Modernising Midlands Airspace

Engagement Evidence
ACP-2025-013

NATS Public

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[redacted]

From: Airspace Consultation
Sent: 10 July 2025 11:40
Subject: NATS Proposed Airspace Change: Midlands Airspace
Attachments: Midlands_Stage 1_Engagement.pdf

Dear Colleague,

NATS is proposing an airspace change proposal to improve the efficiency of the Midlands airspace above 7,000ft between London TMA and Manchester TMA.
We are currently in Stage 1 of the CAP1616 Airspace Change Process – "Define", and your organisation is identified as potentially impacted by this change.

Please find attached a briefing pack which describes the need for change, the area of scope, and proposed design principles.
We would like your feedback on the current day scenario, and the proposed Design Principles for this change.
Please complete this brief form with your response to the following by **Thursday 31 July:**

- Midlands Airspace current day scenario: Agree / Disagree. Any comments.
- Midlands Airspace proposed Design Principles: Agree / Disagree. Any comments.

After this date, we will consider feedback and review the proposed DPs. The finalised DPs will be used to develop and assess design options within Stage 2.

We will seek further input from yourselves as we progress through that stage. The project is still in development and will be subject to inclusion in NATS' long term investment plan.

Many thanks for your time, your feedback is important to us. **https://forms.office.com/e/2RFXxXu7vy**

Kind regards

NATS Airspace Change Team

NATS

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Airspace Change Specialist

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Midlands Airspace

Stage 1: Current Day Scenario and Design Principles

1. Name

2. Organisation

3. To what extent do you agree with the description of the current day scenario

- ◯ Agree
- ◯ Neutral
- ◯ Disagree

4. Please comment here

5. Do you agree with the proposed Design Principles for the Midlands Airspace change?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

6. Please comment

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Microsoft Forms

Modernising Midlands Airspace

Stage 1 Define

Engagement Material

ACP-2025-013

July 2025

NATS

1

The need for change

NATS

The aim of this Airspace Change Proposal (ACP) is to modernise the airspace which interfaces between the London TMA (LTMA) and Manchester TMA (MTMA) ('Midlands Airspace'), shown in the blue box.

Current Issue:

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 due to the airspace design.

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

Key objectives:

- to optimise the airspace to enhance route capacity
- reduce complexity and controller workload
- provide environmental efficiencies where possible

Airspace Modernisation Strategy

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. This ACP is an enabler to those changes.

Limitations:
The indicative lateral scope area is shown in Figure 1.
Vertical scope includes the lower and upper airspace, from FL70 – FL660.

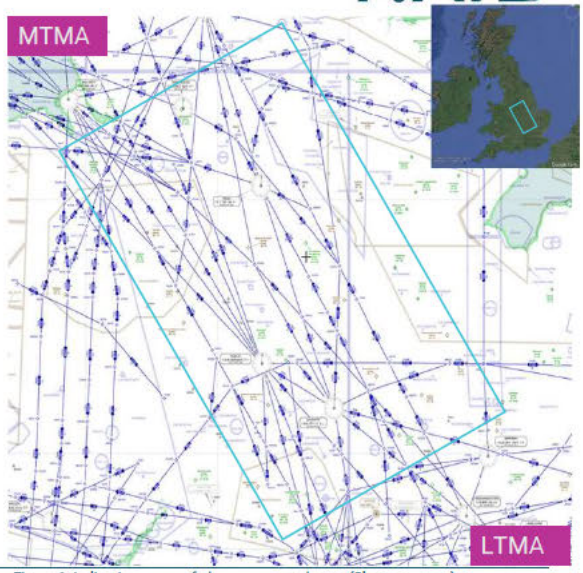


Figure 1: Indicative scope of change proposal area (Skyvector map)

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Current-day scenario: airspace design

The current design is predicated on the use of ground based navigational aids. ATS routes converge at VORs, such as HONILEY (HON), DAVENTRY (DTY), and TRENT (TNT) (circled).

Figure 2 shows the traffic density for a busy week. Traffic is routinely dispersed from ATS routes using headings, requiring a high level of controller intervention. The airspace is not designed for optimal efficiency.

Traffic predominantly follows the northbound flow, to the east of the airspace, or the southbound flow to the west.

Southbound traffic includes:

- arrivals into LTMA, Wessex Group, Solent Group and Farnborough airfields from the north
- departures from MTMA, Birmingham, East Midlands to the south/east
- departures from Northern UK/Irish airfields to the south
- southbound London FIR/UIR overflights

Northbound traffic includes:

- departures from LTMA, Wessex Group, Solent Group and Farnborough airfields to the north
- arrivals into MTMA, Birmingham, East Midlands from the south/east
- arrivals into Northern UK/Irish airfields from the south
- northbound London FIR/UIR overflights

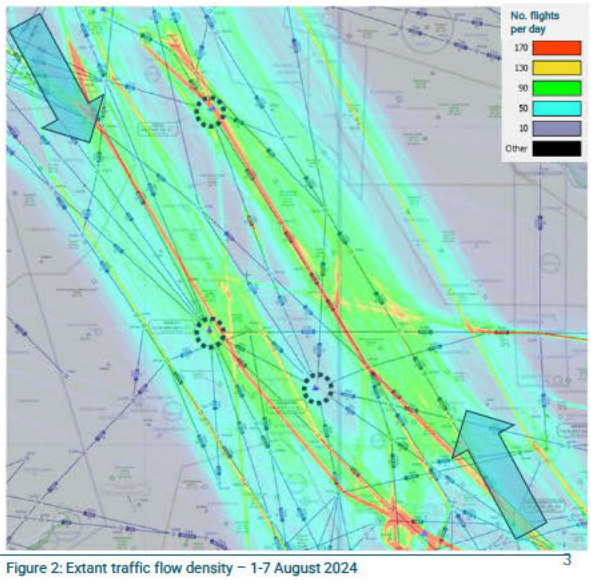


Figure 2: Extant traffic flow density – 1-7 August 2024

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Current-day scenario: route structures

ATS Route Structure

ATS routes, flight plannable direct routes (DCTs) and STARs form the basis of the route network within the area of scope, as shown in Figure 3.

The scope includes the lower and upper airspace, from FL70 – FL660.

The primary ATS routes within scope of this proposal are:

Primary ATS Routes within scope	L8, UL8, L10, L15, L151, L28, UL28, L608, L612, UL612, L613, M605, UM605, M868, UM868, N57, UN57, N859, UN859, N601, UN601, N92, P6, UP6, P18, Q3, Q4, UQ4, T418, T420, Y250, UY250, Y321, Y322, Y53, UY53

The proposed changes will require connectivity with other ATS routes and DCTs within the wider network, so the change is not limited to these routes.

Airport connectivity

Arrivals to MTMA, LTMA, and the Midlands airports connect to the network via STARs (Standard Terminal Arrival Routes); this change will have no impact on airport procedures.

Connectivity will be optimised to current airport departure procedures (SIDs). SIDS are not within scope of this proposed, there are no changes below 7,000ft.

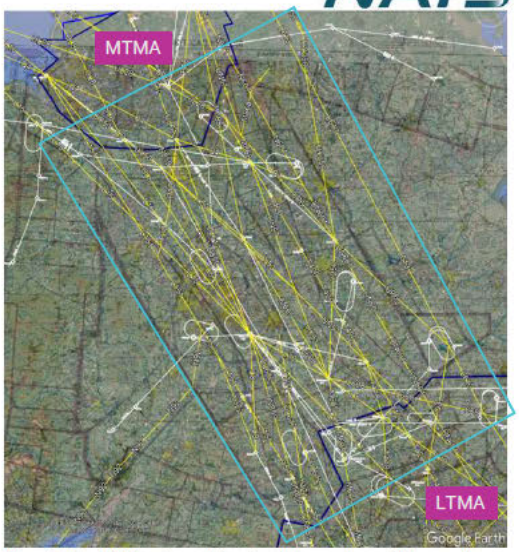


Figure 3: Extant ATS routes and airport arrival procedures within area of scope

Yellow = ATS routes White = STARs

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Current day scenario: airspace structures

Controlled Airspace (CAS) (shown in blue) within area of scope

- Midlands CTA: Class C airspace FL195 - FL245
- Daventry (DTY) CTA 1 – CTA 20: Class A airspace
  Various bases up to FL195 as per Figure 4
- Daventry (DTY) CTA 21 – CTA 25: Class C airspace
  Various bases up to FL195 as per Figure 4

Parachute Areas within scope (blue dots)

- (1) Tilstock parachute site (SFC – FL150)
- (2) Langar Parachute Site (SFC – FL150)
- (3) Weston-on-the-Green parachute site (SFC – FL120)

Gliding Areas within scope (light blue area)

Camphill Box (FL85 – FL100)

Free Route Airspace (FRA) (shown in green) out of scope

To the west of the scope area, airspace above FL245 is FRA.

This denotes the west boundary of the change area and is out of scope.

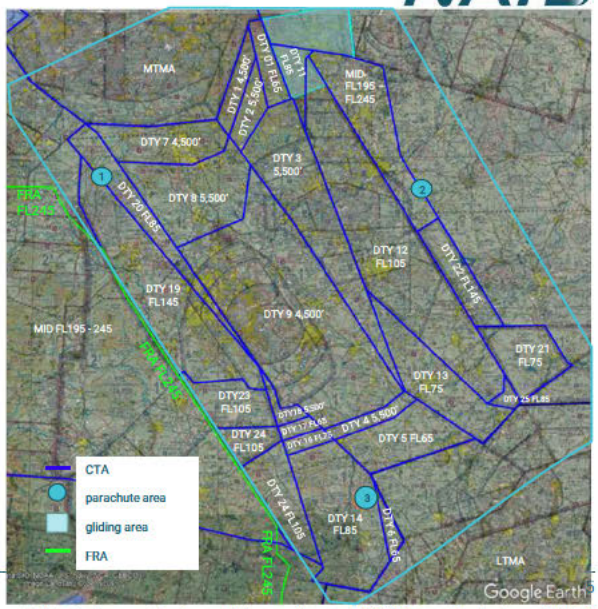


Figure 4: Extant airspace structures within area of scope. DTY CTA base levels shown (all to FL195)

Current day scenario: military airspace

Extant military airspace within area of scope:

Temporary Reserved Area (TRA) 003: (orange)

- FL195 – FL245

East Anglia Military Training Area (EAMTA): (orange)

- FL245 – FL660

Military Corridors: (purple)

- Lichfield Corridor FL140 / FL150
- Daventry (DTY) Corridor FL100 / FL110
- Westcott (WCO) Corridor FL230/ FL240

Danger Areas: (red)

Fairford Danger Complex

- EGD218A SFC – FL75
- EGD218B outside change area of scope
- EGD218C outside change area of scope
- EGC218D outside change area of scope

EG D129 Weston-on-the-Green SFC – FL120

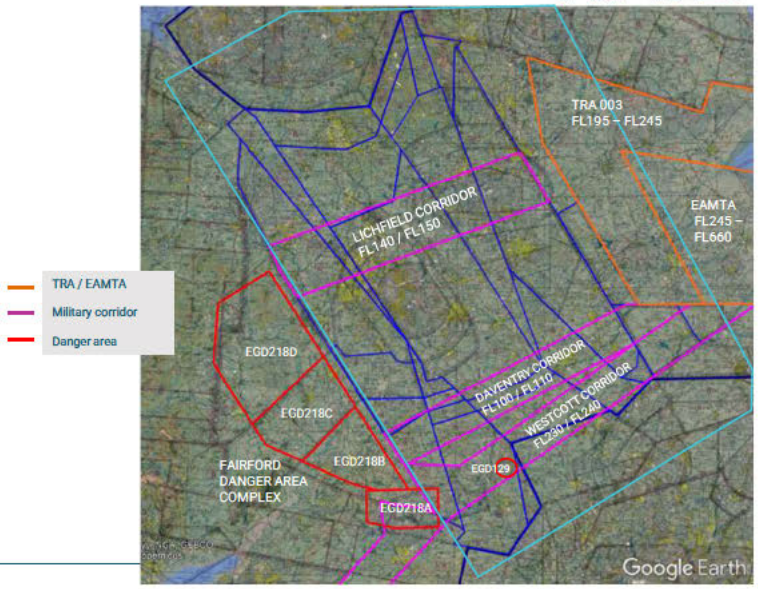


Figure 5: Extant military airspace structures within area of scope.

Current-day scenario: airspace usage

Airspace Operators

Approximately 410,000 flights utilised the airspace in 2024.

The Top 10 airlines using this airspace based on 2024 traffic are:

	Airline	Flights	% flights
1	British Airways	77,291	19.6%
2	Ryanair	71,253	18.1%
3	easyJet	69,313	17.6%
4	Jet2	32,650	8.3%
5	TUI Airways	14,926	3.8%
6	Air France	11,225	2.8%
7	United Airlines	10,891	2.8%
8	Aer Lingus	7,701	2.0%
9	American Airlines	7,489	1.9%
10	Loganair	7,329	1.9%

These airlines comprise approx. 80% of all traffic using this airspace.

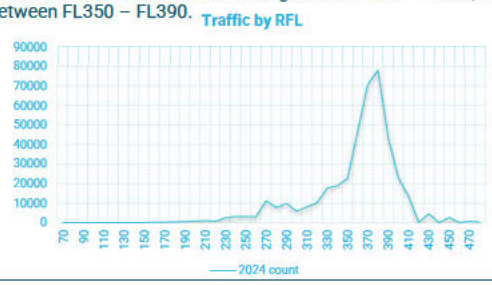
Aircraft Types

71% of traffic is medium jets, mostly comprised of aircraft from the Airbus A320 family and the Boeing B737 family.

20% of traffic is heavy airliners, predominantly B777/B787/B767 and A330/A350 aircraft.

Weight Category	Count (2024)	% all traffic
Super	2,988	1%
Heavy	80,469	20%
Medium	291,688	71%
Small	16,296	4%
Light	17,305	4%

The chart below shows the RFL ranges from FL70 – FL470, with typical RFL between FL350 – FL390.



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Proposed Design Principles

CAP1616 states that we must include Mandatory Design Principles (MDPs) and consider Discretionary Design Principles (DDPs) or Bespoke Design Principles (BDPs).

In line with the key objectives of this ACP (to optimise route capacity, reduce complexity and controller workload, and provide environmental efficiencies where possible), we propose the below DPs, prioritised as indicated:

Priority	Design Principle	Description
A	MDP Safety	The airspace change proposal must maintain a high standard of safety and should seek to enhance current levels of safety.
B	DDP Operational (Capacity)	The airspace change proposal should provide the greatest capacity benefits.
B	BDP Technical (Future Airspace Enabler)	The Midlands Airspace design will provide a compatible and optimised interface with the MTMA and LTMA modernisation projects.
C	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.
C	DDP Technical (Performance based navigation)	The proposed routes (instrument flight procedures/air traffic service routes) should be designed to enable efficiency benefits by using an appropriate standard of performance-based navigation
C	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.

A = Top priority, must meet B = Second priority after 'A' is achieved C = To be considered

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How to respond & next steps…

We would like your feedback on the current day scenario, and the proposed Design Principles for this change.

Please complete this brief form with your response to the following by Thursday 31 July.

- Midlands Airspace current day scenario: Agree / Disagree. Any comments.
- Midlands Airspace proposed Design Principles: Agree / Disagree. Any comments.

After this date, we will consider feedback and review the proposed DPs.

The finalised DPs will be used to develop and assess design options within Stage 2.
We will seek further input from yourselves as we progress through that stage.

Many thanks for your time, your feedback is important to us.

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[redacted]

From: [redacted]
Sent: 24 July 2025 14:20
Subject: REMINDER: NATS Proposed Airspace Change: Midlands Airspace
Attachments: Midlands_Stage 1_Engagement.pdf

Good afternoon,

We recently contacted you because NATS is proposing an airspace change proposal to improve the efficiency of the Midlands airspace above 7,000ft between London TMA and Manchester TMA.

We would really like to hear your feedback, by next **Thursday 31st July.** We will interpret no response as no objection / comments.

We are currently in Stage 1 of the CAP1616 Airspace Change Process – "Define", and your organisation is identified as potentially impacted by this change.

Please find attached a briefing pack which describes the need for change, the area of scope, and proposed design principles.
We would like your feedback on the current day scenario, and the proposed Design Principles for this change.
Please complete this brief form with your response to the following by **Thursday 31 July:**

- Midlands Airspace current day scenario: Agree / Disagree. Any comments.
- Midlands Airspace proposed Design Principles: Agree / Disagree. Any comments.

After this date, we will consider feedback and review the proposed DPs. The finalised DPs will be used to develop and assess design options within Stage 2.

We will seek further input from yourselves as we progress through that stage. The project is still in development and will be subject to inclusion in NATS' long term investment plan.

Many thanks for your time, your feedback is important to us. **https://forms.office.com/e/2RFXxXu7vy**

Kind regards

NATS Airspace Change Team

NATS

[redacted]
Airspace Change Specialist

E: [redacted]

4000 Parkway, Whiteley,
Fareham, Hants PO15 7FL
www.nats.co.uk

[redacted]

From: [redacted]
Sent: 11 July 2025 14:22
To: [redacted]
Subject: [EXTERNAL] RE: NATS Proposed Airspace Change: Midlands Airspace

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organisation. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognise the sender and know the content is safe.

Good afternoon,

I am responding on behalf of the MOD.

Regarding the current day scenario, the Radar Corridors are different from what is presented, which appears to be the block that contains the corridors from a civil ATC perspective. The Lichfield corridor is available at 140 and 150; Daventry at 100 and 110; Westcott and Swindon at 230 and 240.

Agree that the Design Principles are appropriate for the change being described.

Thank you for your engagement and please continue to engage with MOD throughout the CAP1616 process.

Best regards,

[redacted]

Sqn Ldr [redacted] | SO2 Airspace Plans | Defence Airspace and Air Traffic Management | ~~Aviation House | 1E Beehive Ringroad Crawley West Sussex RH6 0YR~~ | Mobile Telephone: [redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

From: Airspace Consultation
Sent: 10 July 2025 11:40
Subject: NATS Proposed Airspace Change: Midlands Airspace

Dear Colleague,

NATS is proposing an airspace change proposal to improve the efficiency of the Midlands airspace above 7,000ft between London TMA and Manchester TMA.
We are currently in Stage 1 of the CAP1616 Airspace Change Process – "Define", and your organisation is identified as potentially impacted by this change.

Please find attached a briefing pack which describes the need for change, the area of scope, and proposed design principles.

Id	Organisation	To what extent do you agree with the description of the current day scenario	Please comment here	Do you agree with the proposed Design Principles for the Midlands Airspace change?	Please comment
1	easyJet	Agree		Yes	
2	General Avaition Aliiance	Agree		No	There is no "principle" listed that says that ALL airspace users need to be considered. There is no principle listed that requires NATS to assess the amount of CAS and if possible reduce the volume required.
3	British Parachute Schools Ltd - Skydive Langar (Langar Airfield)	Agree		No	Langar Airfield is an intense parachuting site with up to 3 aircraft making over 8000 movements per year, this delivers over 60,000 freefall descents. The aircraft is currently outside of CAS. I cannot see a scenario where this can be bought inside CAS and be managed without having a large workload on both the controllers and our pilots.
4	RAF Brize Norton (covering RAF Weston on the Green)	Neutral	It is imperative to note the military activity, both in the captured danger areas and RAF Brize Norton CTR. Whilst activity below 7000ft is excluded, changes that introduce complexity or hazard to SID/STAR at RAF Brize Norton would not be agreeable for us.	No	I mostly agree with the principles, however, with priority "C" going to complying with Secretary of State policy and guidance, and missing entirely any mention of not hampering or precluding Military operations I am unable to fully agree.
5	British Skydiving, National Governing Body for Skydiving.	Agree		No	British Skydiving disagrees with the proposed design principles, as it is likely to have a negative effect on each of the list drop zones, especially our largest civilian skydiving site (Skydive Langar) if there is not amble cooperation and discussion in the design phase (stage 2). It is key that all three sites are consulted during the design phase.
6	Skydive Tilstock Freefall Club	Agree		No	I disagree with proposed principles as they are likely to have a negative effect on our organisation, there needs to be cooperation and discussion in the design phase (stage 2)
7	TUI Airline o.b.o. TUI Airways	Agree		Yes	

EE3: Email update to stakeholders detailing updated Design Principles

[redacted]

From: [redacted]
Sent: 04 August 2025 14:43
Subject: Midlands Airspace - Stage 1 Design Principles engagement update

Dear Stakeholder,

Thank you to those who responded to our recent engagement on our proposed design principles for the above change.
This is a brief update to all stakeholders to update you on the design principle development for this ACP.
In response to the feedback received, we have amended our proposed Design Principles.
Below are the Design Principles we intend to submit to the CAA this Friday 8th August, and which will underpin the Design Development work as we progress to Stage 2.

Priority	Design Principle	Description	Update from e feedback
A	MDP Safety	The airspace change proposal must maintain a high standard of safety and should seek to enhance current levels of safety.	No change
B	DDP Operational (Capacity)	The airspace change proposal should provide the greatest capacity benefits.	No change
B	BDP Technical (Future Airspace Enabler)	The Midlands Airspace design will provide a compatible and optimised interface with the MTMA and LTMA modernisation projects.	No change
B	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.	Revised priority
C	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.	No change
C	DDP Technical (Performance based navigation)	The proposed routes (instrument flight procedures/air traffic service routes) should be designed to enable efficiency benefits by using an appropriate standard of performance-based navigation	No change
C	DDP Technical (Ministry of Defence requirements)	The airspace change proposal should be compatible with the requirements of the Ministry of Defence.	New DP added
C	DDP Technical (Accessibility for all airspace users)	The airspace change proposal should consider the impacts of operators and owners of all classes of aircraft, including general aviation and other civilian airspace users.	New DP added
C	DDP Technical (Controlled airspace	The volume and classification of controlled airspace required for the provision of air traffic control services to IFR flights should be the minimum necessary to deliver an efficient airspace design, taking into account the needs of other airspace users	New DP added

The Stage 1 submission which details the feedback received and the influence on the DPs will be published on the portal on Friday.
The CAA portal page for this change is https://airspacechange.caa.co.uk/PublicProposalArea?pID=710

We will be in touch again soon as we move into Stage 2 of the Airspace Change Process (CAP1616) and look forward to working with your organisation as design options develop.

In the meantime, thank you again for your feedback.

Kind regards

[redacted]
Airspace Change Specialist

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