

Airspace Change Process

CAP 1616



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Revision history

1. The fifth edition was published following a CAA review of the CAP 1616, Airspace Change Process. Throughout the review, we engaged and consulted with stakeholders, reflecting and acting on their combined insight to support the development of a more proportionate regulatory airspace change process.
2. Key feedback themes related to the structure of CAP 1616, the proportionality of the airspace change process, the stages, steps and gateways, the engagement and consultation requirements, and the need for more information and greater clarity of the requirements and the CAA's expectations.
3. This edition of CAP 1616 was developed in response to these key feedback themes, and it focusses on providing simplification, clarification and proportionality.
4. The structure of the document has been simplified by separating the regulatory requirements of the airspace change process (as published in this edition of CAP 1616) and related guidance (published in a series of separate guidance CAPs).
5. The planned and permanent redistribution of air traffic has been removed from CAP 1616 and placed into a separate publication, as has the CAA's best practice guidance for the provision of airspace information (transparency about airspace use and aircraft movements).
6. The airspace change process itself has evolved in response to the feedback received. References to 'steps' have been removed, but the fundamental requirements as presented in previous editions of CAP 1616 remain, although in some cases they have been moved to different stages. For example, the change sponsor must develop their current-day scenario in Stage 1 as opposed to Stage 2, while they must publish their consultation response document at the end of Stage 3 as opposed to Stage 4.
7. The requirements and expected outputs of each of the seven-stages of the airspace change process are clearly listed throughout this edition of CAP 1616. Further information on each requirement is provided in the separate guidance CAPs.
8. To address concerns related to proportionality, the level definitions have been modified and the requirements which 'must', 'should' or 'may' be addressed have been made clear.

9. The CAA is committed to undertaking periodic reviews of the CAP 1616 airspace change process at appropriate intervals, taking into account feedback and developments in government policies.

Chapter 1

Introduction

Who is this Document for?

- 1.1 This document outlines the process for airspace change in the UK. It is intended to be read by anyone interested in how changes to the notified airspace design are made, or interested in changes which impact any airspace user. This includes the originator of the change (change sponsors) and those that may be affected by the airspace change proposal (stakeholders).

Purpose of the Document

- 1.2 The CAA has been directed by the Department for Transport to develop and publish procedures, and guidance on such procedures, for the development, making and consideration of an airspace change proposal covering:
- a permanent change to the notified airspace design
 - a temporary change to the notified airspace design. This would result in a change which would normally last for not more than 90 days
 - an airspace trial. This would result in a change which would normally last for not longer than six months.
- 1.3 This document outlines the process for such changes, and the supporting documents provide guidance on how to develop a submission in accordance with the requirements for assessment by the CAA.¹
- 1.4 This process facilitates planned change to airspace design. If a short notice change is required, for instance due to safety or national security, the proposal may not follow this process and the change sponsor should contact the CAA's Airspace Regulation team to discuss the requirements.

What is Airspace Design?

- 1.5 In its simplest terms, airspace is the portion of the atmosphere controlled by a state above its territory, and areas over the sea within which a state is committed by international treaty to provide air navigation services.

¹ Some airspace change proposals were permitted by the Secretary of State and the CAA to continue to follow the previous CAP 725 airspace change process (otherwise replaced in 2017 by CAP 1616). These proposals can be found on the CAA website rather than the airspace change portal:

<https://www.caa.co.uk/commercial-industry/airspace/airspace-change/decisions/permanent-airspace-change-proposals-under-cap725/>

- 1.6 Within this defined portion of atmosphere, structures, flight procedures, restrictions, routes, rules and policies may be established to support aviation activities. The arrangement and composition of these elements come together to describe the overall airspace design; this design is notified to others through the UK aeronautical information publication and/or a notice to aviation (NOTAM).
- 1.7 Overlaying this airspace design are procedures for air navigation services that form a framework of how to operate and manage aircraft within the airspace. Both the airspace design and the procedures can therefore affect how the airspace functions and impacts others. The procedure to change these is the airspace change process.

Documents

- 1.8 The documents within the following section can be found by searching within the [publications section](#) of the CAA website.

The Airspace Change Process

- 1.9 CAP 1616 sets out the requirements for change sponsors to comply with when progressing an airspace change proposal. It is designed to be used by everyone who has a role to play in the airspace change process.
- 1.10 The guidance documents are predominantly aimed at change sponsors as they provide guidance material on how the requirements of the airspace change process may be achieved. However, they may also be of benefit to others who have an interest in the airspace change process. The guidance documents should not be read in isolation, and all readers are recommended to read this document before the guidance documents. The guidance documents are:
- [CAP 1616f, Guidance on Airspace Change Process for Permanent Airspace Change Proposals](#)
 - [CAP 1616g, Guidance on Airspace Change Process for Temporary and Trial Airspace Change Proposals](#)
 - [CAP 1616h, Guidance on Airspace Change Process for Level 3 and Pre-Scaled Airspace Change Proposals](#)
 - [CAP 1616i, Environmental Assessment Requirements and Guidance for Airspace Change Proposals](#)
- 1.11 Details of what may constitute airspace data and require an airspace change proposal are set out in:
- [CAP 1054, Aeronautical Data Quality – Guidance for the provision and maintenance of aeronautical data and aeronautical information in UK Aeronautical Information Products](#)

Other Documents Related to a Change to the Impacts Associated with Airspace Use

- 1.12 Specific events or operating conditions may require a change to air traffic control operating procedures. This could alter traffic flows and cause a change in noise impacts. This process is addressed through:
- [CAP 1617, Planned and Permanent Redistribution of Air Traffic \(PPR\)](#)
- 1.13 The CAA also provides guidance on transparency and engagement for operational changes to airspace usage by aircraft which might have affected the noise impacts on people, this guidance is found in:
- [CAP 1618, Airspace Information: transparency about airspace use and aircraft movements](#)
- 1.14 The CAA is also responsible for reviewing elements of UK airspace design and then to develop a proposal for amendments, where appropriate. This process is set out within:
- [CAP 1991, Procedure for the CAA to review the classification of airspace](#)

Primary Legislation

- 1.15 Under section 66 of the [Transport Act 2000](#), the Secretary of State has given the CAA a number of airspace-related functions including: the duty to develop policy and strategy on the classification and use of airspace; to publish the UK airspace design; and to approve changes to it or in some cases to the procedures for using it; and to prepare and maintain the [airspace modernisation strategy](#). These duties are further explained within the [Air Navigation Directions 2023](#). Further information on the CAA's legislative framework and our statutory duties and functions in relation to airspace change can be found on the [CAA's website](#).
- 1.16 When we decide whether to approve changes to the notified airspace design, we must do so in accordance with the airspace modernisation strategy.
- 1.17 Under section 70 of the Transport Act 2000, we have a duty to take a number of factors into account when considering whether to approve an airspace change proposal, including taking account of specific guidance on our environmental objectives contained within the [Air Navigation Guidance 2017](#).

The Relationship Between the Airspace Change Process, Legislation and Government Policy

- 1.18 It is important to recognise the difference between the airspace change process, the law and government policy concerning airspace (and in particular that concerning environmental impacts). The CAA's airspace change process must operate within the Government's policy framework. We work closely with the

Government to ensure clarity around our respective policy and decision-making roles in the airspace change process. However, the CAA cannot review government policy, nor can it make a regulatory decision that does not give effect to that policy.

- 1.19 The airspace change process is not designed to be a referendum on views, but it is designed to reach the best possible outcome fairly, having regard for the interests of all stakeholders in accordance with the functions in the Air Navigation Directions 2023 and the factors in section 70 of the Transport Act 2000.

Roles and Responsibilities

The CAA's Role

- 1.20 The CAA, as the UK's independent aviation regulator, has primary responsibility for deciding whether to approve an airspace change proposal to the notified airspace design over the UK. We make these decisions in accordance with the legal framework outlined above to consider certain factors which include safety, the environment, the needs of users of airspace and government policy, including the airspace modernisation strategy.
- 1.21 The CAA has developed the airspace change process to ensure that it meets modern standards for regulatory decision-making and is fair, transparent, consistent, and proportionate. The airspace change process must be impartial and evidence-based and must take account of the needs and interests of all affected stakeholders.

The Change Sponsor's Role

- 1.22 The change sponsor 'owns' the airspace change proposal and is responsible for developing and resourcing it, including considering feedback from relevant stakeholders in accordance with the CAA's airspace change process.
- 1.23 Anyone can sponsor an airspace change proposal. In some cases, the change sponsor will work in partnership with other organisations (for example aviation/airspace consultancy firms or approved procedure design organisations) when developing their airspace change proposal. However, the change sponsor remains solely responsible for complying with the airspace change process.

The Ministry of Defence's Role

- 1.24 Although the Ministry of Defence is part of the Government it can also be a change sponsor in its own right. A civil change sponsor should therefore treat the Ministry of Defence as an interested stakeholder and include it in engagement about an airspace change proposal. The CAA also has its own statutory obligations with regard to national security that will involve the Ministry of Defence.

The Stakeholder's Role

- 1.25 Stakeholders who may be impacted by an airspace change proposal will (and subject to the requirements set out in this process) be engaged by the change sponsor throughout the airspace change process and will have the opportunity to submit feedback in relation to the development of the airspace change proposal. They will also have access to all relevant documentation, except for commercially (or national security) sensitive material, via the airspace change portal.

The Airspace Change Portal's Role

- 1.26 For transparency the CAA manages an online [airspace change portal](#). The airspace change portal holds relevant information and documentation for each airspace change proposal. This includes, but is not limited to:
- details of the airspace change proposal including all relevant documentation and an indication of the geographical area that may be impacted
 - the CAA's responses throughout the airspace change process, including its decisions
 - progress and status of the airspace change process
 - details related to the Secretary of State's Call-in process
 - details related to any proposed public evidence sessions
 - details related to the post implementation review.

Parliament and Government's Role

- 1.27 Parliament and the Government are responsible for setting the CAA's statutory objectives, outlining the CAA's functions and responsibilities, and providing guidance to the CAA. The Secretary of State may, under certain conditions, decide to 'call-in' a particular airspace change proposal. In this instance the Secretary of State becomes the decision maker, instead of the CAA.

Definitions

- 1.28 Throughout the airspace change process, the degree of compliance expected is based on the following definitions:
- '**will**' or '**must**' is used to refer to requirements that **must** be met in full unless it has been agreed in advance with the CAA that it would be disproportionate to do so.
 - '**should**' is used to refer to a requirement that is expected to be met in full unless the change sponsor provides an acceptable rationale (within their submissions) that it would be disproportionate to do so.

- 'may' is used to refer to an action that the change sponsor is encouraged to consider taking. Given the unique circumstances of each airspace change proposal, there may be instances where the CAA might instruct the change sponsor to take specific action.

Key Principles of the Airspace Change Process

Safety

- 1.29 All airspace change proposals must consider safety and demonstrate the impacts on safety of any proposed changes. Section 70(1) of the Transport Act 2000 places the CAA under a primary duty, when deciding whether to approve airspace change proposals, to do so in a way that maintains a high standard of safety in the provision of air traffic services. Therefore, safety has the highest priority within the airspace change process.

Transparency

- 1.30 A key principle of the airspace change process is that it is as transparent as possible throughout. Those potentially affected by an airspace change proposal should feel confident that their voice has a formal place in the airspace change process.
- 1.31 Therefore, the default position is that, where practicable, all required documents in relation to an airspace change proposal are published on the airspace change portal, which the CAA monitors. We will consider withholding material or redacting information:
- for reasons of national security
 - that the CAA has agreed with the change sponsor should not be made public in order to protect the legitimate commercial interests of a person or business (in the same way that we might apply an exemption(s) from the duty to disclose information in response to a request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 or the Environmental Information Regulations 2004)
 - containing personal information in accordance with data protection law
 - containing specific technical data related to the design of Instrument Flight Procedures (this data is submitted by approved procedure design Organisations using an agreed method that is overseen by the CAA).
- 1.32 However, we do not anticipate agreeing to withhold large amounts of information and will only accept redaction of the minimum information necessary.

Proportionality

- 1.33 In line with the Air Navigation Directions 2023, the CAA has a duty to develop a proportionate airspace change process with the aim of ensuring the expeditious

assessment of airspace change proposals. To support this, the airspace change process uses distinct stages where the requirements of each stage will be applied dependent upon the nature of the airspace change proposal and its potential impacts.

Accountability and Consistency

- 1.34 In line with the CAA Regulatory Principles (which in part give effect to the principles of the Government's Better Regulation framework), gateway outcomes and Stage 5 regulatory decision documents are published on the airspace change portal to ensure stakeholders and change sponsors can access and understand the reasons for our decisions.

Appeal of Decisions

- 1.35 There is no appeals mechanism in the airspace change process in respect of an airspace decision or its terms and conditions. All CAA decisions are subject to judicial review, a legal challenge to the High Court on the fairness and lawfulness of the process followed by the CAA in reaching a decision. Detailed guidance on the judicial review process can be found on the [Courts and Tribunals Judiciary website](#).

Changes Outside the Scope of the Airspace Change Process - Noise Preferential Routes

- 1.36 Aircraft departing from certain airports follow noise preferential routes. These are set departure routes/swathes agreed by government, airports or local planning authorities. They are established to provide some certainty as to which areas will be exposed to aircraft activity. Noise preferential routes are not regulated by the CAA nor covered by the airspace change process. However, change sponsors may need to consider the existence of noise preferential routes during the airspace change process.

Review of the Airspace Change Process

- 1.37 The CAA commits to undertaking periodic reviews of the airspace change process at appropriate intervals, taking into account feedback and developments in government policies.

More Information and Help

- 1.38 If you have questions about the airspace change process which this document does not answer, further information is provided on the CAA [airspace webpage](#).
- 1.39 If you need further help with questions related to the airspace change process or national policy then please email us at airspace.policy@caa.co.uk.

- 1.40 Please be aware that we will only answer questions about CAA policy and the airspace change process through this address, and not issues about specific airspace change proposals, which should be directed to the change sponsor.

Chapter 2

Airspace Change Process

Introduction

- 2.1 Airspace change proposals, including temporary airspace change proposals and airspace trials, may vary greatly in terms of size, scale of impact and complexity. Some may have little noticeable operational or environmental impacts. Others may require a complex structuring of airspace with impacts both for airspace users and the environment, including people on the ground impacted by noise. The CAA does not have a separate airspace change process for every type of airspace change proposal. Instead, the airspace change process has three different levels (each with different requirements) and within each level the process may be able to be scaled further to support the proportionate application of the airspace change process. Specific guidance on how the requirements within levels can be scaled is included within [CAP 1616f, Guidance on Airspace Change Process for Permanent Airspace Change Proposals](#).
- 2.2 To progress an airspace change proposal to the point where a final decision is made, the change sponsor must demonstrate:
- a need for a change to airspace design
 - that relevant design principles have been designed through effective engagement with those affected and design options have been informed by those design principles
 - that the impacts of those design options have been properly assessed
 - that, where relevant, they have facilitated meaningful consultation or engagement on proposed design options and that stakeholder feedback has been taken into account
 - that the final airspace change proposal submission contains all the information that the CAA and other stakeholders need, in the right format.

Is an Airspace Change Proposal Required?

- 2.3 An airspace change proposal must be prepared and submitted for approval if the proposal is that there will be a change to the existing airspace design and the change could, if implemented, in the view of the CAA have an impact on existing flight behaviours.
- 2.4 However, if a proposed change is 'administrative in nature', a change sponsor may be able to submit a change directly to the UK Aeronautical Information

Service through submission of an aeronautical information publication change request.

- 2.5 [CAP 1054, Aeronautical Data Quality – Guidance for the provision and maintenance of aeronautical data and aeronautical information in UK Aeronautical Information Products](#), provides further details on the types of data that, if changed, could impact the airspace design and may require an airspace change proposal.
- 2.6 The CAA has visibility of changes submitted directly via the [Aurora Data Originators Portal](#). If it is believed that the proposed change requires an airspace change proposal to be prepared and submitted (see Paragraph 3.3 above) we may intervene and require that the change sponsor follows the airspace change process.
- 2.7 If the change sponsor is in any doubt as to whether their change would constitute an Aeronautical Information Publication Change Request rather than an airspace change proposal they should follow the process outlined below.

Applicability and Policy Alignment Check

- 2.8 Should a change sponsor believe that they have identified a change in airspace design that will not alter air flight behaviours, but is unsure whether they are able to submit an aeronautical information publication change request directly to the UK Aeronautical Information Service, they should approach the CAA so that an assessment can be made. Examples of when a change sponsor should approach the CAA include:
- seeking confirmation from the CAA that a change to airspace design will not alter flight behaviours:
 - considering the relocation of a navigational aid which is referenced by a flight procedure, where the change sponsor has demonstrated the new location of the navigation aid will not impact the airspace design.
 - checking with the CAA that a change to airspace design will not have unintended impacts that have the potential to alter flight behaviours:
 - considering the movement of an aerodrome reference point. In this instance the aerodrome reference point may be directly referenced by other elements of airspace design that may need to be considered before the change can be approved
 - considering a request to amend an activity descriptor within a danger area. In this instance this can require consideration of wider policy requirements that have the potential to impact the design of surrounding airspace.

- 2.9 In any such case, the change sponsor should submit a [DAP1916 – statement of need](#) to provide a brief description of the proposed change. The CAA will review the statement of need and will use this information to assess the proposal and advise the change sponsor accordingly.
- 2.10 If the CAA accepts that the change to airspace design will not alter flight behaviours we will provide a ‘change request authority’ to the change sponsor confirming that they can submit a change request authority directly to the UK Aeronautical Information Service. While there will be no requirement for the proposal to progress through the airspace change process, the statement of need and the change request authority will be published on the airspace change portal.
- 2.11 If the CAA determines that the change to airspace design has the potential to alter flight behaviours, the change sponsor will be required to follow the airspace change process outlined below.

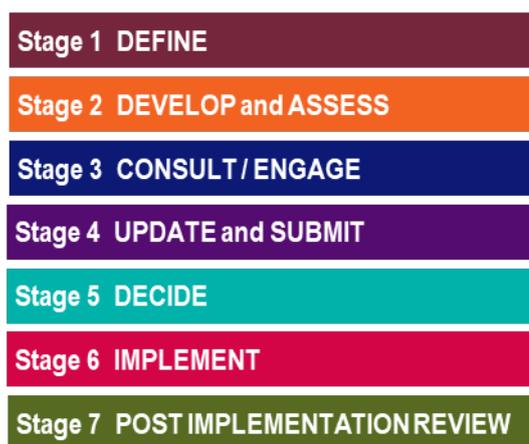
Permanent Airspace Change Process

- 2.12 Permanent airspace change proposals should follow the airspace change process detailed below. Temporary airspace change proposals and airspace trials have different requirements described in Paragraphs 3.33 to 3.35.

The Seven-Stages of the Permanent Airspace Change Process

- 2.13 The airspace change process comprises seven stages. These are define, develop and assess, consult/engage, update and submit, decide, implement and the post implementation review.

Figure 1: The seven stages



- 2.14 Within each stage there are several activities. These activities are discussed in the next section.
- 2.15 In addition, there may be other activities not part of the airspace change process but which the airspace change process’ development is dependent upon, that

the change sponsor elects to undertake concurrently with the airspace change process. Examples include activities related to the development of instrument flight procedures (such as validation activities using a simulator or an aircraft), obtaining other regulatory approvals from the CAA such as licenses for any spaceflight activities, remotely piloted aircraft systems' operational authorisations, or work related to Department for Transport approved noise preferential routes.

Gateways

- 2.16 The CAA monitors the progress of an airspace change proposal against the requirements of the airspace change process at key defined points, called gateways. There are three gateways within the airspace change process:
- 'define' gateway at the end of Stage 1
 - 'develop and assess' gateway at the end of Stage 2
 - 'consult/engage' gateway that must be passed prior to commencing consultation or engagement in Stage 3.
- 2.17 At each gateway, the CAA will assess whether the relevant airspace change process requirements have been met. It is important to note that passing a gateway through Stages 1-3 does not predetermine the CAA's regulatory decision on the final airspace change proposal submitted at Stage 4. The gateways are there to determine whether the airspace change process has been followed up to that point, and whether to approve progress to the next stage.
- 2.18 For Stages 1-3, the CAA will hold internal gateway assessments in accordance with a published schedule to determine the gateway outcome. For each gateway, the change sponsor must have produced and published relevant outputs on the airspace change portal and submitted related evidence to the CAA at least two weeks in advance of the gateway assessment. Depending on the size and complexity of the airspace change proposal there may be occasions where four-weeks (or more) is required. Submission deadlines for each gateway will be discussed at the assessment meeting and agreed as part of the overarching timeline for the airspace change proposal.
- 2.19 Submission checklists for each of the Stage 1-3 gateways have been developed to help change sponsors ensure their submissions have all of the required information for the CAA to make its assessment. Change sponsors must complete the submission checklist and submit it as part of their document set for each of the Stage 1-3 gateways.
- 2.20 The change sponsor or the CAA may request a meeting to discuss the outputs and related evidence so that any gaps can be identified, and preliminary queries addressed. In the absence of any such meeting, the CAA may request

supplementary information or clarification from the change sponsor ahead of the gateway assessment. Any additional information provided to the CAA will be published on the airspace change portal.

- 2.21 The CAA's regulatory decision takes place during Stage 5 and can be made at any point following the conclusion of the relevant assessments. The change sponsor will only be permitted to progress to Stage 6 (Implement) if the CAA's regulatory decision is to approve the final airspace change proposal.

Gateway Outcomes

- 2.22 Aligned with our regulatory principles of transparency and proportionality there are four possible outcomes to each of the Stage 1-3 gateways:
- **Passed.** The CAA has concluded that the change sponsor has met the requirements of the airspace change process and can therefore proceed to the next stage.
 - **Decision pending.** The CAA has concluded that minor action(s) are required by the change sponsor to enable the CAA to conclude that the requirements of the airspace change process have been met. These actions are generally either for clarification purposes and/or where information has been omitted from the submission. Actions attached to a decision pending will not normally include changes to the methodology adopted, requiring further engagement activities, or where a substantial number of airspace change process issues have been identified.
 - **Not passed – targeted review.** The CAA has concluded that a significant number but not all of the requirements of the airspace change process have been met. The CAA will arrive at a not passed – targeted review where we have formed the view that the requirements that need further work by the change sponsor can be assessed after that work has been done in isolation from the rest of the requirements, and at an 'extraordinary' gateway (looking only at those elements). Extraordinary gateways are not subject to the published schedule and are at the CAA's discretion. Extraordinary gateways will be published on the airspace change portal once scheduled and prior to the gateway. The notification must be achieved through the completion of a 'timeline change request' form. The gateway submission period for an extraordinary gateway meeting will be as required for the original gateway and in any case, should be a minimum of two weeks. The exact duration required will be determined by the CAA taking into consideration other work commitments, available resources and the extent of work to be undertaken to assess the information provided in relation to those elements which did not meet the gateway requirements.

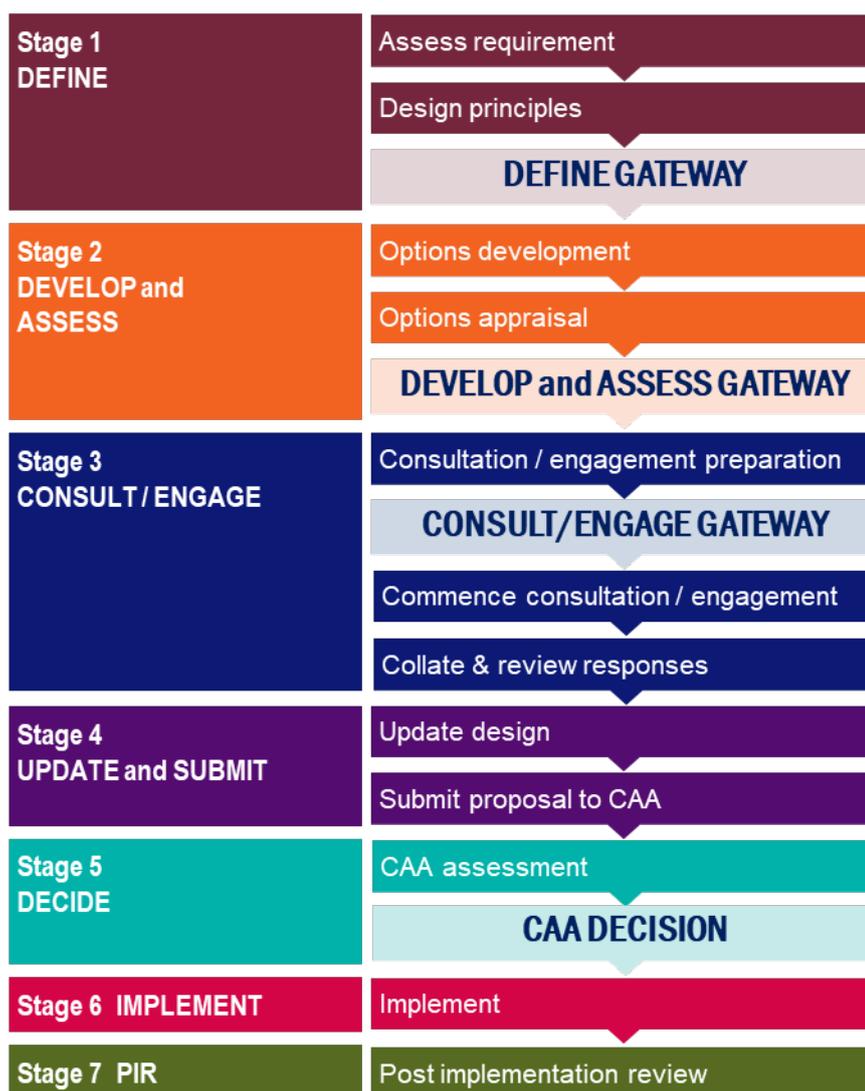
- **Not passed – full review.** The CAA has concluded that the airspace change process requirements have not been met and the submission contains elements that cannot be addressed through the use of a decision pending outcome, and fall outside the criteria for the CAA to be able to offer an extraordinary gateway. In any such case, it is possible that the change sponsor may have to revisit the stage and do further work. Once the change sponsor has addressed the reasons why the proposal did not pass the gateway previously and submitted the information required for a new gateway, the CAA will review the submission in full against the airspace change process requirements at a subsequent gateway in accordance with the published schedule.

2.23 We will communicate the gateway outcome directly to the change sponsor and record it on the airspace change portal. In some cases, we may determine that it would be beneficial to facilitate a post-gateway meeting with the change sponsor to provide feedback specifically related to their submission and/or the technical viability of their airspace change proposal.

Airspace Change Process Overview

2.24 Figure 2 outlines the overview of the airspace change process including the stages, activities and gateways.

Figure 2 Overview of the airspace change process



Levels of Airspace Change Proposal

2.25 Each permanent airspace change proposal is assigned a ‘level’ depending on the characteristics of the change and potential for impacts, which is in part based on the altitude and location in which the changes occur. The airspace change proposal levels are:

Permanent Airspace Change Proposal Level definitions

Level 1

2.26 A change to the notified airspace design that has the potential for a high impact on aviation and/or non-aviation stakeholders.

2.27 We would expect changes that have the potential to alter flight behaviours below 7,000 feet (above mean sea level) over land to fall within this level.

Level 2

- 2.28 A change to the notified airspace design that has the potential for a medium impact on aviation and/or non-aviation stakeholders.
- 2.29 We would expect changes that have the potential to:
- alter flight behaviours above 7,000 feet (above mean sea level) or
 - alter flight behaviours below 7,000 feet (above mean sea level) over sea and
 - not alter flight behaviours below 7,000 feet (above mean sea level) over land to fall within this level.

Level 3

- 2.30 A change to the notified airspace design that has the potential for a low impact on both aviation and non-aviation stakeholders.
- 2.31 Some airspace change proposals have already been identified as Level 3 and are listed in [CAP 1616h, Guidance on Airspace Change Process for Level 3 and Pre-Scaled Airspace Change Proposals](#).
- 2.32 However, a change sponsor may explain why they consider a proposed change not on that list is a Level 3 change, with a suitable supporting argument, for consideration by the CAA.

Level Allocation

- 2.33 During the assessment meeting, the CAA will provisionally indicate the appropriate level for the airspace change proposal. If the provisional Level is 1 or 2, the CAA's confirmation will follow once the change sponsor has passed the 'develop and assess' gateway.
- 2.34 If the provisional Level is 3, the level should be confirmed during, or shortly after, the assessment meeting. However, on some occasions the CAA may need to better understand the characteristics of the airspace change proposal and the potential impacts before it can make a determination. If an airspace change proposal cannot initially be confirmed as Level 3, it will be re-assigned as a provisional Level 1 or 2 until such time as the CAA can be satisfied that it can be confirmed as Level 3. Notwithstanding that provisionally assigned level, the requirements in the airspace change process may be scaled when the CAA considers it proportionate to do so.
- 2.35 Should the provisionally assigned level of any airspace change proposal be amended following the 'develop and assess' gateway, change sponsors may be required to return to previous stages to fulfil requirements that were not completed on the basis of the provisionally assigned level. This will be assessed by the CAA on a case-by-case basis.

Further Proportionate Scaling of the Airspace Change Process

- 2.36 The application of levels enables the airspace change process to accommodate different types and complexities of airspace change proposals by applying the requirements in a proportionate way.
- 2.37 In accordance with our regulatory principles, the CAA will apply the airspace change process in a reasonable and proportionate manner that can accommodate flexibility. We will, therefore, consider scaling the airspace change process further within the requirements of each level when there is a good reason, and it is proportionate to do so. Note there are some elements of the airspace change process that the CAA does not have discretion to scale because they are imposed by Secretary of State in the Air Navigation Directions 2023. If a change sponsor considers that a specific airspace change proposal warrants further scaling, it must raise and minute this request at the assessment meeting. Any proposed further scaling to the airspace change process must be approved and published by the CAA on the airspace change portal.

Safety Assessment

- 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.
- 2.39 The CAA has published separate guidance (for example [CAP 760, Guidance on the Conduct of Hazard Identification, Risk Assessment and the Production of Safety Cases](#)) on performing the safety assessment.

Temporary Airspace Change Proposals and Airspace Trials

- 2.40 Temporary airspace change proposals and airspace trials are not required to complete gateways. Specific guidance on the process requirements for temporary airspace change proposals and airspace trials is in [CAP 1616g, Guidance on Airspace Change Process for Temporary and Trials Airspace Change Proposals](#).

Stakeholder Engagement

Change Sponsor-Led

- 2.41 Effective stakeholder engagement is a vital underpinning of the airspace change process. For airspace changes with potentially significant impacts, neutral facilitation may help to enable effective engagement and consultation. The change sponsor may, therefore, wish to seek the advice and support of external experts in consultation and public engagement.
- 2.42 For any airspace change proposal, the change sponsor must consider both the direct and consequential impacts so that relevant stakeholders can be identified and engaged accordingly. Depending on the scale and impact of the airspace change proposal, stakeholders may include the general public, their elected representatives, community groups, airport consultative committees, government organisations and industry/environmental representative groups, other airspace users, airport operators, and air navigation service providers.
- 2.43 There are three clear points in the airspace change process where change sponsors should be explicitly seeking stakeholder input to their airspace change proposal:
- Stage 1 – to inform the development of design principles
 - Stage 2 – to inform the development and assessment of design options
 - Stage 3 – to inform the selection of the final design option and development of the final airspace change proposal.
- 2.44 The change sponsor must maintain clear records of engagement activity with all stakeholders throughout the airspace change process. We will expect to see details of what change sponsors have been told by their stakeholders, how they responded to this feedback, and how it has informed (or not) the development of the airspace change proposal.
- 2.45 The CAA does not intend to set out how engagement must be undertaken in a prescriptive way, as the change sponsor owns the requirement for stakeholder engagement throughout the airspace change process. However, the core principle underpinning the CAA's assessment of whether a change sponsor is facilitating meaningful engagement will be documented evidence that they are engaging in a two-way conversation. The nature of a two-way conversation and how it is evidenced will differ depending on the circumstances, the type of meeting, the relationship between the stakeholder and the change sponsor, and the details of the airspace change proposal.
- 2.46 This does not mean that change sponsors must make modifications to their airspace change proposal to accord with the feedback received, but evidence

must be provided that feedback has been conscientiously considered by the change sponsor and that a rationale has been provided to justify the decision that they have taken.

- 2.47 The process requirements reflect the minimum standards with which the change sponsor is required to comply. As transparency and accountability are key principles of the airspace change process, change sponsors are encouraged to undertake additional engagement activities that go beyond these requirements, where they feel it would be appropriate to do so. In any such case, we will review the submission to ensure that the change sponsor has satisfactorily completed all of the engagement activities that they committed to doing.

CAA-Led

- 2.48 For Level 1 airspace change proposals, the CAA may decide to convene a public evidence session at Stage 5 of the airspace change process, if there is sufficient interest to justify holding one and it is proportionate to do so. The purpose of the public evidence session is to give an opportunity for stakeholders other than the change sponsor to provide the CAA decision-maker with their views on the airspace change proposal directly, in a public forum in addition to the opportunities to provide their views that they have had at earlier stages in the airspace change process. The CAA is there to listen; we may ask questions, but only if we do not understand what a stakeholder or representative is saying.
- 2.49 There are defined points within the airspace change process where the CAA invites feedback from stakeholders. Outside of these points, all feedback should be provided directly to the change sponsor. The change sponsor is responsible for engaging with stakeholders and they must demonstrate to the CAA throughout the airspace change process how the decisions they have taken relate to the feedback they have received.

Timelines

- 2.50 The timeline for completion of the airspace change process will inevitably depend on the complexity of the airspace design and the potential impacts of the airspace change proposal. These factors will determine the amount of design work, analysis, and degree of engagement required. The timeline will also depend on the amount of resource that the change sponsor can dedicate to developing its airspace change proposal and producing the associated documentation.
- 2.51 The change sponsor must develop a timeline that proposes target dates for:

- each gateway submission utilising the published schedule and taking into account any additional activities that may inform the development of their airspace change proposal. The CAA will typically need at least two weeks to complete the gateway assessment, but there may be occasions where four weeks (or more) is required given the size and complexity of the airspace change proposal
- the final airspace change proposal submission to the CAA, taking into account any additional work that may be required prior to submission, including that related to instrument flight procedure design
- the proposed implementation date of the change. This date should take into account the aeronautical information regulation and control (AIRAC) or aeronautical information circular/supplement (AIC/SUP) schedule. This should also account for any additional activities that may require completion prior to implementation.

2.52 When developing their timeline, the change sponsor will need to take into account that the amount of time required for the CAA to complete Stage 5 will vary. This is due to the potential need for a public evidence session, and/or a draft decision, and/or the possibility of the airspace change proposal being called-in by the Secretary of State. It could take 32 weeks for the CAA to make a decision on a Level 1 airspace change proposal, whereas we may be able to make a decision in less than 10 weeks for some Level 2 and Level 3 airspace change proposals.

2.53 As the change sponsor owns the timeline, they are ultimately responsible for determining the duration of each stage, taking into consideration the amount of time that the CAA typically needs to complete the elements for which we are responsible. Our ability to meet the timeline is dependent on the change sponsor meeting their own commitments and the quality of the submissions that are presented to us throughout the airspace change process.

2.54 While the change sponsor owns the timeline, it must be agreed with the CAA, including any adjustments that need to be made at any stage of the airspace change process. Agreement on timescales will take into account submissions by other change sponsors, CAA resources and the contents of [CAP, 2541, Principles for the prioritisation of airspace change proposals](#)².

² CAP 2541 was developed and published to address the requirement placed upon the CAA via the Air Navigation Directions to publish a prioritisation principles document which sets out its approach to the consideration of airspace change proposals.

Pausing and Withdrawing Airspace Change Proposals

- 2.55 A change sponsor may pause an airspace change proposal when the proposed timeline cannot be achieved and a new proposed timeline cannot, for an indeterminate period of time, be submitted to the CAA for consideration. The change sponsor must provide a reason for the pause which should be made visible on the airspace change portal. If an airspace change proposal is paused for a period of more than three months, the change sponsor must provide a quarterly update to the CAA confirming that the paused status is still required. Where an airspace change proposal is paused for longer than 12 months, the CAA may ask for additional information to confirm if a paused status is still appropriate.
- 2.56 When a change sponsor wishes to restart an airspace change proposal, the CAA will require assurance and evidence regarding any changes during the intervening period to the context within which the airspace change proposal is being prepared. Contextual considerations include:
- any changes to the objectives of the airspace change proposal, the airspace issues or opportunities to be addressed and the current/existing situation.
 - changes to law, government policy or CAA requirements that would affect the development of an airspace change proposal, or parts of an airspace change proposal
 - changes to identified stakeholders.
- 2.57 If there have been no relevant changes in context, the change sponsor must submit a short confirmation statement to the CAA before being invited to submit a new timeline for restarting the airspace change proposal. If there have been relevant changes in context, the change sponsor will need to consider how that may have affected work already done as part of the development of the airspace change proposal in terms of its fitness for purpose and validity. The consequence of any change in context will vary depending on how far through the CAP 1616 process the change had progressed before it was paused. The change sponsor will need to explain what the changes are and submit evidence to the CAA that either:
- changes will have no impacts on material already prepared. For example, if there was a change in policy that may not be considered relevant to a particular airspace change proposal
 - changes may be addressed by updating or supplementing existing material already prepared. For example, feedback has been obtained from new stakeholders to confirm the validity of previous work

- changes will require certain CAP 1616 stage(s) to be revisited. For example, new information has become available that may affect the validity of previous work.

2.58 If the CAA is able to conclude that the airspace change proposal can be restarted, the change sponsor will be invited to submit a new timeline for the airspace change proposal.

2.59 A change sponsor may elect to withdraw their airspace change proposal if they consider that its development is no longer required. If so, they should notify the CAA together with the reason. Once agreed, this will be identified on the CAA airspace change portal as “withdrawn” together with a statement outlining why the airspace change proposal has been withdrawn. This is not the same as an airspace change proposal which has reached the Stage 5 ‘decision’ which the CAA has decided not to approve.

Call-in Process

2.60 During Stage 5, the Secretary of State may determine that an airspace change proposal should be ‘called-in’ and a decision made by the Secretary of State instead of the CAA. The Air Navigation Directions 2023 and Air Navigation Guidance 2017 detail the criteria an airspace change proposal must satisfy for it to be eligible to be ‘called-in’. If an airspace change proposal is ‘called-in’, the CAA ceases to be the primary decision maker. This is a Department for Transport process; guidance and associated timelines for decisions within this process are discussed within the Air Navigation Guidance 2017.

2.61 The Secretary of State may not determine that the airspace change proposal will be decided by him/her if it:

- was submitted by, or on behalf of, the Ministry of Defence; or
- is directly related to a planning decision made by the Secretary of State or another planning authority involved detailed consideration of changes to flightpaths in UK airspace, consequential on the proposed development, that the change sponsor has taken into account when developing its airspace change proposal.

Chapter 3

The Airspace Change Process - Requirements

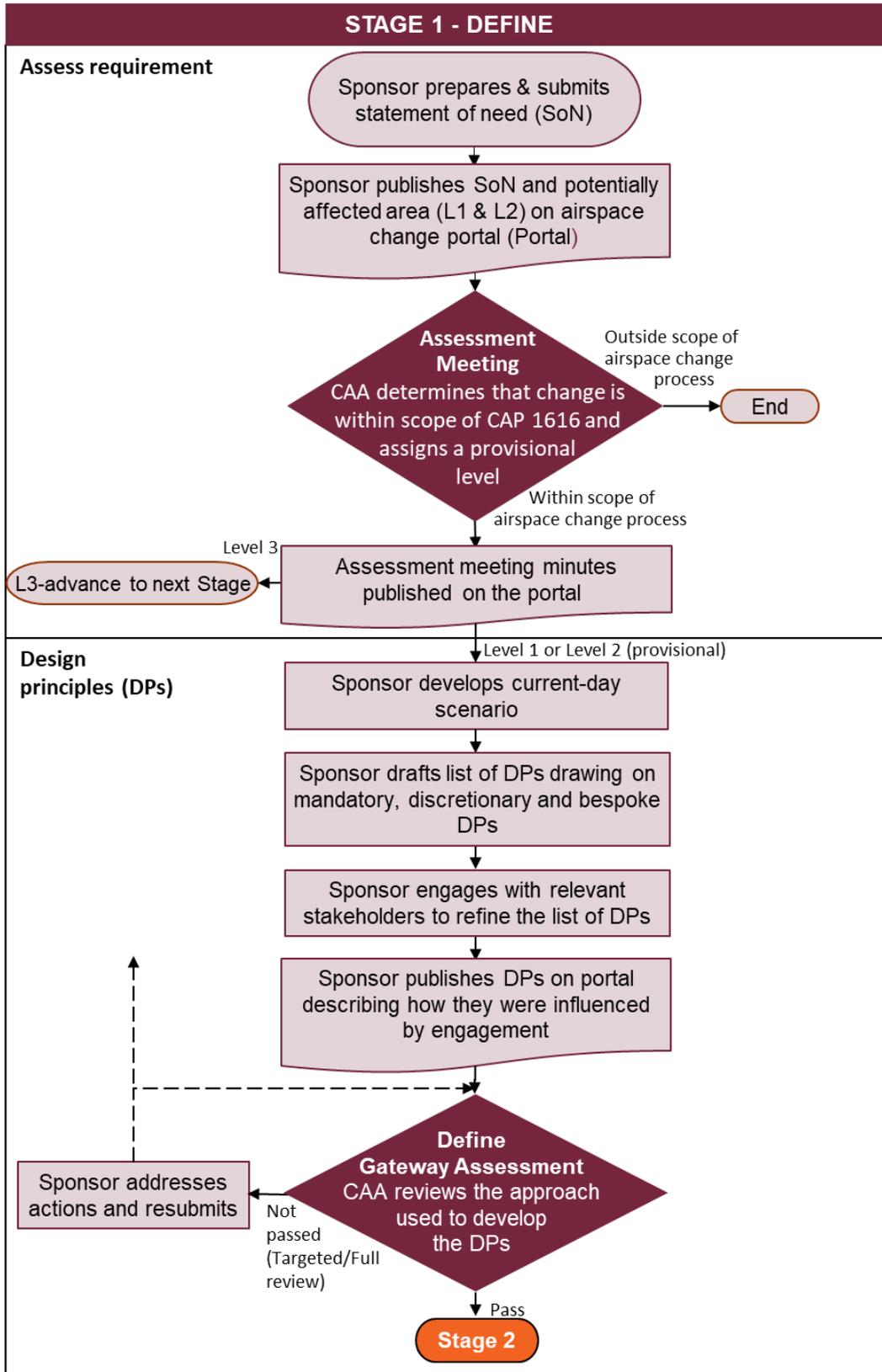
Permanent Airspace Change Proposal

- 3.1 The airspace change process requirements for Level 1 and 2 permanent airspace change proposals are described below. Level 3 permanent airspace change proposals have a set of minimum requirements which are detailed in [CAP 1616h, Guidance on Airspace Change Process for Level 3 and Pre-Scaled Airspace Change Proposals](#). These minimum requirements may be supplemented with the requirements for Level 1 and 2 at the discretion of the CAA depending on the nature of the Level 3 airspace change proposal – we will confirm our expectations with the change sponsor following the assessment meeting. Further detail is provided in [CAP 1616f, Guidance on Airspace Change Process for Permanent Airspace Change Proposals](#) and [CAP 1616h, Guidance on Airspace Change Process for Level 3 and Pre-Scaled Airspace Change Proposals](#), which provide detailed guidance on the requirements for each stage of the airspace change process. Specific environmental assessment requirements and guidance are provided in [CAP1616i, Environmental Assessment Requirements and Guidance for Airspace Change Proposals](#).
- 3.2 The airspace change process requirements are listed in their entirety across the seven stages, and they are presented as activities that the change sponsor must do. However, to ensure we apply the requirements of the airspace change process in a proportionate way, we have highlighted those activities that, for some Levels, the change sponsor **should** do, or **may** do, rather than **must** do.
- 3.3 Detailed guidance on how the requirements for each stage of the permanent airspace change process can be scaled is provided within [CAP 1616f, Guidance on Airspace Change Process for Permanent Airspace Change Proposals](#) and [CAP 1616h, Guidance on Airspace Change Process for Level 3 and Pre-Scaled Airspace Change Proposals](#).

Stage 1 – Define

Process Overview

Figure 3 Stage 1 (define) process overview



Purpose

- 3.4 Stage 1 is where the change sponsor defines their requirement for a proposed change to airspace design, setting out the objectives, issues or opportunities associated with the airspace change within a statement of need.
- 3.5 The CAA will then facilitate an assessment meeting to discuss the statement of need. The assessment meeting will determine whether the airspace change process is the appropriate mechanism for change and, assuming it is, a provisional level, general airspace change process requirements, proposed scaling opportunities and an indicative timeline will be discussed. Following the assessment meeting, the change sponsor will agree a timeline for the airspace change proposal with the CAA, describe the current-day scenario and develop design principles.

Requirements

Statement of need

- 3.6 The change sponsor **must** complete and submit the [DAP1916 - statement of need](#) form, ensuring that it includes the objectives of the airspace change proposal, the airspace issues or opportunities to be addressed and the current/existing situation.

Creation of the airspace change proposal on the airspace change portal

- 3.7 The change sponsor **must**:
- create an entry for their airspace change proposal
 - add a potentially affected area (**should** for Level 2)
 - ensure that the status is set to 'in progress'
- 3.8 This activity may be completed after the assessment meeting but must be completed prior to the 'define' gateway.

Assessment meeting

- 3.9 The change sponsor **must**:
- deliver a briefing to the CAA on the objectives of the airspace change proposal, the airspace issues or opportunities giving rise to it, and proposed next steps
 - provide an indicative timeline detailing target dates for each gateway and submission of the airspace change proposal, CAA decision and implementation.
 - develop the output from the assessment meeting

- where required, submit and publish updated versions of the statement of need on the airspace change portal, ensuring that they are clearly identified by a version number.

Current-day scenario

3.10 The change sponsor **must** describe the current-day scenario.

Design principles

3.11 The change sponsor **must**:

- develop a list of design principles to provide a framework against which design options can be developed and evaluated
- use the mandatory design principles
- consider using the discretionary design principles
- consider developing bespoke design principles
- consider both local context and national policy when developing the list of design principles
- identify any local circumstances and competing priorities that may need to be considered when developing the list of design principles.

Stakeholder engagement

3.12 The change sponsor **must**:

- identify relevant stakeholders
- consider the unique requirements of their stakeholders when developing their engagement methodology (approach and materials)
- share the current-day scenario and proposed design principles with relevant stakeholders so that they can comment accordingly, and take those comments into account
- explain the criteria that will inform and influence the development of design options, clearly setting out competing priorities and choice of design principles
- provide relevant engagement evidence
- demonstrate what they have heard and how this feedback has, or has not, informed the content of the current-day scenario and development of the design principles.

Define gateway

- 3.13 The change sponsor **must** submit the required outputs to the CAA for assessment at the 'define' gateway and publish them on the airspace change portal.

Outputs Required During Stage 1

Before assessment meeting (produced and published by change sponsor)

- statement of need (submitted to CAA)
- entry created on the airspace change portal, and status set to 'in progress'.
- redacted statement of need published on the airspace change portal.

After assessment meeting (produced and published by change sponsor)

- assessment meeting output (to include the proposed timescales for the airspace change process and the provisional level assigned by the CAA)
- updated statement of need submitted to the CAA and redacted version published on the airspace change portal (if applicable).

After assessment meeting (produced and published by the CAA)

- Determination on whether the airspace change proposal is in scope of the airspace change process (on airspace change portal).

Before 'define' gateway (produced and published by the change sponsor)

'Define' gateway submission, including:

- current-day scenario
- list of design principles
- related engagement evidence
- completed submission checklist.

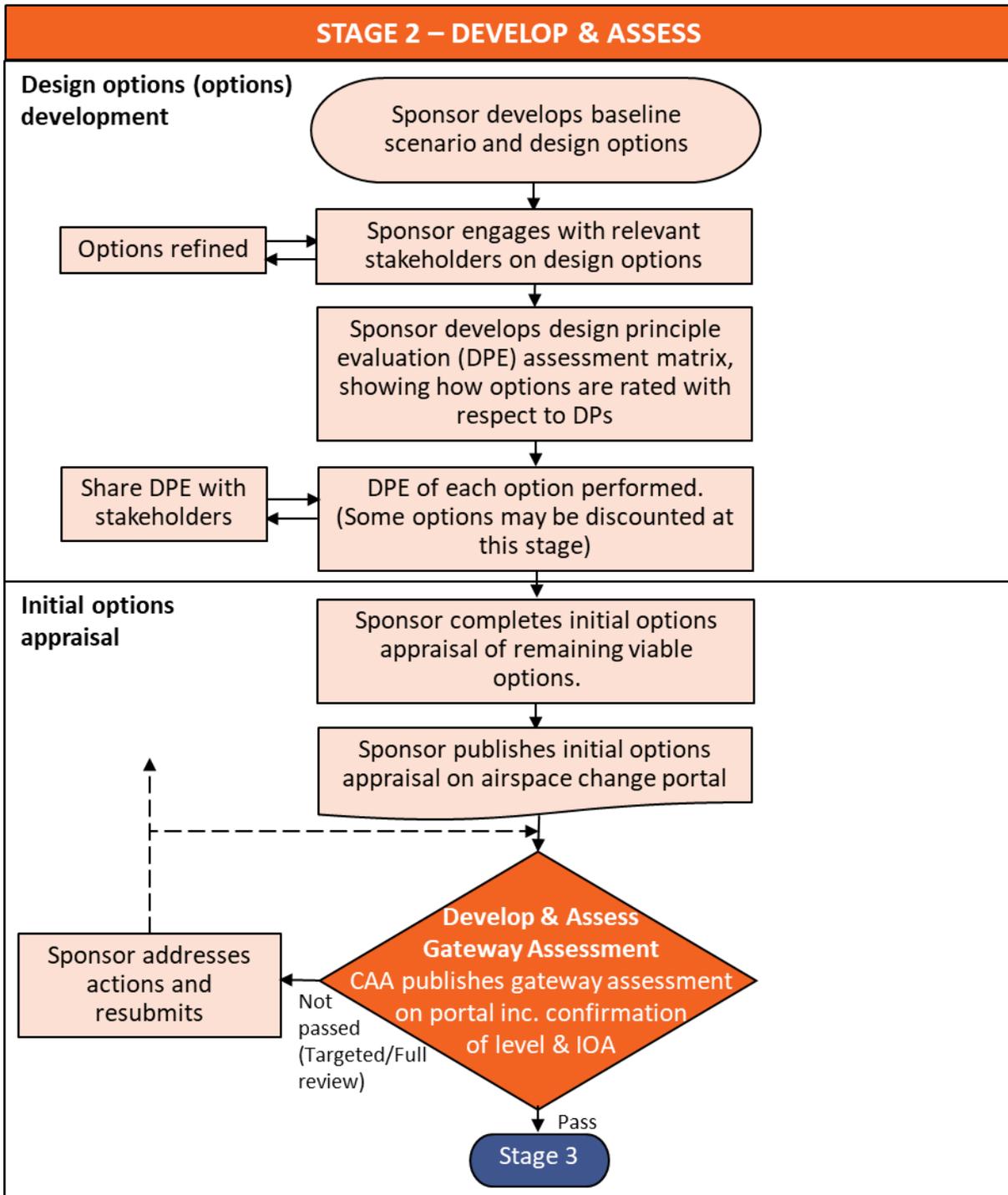
After 'define' gateway (produced and published by the CAA)

- 'define' gateway outcome.

Stage 2 – Develop and Assess

Process Overview

Figure 4 Stage 2 (develop and assess) process overview



Purpose

3.14 Stage 2 is where the change sponsor develops design options for the airspace change proposal that address the statement of need and align with the design

principles from Stage 1. The change sponsor then carries out an initial options appraisal of the different design options, which the change sponsor will later refine.

Requirements

Develop the baseline scenarios and a list of design options

3.15 The change sponsor **must**:

- develop the following baseline scenarios, taking due consideration of known or anticipated factors that might affect them:
 - year of implementation without the airspace change proposal; and
 - 10-years after implementation without the airspace change proposal.
- develop a list of design options that address the statement of need and align with the criteria from the design principles:
 - year of implementation with the airspace change proposal; and
 - 10-years after implementation with the airspace change proposal.
- provide evidence and supporting rationale to justify where single or limited design options are presented.

Engage with stakeholders on the baseline scenarios and design options

3.16 The change sponsor **must** (**should** for Level 2):

- share the baseline scenarios and design options with the same stakeholders as in Stage 1, so that they can comment accordingly
- explain the engagement approach/methodology used and the rationale for doing so
- provide relevant engagement evidence
- demonstrate what they have heard and how this feedback has, or has not, informed the development of the baseline scenarios and design options.

Conduct the design principle evaluation

3.17 The change sponsor **must**:

- describe the methodology used for the design principle evaluation
- evaluate the baseline scenarios and design options against the design principles, specifying if they have met, partially met or not met each design principle
- publish the design principle evaluation on the airspace change portal.

Conduct the initial options appraisal

3.18 The change sponsor **must**:

- consider the initial options appraisal against the statutory factors and where applicable, government policy, that the CAA is required to consider
- ensure that the initial options appraisal is objective (unbiased and evidence based), repeatable and consistent
- undertake a qualitative and where possible, a quantitative assessment according to the nature of the airspace change proposal and potential impacts
- conduct an initial options appraisal of the potential impacts of each design option against the baseline scenarios. As a minimum, the initial options appraisal of the baseline scenarios and each design option must include:
 - a qualitative assessment of the likely environmental impacts, including all direct and consequential impacts
 - a high-level assessment of all reasonable costs and benefits involved
 - a qualitative assessment of the potential impacts on safety
- provide an indication of the preferred design option(s)
- provide supporting evidence for the Category used in relation to [CAP 2091, CAA Policy on Minimum Standards for Noise Modelling applicable to the airspace change proposal](#)
- use the most up-to-date, credible, and clearly referenced sources of data to assess the impacts of the baseline scenarios and design options
- identify any evidence gaps in the initial options appraisal and describe what evidence will be collected, and how, to fill such gaps and develop the full options appraisal.

Conduct the habitats regulations assessment screening exercise

3.19 The change sponsor **must** complete the habitats regulations assessment early screening criteria form.

'Develop and assess' gateway

3.20 The change sponsor **must** submit the required outputs to the CAA for assessment at the 'develop and assess' gateway and publish them on the airspace change portal.

Outputs Required During Stage 2

Before ‘develop and assess’ gateway (produced and published by the change sponsor)

‘Develop and assess’ gateway submission, including:

- the baseline scenarios and design options
- design principle evaluation
- initial options appraisal, including safety assessment
- environmental assessment
- applicable CAP 2091 category
- habitats regulations assessment early screening criteria form
- relevant engagement evidence
- completed submission checklist.

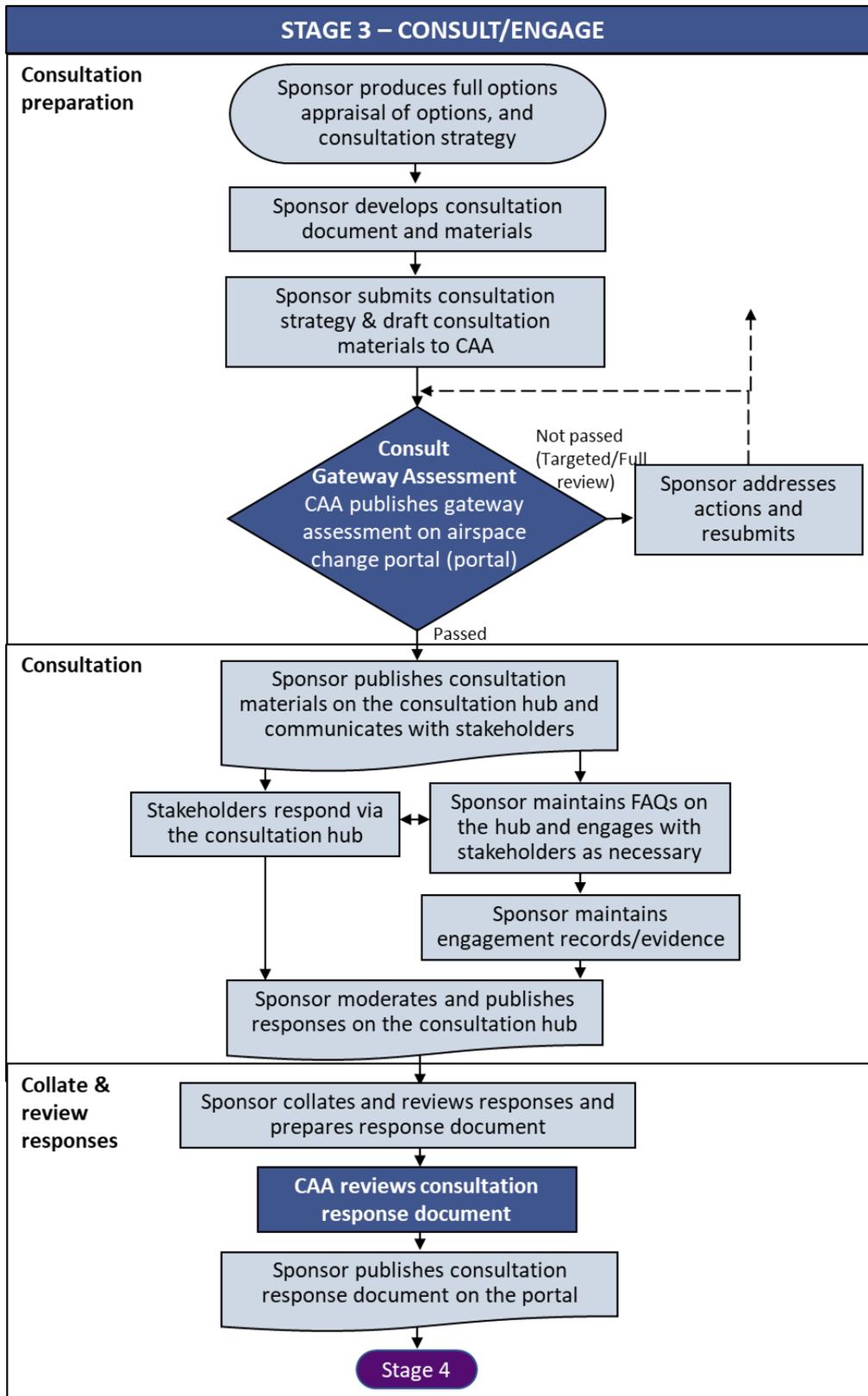
After ‘develop and assess’ gateway (produced and published by the CAA)

- ‘develop and assess’ gateway outcome and confirmation of level
- CAA assessment of change sponsor’s initial options appraisal.

Stage 3 – Consult/Engage

Process Overview

Figure 5 Stage 3 (consult/engage) process overview



Purpose

- 3.21 Stage 3 is where the change sponsor prepares and then, once it has passed the 'consult/engage' gateway which occurs in the middle of Stage 3, launches its consultation. This is the key stage of the airspace change process for change sponsors to seek feedback that will help them understand stakeholders' views about the impacts of their airspace change proposal. This feedback will help the change sponsor make informed decisions regarding the airspace change proposal ahead of its submission at the end of Stage 4.
- 3.22 The form of the consultation can be scaled according to the scale and impact of the airspace change proposal. For smaller scale changes, with a low impact, then a scaled form of consultation – engagement – may be appropriate. If the change sponsor is proposing to conduct engagement, it must present its rationale for this approach at the 'consult/engage' gateway, and ordinarily should present this during the assessment meeting.
- 3.23 More information about how these requirements can be scaled at Stage 3 can be found in [CAP 1616f, Guidance on Airspace Change Process for Permanent Airspace Change Proposals](#).

Requirements

Conduct the full options appraisal

- 3.24 The change sponsor **must**:
- develop the initial options appraisal into a full options appraisal
 - the full options appraisal **must** include:
 - each shortlisted design option fully developed, including a comparison of its impacts against the baseline scenarios, in particular:
 - all evidence gaps identified at Stage 2 fully assessed
 - all reasonable costs and benefits quantified
 - all other costs and benefits described qualitatively
 - reasons why costs and benefits have not been quantified
 - detail on the preferred design option, setting out reasons for the preference (where relevant)
 - a more detailed assessment of the impacts on safety, if completed by the change sponsor
 - a quantified and monetised environmental assessment of the design options, including direct and consequential impacts

- use the most up-to-date, credible, and clearly referenced sources of data to assess the impacts of the baseline scenarios and design options.

Provide any additional assessments for the habitats regulations assessment

3.25 The change sponsor **must** provide any additional assessments for the habitats regulations assessment as specified by the CAA.

Consultation preparation

3.26 The change sponsor **must**:

- produce a consultation strategy that:
 - identifies which stakeholders are likely to be impacted, positively or negatively
 - explains what stakeholders' information needs are and, where appropriate, considers any seldom-heard audiences
 - details how the change sponsor will inform different audiences of the consultation and what opportunities those audiences will have to engage and respond
 - considers whether it is appropriate to use intermediaries to communicate with impacted stakeholders, or whether the nature of the airspace change proposal means direct contact with impacted parties is more appropriate
 - considers whether individual properties need to be contacted, or that sets out other reasonable methods of reaching communities
 - details the intended start and end dates of the consultation and provides a rationale detailing why the consultation length is sufficient to facilitate an effective consultation
 - should include a timetable of associated consultation activities
 - explains what steps will be taken to generate an appropriate level of participation and respond to unexpected events and challenges
 - details how the consultation material will provide stakeholders with enough information to ensure that they understand the issues and the potential impacts of the airspace change proposal on them so they can give informed responses
 - sets out how the change sponsor will use the most up-to-date and credible, clearly referenced sources of data, with modelling carried out in line with relevant best practice
 - should set out how the supporting materials will be developed to suit a range of audiences

- produce draft consultation materials that:
 - are fully aligned with the consultation strategy
 - clearly explain the scope of the airspace change proposal and the baseline scenarios
 - provide respondents with enough information to ensure that they understand the issues and the potential impacts of the airspace change proposal on them, and can give informed responses
 - do not require technical knowledge to understand and respond to (**should** for Level 2)
 - use the most up-to-date, credible and clearly referenced data with modelling carried out in line with relevant best practice
 - make clear the extent to which the change is reversible if it does not achieve the objectives it is designed to achieve
 - seek stakeholders' views using questions that are clear, appropriate and unbiased.

'Consult/engage' gateway

3.27 The change sponsor **must** submit the required outputs to the CAA for assessment at the 'consult/engage' gateway.

Commence consultation

3.28 After passing the 'consult/engage' gateway, the change sponsor **must**:

- implement their consultation strategy and issue the consultation documents by publishing them on the Citizen Space consultations hub
- maintain records to demonstrate that all reasonable actions have been taken to ensure stakeholders are informed of the consultation and have been offered the opportunity to engage with it
- moderate responses in order to remove any unsuitable content, but not as a general means of censoring or filtering responses
- publish consultation responses on the Citizen Space consultations hub
- publish any additional consultation feedback (such as postal responses) on the Citizen Space consultations hub
- actively monitor responses during the consultation and take reasonable steps to elicit a response from stakeholders
- monitor the progress of the consultation and, if necessary, take action in line with the consultation strategy if the strategy falls short of expectations.

Collate and review responses

3.29 The change sponsor **must**:

- review the consultation responses and categorise them into those that present information that may impact the final airspace change proposal, and those which do not
- set out clearly why it has categorised each response in the way that it has to demonstrate that it has heard and understood the feedback provided
- include the categorisation for each consultation response within a consultation response document.

Outputs Required During Stage 3

Before ‘consult/engage’ gateway (produced and published by the change sponsor)

- full options appraisal
- environmental assessment
- any additional assessments for habitats regulations assessment as specified by the CAA
- draft consultation strategy
- draft consultation materials
- fully developed (but unpublished) consultation pages on the Citizen Space consultations hub
- completed submission checklist.

After ‘consult/engage’ gateway (produced and published by the CAA)

- assessment of full options appraisal
- ‘consult/engage’ gateway outcome.

At start of consultation (produced and published by the change sponsor)

- consultation materials.

During consultation (produced and published by the change sponsor)

- moderated consultation responses.

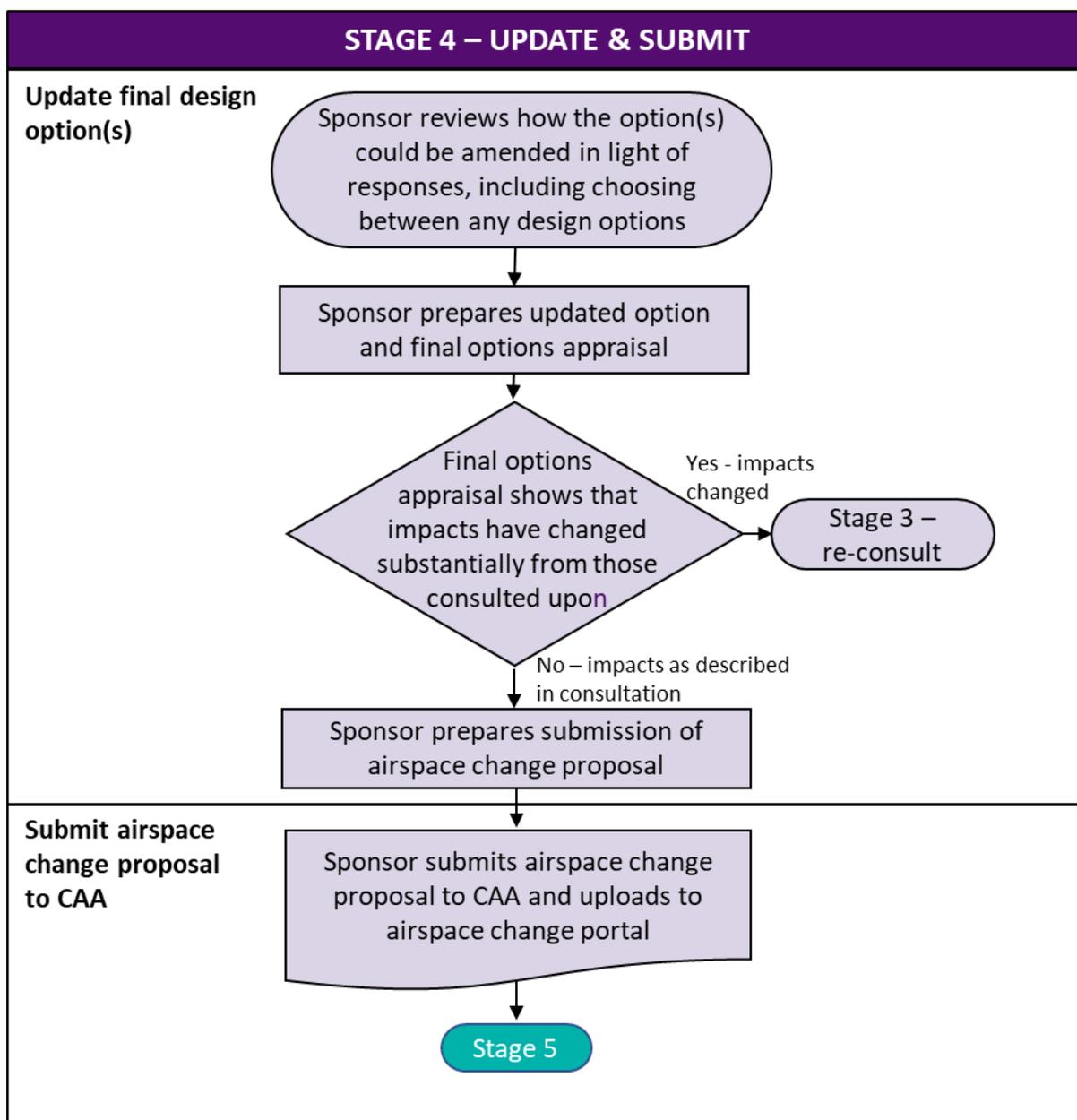
After consultation (produced and published by the change sponsor)

- consultation response document.

Stage 4 – Update and Submit

Process Overview

Figure 6 Stage 4 (update and submit) process overview



Purpose

- 3.30 Stage 4 enables the change sponsor to make any final adjustments to the airspace design ahead of submitting the final airspace change proposal to the CAA. This stage commences when the Stage 3 consultation has closed and the responses have been collated, reviewed and categorised by the change sponsor in the consultation response document.

- 3.31 Change sponsors should select a final design option and consider any updates to it in light of information received in the consultation, complete the final options appraisal, assess the need for additional consultation, and submit their final airspace change proposal describing the airspace change to the CAA and stakeholders.
- 3.32 The change sponsor or the CAA may request a meeting to discuss the final airspace change proposal submission so that any gaps can be identified, and preliminary queries addressed.

Requirements

Update the final design option

- 3.33 The change sponsor **must**:
- select a final design option if more than one was consulted on, providing justification for the selection
 - consider the merits and practical possibilities of updating the final design option to address issues identified in the consultation response document as requiring further consideration
 - assess all feedback carried forward from the consultation response document, bringing each individual element to a conclusion as to whether it did, or did not, influence the final design option.

Conduct the final options appraisal

- 3.34 The change sponsor **must**:
- develop the full options appraisal into a final options appraisal to consider any revised impacts due to the updated final design option and/or changes in data using the same approach as in the earlier stages
 - provide a rationale for any updates made to the final design option
 - assess whether any of the environmental impacts have changed
 - provide a final assessment of the impacts on safety.

Provide any additional assessments for the habitats regulations assessment

- 3.35 The change sponsor **must** provide any additional assessments for the habitats regulations assessment as specified by the CAA.

Assess the need for additional consultation

- 3.36 The change sponsor **must**:

- discuss with the CAA whether additional consultation is required where the final options appraisal reveals that the impact of the final design option has substantially changed, including modifications to instrument flight procedures
- re-consult where there is a substantial difference between the airspace change proposal consulted on and the final design option
- submit post-consultation engagement evidence, analysis, and conclusions to the CAA.

Submit the final airspace change proposal

3.37 The change sponsor **must**:

- prepare the final airspace change proposal using the standard template
- ensure that the final airspace change proposal does not include any design elements that have not been consulted on, unless this has been approved by the CAA in advance
- where relevant, ensure that their approved procedure design organisation provides the CAA with the instrument flight procedure design submission in accordance with the agreed method documented in the approved procedure design organisation's quality management system
- where relevant, include in the final airspace change proposal the rationale as to why no further consultation is required
- include in their final airspace change proposal sufficient information written in plain English such that non-aviation stakeholders can understand the airspace change proposal and the anticipated impacts
- include in their final airspace change proposal sufficient technical details such that aviation stakeholders can fully understand the airspace change proposal and the anticipated impacts
- include in their final airspace change proposal sufficient details such that the CAA can assess the airspace change proposal against the CAA's statutory duties and where applicable, government policy
- include in their final airspace change proposal sufficient details such that the CAA can assess the airspace change proposal against any applicable CAA policies, including requests for policy dispensations
- include in their final airspace change proposal a realistic target implementation date that takes into account the decision process in Stage 5 and the implementation process set out in Stage 6, as well as any requirements of the change sponsor and impacted stakeholders

- include their assessment as to whether the anticipated impacts meet any of the relevant call-in criteria set out in the Air Navigation Guidance 2017
- submit their final airspace change proposal to the CAA, noting that the technical instrument flight procedure submission (where relevant) must be submitted by the change sponsor's approved procedure design organisation
- publish their final airspace change proposal on the airspace change portal, noting that this must not include the technical instrument flight procedure submission
- submit a safety case and related assessments, where required.

Outputs Required During Stage 4

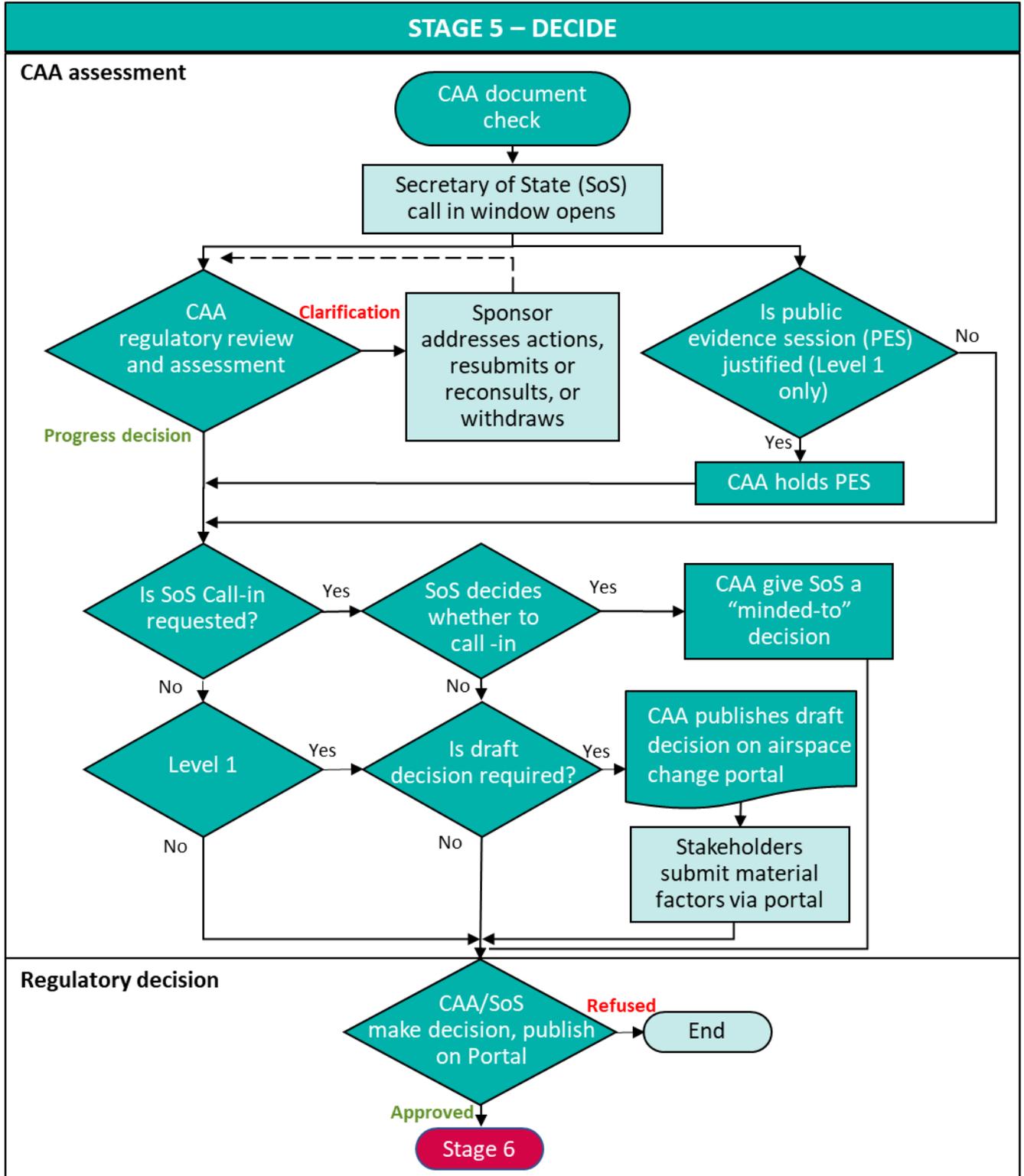
Final airspace change proposal submission (produced and published by the change sponsor)

- final options appraisal and environmental assessment
- any additional assessments for habitats regulations assessment as specified by the CAA
- final airspace change proposal (in accordance with the standard template format) and all required evidence/material
- instrument flight procedure submission (if applicable) (submitted by change sponsor's approved procedure design organisation).

Stage 5 - Decide

Process Overview

Figure 7 Stage 5 (decide) process overview



Purpose

- 3.38 The CAA reviews and assesses the final airspace change proposal and may request supplementary information or clarification from the change sponsor ahead of making the regulatory decision. The CAA may convene a public evidence session and/or publish a draft decision for Level 1 proposals, when it is proportionate to do so.
- 3.39 The CAA decides on whether or not to approve the final airspace change proposal. The CAA's decision may be subject to modifications to, and conditions on, the final airspace change proposal as the CAA considers necessary. These modifications and/or conditions will need to be fulfilled by the change sponsor either before, or after, implementation. Alternatively, the Secretary of State may 'call-in' the proposal and make the decision, and the CAA will instead give the Secretary of State a 'minded to' decision. More information on the call-in process can be found in [CAP 1616f, Guidance on Airspace Change Process for Permanent Airspace Change Proposals](#).

Requirements

- 3.40 The change sponsor **must**:
- provide the CAA with all the required documentation to allow a review of the final airspace change proposal to commence
 - where requested, provide the CAA with any further information so that a regulatory decision can be made.
- 3.41 If the CAA determines that a public evidence session is required, the CAA will provide at least four weeks' notice to the change sponsor and stakeholders. In which case the change sponsor **may** need to (Level 1 only):
- produce an executive summary of its airspace change proposal – in particular, how it may differ from what was consulted upon
 - produce a layperson's guide and a graphic version of the explanation so that stakeholders can more easily understand:
 - the potential impacts that the airspace change proposal has on them
 - what has changed between the consultation and the final airspace change proposal.
- 3.42 More detailed guidance on the required documentation for the different levels of airspace change proposals can be found in [CAP 1616f, Guidance on Airspace Change Process for Permanent Airspace Change Proposals](#).

Outputs

- 3.43 In making its decision, the CAA will state whether it approves or rejects the final airspace change proposal, with clear assessments of individual factors and an explanation about how we have reached our decision, including weighing the different factors involved.
- 3.44 The CAA's decision is made in the context of a number of legal duties and, where applicable, government policy. Our duties highlight the factors we must consider before making our decision, and these include:
- in line with Air Navigation Directions 2023, ensuring the change is in accordance with the airspace modernisation strategy, as well as the CAA's published procedures and policy on the design and classification of UK airspace, such as this airspace change process
 - consideration of the airspace change proposal against the statutory factors in section 70 of the Transport Act 2000, including safety, security, and operational and environmental impacts
 - consideration of any other relevant requirements of government policy and legislation, including where relevant the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.
- 3.45 The CAA will also consider the airspace change proposal's compliance with any applicable CAA policy, including requests for policy dispensations.
- 3.46 Sometimes the requirements or interests of change sponsors and/or stakeholders will conflict, resulting in 'competing priorities' within or between different factors. It is therefore reasonable for those parties to understand not just how the airspace change process works but also how the CAA reaches its decision. The list below details all of the outputs from Stage 5, including the different decision documents that we may publish depending on the level of the airspace change proposal.

Outputs Required During Stage 5

Output from Stage 5 CAA regulatory assessment (by whom produced and published - in brackets)

- confirmation that document check is complete (CAA)
- date of any public evidence session – some level 1 changes only (CAA)
- if required for a public evidence session, an executive summary of the airspace change proposal – some level 1 changes only (change sponsor)

- if required for a public evidence session, an executive summary of the airspace change proposal with associated guide and graphics (some level 1 changes only)
- transcript of any public evidence session – some level 1 changes only (CAA)
- minutes of any additional meetings between the CAA and stakeholders that form part of the public evidence session – some level 1 changes only (CAA)
- request for any further technical details or minor amendments (CAA)
- response or revised airspace change proposal as 'version 2.0' (if any) (change sponsor)
- draft decision document/minded-to decision – some level 1 changes only (CAA)
- feedback on any draft decision document – some level 1 changes only (affected stakeholders, moderated by the CAA prior to publication)
- Secretary of State call-in requests (affected Stakeholders, moderated by the CAA prior to publication)
- assessment of whether the airspace change proposal meets one or more of the call-in criteria, where a call-in request has been made (CAA)
- any notification that the airspace change proposal is eligible for call-in and has been called-in by the Secretary of State (where relevant) and if subsequently called in a 'minded to decision' (Department for Transport).

Output from regulatory decision (CAA and/or Department for Transport)

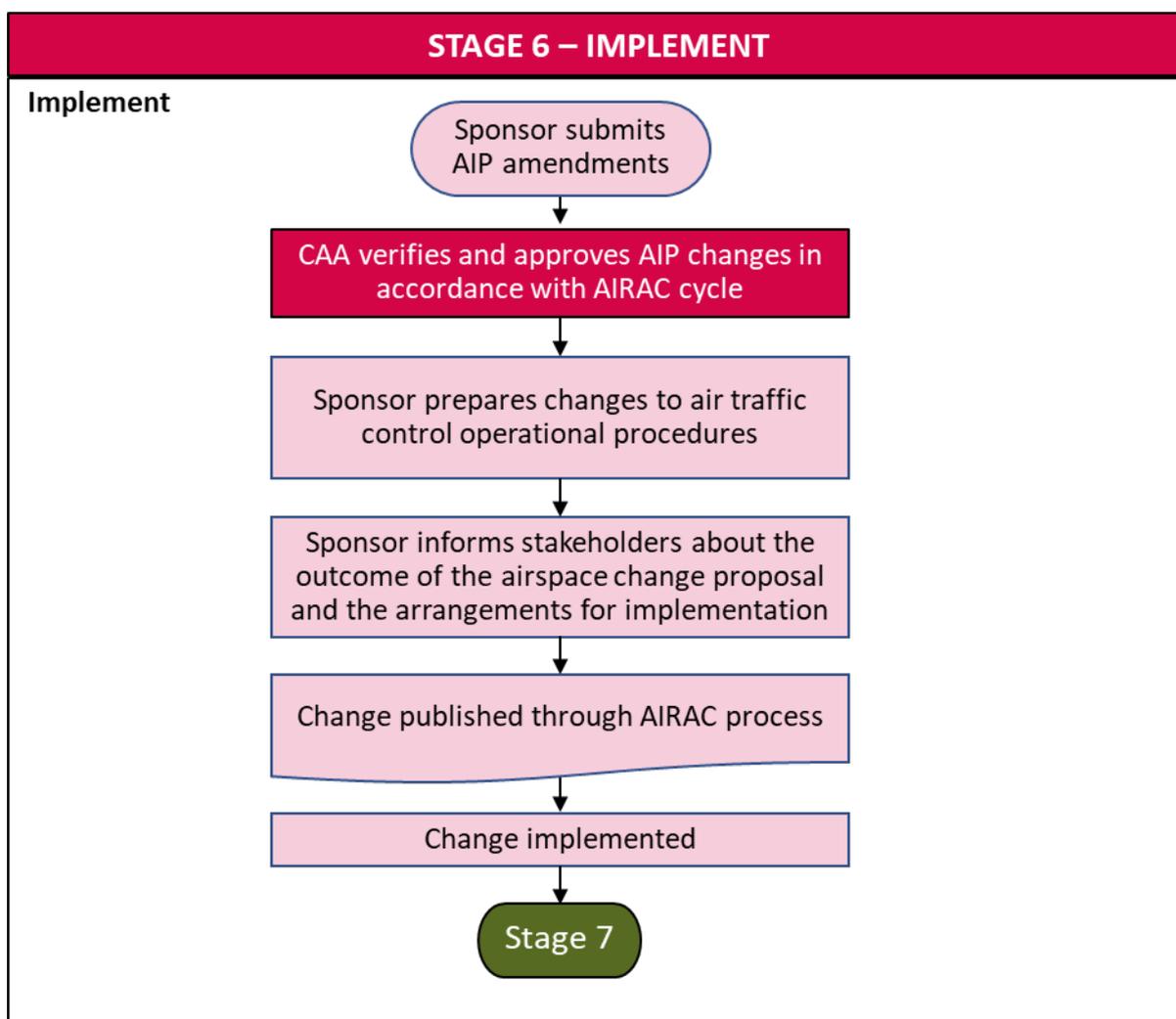
Decision documents including (possibly):

- decision statement
- CAA final options appraisal assessment
- CAA safety review (plain English summary)
- CAA operational assessment
- CAA consultation assessment
- CAA environmental statement
- CAA decision log (explanation of how we reached our decision and required conditions/modifications).

Stage 6 - Implement

Process Overview

Figure 8 Stage 6 (implement) process overview



Purpose

3.47 Stage 6 is where the approved final airspace change proposal is implemented.

Requirements

Implement the change

3.48 The change sponsor **must**:

- fulfil any conditions or modifications set out in the CAA's regulatory decision
- finalise and submit aeronautical data to the CAA for aeronautical data quality validation

- update all relevant documentation including, but not limited to, aeronautical publications, charts, operational documentation, letters of agreement and air traffic management systems.

3.49 The change sponsor **should**:

- consider the extent of the aeronautical information publication amendments as a whole, including those of adjacent aerodromes and/or neighbouring states
- consider how to notify relevant stakeholders
- bring the airspace change to the attention of the aviation community.

Monitor the impacts of the change

3.50 The change sponsor **must**:

- continue to engage with stakeholders and review and collate feedback received regarding the impacts of the airspace change (note this is in addition to the requirements of the post implementation review at Stage 7)
- if problems arise, consider what steps it can take to address those problems within the constraints of the final airspace design.

Outputs Required During Stage 6

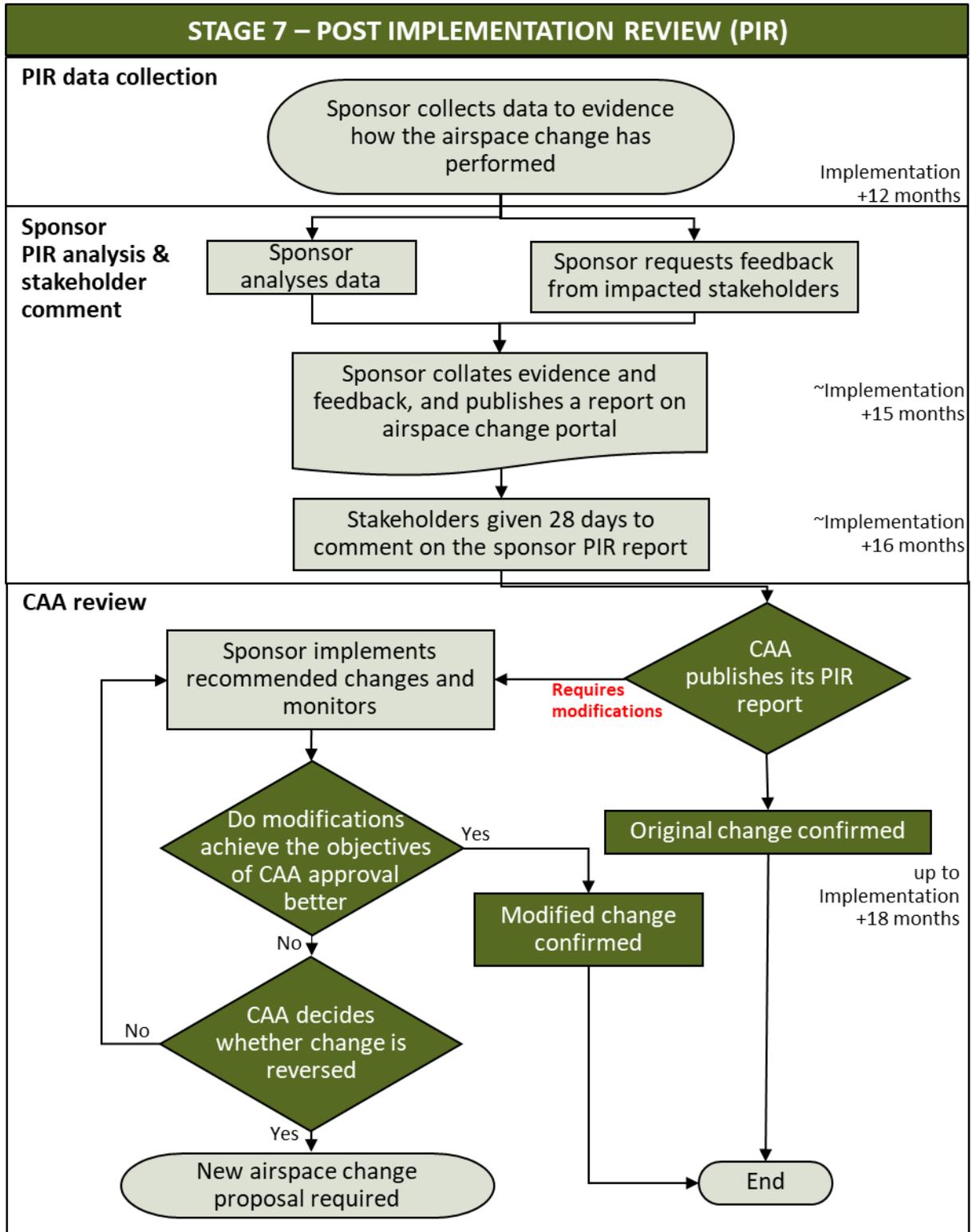
Output from Stage 6 (by whom produced and published - in brackets)

- aeronautical data verification complete and returned to the change sponsor, or submitted directly to the UK Aeronautical Information Service where relevant (CAA)
- approval of aeronautical information publication change request authority (CAA)
- aeronautical information publication change request submitted to UK Aeronautical Information Service (change sponsor)
- aeronautical information publication updated and published (on implementation date) in accordance with AIRAC cycle (UK Aeronautical Information Service)
- publish and provide the change sponsor with the post implementation review data request form (if it is required; see Stage 7 for detail on the post implementation review) (CAA).

Stage 7 – Post Implementation Review

Process Overview

Figure 9 Stage 7 (post implementation review) process overview



Purpose

- 3.51 Stage 7 is where the post implementation review analyses the impacts of the implemented airspace change in order to allow the CAA to determine if it has, or has not, produced the intended outcomes.
- 3.52 The post implementation review is not a review of the decision that was made on the final airspace change proposal, and neither is it a re-run of the decision-making process. The following outcomes may result from the post implementation review:
- the CAA may confirm that the implemented design satisfactorily achieves – within acceptable tolerance limits – the objective and terms of the CAA's approval, and the airspace change is confirmed; or
 - the CAA may require modifications to better achieve the objective and terms of the CAA's approval; once the modifications have been implemented and operated for a period (approximately six months), there are three further possible outcomes:
 - noting that the modifications did not better achieve the objective and terms of the CAA's approval, the CAA may conclude that the original design was satisfactory and the original airspace change is confirmed; or
 - noting that the modifications did not better achieve the objective and terms of the CAA's approval, the CAA may conclude that the original design was not satisfactory and the original airspace change is not confirmed. In this case, in order to pursue its airspace change, the change sponsor will need to commence a fresh airspace change proposal from Stage 1; or
 - the CAA may conclude that the modifications do better – within acceptable tolerance limits – achieve the objective and terms of the CAA's approval and so the modified design will be confirmed
 - the CAA may determine that the implemented design does not satisfactorily achieve the objective and terms of the CAA's approval, and modifications are not practicable. In any such case, the change sponsor may be required to revert to the previous airspace design.

Requirements

Data collection

- 3.53 For all Level 1 airspace change proposals the change sponsor **must**:
- commence gathering data, including collating and responding to stakeholder feedback from the date of implementation

- engage with the CAA throughout the first 12 months after implementation regarding issues with the airspace change that may affect the post implementation review, or any safety concern or emergent issue related to the implemented airspace design
- provide a request to the CAA, with justification, if an extension to the data gathering period or the data analysis period are required
- produce a submission and publish this on the airspace change portal, within the agreed timescales.

3.54 For Level 2 and 3 airspace change proposals where the CAA has determined that it would be proportionate to undertake a post implementation review, we will provide the change sponsor with a 'data request form', clearly setting out the data that is required to enable the completion of it.

CAA Review

3.55 The change sponsor **may** be required to undertake additional actions as a result of the post implementation review report.

Outputs Required During Stage 7

Output from Stage 7 (by whom produced and published - in brackets)

- data submission for review (change sponsor)
- CAA post implementation review report, including confirmation of whether original change is confirmed or requires modification (CAA).

APPENDIX A

References and Selected Bibliography

Glossary

- A1 We have deliberately avoided the use of abbreviations where possible. Definitions of commonly used air traffic management vocabulary can be found in [CAP 1430, UK Air Traffic Management Vocabulary](#).

Bibliography

- A2 The following bibliography provides a list of useful references for stakeholders. This list is not exhaustive, and the change sponsor may need to reference additional documents throughout the airspace change process. CAA SARG policy statements can be accessed through the [List of Airspace Policy Statements](#).
- [Additional guidance under s70\(2\)\(ca\) Transport Act 2000: Carrying out air navigation functions for the purpose of spaceflight activities](#)
 - [Aeronautical Information Publication](#)
 - [Air Navigation Guidance 2017](#)
 - Air Quality Strategy [Volume 1](#) and [Volume 2](#)
 - [CAA Working with Industry Website](#)
 - [CAA Environment Website](#)
 - [CAP 493, Manual of Air Traffic Services Part 1](#)
 - [CAP 670, Air Traffic Services Safety Requirements](#)
 - [CAP 740, UK Airspace Management Policy](#)
 - [CAP 760, Guidance on the Conduct of Hazard Identification, Risk Assessment and the Production of Safety Cases: For Aerodrome Operators and Air Traffic Service Providers](#)
 - [CAP 785A, Oversight of UK Approved Procedure Design Organisations](#)
 - [CAP 785B, Implementation and Safeguarding of IFPs in the UK](#)
 - [CAP 1054, Aeronautical Information Management](#)
 - [CAP 1498, Definition of Overflight](#)

- [CAP 2091, CAA Policy on Minimum Standards for Noise Modelling](#)
- [CAP 2506, Noise measurements from eVTOL aircraft: A review of available data](#)
- [DAP Guidance 109 – Guidance for airspace and instrument flight procedure designers for the design of standard departures that end at a flight level](#)
- Department for Transport's [Transport Analysis Guidance \(TAG\)](#)
- Department for Transport's [Transport Analysis Guidance \(TAG\) unit A3 environmental impacts](#)
- Department for Transport's [Transport Analysis Guidance \(TAG\) unit A5-2 aviation appraisal](#)
- [Guidance to the regulator on environmental objectives relating to the exercise of its functions under the Space Industry Act 2018](#)
- HM Treasury's [The Green Book](#)
- ICAO Annex 2, Rules of the Air
- ICAO Annex 3, Meteorology
- ICAO Annex 4, Aeronautical Charts
- ICAO Annex 6, Operation of Aircraft
- ICAO Annex 10, Aeronautical Telecommunications
- ICAO Annex 11, Air Traffic Services
- ICAO Annex 15, Aeronautical Information Services
- ICAO Annex 16, Environmental Protection
- ICAO Doc 4444, PANS-ATM Procedures for Air Navigation Services – Air Traffic Management
- ICAO Doc 7030, Regional Supplements
- ICAO Doc 8168, PANS OPS Volumes 1 and 2 – Procedures for Air Navigation Services – Aircraft Operations
- ICAO Doc 9426, ATS Planning Manual
- ICAO Doc 9613, Manual on Required Navigation Performance (RNP)
- ICAO Doc 9689, Manual on Airspace Planning Methodology for Determination of Separation Minima
- [Military Aviation Authority Regulatory Publications](#)

- SARG Policy 105 – Policy for ‘Point Merge’ and ‘Trombone’ Transition Procedures
- SARG Policy 109 – Policy for the replication of conventional SIDs, STARs and Holds using PBN
- SARG Policy 111 – Standard Instrument Departure Truncation Policy
- SARG Policy 113 – Standard Instrument Arrival Route (STAR) Truncation Policy
- SARG Policy 114 – Policy for the Establishment of Visual Reference Points (VRPs)
- SARG Policy 115 – Establishment and Dimensions of Aerodrome Traffic Zones (ATZ)
- SARG Policy 116 – Reduction in Notified Hours or Disestablishment of Airspace Restrictions
- SARG Policy 118 – Policy for Permanently Established Danger Areas and Temporary Danger Areas
- SARG Policy 123 – Policy for Radio Mandatory Zones and Transponder Mandatory Zones
- SARG Policy 124 – ATS Network Policy with Neighbouring States
- SARG Policy 125 – Aeronautical Data Associated with CAP 1616 Airspace Changes
- SARG Policy 126 – Policy for the Design of Controlled Airspace Structures
- SARG Policy 127 – Policy for the Classification of UK Airspace
- SARG Policy 128 – Policy for an Iterative Options Cycle for Interdependent Masterplan ACPs
- SARG Policy 129 – Guidance on the application of the airspace change process for the establishment of new and changes to existing No Planning Zones and Flight Plan Buffer Zones
- SARG Policy 131 – Special Use Airspace - Safety Buffer Policy for Airspace Design Purposes