anomaly, as depicted in Figure 7. This would compress a significant amount of traffic to avoid the anomaly, resulting in increased conflict management with aircraft arriving and departing from the Isle of Man region; alongside a likely change to flight patterns at a low level.

In summary, NERL contends that this is not a viable design option to alleviate the current airspace anomaly, and associated issue whereby aircraft leave and re-enter CAS. This proposal only seeks to remove the airspace anomaly (through CAS realignment) and does not seek to change any extant routings, including those within the Belfast TMA.

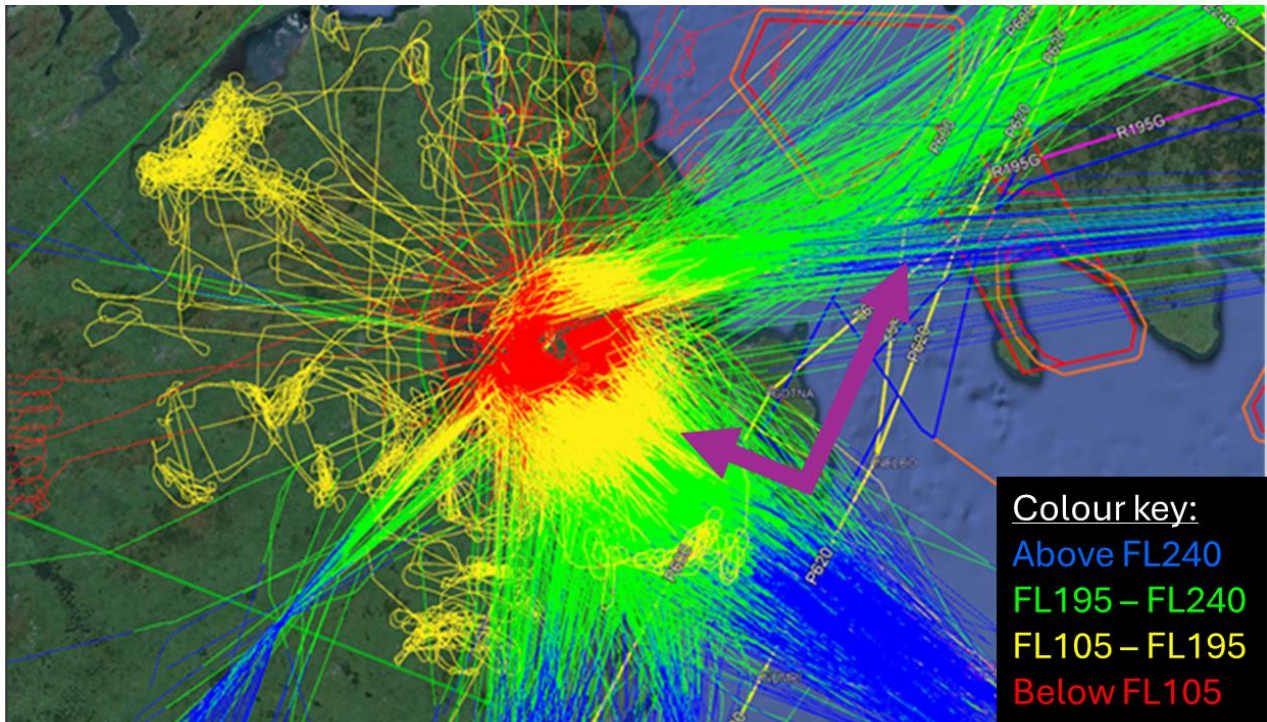


Figure 7: Indication of traffic which would be required to re-route (Belfast TMA August 2024)

3.2.2. Update to TMA Base

The second suggestion raised was in regard to the variable base level of Belfast TMA 1, which is currently specified as *2,000ft ALT or 700ft agl (whichever is highest)*. The CAA noted that the variation in base level could be difficult for airspace users to interpret; and is not in alignment with the latest CAS policy which states that the lowest level of a TMA should be 2,000ft agl. NERL were encouraged to discuss updating the base level to a specific altitude with Belfast.

This is a long-standing airspace definition which Belfast contend, is understood, and operated appropriately by airspace users. Updating the TMA base to a fixed altitude may actually result in complicating the base levels because of local high ground. The topography around Belfast, and specifically underneath the TMA, contributes to an ongoing infringement concern. The extant variable airspace definition provides a mitigation against infringements and updating to a specific altitude, could potentially exasperate the infringement risk (varying bases because of the high ground).

Alongside the infringement mitigation, Belfast also note that updating the current TMA base would add visual complexity to the extant airspace mapping and radar displays. To conclude, NERL and Belfast do not want to conflate the outstanding TMA variable base definition with the ongoing Strangford CTA realignment, which is the primary and sole focus of this ACP.

3.3. Design Principle Evaluation

A qualitative assessment was conducted of the proposed design option against the mandatory Design Principles. All Design Principles were assessed to be met, and the design option was progressed to Stage 3, Consult/Engage.

This ACP explicitly supports two of the CAA’s mandatory Design Principles (enhance current level of safety and accord with the AMS) and does not contradict the third mandatory Design Principle (delivery of Government environmental objectives).

Therefore, NERL surmises that the proposed option will improve upon extant safety levels and has limited impact on airspace design and other airspace users.

MDP Safety	MET	<p>This change will enhance current safety levels.</p> <p>A simpler and contiguous airspace design will preclude aircraft leaving and re-entering CAS, as today. Currently, when aircraft leave and re-enter CAS, there is an increase in Radio Transmissions and associated workload from Air Traffic Service changes. This proposal will enable a reduction in ATC and pilot workload.</p>
MDP Policy	MET	<p>As noted above, this proposal will enhance current safety levels which actively supports the AMS safety objective. It will also provide a simpler and contiguous airspace design, enhancing operational resilience of the network, and future proofing for continually higher performing aircraft. This is in compliance with the AMS strategic objective of simplification, reducing complexity and improving efficiency.</p> <p>This proposal will not contradict either of the final 2 AMS strategic objectives of user integration and environmental sustainability (no impact on either).</p> <p>This change is consistent with relevant policy such as the CTA definition found within the CAA’s Policy for the Design of Controlled Airspace Structures ^(see Ref 2).</p>
MDP Environment	MET	<p>This change will not change existing procedures, routings, or associated flight patterns. Therefore, the proposed change will deliver against the Government’s key environmental objectives with respect to air navigation as set out in the Government’s Air Navigation Guidance 2017, in that there are no anticipated impacts on noise, greenhouse gas emissions, local air quality, tranquillity, or biodiversity.</p>

Table 2: Design Principle Evaluation & Proposal Impacts

3.4. Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA)

The following response to the HRA early screening criteria question was sent to the CAA in September 2024. The CAA concluded that the Stage 2 outputs for this ACP were considered complete and that no further information was required.

Q1. Are there any changes to air traffic patterns or number of movements expected below 3,000 feet due to the airspace change proposal?

No – this ACP will not include any proposed changes to airspace below 3,000ft alongside associated traffic patterns or movements. This proposal will not change existing procedures or introduce new ones such as SIDs or STARs.

The proposed changes are at and above FL105: updating the lateral dimensions of the Strangford CTA 3 to align with the Belfast TMA 1 with a base level of FL105, ceiling level of FL195, and Class D airspace (as today). Therefore, the Habitats Regulation Assessment is not required.

4. Stage 3: Consult / Engage

4.1. Engagement Strategy

This engagement strategy describes the objectives, intended audience, engagement materials and engagement activities, which demonstrates how we facilitate effective engagement with our relevant stakeholders for this change proposal.

This is a Level 3 ACP, and the changes proposed are all above FL105, replicating current airspace usage around Belfast. The drivers for change are to reduce controller and pilot workload through a simpler and contiguous airspace design, thereby improving upon current safety levels.

Given the nature of the proposal, targeted engagement with relevant aviation stakeholders is proportional for this proposal.

4.1.1. Objectives

The objectives of the engagement are to:

- Share design options in their formative stage with relevant stakeholders, informing stakeholders of the impacts of each design option.
- Obtain stakeholder views on the proposals and consider any feedback in the design.

4.1.2. Engagement Audience (Stakeholders)

At the Assessment Meeting, it was agreed that the targeted stakeholders would be limited to the top airlines, local airspace users, applicable airports, relevant NATMAC¹ members and the MoD. The following paragraphs list the stakeholders who were engaged and how they were identified.

Top airlines: flight plan data for Belfast City/ International arrivals and departures from September 2023 to August 2024 was analysed and used to identify the airlines most impacted by the change. The following airlines made up 98% of all flights and had at least 100 flights in the period analysed:

easyJet, Emerald Airlines (Aer Lingus), Loganair, Ryanair and Woodgate Aviation.

Ministry of Defence (MoD): the MoD were engaged through Defence Airspace and Air Traffic Management (DAATM). DAATM is a focal point for all aviation matters which may impact military airspace and operations. DAATM collects feedback from all branches of the military which may be impacted to provide a single response.

Relevant National Air Traffic Management Advisory Committee (NATMAC) members: we limited this to those organisations which have members which operate in the lower airspace: Airlines UK, British Gliding Association, British Hang Gliding & Paragliding Association, Guild of Air Traffic Control Officers (GATCO) and Low Fare Airlines.

Relevant airports: airports who are directly impacted by the existing anomaly (Belfast) or are based nearby: Belfast International, Belfast City, Carrickmore Airfield (C-More Flying School – General Aviation (GA) Airfield), Langford Lodge Airfield (GA Airfield), Movenis Airfield (Skydive

¹ National Air Traffic Management Advisory Committee – a non-statutory advisory body chaired by the CAA; the NATMAC is consulted for advice and views on any major matter concerned with airspace management and strategy matters. This includes organisations representing additional airlines; it was deemed relevant to include these should they wish to provide a response on behalf of their members.

Ireland - Private Airfield & Parachuting Centre) and Tandragee Airfield (Kernan Aviation - GA Airfield).

Belfast City/ International have an existing LoA with Ulster gliding club who have also been engaged as a targeted stakeholder. No other GA or local airspace users have been included as there is no airspace which permits Visual Flight Rules (VFR) to be used above the Belfast TMA.

Only the organisations listed above were formally contacted for feedback. However, NERL welcomes feedback from any individual or organisation which considers the changes within this ACP may impact them.

4.1.3. Engagement materials

A briefing pack ^(see Ref 4) was provided to stakeholders which describes the scope of the proposed changes, and the drivers for change. The current day scenario was provided including extant airspace design and airspace usage, using radar data.

The issues/ opportunities and concept for development were provided to stakeholders. The single design option is described with operational diagrams used to indicate change. This contains a qualitative assessment of impacts and benefits.

4.2. Engagement Activity

A 4-week engagement period was discussed with the CAA at the Assessment Meeting. It is deemed proportionate for this group of stakeholders given the nature of the proposed changes, above FL105, providing operational benefit, and reflecting current day flight patterns.

NATS contacted relevant stakeholders via email with the engagement materials attached. Stakeholders were emailed on Monday 14th October and asked to provide feedback (positive, negative, neutral) or raise any questions by Monday 11th November. A reminder email was sent on Monday 28th October 2024 to encourage responses, halfway through the engagement period.

During this engagement period we received 8 responses, from 18 stakeholders contacted, including 2 from the same stakeholder (Belfast International). We received no emails asking for further time or asking any questions on the change proposal. This response rate is considered sufficient, and representative given the scope and impact area of these proposed changes.

A copy of all engagement responses can be found in the Stage 4 Engagement Evidence document, submitted alongside this ACP ^(see Ref 4).

Table 3 summarises the engagement activity undertaken with all identified stakeholders.

Date	Stakeholder(s)	Activity & Feedback mechanism
14/11/2024 – 11/11/2024	All stakeholders (airlines, MoD, relevant NATMAC members, Airports, local airspace users)	Engagement material sent via targeted emails. Feedback requested via Microsoft Forms. A follow up email was sent if stakeholders had not responded to the initial email.
16/09/2024	MoD	Meeting via TEAMS to discuss the proposal. Brief summary slide pack provided ^(see Ref 4) .
26/09/2024	Belfast International Airport	Meeting via TEAMS to discuss the ACP including feedback from the Assessment Meeting and the upcoming engagement activities.

Table 3: Engagement Activities with Stakeholders

4.3. Engagement Summary

We engaged our stakeholders on the above proposed design in accordance with our engagement strategy, and received the following responses outlined in Table 4.

Stakeholder	Response	Comments
Airlines UK	No response	
Belfast City	Neutral	Belfast City Airport does not believe that this proposal will impact operations at BHD and therefore have no objection to the proposed airspace change.
Belfast International Airport	Positive	Belfast International conclude that the change would be a significant improvement, with workload and safety benefits for ATC and flight crew alike.
British Gliding Association (BGA)	Neutral	The BGA are satisfied that this proposed change does not impact gliding operations.
British Hang Gliding & Paragliding Association	No response	
Carrickmore Airfield	No response	
easyJet	Positive	easyJet contends that the proposal appears constructive in the context of aligning the Strangford CTA with the Belfast CTA and hopefully, allowing us to remain in CAS for longer on our affected routes to/ from BFS and BHD.
Emerald (Aer Lingus)	No response	
Guild of Air Traffic Control Officers (GATCO)	No response	
Langford Lodge Airfield	No response	
Loganair	No response	
Low Fare Airlines	No response	
MoD	Neutral	The MoD have no negative feedback or objection to the proposal; there is no perceived impact to MoD operations.
Movenis Airfield	No response	
Ryanair	No response	
Tandragee Airfield	Neutral	No comment to make upon the proposals, as they do not affect operations at Tandragee. The aircraft used, due to their type and the nature of operations, do not routinely enter CTA 3.
Ulster Gliding Club	Neutral	Ulster Gliding Club are satisfied that this proposed change does not impact gliding operations.
Woodgate Aviation	No response	

Table 4: Engagement Feedback

5. Stage 4: Update & Submit

5.1. Final Design Option & Impacts

We received no feedback which may impact the design, so we progress the design option described in Section 3 as summarised below.

This airspace change proposes to update the lateral dimensions of Strangford CTA 3 (FL105 – FL195) to align with Belfast TMA 1 (2,000ft ALT – FL105). There will be no change to Belfast TMA 1. The base level of the Strangford CTA 3 will remain FL105, and the top level will remain FL195. The ICAO airspace classification will remain Class D (all airspace within the UK above FL195 is Class C).

This ACP does not include any changes to existing procedures in and around the Belfast TMA, and will not introduce any new procedures e.g., publish new SIDs or STARs.

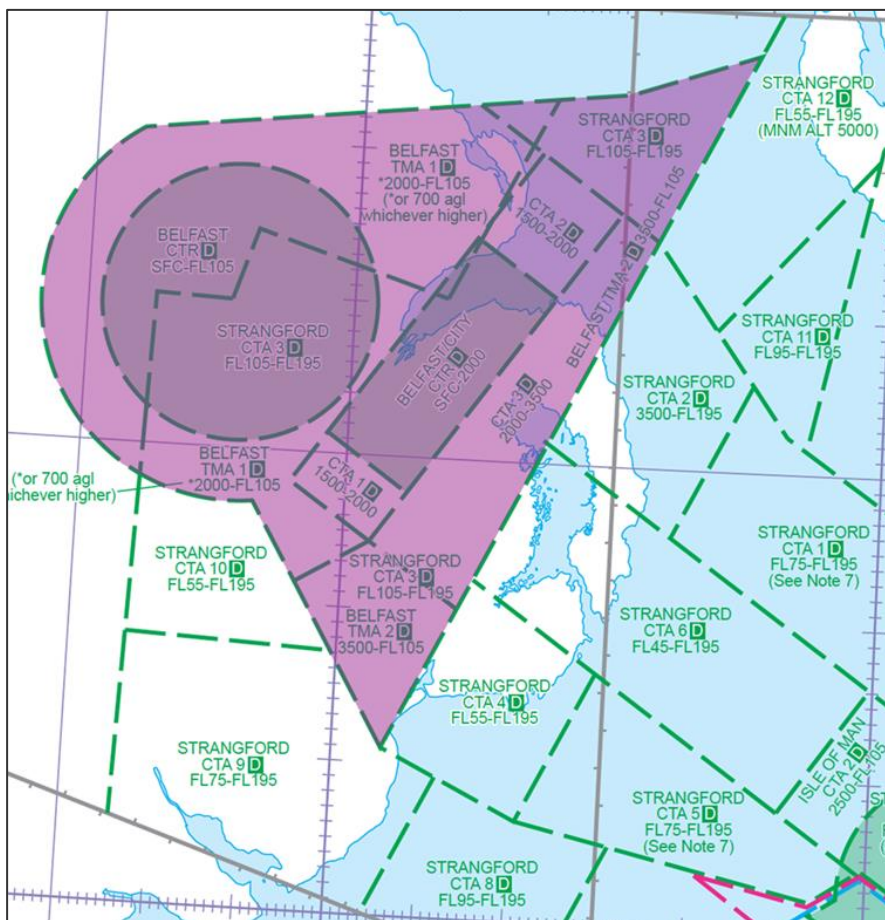


Figure 8: Final Design Option

5.2. Regulations, Policies and Harmonisation

The following regulations and policies will be complied with in delivery of this airspace change:

Policy	Adherence
UK Airspace Modernisation Strategy (see Ref 1)	Design options have been evaluated against the AMS objectives: Safety: the final design will enhance current safety levels. Integration: provides a simpler and contiguous airspace design, reflecting current usage and no change to existing procedures. Environment: no change to extant environmental, noise or local air quality impacts. Simplification: reduces ATC and pilot workload by reducing the need for communication from ATC.
SARG Policy 126: Policy for the Design of Controlled Airspace Structures (see Ref 2)	The updated lateral dimensions of Strangford CTA 3 and associated ATC service provided within the CTA are compliant with this policy statement. The upper limit of FL195 for Strangford CTA 3 coincides with the lower limit of the upper CTA (Irish Sea CTA 1) which conforms with the policy.

5.3. Anticipated Operational Impacts

Military Impacts - there will be no impact on military airspace users.

Commercial Airspace Users - this change will reduce pilot workload for operators which are currently impacted by the existing airspace anomaly. The proposed change will result in less commercial airspace users leaving CAS which will reduce Air Traffic Service changes, decrease RT and associated workload. There will be no other impacts noticeable by commercial airspace users pertaining to this change.

Relevant Airports - this change will have minimal operational impact for airports aside from nomenclature changes in the AIP.

Other Airspace users - there will be no impacts on other airspace users.

5.4. Safety

If this ACP is approved, it will be covered by an Air Traffic Control Procedure Safety Analysis for a change in airspace definition. Other than the airspace description, there will be no other changes to the Units MATS Part II.

The principal aim of this ACP is to remove an existing airspace anomaly which affects Belfast City and Belfast International arrivals and departures. This anomaly results in aircraft leaving and then re-entering CAS in the descent and climb. This design irregularity increases pilot and controller workload as Air Traffic Services switch between Radar Control and UK Flight Information Services.

As stated previously, there are no proposed changes to procedures or routings as a result of rectifying this issue and therefore there are no indicative safety concerns associated with this proposal. On the contrary, the removal of the anomaly produces a simpler and contiguous known environment (CAS) within which defined separation standards are applied in accordance with the ICAO airspace classification. Thereby, this proposal would enhance current safety levels through a reduction in both Pilot and ATC workload.

5.5. Environmental Assessment

The proposed change is governed by the existing published procedures within the AIP and will not change existing procedures, routings, or associated flight patterns.

Therefore, there will be no change to extant environmental, noise or local air quality impacts which could be assessed.

5.6. List of Supplementary documents

A technical definition document was provided to the CAA which provides further information on the proposed design and the WGS84 data in excel format ^(see - Ref 5). This contains aeronautical information such as the lateral dimensions of the amended airspace structure.

6. Appendix A: Glossary

Term	Definition
ACP	Airspace Change Proposal – a formal process by which changes to the design or structure of airspace are proposed and evaluated. This involves collaboration between stakeholders, regulatory authorities, and the public to assess the potential impacts of proposed changes and make informed decisions.
AGL	Above Ground Level - a term used to describe the vertical distance between an aircraft or object, and the surface of the ground or terrain directly below it.
AIP	Aeronautical Information Publication – contains static aeronautical data, which is updated regularly, on the regulation, procedures, and other information pertinent to flying aircraft.
AIRAC	Aeronautical Information Regulation and Control – a system that governs the publication of aeronautical information, including changes to navigation procedures, airspace designations, and other critical data used by pilots and air traffic controllers.
AMS	Airspace Modernisation Strategy – produced by the CAA and Department of Transport, it sets out the ends, ways and means of modernising the design, technology, and operations of UK airspace.
ATC	Air Traffic Control – a service provided by ground-based controllers to guide and manage the movement of aircraft within airspace.
ATS	Air Traffic Service – a system that provides for the safe and efficient movement of aircraft within airspace.
CAA	Civil Aviation Authority – UK Government regulatory body responsible for overseeing and ensuring the safety, security, and efficiency of civil aviation activities within the UK.
CAS	Controlled Airspace – an airspace of defined dimensions within which air traffic control services are provided to flights in accordance with the airspace classification. Controlled Airspace includes Control Areas, Terminal Control Areas, Airways, and Control Zones.
CTA	Control Area – controlled airspace extending upwards from a specified limit to a specific upper limit.
FIS	Flight Information Service – a service provided to pilots by air traffic control. It gives advice and information useful for the safe and efficient conduct of flights. The UK FIS is comprised of a basic service, traffic service, deconfliction service and procedural service.
FL	Flight Level – a standard measure of altitude used in aviation. Flight Level is expressed in hundreds of feet and is based on a standard atmospheric pressure at sea level.
GA	General Aviation - a term used to describe civil aviation activities other than scheduled air services and non-scheduled air transport operations. This could include private flying, recreational flying, flight training and agricultural aviation.
MoD	Ministry of Defence – the UK Government department responsible for overseeing the United Kingdom’s defence and military affairs.
NATS	The air navigation service provider for the UK, formerly National Air Traffic Services.
NERL	NATS En Route Ltd – the part of NATS that delivers en route air traffic control.
NOTAM	Notice to Airmen - contains information concerning the establishment, condition or change in any aeronautical facility, service, procedure, or hazard. It will cover notifications of temporary information, or permanent information not yet included in the AIP.
RNAV	Required Navigation is a navigation specification which aircraft must maintain. RNAV1/ RNAV5 include a numerical suffix which refers to the accuracy requirement in the procedure i.e., within +/- 1 nautical mile of the centreline of the designed route.
RNP	Required Navigation Performance – performance requirements are expressed by accuracy, integrity, continuity, availability, and functionality needed for the proposed operation in the context of a particular airspace concept.
SID	Standard Instrument Departure – an Instrument Flight Procedure that enables aircraft to follow a pre-determined departure flightpath issued by Air Traffic Control. This is proven to be flyable and safe from all known obstacles and terrain.
STAR	Standard Arrival Route – a standard ATS route identified in an approach procedure by which aircraft should proceed from the en-route phase to an initial approach fix.
TMA	Terminal Manoeuvring Area – a designated area of controlled airspace surrounding a major airport where there is a high volume of traffic.
VFR	Visual Flight Rules – a set of regulations under which a pilot operates an aircraft in weather conditions generally clear enough to allow the pilot to see where the aircraft is going. In VFR conditions, pilots navigate and control the aircraft by visual reference to the ground and other landmarks, rather than relying solely on instruments.

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