

July 2025

Policy Statement

POLICY FOR CHANGES TO THE UK GROUND NAVIGATION INFRASTRUCTURE

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) has a statutory duty to ensure “the safe operation of aircraft and expeditious flow of air traffic”¹. To perform that duty and in accordance with the CAA (Air Navigation) Directions 2023, the CAA must approve all Air Traffic Service (ATS) equipment used to support the provision of ATS at civil aerodromes. Furthermore, the CAA (Air Navigation) Directions 2023², also require the CAA to “develop and publish rules, guidelines, technical design criteria and common procedures for the use of UK airspace”.

2 Purpose and scope

- 2.1 This policy statement supersedes that of the same name published in August 2010.
- 2.2 This document sets out the policy for changes to the UK ground navigation infrastructure and describes the process and procedures applicable for removing a ground radio navigation aid. It also provides guidance for identifying the impacts on airspace users.
- 2.3 All ground-based navigation aids that support the provision of air traffic services are in scope of this policy.

3 Background

- 3.1 Historically, ATS routes were predicated upon significant geographic points that may coincide with the location of a ground-based radio navigation aid (navaid) such as VORs, DMEs and NDBs. However, since the implementation of Performance-Based Navigation, ATS routes are no longer required to be designed with reference to these nav aids despite they can be used in support of conventional navigation.
- 3.2 UK ground-based navigation aids or facilities supporting the provision of air traffic services at aerodromes and operation of aircraft, are primarily owned by the aerodrome operators themselves. NERL, a subsidiary of NATS, do however own some facilities at a few aerodromes and are required to provide the ground-based navigation infrastructure for en-route operations.

¹ Section 70 of the Transport Act 2000.

² Civil Aviation Authority (Air Navigation) Directions 2023.

Air Navigation Service Providers (ANSPs) providing air traffic service are required to provide and maintain communication, navigation, and surveillance (CNS) services in compliance with the UK Reg (EU) 2017/373 Annex VIII Part-CNS, and Annex IV Subpart B – Technical Requirements for Providers of Air Traffic Services (ATS.TR).

4 Applying the Policy for changes to the UK ground navigation infrastructure

- 4.1 Any permanent change to the ground navigation aids infrastructure, whether it be a re-location or removal of a facility, will require the approval of the CAA to ensure the UK ground navigation infrastructure is adapted to the provision of air traffic service and the safe use of airspace.

5 Definitions

- 5.1 For the purposes of this policy statement, the following definitions apply:

- (a) 'Aerodrome' means a defined area (including any buildings, installations, and equipment) on land or water or on a fixed, fixed offshore or floating structure intended to be used either wholly or in part for the arrival, departure and surface movement of aircraft. (UK Reg (EU) No 923/2012 Article 2(6)).
- (b) 'Air Navigation Services (ANS)' means air traffic services; communication, navigation, and surveillance services; meteorological services for air navigation; and aeronautical information services. (UK Reg (EC) No 549/2004 Article 2 (4)).
- (c) 'Air traffic' means all aircraft in flight or operating on the manoeuvring area of an aerodrome (UK Reg (EU) No 923/2012 Article 2(26)).
- (d) 'Air traffic control service' means a service provided for the purpose of:
 - (1) preventing collisions:
 - a. between aircraft, and
 - b. on the manoeuvring area between aircraft and obstructions; and
 - (2) expediting and maintaining an orderly flow of air traffic (UK Reg (EU) No 923/2012 Article 2(30)).
- (e) 'Air traffic service (ATS)' means a generic term meaning variously, flight information service, alerting service, air traffic advisory service, air traffic control service (area control service, approach control service or aerodrome control service). (UK Reg (EU) No 923/2012 Article 2(32)).
- (f) 'ATS route' means a specified route designed for channelling the flow of traffic as necessary for the provision of air traffic services (UK Reg (EU) No 923/2012 Article 2(46)).

Note.

- (1) The term 'ATS route' is used to mean variously, airway, advisory route, controlled or uncontrolled route, arrival, or departure route, etc.
- (2) An ATS route is defined by route specifications which include an ATS route designator, the track to or from significant points (waypoints),

distance between significant points, reporting requirements, and as determined by the competent authority, the lowest safe altitude. (UK Reg (EU) No 923/2012 Article 2(46) GM1).

- (g) 'DME' means distance measuring equipment.
- (h) 'ILS' means instrument landing system.
- (i) 'Radio Navigation Aid' means a facility or system external to the aircraft, which generates electro-magnetic signals to be used by aircraft navigation systems for position determination or flight path guidance.
- (j) 'NDB' means non-directional beacon.
- (k) 'Performance-based navigation (PBN)' means area navigation based on performance requirements for aircraft operating along an ATS route, on an instrument approach procedure or in a designated airspace.

Note. - Performance requirements are expressed in navigation specifications (RNAV specification, RNP specification) in terms of accuracy, integrity, continuity, availability, and functionality needed for the proposed operation in the context of a particular airspace concept. (ICAO Doc 4444 Edition 16 – PANS-ATM, 1-13).

- (l) 'Required navigation performance (RNP)' means a statement of the navigation performance necessary for operation within a defined airspace.

Note. - Navigation performance and requirements are defined for a particular RNP type and/or application (ICAO Doc 4444 Edition 16 – PANS-ATM, 1-15).

- (m) 'VOR' means very high frequency omnidirectional range.

6 References

6.1 UK Legislation

- [UK Reg \(EU\) 2017/373 - Air Traffic Management/Air Navigation Services Implementing Regulation \(ATM/ANS IR\);](#) and,
- [UK Reg \(EU\) No. 923/2012 - Standardised European Rules of the Air \(SERA\).](#)

6.2 Related CAA CAPs & Airspace Policy Statements can be found on the CAA Website. [CAA website.](#)

6.3 Other related guidance material

- [EUROCONTROL Route Network Improvement Plan \(ERNIP\) Part 1;](#)
- [EUROCONTROL European Navaid Infrastructure Planning Handbook including Minimum Operational Network \(MON\) PBN Handbook No.4](#)

7 Review of Policy

- 7.1 The CAA shall review this policy statement and its associated annexes on a discretionary basis but not less than triennially from its publication date.

8 Point of Contact

- 8.1 Any queries or further guidance required on the content of this Airspace Policy Statement should be marked for the attention of Airspace Regulation and sent to:

Manager Airspace Regulation
Safety & Airspace Regulation Group
Aviation House
Beehive Ring Road
Crawley
West Sussex
RH6 0YR
Telephone: 0330 022 1500 (Main Switchboard)
Email: airspace.policy@caa.co.uk

Annex A

Procedure for the removal of ground navigational aids

A1 Policy

- A1.1 Any permanent change to the ground navigation infrastructure, whether it be re-location or removal of a facility, will require the approval of the CAA with Airspace Regulation (AR) acting as the focal point. This approval will only be forthcoming once the following procedures have been carried out:
- Once an aerodrome or ATM/ANS provider has identified a need to change an element or elements of the navigation infrastructure, it is to inform the CAA of the proposal, by completing a DAP1916 'Statement of Need' form³.
 - An assessment meeting will enable the CAA to determine if the proposed change has potential to alter flight behaviours of airspace users or not. The CAA will thereafter notify the Sponsor, advising the level of engagement required with all stakeholders, and whether an Airspace Change Process (ACP) CAP1616⁴ is required.
 - If an ACP is **not** required, the Applicability and Policy Alignment Check⁵ (APAC) procedure applies. After completion a 'change request authority' email will be issued to the Sponsor.

The Sponsor must then submit:

- A SRG1430⁶ form to CAA Air Traffic Management (ATM) for notification of the change to the functional system.
 - An AIP Change Request (ACR) to the NATS AIS portal (Change Request Portal).
- If an ACP **is** required, the CAA will inform the sponsor. The sponsor will then need to comply with the CAP1616 process and requirement.
 - At the end of the airspace change process, the sponsor will be notified of the regulatory decision made.
 - If the proposed change is **not approved**, sponsors may decide to begin the process again and resubmit a Statement of Need. Should the Sponsor not wish to attempt the process again, this concludes the process, and the navigation aids will need to be maintained operational.
 - If the proposed change is **approved**, the sponsor is required to submit:

³ DAP1916: Intended Change to Notified Airspace Arrangements | Civil Aviation Authority (caa.co.uk)

⁴ CAP1616: The Process for Changing the Notified Airspace Design | UK Civil Aviation Authority

⁵ [Information regarding this can be found in CAP1616 chapter 2](#)

⁶ SRG1430: Notification of a Proposed Change by an Air Navigation Service Provider (Regulation UK (EU) 2017/373) or ATCO Training Organisation (Regulation UK (EU) 2015/340) | UK Civil Aviation Authority

- ✓ A SRG1430⁷ form to CAA Air Traffic Management (ATM) for notification of the change to the functional system.
- ✓ An Airspace Change Request (ACR) to the NATS AIS portal.

⁷ SRG1430: Notification of a Proposed Change by an Air Navigation Service Provider (Regulation UK (EU) 2017/373) or ATCO Training Organisation (Regulation UK (EU) 2015/340) | UK Civil Aviation Authority

Annex B

Flow Chart Process

