

Doncaster Sheffield Airport

ACP-2024-039

CAA Assessment Meeting – 3 September 2025

Agenda

- Introductions
- Summary of issues driving the DSA ACP
- Statement of Need (discussion & review)
- Opportunities for scaling and proportionality
- Fast-track timeline and MTMA dependencies
- Do Nothing / Do Minimum baseline scenario
- Provisional indication of the level and process requirements
- Provisional process timescales
- Safety Case requirement
- Next Steps & AOB

Introductions

- CAA
- City of Doncaster Council (CDC)
- CDC Consultants

Summary of issues driving the DSA ACP

- **Government priority:** The reopening of DSA is a flagship element of the South Yorkshire Airport City (SYAC) programme, backed by central government. SYAC is projected to deliver £1bn direct / £3bn wider GVA uplift, 11,500 jobs, and a 9:1 BCR, with commitment from national leaders (including the Chancellor and Prime Minister) to support Doncaster and South Yorkshire mayors in securing the airport's reopening.
- **Controlled airspace connectivity:** Controlled airspace, SIDs, STARs and IAPs must be re-established to enable safe and efficient commercial air transport operations.
- **Commercial imperative:** Airline operators have confirmed that controlled airspace is a prerequisite for passenger operations and safe integration with the busy surrounding airspace.
- **Regulatory context:** DSA's former controlled airspace is due to be withdrawn from the UK AIP in Sept 2025 (ACP-2022-082) — this ACP is required to reinstate it.
- **Proven airspace design:** The change proposal builds on 17 years of safe and efficient operations at DSA, with re-established PBN procedures aligned with the Airspace Modernisation Strategy ensuring seamless integration with the en-route network and adjacent MTMA airspace structures.

Statement of Need – for discussion and review (1)

The objective of the proposed change is to re-establish controlled airspace, Standard Instrument Departures (SIDs), Standard Terminal Arrival Routes (STARs), and Instrument Approach Procedures (IAPs) serving Doncaster Sheffield Airport (DSA), which are currently in the process of being removed by the CAA under ACP-2022-082. This airspace is due to be formally withdrawn in the September 2025 Aeronautical Information Publication (AIP).

The proposed change supports DSA's planned reopening and is essential to enabling the safe and efficient operation of scheduled commercial air transport.

DSA ceased operations in November 2022, triggering the suspension and eventual removal of the associated controlled airspace by the CAA under ACP-2022-082. In March 2024, the City of Doncaster Council (CDC) secured a 125-year lease on the site, initiating a strategic programme to reopen the airport, with phased operations beginning in 2026 and full commercial services expected to resume in 2027.

This ACP seeks to re-establish controlled airspace to support the airport's safe and efficient return to operation. CDC's business plan is built on a mix of scheduled passenger services, general and business aviation, and the restoration and growth of freight operations. Demand from potential airline customers has already been identified.

Statement of Need – for discussion and review (2)

DSA will operate in a busy and complex section of UK airspace, close to other large commercial air transport airports and significant general aviation activity.

Airline operators have made clear that controlled airspace in this region is a pre-requisite for safe passenger operations and seamless integration into the en-route network. The airport's operational concept includes a return to standard instrument procedures (SIDs, STARs, and IAPs), which require controlled airspace to function efficiently and effectively.

The proposed reintroduction of controlled airspace is grounded in over 17 years of operational experience at DSA, where the previous airspace design was developed in direct response to airline requirements and proved both safe and effective.

The new airspace design is expected to closely reflect the former construct, with refinements made through stakeholder engagement and consultation and integration with evolving regional airspace structures.

From a safety and operational standpoint, reintroducing controlled airspace and associated procedures will provide essential protection for commercial traffic and ensure safe interactions with other airspace users.

Statement of Need for discussion and review (3)

Annual air traffic movements at DSA from 2019-2022 are shown in the table below, illustrating the scale and diversity of previous operations.

		Commercial Movements			Non-Commercial Movements					
Year	Total	Air Transport	Air Taxi (excluded from total stats)	Positioning Flights	Test & Training	Other flights by AT Operators	Aero Club	Private	Official	Military
2019	23,043	11,569	2,084	472	1,396	568	8,561	150	85	242
2020	12,232	4,597	2,016	496	1,804	537	3,658	100	750	290
2021	14,077	5,468	2,585	392	2,221	764	3,639	61	1174	358
2022	15,847	7,966	2,113	561	1,527	649	3,984	35	831	294

Statement of Need – for discussion and review (4)

At the time of closure in November 2022, DSA operated with an Aerodrome Traffic Zone (ATZ) and a full controlled airspace construct, comprising a Control Zone (CTR) and a series of Control Areas (CTAs). These airspace volumes provided full connectivity to the en-route airways network, supporting and protecting both arriving and departing IFR traffic. The controlled airspace structure was managed by a fully equipped Air Traffic Control (ATC) unit, providing Tower and Approach services, which (prior to the COVID-19 pandemic), were available 24 hours a day.

The current airspace arrangements, although no longer active, remain published in the UK AIPR under entries EGCN AD2.17, 2.18, 2.19 and 2.24. These documents detail the airport's Instrument Flight Procedures (IFPs), including RNAV (GNSS) SIDs and STARs, as well as ILS and RNP approaches. The airport also maintained surveillance-based vectoring procedures for radar-controlled arrivals and departures.

PBN procedures were introduced in 2018, as part of an airspace modernisation initiative, in response to the CAA's planned decommissioning of legacy VHF Omnidirectional Range (VOR) navigational aids, specifically the Gamston VOR, which had previously underpinned DSA's conventional procedures.

Statement of Need – for discussion and review (5)

To maintain resilience and continuity of service, DSA successfully implemented Performance-Based Navigation (PBN) procedures, supported in part by EU Innovation and Networks Executive Agency (INEA) grant funding. This transition allowed DSA to become an early adopter of PBN concepts, aligning its procedure with the UK's Airspace Modernisation Strategy and ICAO's Global Air Navigation Plan.

Following the airport's closure, DSA has continued to maintain aerodrome safeguarding measures, including protection of the published instrument flight procedures and associated protected surfaces. This activity is intended to preserve the viability of the existing procedures and facilitate their reuse or adaptation as part of the proposed re-establishment of airspace.

DSA has been closed to air traffic since November 2022. As a result, there are currently no scheduled or unscheduled air traffic movements taking place at the aerodrome. Controlled airspace, procedures and ATC services have been suspended, and the airport is not presently operational, with the exception of a small number of unlicensed 2Excel movements, which do not carry passengers or cargo.

CDC is actively progressing with the appointment of an Airport Operator* and Air Navigation Service Provider (ANSP) to support the phased reactivation of the airport.

Statement of Need – for discussion and review (6)

Business plans developed by CDC, validated through independent economic and commercial review, anticipate that commercial air transport services will resume progressively from 2027, following an initial return of General and Business Aviation and Freight activity expected in late 2026.

Forecast modelling indicates a return to pre-closure traffic volumes within approximately five years of full commercial operations commencing (by 2030-2031). By this stage, the airport is expected to handle c.25,000 total air traffic movements (ATMs) annually, with approximately 50% of these flight being Commercial Air Transport (CAT) movements. The remainder will comprise General Aviation (GA), Business Aviation, cargo, training, and positioning flights.

Longer-term growth projections anticipate passenger throughput reaching approximately 2.5 million passengers per annum (mppa) by ten years after the restart of operations. These figures are consistent with the airport's previous performance prior to closure and are based on an expected mix of lower-cost, charter, and full-service carriers, as well as the re-establishment of freight operations and the accommodation of emerging aviation markets.

These projections will be kept under review and refined further as the airport's reopening programme progresses, particularly in light of airline commitments and regional demand.

Opportunities for scaling and proportionality

1. **DSA proposes this ACP is structured around a single preferred option – a modified reinstatement of the previous airspace construct** – rather than a wholly new design. The objective is to reinstate airspace and procedures that were proven safe and effective until 2022.
2. **Noise Preferential Routes (NPRs)** for departures were established through the 2018 ACP and are assumed to remain extant; as they were only recently consulted on, CDC does not propose further modification of these NPRs as part of this ACP.
3. **Significant historical data** from the previous ACP and operation exists that can be re-purposed to reduce ACP workload and timescales.
4. **Engagement and consultation** could be scaled in line with CAP1616f guidance, focusing on the small refinements to the previous airspace construct and ensuring transparency rather than full consultation.
5. **CDC requests expedited CAA Gateway review periods** where resources permit, due to the urgency to enable commercial operations from 2027, and because the proposal is not a new design but a reinstatement.

Fast-track timeline and MTMA dependencies

CDC and Government expectations are that airspace reinstatement should be expedited so that airline engagement and operational planning can proceed on schedule and enable the safe recommencement of commercial operations from 2027.

- The Manchester Terminal Control Area (MTMA) Future Airspace Strategy Implementation (FASI) programme is targeting deployment around 2031, with NERL as the future UK Airspace Design Service.
- Waiting for the MTMA redesign would delay DSA's reopening by several years, contrary to the Government and CDC objective of resuming full operations by 2027.
- The DSA ACP can be designed as a standalone, proportionate reinstatement, reducing risk of programme conflict with the MTMA system-wide design.
- By resolving DSA's requirements early, the MTMA programme can proceed unencumbered. The DSA ACP will be developed to integrate efficiently with both current and the expected future MTMA designs.

Do Nothing / Do Minimum baseline scenario

- Since DSA's closure in Nov 2022 it has had no operational airspace, procedures or scheduled traffic, and with the associated controlled airspace due to be withdrawn from the AIP in Sept 2025, there is no meaningful 'current-day scenario' and therefore no viable 'Do Nothing' comparator for the ACP.
- CDC proposes that the appropriate baseline is instead a 'Do Minimum' scenario, defined as: the reinstatement of the controlled airspace and procedures that were in operation until 2022, without modification.
- This airspace construct is safe, credible, familiar to stakeholders, and directly meets the objectives of the Statement of Need.
- The options appraisal can then focus on the impacts of reinstatement (environmental, operational, safety) and any refinements made to the 'Do Minimum' following stakeholder engagement (e.g. to enable efficient integration with the current and future MTMA system-wide designs).

Provisional indication of the level and process requirements

- Level 1 ACP
- The goal is to deliver a **fast-track ACP**, which is fully compliant with CAP1616, but moves through the stages significantly quicker than typical proposals.
- A successful fast-track ACP will require:
 - Agreement with CAA-AR on scope, evidence and tailored process steps
 - Streamlined stakeholder engagement and consultation
 - Close co-ordination with neighbouring MTMA ACP sponsors.

Provisional process timescales (Stages 1-3)

Activity	Proposed Timescales									
Stages 1 & 2	Sep 25	Oct 25	Nov 25	Dec 25	Jan 26	Feb 26	Mar 26	Apr 26	May 26	Jun 26
Assessment Meeting										
Stage 1 & 2 stakeholder engagement										
DPE and Options Appraisal										
Submit to CAA										
CAA Stage 1 & 2 Combined Gateway										
Stage 3										
Prepare Consultation Material										
Submit to CAA										
CAA Stage 3 Gateway										
Consultation										
Consultation Response Document										

Provisional process timescales (Stages 4-6)

Activity	Proposed Timescales									
Stages 4	Jul 26	Aug 26	Sep 26	Oct 26	Nov 26	Dec 26	Jan 27	Feb 27	Mar 27	Apr 27
Produce ACP Submission										
Submit to CAA										
Stage 5										
CAA Decision										
Stage 6										
Target AIRAC					02/2027					
Implementation										

Safety Case requirement

As per CAP1616 f, para 2.38:

Each design option for an airspace change proposal identified within Stage 2 will need a qualitative assessment of the potential safety considerations. A detailed final safety assessment must be completed by the change sponsor and included in the Stage 4 submission to the CAA. The final assessment must as a minimum:

- describe the scope of the airspace change proposal
- identify new and changing hazards
- identify and quantify risks arising from those hazards
- set mitigations for those risks.

DSA intend to produce a qualitative safety assessment against MDP Safety in the DPE submitted at the combined Stage 1 & 2 Gateway. A detailed final safety assessment will be included in the Stage 4 submission.

Next Steps & AOB

Next Steps

- CAA to approve proposed process requirements and proposed timeline
- DSA to draft meeting minutes and provide to the CAA for review
- CAA Portal to be updated with assessment meeting documentation and Statement of Need

AOB