

## MINUTES OF DONCASTER SHEFFIELD AIRPORT ACP-2024-039 ASSESSMENT MEETING HELD ONLINE ON 3 SEPTEMBER 2025

22 September 2025

### All Attendees

Present	Appointment	Representing
██████████	Airspace Change Account Manager	CAA
██████████	Airspace Regulator (Technical)	CAA
██████████	Airspace Regulator (E&C)	CAA
██████████	Airspace Regulator (Environmental)	CAA
██████████	Airspace Regulator (Economic)	CAA
██████████	Airspace Regulator (IFP)	CAA
██████████	Principal Airspace Regulation (Environmental)	CAA
██████████	Principal Airspace (Coordination & Delivery)	CAA
██████████	SYAC Programme Director (City of Doncaster Council)	CDC
██████████	Airspace Consultant (Trax)	CDC
██████████	Airspace Consultant (Trax)	CDC
██████████	Airspace Consultant (Trax)	CDC

### Apologies

██████████	Airspace Regulator (Environmental)	CAA
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### CAA Assessment Meeting Opening Statement

CAA noted that the following documents - Statement of Need, Assessment Meeting Agenda and Presentation were received in advance of the Assessment Meeting and confirmed they must be published by the Sponsor, together with minutes of the meeting, on the Airspace Change Portal page. CAA clarified that the purpose of the meeting was to conduct an Assessment Meeting, not a Gateway review. They reiterated that, at this stage, the Sponsor – City of Doncaster Council (CDC) is expected to provide a high-level overview of their proposed approach to meeting the CAP 1616 requirements. The CAA emphasised that this meeting was not intended to determine whether the proposal satisfies the detailed requirements of the CAP 1616 process.

As outlined in CAP 1616, the purpose of the Assessment Meeting was to:

- Allow the Sponsor to present and discuss the Airspace Change Proposal (ACP) Statement of Need
- Enable the CAA to assess whether the ACP falls within the scope of the formal airspace change process, including whether it qualifies for a pre-scaled process or Level 3 classification
- Allow the CAA to consider the appropriate provisional Level to assign to the proposed change

In addition, the Sponsor was required to outline how they intend to progress through the airspace change process, including indicative timescales. They also needed to explain how they plan to meet the engagement and consultation requirements at each stage of the process.

### Agenda

The agenda for the meeting is set out below:

1. Introductions
2. Summary of issues driving the DSA ACP
3. Statement of Need - discussion and review
4. Opportunities for scaling and proportionality
5. Fast-track timeline and MTMA dependencies
6. Do Nothing/Do Minimum baseline scenario
7. Provisional indication of the scale level and process requirements\*
8. Provisional process timescales\*
9. Safety Case requirement<sup>1</sup>
10. Next steps and any other business

## Minutes and actions

The table below lists the minutes, action points, and responsible owners, organized by agenda item.

Minutes and actions	Action owner
<p><b><u>Item 1 – Introduction</u></b></p> <p>Attendees from the CAA and CDC introduced themselves. The CAA Account Manager read the standard Assessment Meeting Opening Statement.</p> <p><i>No actions were recorded for this item.</i></p>	-
<p><b><u>Item 2 – Summary of issues driving the DSA ACP (slide 4)</u></b></p> <p>■ representing CDC provided background on the importance of the ACP within the context of the broader South Yorkshire Airport City (SYCA) Programme. A key funding decision by the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority (SYMCA) is expected on 9 September 2025, which will determine the fiscal framework for reopening Doncaster Sheffield Airport (DSA).</p> <p>The SYAC programme has generated substantial public and media interest, including a petition with over 130,000 local community signatures supporting the reopening of DSA. Recruitment is set to begin following the SYMCA funding decision, including roles for Air Traffic Control Officers (ATCOs) and an independent chair for the Airport Consultative Committee, with early engagement already underway.</p> <p>■ representing CDC highlighted that this ACP is driven by the need to reinstate Controlled Airspace (CAS) and associated procedures to support the return of Commercial Air Transport operations following the airport's reopening. Airline operators, already in discussions with CDC, have indicated that CAS, Standard Instrument Departures (SIDs), Standard Terminal Arrival Routes (STARs), Instrument Approach Procedures (IAPs), and integration with the Manchester Terminal Control Area (MTMA) airspace system are essential prerequisites for resuming passenger services.</p> <p>The ACP aims to re-establish the airspace structure previously in place before the airport's closure in November 2022, which the CAA is currently in the process of withdrawing under ACP-2022-082.</p> <p><i>No actions were recorded for this item.</i></p>	-
<p><b><u>Item 3 – Statement of Need discussion and review</u></b></p> <p>The Statement of Need was presented, as set out on slides 5 - 10. No comments or questions were raised by CAA colleagues regarding its content.</p> <p><i>No actions were recorded for this item.</i></p>	-
<p><b><u>Item 4 – Opportunities for scaling and proportionality (slide 11)</u></b></p> <p>While acknowledging the tight timelines associated with this ACP, CDC highlighted the significant opportunities to apply proportionality and streamline elements of the process.</p> <p>CDC proposed developing the ACP from a 'do minimum' position, proposing to reinstate the previous airspace construct, which had been demonstrated as safe and operationally effective for 17 years prior to the airport's closure in November 2022.</p> <p>Should stakeholder engagement during the ACP process lead to suggested modifications to the previous airspace construct, CDC intends to evaluate those against the original 'do minimum' option during the options appraisal stage of the CAP 1616 process (see Item 6 for further detail).</p> <p>CDC also confirmed that there is no intention to alter the Noise Preferential Routes (NPR) for departures that were implemented during the previous DSA ACP in 2018.</p>	-

<p>CDC highlighted that the existence of significant historical and operational data from the previous ACP, which they plan to leverage, would help to accelerate development of ACP materials and fast-track elements of the process.</p> <p>In terms of engagement and consultation, CDC aims to take a streamlined approach, maintaining transparency and providing meaningful opportunities for stakeholder input, while progressing at a faster pace than typical Level 1 ACPs.</p> <p>The CAA sought clarification on the consultation approach, noting that as a Level 1 ACP, a full public consultation is required. DSA confirmed that a full consultation would be carried out but would be scaled and proportionate, reflecting the limited range of options available to meet the Statement of Need, which would be based on any modifications made to the previously consulted airspace design from 2018.</p> <p><i>No actions were recorded for this item.</i></p>	
<p><b><u>Item 5 – Fast-track timeline and MTMA dependencies (slide 12)</u></b></p> <p>CDC confirmed its expectation that DSA will reopen by late 2026, initially supporting General Aviation, business, and freight operations. Scheduled passenger services are expected to resume from 2027.</p> <p>Initial discussions with NATS En Route Limited (NERL) have identified a key consideration: how the reinstatement of DSA's airspace and procedures would integrate with the current and future MTMA airspace system design, which is being modernised under the Future Airspace Strategy Implementation (FASI) programme.</p> <p>It is recognised that the DSA reopening timescales do not align with the longer-term MTMA airspace modernisation programme. However, based on early engagement with NERL, CDC believes it is feasible to pursue a standalone and proportionate approach to reinstating DSA's airspace. This would involve clearly defining DSA's specific requirements, particularly at lower altitudes, to ensure compatibility with the existing MTMA network design. This approach would also allow the MTMA programme to consider and accommodate DSA's airspace within its future design framework, supporting more seamless integration over time.</p> <p><i>No actions were recorded for this item.</i></p>	-
<p><b><u>Item 6 – Do Nothing/ Do Minimum baseline scenario (slide 13)</u></b></p> <p>CDC explained that, due to the absence of current operations at DSA, there is no viable "do nothing" scenario for options comparison purposes. As a result, CDC initially proposed using a 'do minimum' airspace option as the baseline to compare any other options against. This do minimum option would consist of reinstating the controlled airspace and procedures that were in place prior to the airport's closure in 2022, without any modifications. If changes to the proposed design arise through stakeholder engagement conducted as part of the process, those would be assessed against this unmodified 'do minimum' option (serving as a baseline) during the options appraisal stage.</p> <p>The CAA clarified that, under CAP 1616 Version 5, the baseline for appraisal purposes must reflect the current conditions at the time of implementation - i.e. no operations at DSA. The Environmental Regulator further emphasised that comparisons must not be made against the 2022 operational baseline, because it is not an accurate reflection of the current situation. However, a reinstated 'do minimum' airspace design (the 2022 structure without modifications) can be treated as one of the options, rather than the baseline.</p> <p>For the purposes of the ACP options appraisal, CDC will be expected to model environmental and operational impacts for both Year 1 and Year 10 following implementation, comparing these against the "do nothing" baseline that reflects the current situation at the point of implementation (i.e., no operations). While the baseline for modelling must remain as "no operations", CDC may provide narrative context during stakeholder engagement that explains how the new proposed design(s) may compare to the previous 2022 operations, if desired.</p> <p>CDC's representative, [REDACTED] sought further clarification, referencing earlier CAA correspondence from 2021 related to a different ACP, which suggested that a 'do minimum' baseline based on previous operations is appropriate when no current operating</p>	-

<p>environment exists. The CAA responded that this advice was likely based on CAP 1616 Version 4, whereas the current ACP is being conducted under Version 5, which reflects updated policy and guidance.</p> <p>■ asked whether the options to be appraised – namely the reinstated (unmodified) 2022 airspace construct and a potentially modified version of it – should both be assessed against a do-nothing baseline of no operations. The Environmental Regulator confirmed that modelling should compare these options to the current (non-operational) situation at DSA and should include Year 1 and Year 10 projections of the impacts.</p> <p>■ highlighted that using “no operations” as the baseline would likely result in a significant negative Net Present Value (NPV) for environmental impacts, since any new flights introduce impacts where in the current situation there are none. ■ sought confirmation that this would not automatically lead to a negative CAA decision on the ACP. The Economic Regulator confirmed that a negative NPV does not in itself determine the outcome of an ACP. CDC will need to provide an appropriate narrative explaining that the assessment compares new airspace and procedures against a no-operations baseline, which inherently results in negative environmental valuations, because there is no existing environmental footprint to potentially improve upon.</p> <p>The CAA further confirmed that both Transport Analysis Guidance (TAG) modelling and noise assessments should also use the ‘no operations’ do-nothing baseline, acknowledging that this will inevitably show negative impacts. However, this is a necessary reflection of the current situation and environmental context at the point of implementation.</p> <p>■ requested confirmation that, for stakeholder engagement purposes under Stage 1 of the CAP 1616 process, CDC should present the ‘no operations’ do-nothing baseline as the current-day scenario. The Environmental Regulator confirmed this is correct and that, accordingly, there is no modelling required for the baseline scenario itself (estimated impacts of the proposed design will be compared against zero – i.e. no operations).</p> <p>CDC confirmed that, based on the CAA’s guidance in this assessment meeting, the previously proposed ‘do minimum’ scenario (i.e. reinstating the 2022 airspace design without modifications) will now be treated as an option, not as the baseline for appraisals.</p> <p>The Engagement and Consultation Regulator noted the importance of including a clear and accessible narrative for stakeholders, explaining the context and rationale behind the no operations, do nothing baseline, the previous airspace construct and the proposed ACP option under consideration.</p> <p>The Environmental Regulator offered a separate meeting to discuss detailed requirements around environmental metrics. CDC responded that they are comfortable with the metric requirements as outlined in CAP 1616 and their main concern was related to prior assumptions around the baseline — a point now clarified through this discussion. It was reiterated that, under CAP 1616 Version 5, the ‘do minimum’ cannot be used as the baseline, and all comparisons must be made against the current situation and environmental context (i.e. no operations).</p> <p>The CAA concluded by noting that the terminology and policy around this topic have evolved between Versions 4 and 5 of CAP 1616, which likely accounts for the discrepancy in prior guidance.</p> <p><i>No actions were recorded for this item.</i></p>	
<p><b><u>Item 7 – Provisional indication of the scale level and process requirements*</u></b></p> <p>CDC confirmed their expectation that this ACP will be classified as a Level 1 change. While the intention is to fast-track the process, CDC emphasised that all CAP1616 requirements will be fully met.</p> <p>CDC also noted that they will engage closely with the MTMA ACP sponsors through the FASI programme. This engagement will focus on managing interdependencies and ensuring clarity around the approach to integration.</p> <p><i>No actions were recorded for this item.</i></p> <p><b><i>* When the sponsor submits their gateway materials for each Gateway at the agreed submission deadline, the period between this and the gateway decision will be an analysis by the CAA Airspace Regulatory team</i></b></p>	-

<p><i>(Airspace Regulation) of the documentation submitted, for the purposes of making a recommendation to the CAA Gateway decision maker(s). In conducting the gateway assessment, the CAA is assessing the process employed and its compliance with the guidance stipulated within CAP 1616. It is not an assessment of the merits of the submission itself, which is reviewed at Stage 5 - Decision. The CAA 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. The CAA 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. Please note that <u>this text does not apply to ACPs involving the sole implementation of RNP Instrument Approach Procedures (IAPs) without an Approach Control</u>, as Gateway Assessments are not required.</i></p>	
<p><b><u>Item 8 – Provisional process timescales*</u></b></p> <p>CDC presented indicative timescales for the ACP, including a proposal to combine Stages 1 and 2 of the CAP1616 process. The current plan is to submit the combined Stage 1 and 2 materials for Gateway assessment in January 2026, followed by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public consultation in Q2 2026,</li> <li>• ACP submission to the CAA in Q3 2026,</li> <li>• CAA decision in Q4 2026,</li> <li>• Target AIRAC cycle in Q4 2026,</li> <li>• Implementation in Q1 2027.</li> </ul> <p>The Engagement and Consultation Regulator [REDACTED] asked whether CDC intends to conduct a single engagement covering both Stages 1 and 2, and how feedback on Design Principles would be addressed if received alongside Stage 2 material. DSA confirmed that while the intent is to engage on the Design Principles as part of the combined engagement, contingency plans are in place to allow for further engagement if significant issues arise that require additional dialogue. Stakeholders will be clearly informed that further discussion may be facilitated if necessary.</p> <p>CDC expressed interest in further discussions with the Engagement and Consultation Regulator on the detailed engagement and consultation strategy. [REDACTED] welcomed this offer on behalf of the CAA. [REDACTED] representing CDC added that having an existing airspace design available during the Design Principles engagement would support more informed stakeholder feedback. CDC fully anticipates receiving significant input on the proposed design. [REDACTED] highlighted the importance of clearly demonstrating how feedback is taken into account during the design process.</p> <p>The Technical Regulator [REDACTED] asked how ATC training and Aerodrome Licensing are incorporated into the proposed timeline. CDC explained that the ACP forms one part of a broader, multi-strand programme to support the airport's reopening. There are several interdependencies, and as the ACP progresses and provides greater certainty, it will enable the ANSP (Air Navigation Service Provider) workstream to advance accordingly. [REDACTED] (CDC) confirmed that DSA has procurement plans in place for both radar systems and ATCO recruitment, with the intention that the airport will operate as its own ANSP.</p> <p><i>No actions were recorded for this item.</i></p> <p><i>* 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.</i></p>	-
<p><b><u>Item 9 – Safety Case requirement<sup>1</sup></u></b></p> <p>CDC confirmed their understanding of the CAP 1616 requirement that each airspace design option must include an assessment of safety considerations. These assessments will be incorporated into the relevant submission materials.</p> <p>CDC also acknowledged the significant additional work involved in reinstating airport operations. This includes establishing an Air Traffic Control (ATC) unit, developing training programmes, and addressing licensing requirements. DSA noted that they are fully aware of the scale and complexity of this work and that it is being addressed as part of a broader, intensively coordinated programme to support the successful reopening of the airport.</p>	-



**ACTIONS ARISING FROM [INSERT NAME OF CHANGE PROPOSAL] ASSESSMENT MEETING**

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Deadline</b>
Minutes	DSA	Draft meeting minutes to be provided to the CAA	9 September 2025
Timescales	CAA	CAA to confirm timescales	TBC
CAA Portal	DSA	Assessment Meeting material uploaded to the CAA Portal.	24 September 2025

**City of Doncaster Council**  
**ACP Sponsor**