

MINUTES OF ACP 2025-023 ASSESSMENT MEETING HELD ONLINE (TEAMS) WEDNESDAY 9TH JULY 2025

Published 29th July 2025

Distribution List:

Present	Appointment	Representing
	Airspace Regulator (Economic)	CAA
	Principal Airspace Regulator	CAA
	Airspace Regulator (Environment)	CAA
	Airspace Change Account Manager (Covering)	CAA
	Airspace Regulator (Technical)	CAA
	Airspace Regulator (Engagement and Consultation)	CAA
	Airspace Regulator (Engagement and Consultation)	CAA
	Operations Implementation Manager	NATS
	Airspace Change Expert	NATS
<u>Participants in the ACP but unable to attend the meeting (apologies)</u>		
	Airspace Change Account Manager	CAA
	ATS Inspector	CAA

CAA Assessment Meeting Opening Statement

■ (CAA) gave the following opening statement:

The CAA has received the Assessment Meeting Agenda and Presentation Slides in advance of this Assessment Meeting and can confirm that the documents are required to be published, together with minutes of the meeting, on the Airspace Change Portal page. The CAA explained the purpose of the meeting and confirmed that the meeting was an Assessment Meeting and not a Gateway. The CAA reinforced that the sponsor was required to provide a broad description of their proposed approach to meeting the CAA's CAP 1616 requirements, but the CAA was not deciding whether the proposed approach met the detailed requirements of the CAA's process at this stage. The purpose of the Assessment Meeting (set out in detail in CAP 1616) was broadly:

- for the Sponsor to present and discuss their Statement of Need,
- to enable the CAA to consider whether the proposal concerned falls within the scope of the formal airspace change process, including determining whether the proposal falls within the scope of a pre-scaled ACP process/Level 3,
- to enable the CAA to consider the appropriate provisional Level to assign to the change proposal.

Additionally, the sponsor was required to provide information on how it intended to proceed to fulfil the requirements of the airspace change process and to provide information on timescales. Lastly, the sponsor was required to provide information on how it intended to meet the engagement requirements of the various stages of the airspace change process.

	ACTION
Item 1 – Introduction NATS and CAA staff introduced themselves. ■ (NATS) displayed the presentation.	
Item 2 – Statement of Need (discussion and review) ■ (NATS) presented the Statement of Need (SoN) as part of the slide pack. There were no comments or proposed amendments to the SoN. ■ (CAA) agreed that the proposal falls within scope of the airspace change process.	

<p>Item 3 – Issues or opportunities arising from proposed change</p> <p>██████████ (NATS) explained the operational issue with the Controlled Airspace (CAS) base-step between Clacton CTAs 11 and 12, using the slide pack to illustrate.</p>	
<p>Item 4 – Options to exploit opportunities or address issues identified</p> <p>██████████ (NATS) explained how safety would be maintained and the potential for a future increase in risk would be mitigated, by the timely resolution of a potential future issue, with low predicted negative impacts on other airspace users and none on non-aviation stakeholders.</p>	
<p>Item 5 – Current day scenario</p> <p>██████████ (NATS) used the slide pack to illustrate how current traffic flows are integrated, how the CAS base-step affects ATC/cockpit workload, and why action needs to be taken.</p> <p>██████████ (CAA) noted that the presentation states that all potential operational mitigations have been updated to the fullest extent possible and asked for more detail about how the controllers are managing this tactically at present, what operational mitigations have been put in place for this summer and whether this included flow restrictions?</p> <p>██████████ (NATS) explained that flow restrictions were not the right tool to mitigate this situation as the complexity arises due to the integration of southerly and easterly flows. ██████████ stated that level allocations within the Stansted/LOREL/OXDUF area have been updated to mitigate the interaction. ██████████ explained that all recommended operational measures are in place and provided additional detail about how controllers were managing traffic flows tactically. The only mitigation which has not yet been implemented is an airspace change.</p> <p>██████████ (CAA) The airspace step was introduced under SAIP AD6 (ACP-2018-65). Was this issue foreseeable?</p> <p>██████████ (NATS) Early AD6 designs had far lower CAS across a wide region, these designs were amended during development to include the CAS step. No issues were expected, and it was not until traffic increased two years post-COVID that the potential issue was identified.</p> <p>(All) Discussion about the history of identifying the issue.</p> <p>██████████ (CAA) Another design option would be for CLN CTA12 to be completely lowered to FL105, rather than being split. Had this been considered in early design planning?</p> <p>██████████ (NATS) There would be no ATC benefit in having lower CAS to the east of OFJES, due to expected descent profiles, therefore it has not been considered. The issue occurs in the integration area from OFJES westwards towards OXDUF, rather than east of OFJES.</p> <p>██████████ (CAA). The presentation notes that there will be no changes to the STARs, hence why the IFP representative was 'stood down' from this assessment meeting; however, the STARs have level restrictions of FL140 by OFJES. Is the intention for these be amended?</p> <p>██████████ (NATS) The intent is to retain the current STARs from the east, which all have a level restriction of FL140 by OFJES. We would not need to change that level restriction, nor change the STARs. This ACP would provide controllers with the option to descend below FL140 tactically once past OFJES.</p>	
<p>Item 6 – Provisional indication of the scale level and process requirements*</p> <p>██████████ (NATS) put forward the case for Level 3 as per CAP1616h. The CAA will consider this and will respond.</p>	<p>ACTIONS</p> <p>Level 3 argument & decision</p>

<p><i>stipulated within CAP 1616. It is not an assessment of the merits of the submission itself, which is reviewed at Stage 5 - Decision. We may request documentation from the sponsor that is referred to in the gateway submission but has not been provided as part of the Gateway submission materials. We may also request the sponsor to provide information by way of clarification relating to statements or assumptions made in the submission. Any further information sought by Airspace Regulation at this stage is for clarificatory purposes and is only for determining compliance with the CAP 1616 process. In any instance where a sponsor has not met the requirements of the process, we will inform them after the gateway decision and advise of next steps.</i></p>															
<p>Item 7 – Provisional process timescales*</p> <p>██████ (NATS) put forward the case for implementation on AIRAC 03/2026 (19th March 2026), which aligns with NATS' systems update cycle and is the only such date available before Summer 2026. Under a Level 3 ACP there would be no gateway schedule, engagement activities would occur with a limited, targeted stakeholder list, the ACP would be submitted in late September and a CAA decision by end November 2025 would achieve the target AIRAC (presuming approval). NATS also confirmed to the CAA that there is a safety imperative behind the proposed timeline.</p> <p>██████ (CAA) asked what the contingency plan was, should the timeline for AIRAC 03/2026 not be feasible and whether the plan would be to delay implementation until after the summer season or whether it would be implemented as soon as possible in the next available/suitable AIRAC cycle.</p> <p>██████ (NATS) confirmed that were that situation to arise, the plan would be to implement as soon as possible, as they would wish to deliver the benefits of this ACP as quickly as possible for the reasons described previously.</p> <p>As noted above, the CAA will consider this, and will respond.</p> <p><i>Post Assessment Meeting note: A timeline has since been approved by the CAA.</i></p> <table border="1" data-bbox="165 1016 1236 1240"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2">Post Assessment Meeting Update - Timeline</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Define Gateway</td><td>29-Aug-25</td></tr> <tr> <td>Develop and Assess Gateway</td><td>29-Aug-25</td></tr> <tr> <td>Consult Gateway</td><td>29-Aug-25</td></tr> <tr> <td>Formal ACP Submission</td><td>10-Oct-25</td></tr> <tr> <td>Decide Gateway</td><td>05-Dec-25</td></tr> <tr> <td>Target AIRAC</td><td>03/2026</td></tr> </tbody> </table> <p><small>* The timeline agreed may become subject to change by the CAA. As outlined in CAP 2541 it is not the CAA's intent to conduct a re-prioritisation of all ACPs currently in progress, but only to prioritise when we believe this is required. Such prioritisation will be conducted on a case-by-case basis and in accordance with the principles outlined in CAP 2541. Should it be considered necessary to reprioritise an ACP a member of the Airspace Regulation team will contact the sponsor directly.</small></p>	Post Assessment Meeting Update - Timeline		Define Gateway	29-Aug-25	Develop and Assess Gateway	29-Aug-25	Consult Gateway	29-Aug-25	Formal ACP Submission	10-Oct-25	Decide Gateway	05-Dec-25	Target AIRAC	03/2026	
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<p>Item 8 – Safety Case requirement¹</p> <p>██████ (NATS) summarised the use of HAZID and the mitigation this ACP would provide. Simplifying flow integration mitigates the potential for a future increase in risk.</p>															
<p>Item 9 – Next steps</p> <p>██████ (NATS) to send draft minutes of this meeting to ████████ (CAA) CAA to confirm process requirements including ACP Level.</p> <p>██████ (NATS) to complete NATS' actions and upload finalised redacted minutes and presentation to the CAA airspace change portal.</p>	<p>ACTIONS</p> <p>Minutes Presentation Process reqts</p>														

¹ The default position is that if the safety case contains proprietary information which is commercially sensitive in nature, it may be agreed by the CAA not to have it published in its entirety at stage 4. However, it must be submitted to the CAA, labelled accordingly and a Plain English summary of the final safety assessment explaining why the proposal will maintain a high standard of safety, must be published on the Portal, in accordance with CAP1616 para 1.31.

<p>Item 10 – Any other business</p> <p>After the meeting, [REDACTED] (CAA) informed [REDACTED] (NATS) that progress of this ACP will be without prejudice to the outcome of the SAIP AD6 (ACP-2018-65) post-implementation review (PIR).</p>	
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ACTIONS ARISING FROM OFJES ACP-2025-023 ASSESSMENT MEETING

Subject	Name	Action	Deadline
Draft Minutes	[REDACTED] (NATS)	Share minutes of meeting within 7 days	16/07/2025 Closed
Agree Minutes	[REDACTED] (CAA)	Review minutes, allocate ACP level, supply process requirements if not already covered	29/07/2025 Closed
Publish Minutes	[REDACTED] (NATS)	Upload redacted minutes and presentation to the CAA portal entry for this ACP	29/07/2025 Closed
Publish HRA form	[REDACTED] (NATS)	Complete the HRA screening form and publish to the CAA portal entry for this ACP	29/07/2025 Closed
Supply data on regional occupancy	[REDACTED] (NATS)	Extract relevant slides from USAFE exploratory briefing, combine with draft slide from Engagement Briefing Pack, and send to CAA on the understanding that this will not be published until later in the process subject to checks	14/07/2025 closed
Supply draft Engagement Strategy	[REDACTED] (NATS)	Send the draft Engagement Strategy for CAA awareness and comment	14/07/2025 closed
Supply draft Engagement Briefing Pack	[REDACTED] (NATS)	Send the draft Engagement Briefing Pack for CAA awareness and comment	14/07/2025 closed

NATS as ACP Sponsor

DRAFT MINUTES OF ACP 2025-023 FOLLOW UP TO ASSESSMENT MEETING HELD ONLINE (TEAMS) TUESDAY 22 JULY 2025

Present	Appointment	Representing	
[REDACTED]	Principal Airspace Regulator	CAA	
	Airspace Regulator (Technical)	CAA	
	Airspace Regulator (Environment)	CAA	
	Airspace Regulator (Engagement & Consultation)	CAA	
	Airspace Change Account Manager	CAA	
	Airspace Change Expert	NATS	
Item 1 – Introductions and Purpose of Meeting			
[REDACTED] Introduced [REDACTED] self as [REDACTED] could not attend the Assessment Meeting on 9 July 2025. All other attendees had previously met. Attendees were reminded about the purpose of the meeting – to provide feedback on the proposed level and ACP timelines outlined in the Assessment meeting for ACP-2025-023 on Wednesday 9 July 2025.			
Item 2 – Provisional indication of the scale level			
[REDACTED] thanked NATS for providing the draft minutes, and additional information following the assessment meeting, which had all been given conscious consideration.			

<p>The minutes were under review ahead of this follow-on meeting on 22 July 2025. It is proposed that notes from this meeting will be added as an addendum to the original assessment meeting to ensure there is a transparent audit trail of discussion and decision-making.</p> <p>■ clarified that after careful consideration ACP-2025-023 would be allocated as a scaled Level 2 ACP. The reason for this was because having considered the ACP, the proposed change meets the criteria described in the Level 2 definition and is therefore the appropriate level allocation to ensure the correct process requirements are followed. Notwithstanding, noting the proposed scope and context of the ACP, there are opportunities to scale the ACP to ensure it is proportionate to the proposed change. Furthermore, CAP 1616f provides guidance on requirements which can be screened out.</p> <p>The CAA acknowledged the case made by the sponsor for targeting the 03/2026 AIRAC and best endeavours would be made to support the sponsor in meeting that proposed timeline.</p> <p>■ (NATS) raised some questions about the rationale for the ACP being allocated as a level 2, so that the logic could be fully understood. Examples were provided of ACPs which had been allocated as Level 3. These were discussed and had previously been examined by the CAA ahead of the meeting; however, it was explained that each ACP has its own specific context and conditions and had to be assessed on its own merits.</p>	
<p>Item 3 – ACP Timeline and Process Requirement Discussion</p> <p>The discussion moved on to the detailed timelines and process requirements. It was suggested that it would be best to work backwards from stage 6 (Implementation) when discussing proposed timelines.</p> <p>The CAA provisionally accepts the sponsor's timeline to target the 03/2026 AIRAC cycle (19 Mar 26) and will make its best endeavors to meet that timeline, subject to a formal review, noting the case for targeting that AIRAC made by the sponsor during the Assessment Meeting. The AIS deadline for this AIRAC cycle is 12 Dec 25. Moving backwards to Stage 4 – the submission and assessment dates as well as the call in process were discussed and how these would need to be accommodated within the overall timelines for the ACP.</p> <p>Moving backwards again to Stage 3, in terms of scaling, it was explained that CAP1616 allows scaling of the airspace change process requirements on a case-by-case basis, which will be influenced by the potential impacts of the airspace change proposal. The potential to combine stages of the process and to conduct a combined Gateway Assessment in August was discussed and the CAA took an action to explore this option. Options discussed were to have a combined Stage 1/2/3 Gateway or to have a review of Stage 1 outputs and a combined Stage 2/3 gateway.</p> <p>With regards to Stage 1, it was noted that it was important for the sponsor to outline the current day scenario in sufficient detail to explain the case for change and to tell the story of how they arrived at the single design option which was proposed in the Assessment Meeting. Moving on from the discussion about timelines and into more specific scaling discussions, in terms of the requirements from the regulators:</p> <p><u>Engagement & Consultation:</u> The CAA stated that the sponsor would need to demonstrate effective two-way communication with stakeholders. Therefore, they must provide relevant engagement evidence showing that they shared their current day scenario & DPs with their stakeholders (CAP1616 f 2.58). The CAA noted that the sponsor has already completed some engagement with some key stakeholders. The Sponsor was also advised that they should also show how they engaged with stakeholders on the baseline scenarios and design option; however, sponsor can make a justification if they don't engage but provide evidence of this at stage 4. Targeted engagement was proposed, and the sponsor was advised to develop and share their updated engagement strategy with their materials at stage 3 gateway. This must include the methodology used, including the timelines and</p>	

<p>duration of engagement, with a rationale for the period. Specific other guidance for stage 3 can be found in Chapter 4 of CAP1616f.</p> <p><u>IFP</u>: The clarification in the assessment meeting about the intention to make no changes to the relevant STARs, means that there would be little/no IFP input required.</p> <p><u>Economic</u>: Qualitative assessment of the impacts on civilian and military aviation and non-aviation stakeholders.</p> <p><u>Environment</u>: Change sponsor to provide rationale and evidence to support argument that there is no impact on fuel and GHG emissions and therefore no need for quantitative assessment (see CAP1616i 2.16/2.17)</p> <p>It was noted that a single design option was presented in the assessment meeting. CAP1616f para 3.5 states that “While baseline scenarios and design options must be developed for all airspace change proposals, we will consider evidence and supporting rationale provided by change sponsors to justify where single or limited design options have been presented. For airspace change proposals where there is a single design option only (other than the baseline scenarios), initial options appraisal and full options appraisal requirements can be consolidated.”</p>	
<p>Item 4 – Immediate Next Steps</p> <p>The minutes of the Assessment Meeting, along with the addendum of the 22 July follow-on meeting, will be returned to the sponsor with CAA feedback and comments by close of play 28 July 25.</p> <p>████ would check available options for a Gateway Assessment meeting in Aug.</p> <p>If the sponsor had any follow-up queries, they could be directed to █████, who would forward to the relevant regulator/answer as required.</p>	