

15th September 2026

Dear UKADS provider,

The Department for Transport (DfT) has now published its Air Navigation Directions (AND) 2026 and Air Navigation Guidance (ANG) 2026 both of which come into effect on 1st October 2026. In light of the changes to Government policy within AND 2026 and ANG 2026, the CAA has also published a revised airspace change process (CAP 1616 version 6) which has an effective date of 1st October 2026.

The ANG 2026 includes the criteria for the applicability of the ANG 2026 when it becomes effective, and how this applies to airspace change proposals (ACPs) which commence after the effective date and those currently in progress (ANG 2026 paragraph 11 refers), with Direction 4 of AND 2026 requiring that procedures and guidance developed by the CAA must reflect Government policies. This letter sets out the impact of how those criteria apply to your ACP (migration) in accordance with the ANG 2026 and the airspace change process (CAP 1616 version 6).

On 6 May 2026, modifications to the NATS (En Route) Plc (NERL) licence came into effect, including the designation of NERL as the UK Airspace Design Service (UKADS) provider. The DfT has identified¹ the London TMA region as the initial delivery focus area for UKADS.

Because of this initial delivery focus area, we are writing to you regarding the single ACP for the London TMA region which NERL as the UKADS provider is to sponsor and outlining what this means for this ACP.

1. Scope

The ANG 2026 requires that an ACP designing a block of UK airspace that covers the area of airspace managed by more than one airport and which is being sponsored by NERL as the UKADS provider must apply ANG 2026 from its effective date.

This means that in accordance with the strategic objectives set by the Secretary of State, NERL as the UKADS provider must apply ANG 2026 to the single ACP for the delivery focus area identified as the London TMA region. For the purposes of UKADS, the London TMA region comprises:

- The area described in the UK Aeronautical Information Publication (AIP) as the London TMA (AIP ENR 6, Chart 42); and

¹ [UKADS and UKACS licence obligations: strategic objectives - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/ukads-and-ukacs-licence-obligations-strategic-objectives)

- The areas associated with the following airports and their corresponding network ACPs:

- Biggin Hill
- Bournemouth
- Farnborough
- London City
- London Gatwick
- London Heathrow
- London Luton
- London Stansted
- RAF Northolt
- Southampton
- Southend

In addition, the strategic objectives set by the Secretary of State also state that NERL, as the UKADS provider, may be required to incorporate, or progress separately, any other ACPs that have the potential to interact with the ACP for the London TMA region.

To support the CAA's planning for the transition to the revised airspace change process (CAP 1616 v6), we now require NERL as the UKADS provider to provide a list of ACPs that it intends to:

- Incorporate within the new single London TMA region ACP;
- Progress using the UKADS outside the single London TMA region ACP; or
- Support a partner organisation in progressing outside the single London TMA region ACP.

Please provide this list by 28th September 2026.

To note, should the CAA receive any statement of need from 1st October 2026 that falls within the London TMA region, we will consult with NERL as the sponsor of the single London TMA region ACP before we hold a Briefing and Guidance meeting (in accordance with the provisions of CAP 1616j and CAP 1616k).

2. Onboarding

The CAA onboarding process (CAP 3129) focused on the process to onboard the London cluster ACPs into a London TMA region single ACP sponsored by the UKADS provider. CAP 3129 was developed when it was envisaged that these ACPs would remain on CAP 1616 v5.1 and be onboarded to a single ACP under v5.1. Since CAP 3129 was published, the Government has published AND 2026 and the ANG 2026 and the CAA has published CAP 1616 version 6.

The ANG 2026 sets out the arrangements for the applicability of the guidance upon it coming into effect. ACPs that are required to apply ANG 2026 will be required to follow CAP 1616 version 6 requirements as these have been developed to reflect this version of the ANG.

Given the changes in ANG 2026 from ANG 2017 it is not possible to apply CAP 1616 version 5.1 (or earlier versions) to ACPs to which ANG 2026 applies. For this reason, (1) the CAA intends to withdraw CAP 3129 on the effective date of CAP 1616 v6; and (2) (within CAP 1616 v6) sponsors are no longer required to formulate design principles to apply to their design

work. Instead, sponsors are required to apply the airspace design priorities to their design work.

CAP 1616 version 6 will incorporate elements of the CAP 3129 document as follows:

- Step 1 – Data collection
 - CAP1616 version 6 includes the requirement for the UKADS provider as sponsor to gather information.
- Step 2 - Design considerations and “commitments” and Step 3 - Review of design considerations & “commitments”
 - CAP1616 version 6 includes the requirement for the UKADS provider to establish the current day scenario. As part of this requirement the UKADS provider as the sponsor will need to collate details of relevant best endeavours commitments or assurances which may have been made by previous airspace change sponsors that have become partners to the UKADS provider. Section 3 of this letter provides further guidance.
- Step 4 – Onboarding Partnership Arrangement
 - CAP 1616 version 6, includes a requirement to enter into Partnership Arrangements.

As the onboarding process steps in CAP 3129 are addressed through requirements in the CAP 1616 version 6, the UKADS provider will not be required to submit separate onboarding documentation to that required by CAP 1616 version 6. Instead, CAA oversight of these requirements will be part of our oversight of the single ACP through the CAP 1616 version 6.

3. Clarity around current day scenario and design development

Under CAP 1616 version 6 the sponsor must describe the current day scenario (Requirement 10). As part of this requirement the UKADS provider must identify:

- Any location specific legal obligations. CAP 1616 version 6, CAP 1616j Stage 1, sets out more detail on items which may form part of any location specific legal obligations.
- Any local context. This will include any relevant best endeavours commitments or assurances which may have been made by previous airspace change sponsors that have become partners to the UKADS provider as the sponsor for the single London TMA region ACP.

Under CAP 1616 version 6, CAP 1616j Stage 1, the sponsor must provide sufficient explanation to demonstrate (Requirement 11),

- What information was gathered and from which sources.
- How the gap analysis was conducted and the actions taken to address any information gaps.
- How assumptions and constraints were identified, tested and developed, and how they have informed the draft design(s).
- Why any gathered information has not been taken forward to the application of the airspace design priorities to influence the draft design(s).

Therefore, under requirement 11, the UKADS provider must identify which relevant best endeavours commitments or assurances they intend to carry forward into their design work

and identify which they do not. When undertaking this activity, the UKADS provider must discount any relevant best endeavours commitments or assurances if,

- they impact the UKADS provider's ability to meet the Secretary of State's strategic objectives on what the London TMA region single ACP must achieve;
- they impact the UKADS providers ability to apply the government policy in the ANG 2026 (specifically including the Airspace Design Priorities) or
- they prevent any location specific legal obligations being met.

The remaining relevant best endeavours commitments or assurances that are not discounted in the previous step, must be reviewed by the UKADS provider and discounted or taken forward. We anticipate that relevant best endeavours commitments or assurances that do not apply the government policy in the ANG 2026 and where applicable the Aviation National Policy Statement (or any successor National Policy Statement) will be discounted.

Under requirement 13, the UKADS provider will be required to document this process, including sufficient explanation of how relevant best endeavours commitments or assurances have been handled. This forms part of the draft design development narrative (Requirement 13). UKADS will be required to publish this draft design narrative as part of their consultation materials.

This letter has been sent to the airports which form the London TMA region ACPs as listed above, and which will become partners to the UKADS provider as sponsor for the single London TMA region ACP.

Yours sincerely

Ben Lippitt
Manager Airspace Regulation