Modernising Midlands Airspace

Stage 1 Define

Assessment Meeting

ACP-2025-013

12 June 2025

Agenda

- Introduction
- Statement of Need (discussion and review)
- Current day scenario
- Issues or opportunities arising from the proposed change
- Options to exploit opportunities or address issues identified
- Provisional indication of the level and process requirements
- Provisional process timescales
- Safety case requirements
- Next steps
- AOB

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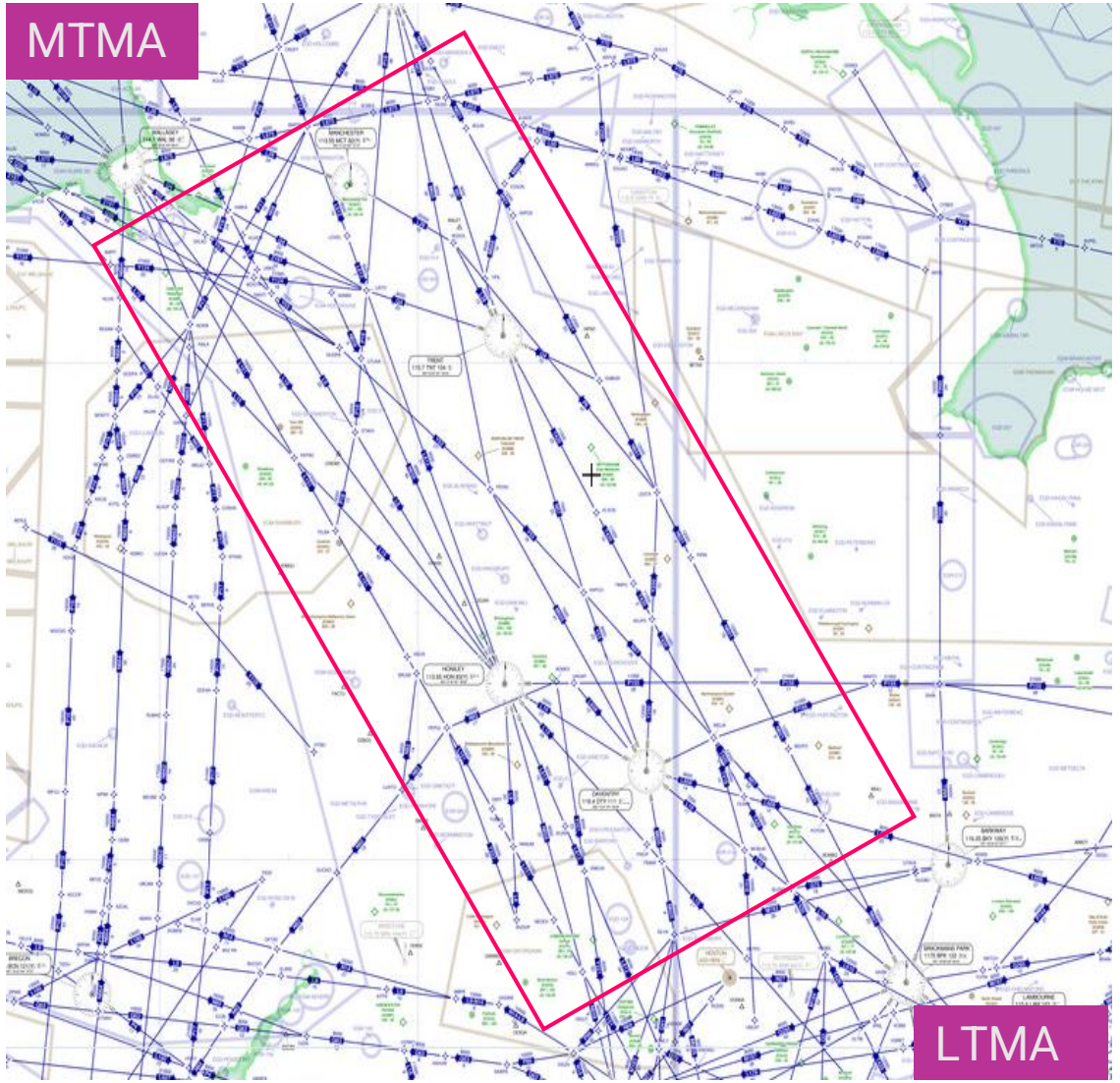
Statement of Need

Objective:

The aim of this ACP is to modernise the airspace which interfaces between the London TMA (LTMA) and Manchester TMA (MTMA) (referred to hereafter as 'Midlands Airspace'), in line with the AMS.

The key objectives are to enhance route capacity and reduce complexity, providing environmental efficiencies where possible.

This change aligns with the AMS.



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Statement of Need

Issue/opportunity to be addressed:

Midlands Airspace is a complex area of airspace. Sandwiched between the MTMA and LTMA, there are 2 primary flows of traffic to the north and south which traverse the 'spine' of the country, and a high volume of traffic.

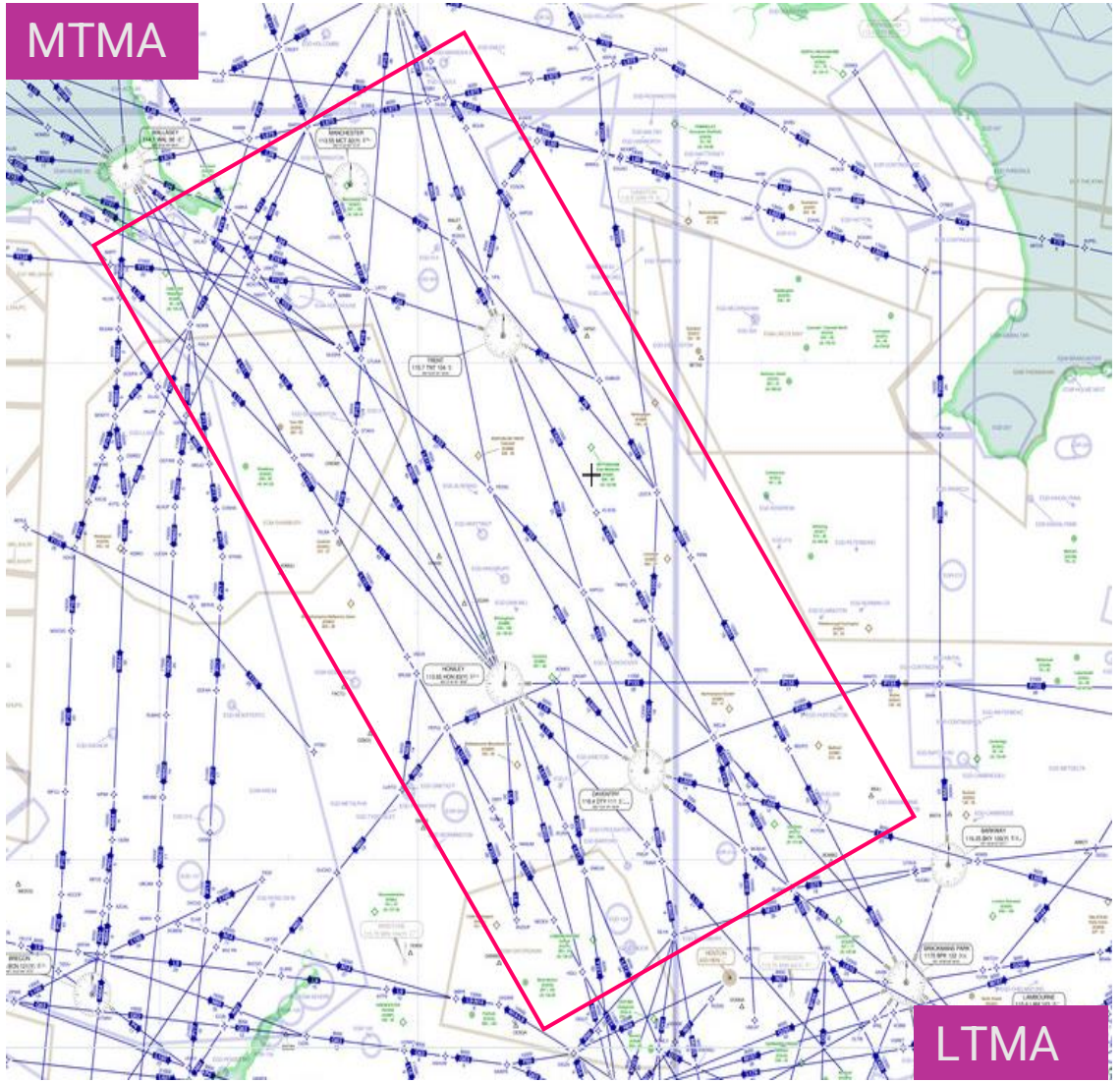
Separate ACPs are underway to modernise both the LTMA and the MTMA (ACP-2017-041/ACP-2019-77) which will introduce systemised routings within the TMAs.

Current capacity within Midlands Airspace is restricted by the high level of controller workload, driven by high levels of tactical intervention required to maintain safety.

This ACP seeks to optimise the route network in advance of the MTMA and LTMA changes, providing a systemised route structure, and where suitable, Free Route Airspace may be implemented.

Consideration has been given to combining this with either / both the extant TMA ACPs, however it is assessed as optimal to deliver this as a separate change.

This will be an enabling change for both MTMA and LTMA ACPs.



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Current-day scenario:

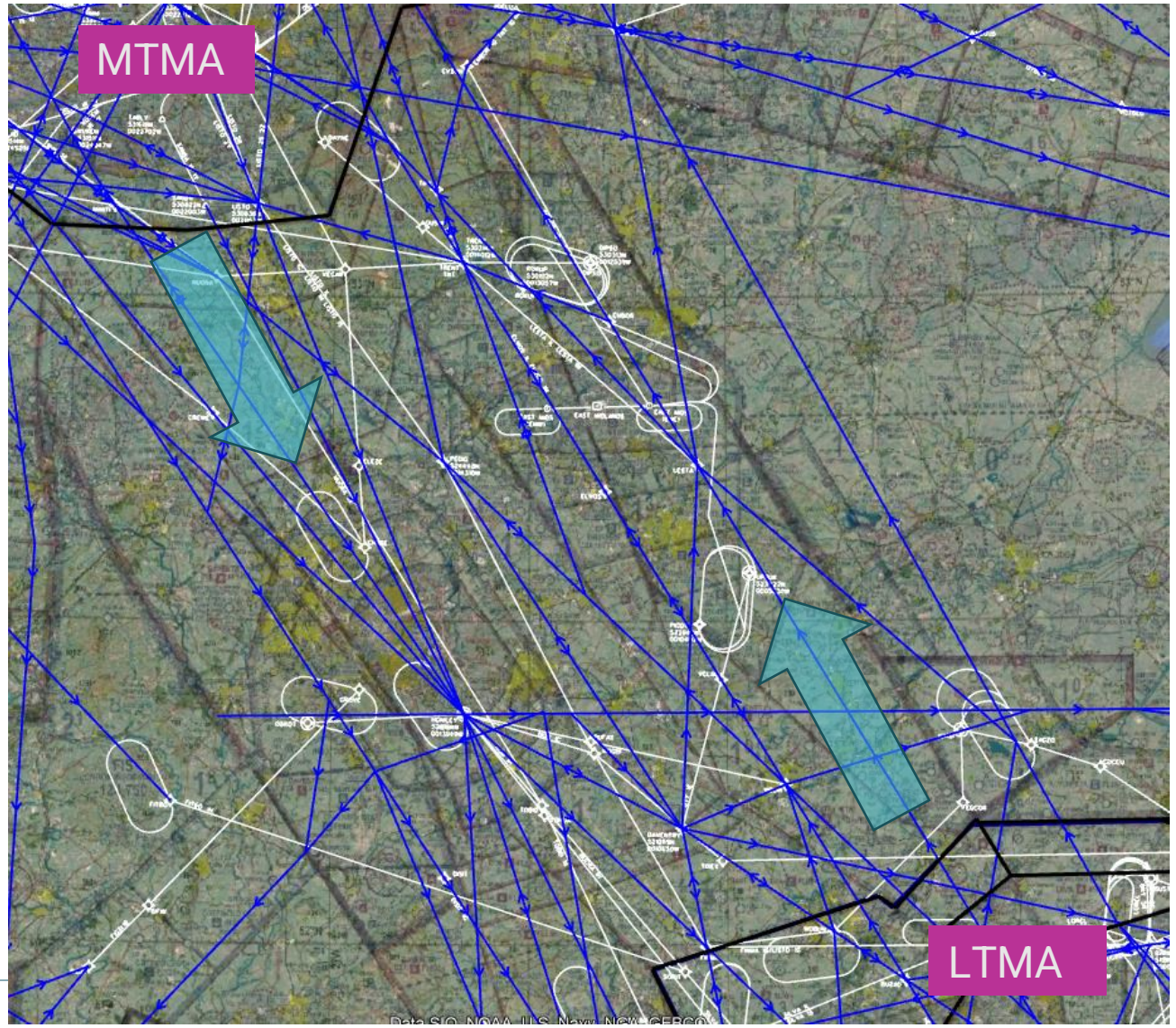
Airspace Design: FL70 - FL460

ATS routes, flight plannable direct routes (DCTs) and STARs form the basis of the routing network.

Convergence of ATS routes based on ground based navigational beacons increases controller intervention (with use of headings) as the current network does not lend itself to systemisation.

The airspace is split into two main components, one predominantly southbound at the western section of the airspace and one predominantly northbound to the east.

The vast majority of traffic follows the northbound or southbound flow.



Prevalent traffic flow

Blue = ATS routes
White = STARs

Current-day scenario:

Airspace Usage:

Southbound:

LTMA, Solent Group, Wessex Group and EGLF arrivals from the north.

MTMA, Birmingham, East Midlands deps to the south/east

Northern UK/Irish departing southbound traffic.

Southbound London UK overflying traffic

Northbound:

LTMA, Solent Group, Wessex Group and EGLF departures to the north

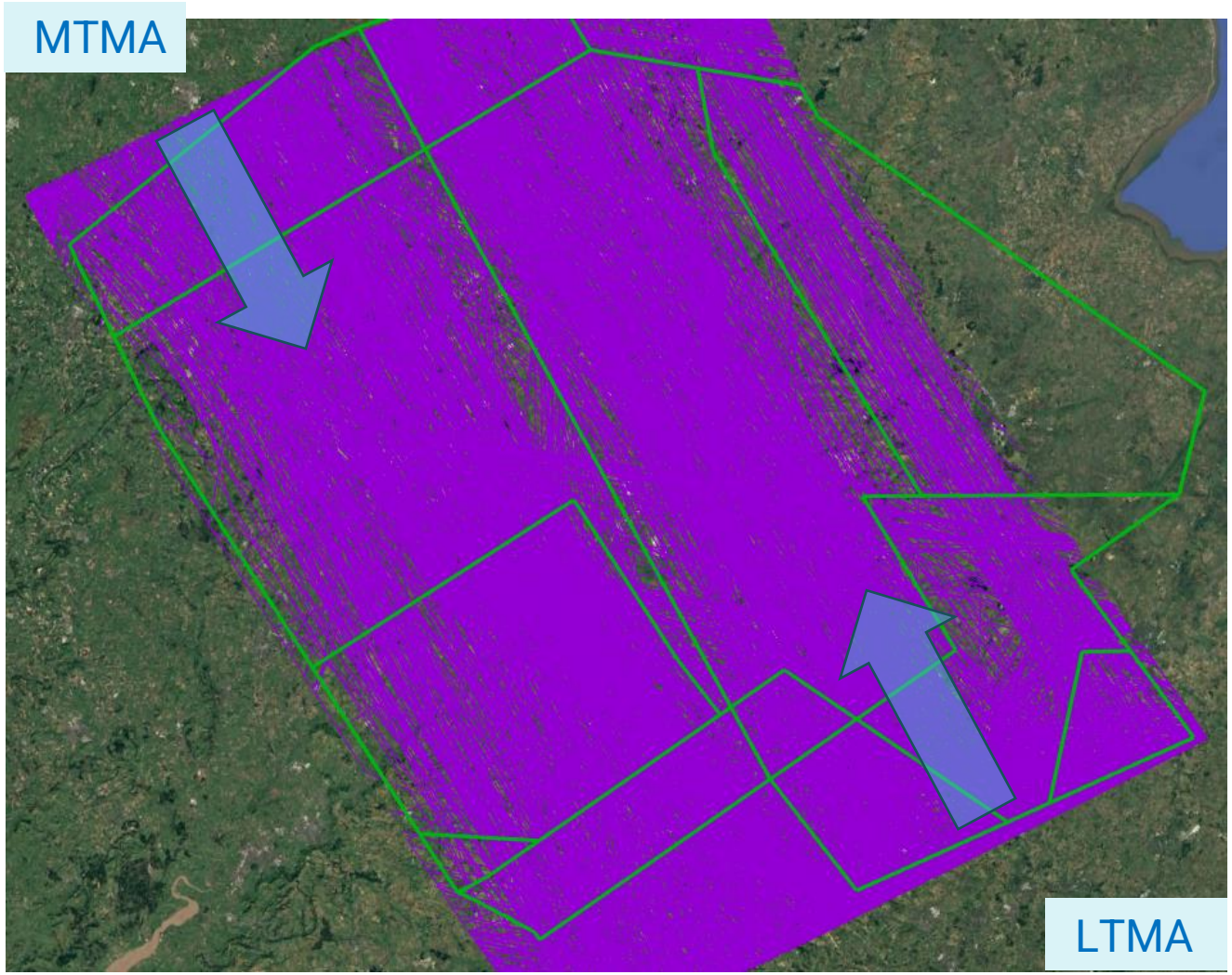
MTMA, Birmingham, East Midlands arrivals from the south

Northbound traffic to Northern UK/Irish airfields.

Northbound London UK overflying traffic

Traffic volume:

Estimated traffic figures - circa 410,000 flights per year



Current airspace usage – typical traffic flows (1 week July 2024)

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Opportunities and Issues Arising from the Proposed Change

Opportunities

Systemisation of traffic flows

- Simplification - separation by design
- Reduce ATCO / pilot workload
- Optimise airport connectivity
- Increase capacity
- Increased predictability and consistency for traffic presentation

Enabling future TMA changes

- Align with concepts for LTMA/MTMA ACPs
- Compatible with Free Route Airspace

Issues

Ensuring compatibility with existing arrivals & departure routes

- No intent to change tactical management of traffic below 7,000ft
- STARs will be realigned

Widescale systemisation can be challenging for environmental efficiencies

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Safety Case Requirements

Standard safety activities will take place throughout the ACP lifecycle.

No new or novel procedures are expected which could require extensive safety work.

This ACP will at least maintain the current safety levels in the affected area.

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Level, Process Requirements and Provisional Timelines

Expected Level 2 ACP

- Alters flight behaviours above 7,000ft (amsl)
- Does not alter flights below 7,000ft (amsl) over land

Stage 1

- Mandatory design principles
- Minimal discretionary design principles
- 2-week stakeholder engagement
- Limited to relevant aviation stakeholders

Stage 2

- Stakeholder engagement on design development
- Qualitative initial appraisal

Stage 3

- 6-week consultation with relevant aviation stakeholders

Activity	Proposed Date
Submit Stage 1	15th August 2025
Stage 1 Decision	29th August 2025
Submit Stage 2	13th February 2026
Stage 2 Decision	27th February 2026
Submit Stage 3	16th October 2026
Stage 3 Decision	30th October 2026
Consultation	Jan / Feb 2027
Submit Stage 4	4th June 2027
Stage 5 Decision	13th August 2027
AIRAC Submission	27th August 2027
Target AIRAC	November 2027

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Next Steps

Confirm process requirements with CAA (minutes of Assessment Meeting)

Agree timelines with CAA

Commence Stage 1 engagement activity with relevant stakeholders

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Thank you

