UK Civil Aviation Authority

Airspace Classification Review

AMEND

MANCHESTER LOW LEVEL ROUTE

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY – CAP2992A

Our Engagement Exercise

We have been studying the use of a volume of airspace known as the Manchester Low Level Route (MLLR). Through our review of the airspace, published in July last year, we uncovered a number of safety concerns, most notably the risk of mid-air collisions, which endanger both air traffic and ground communities.

In order to ensure safety and fair access for all, we are considering making changes to this airspace.

This document contains important information about our proposed amendments and is part of our engagement process. For more information, please see our full engagement exercise document at the link below.

How to respond

We are now seeking your views on our proposal through our dedicated online engagement page.

The engagement exercise closes at midnight on 16 July 2024

You may also send your responses by letter to the following address:

MLLR Amendment Engagement
Airspace Classification Department
UK Civil Aviation Authority
Aviation House
Beehive Ring Road
Crawley, RH6 0YR

The MLLR and how it is used

The MLLR is a designated corridor within Manchester Airport's busy airspace, extending from the surface to altitude 1300 feet, providing vital north-south access for VFR traffic.

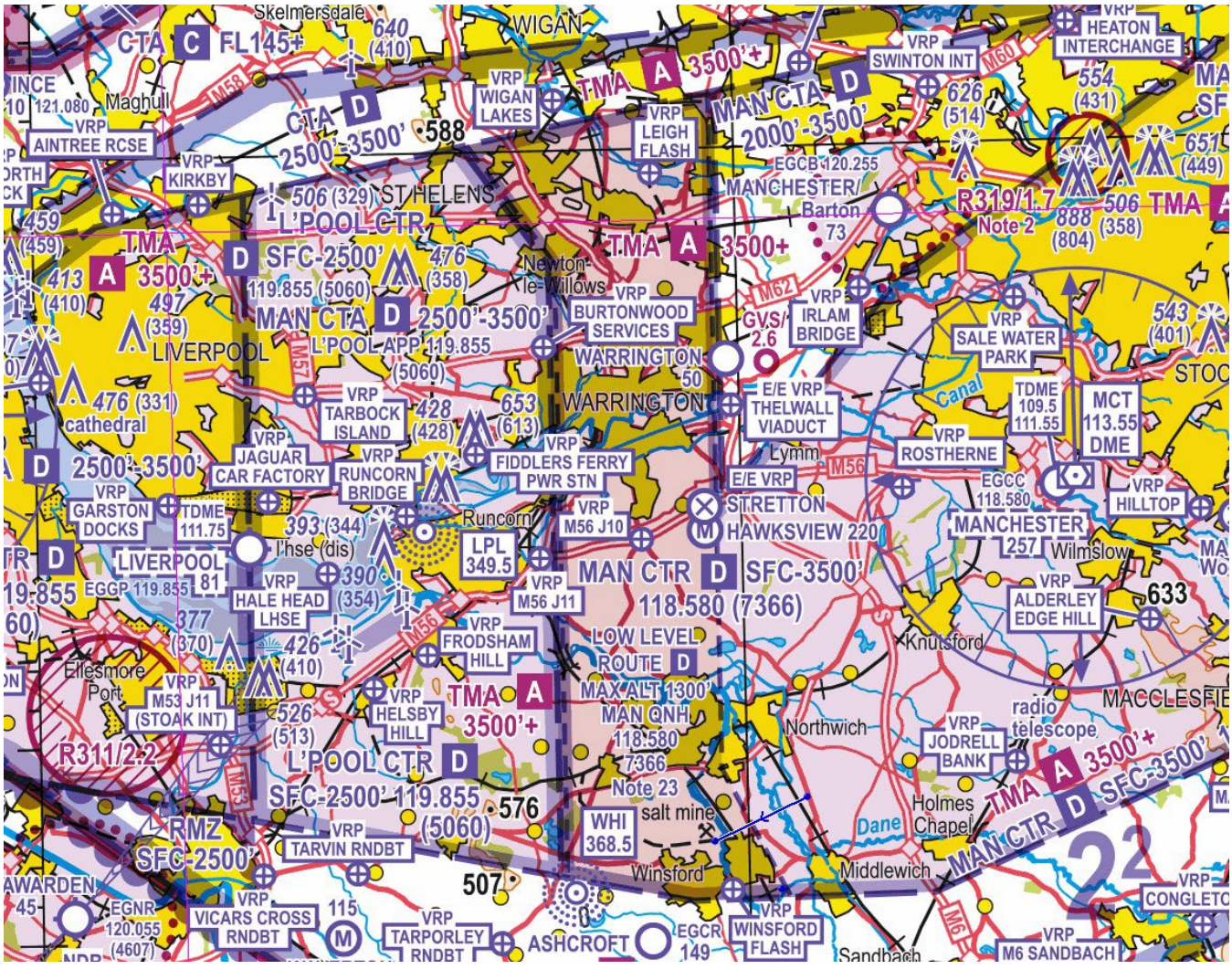

Figure 1 – Screenshot of VFR 1:500,000 map (Edition 47: 2024) showing the location of the MLLR (pink north-south corridor in image centre)

While the MLLR is currently classified as Class D airspace, it has an exemption to airspace rules which allows aircraft to fly through the large block of Manchester and Liverpool's adjoining airspace without needing to speak to air traffic control. This helps aircraft by avoiding longer detours over high terrain or water.

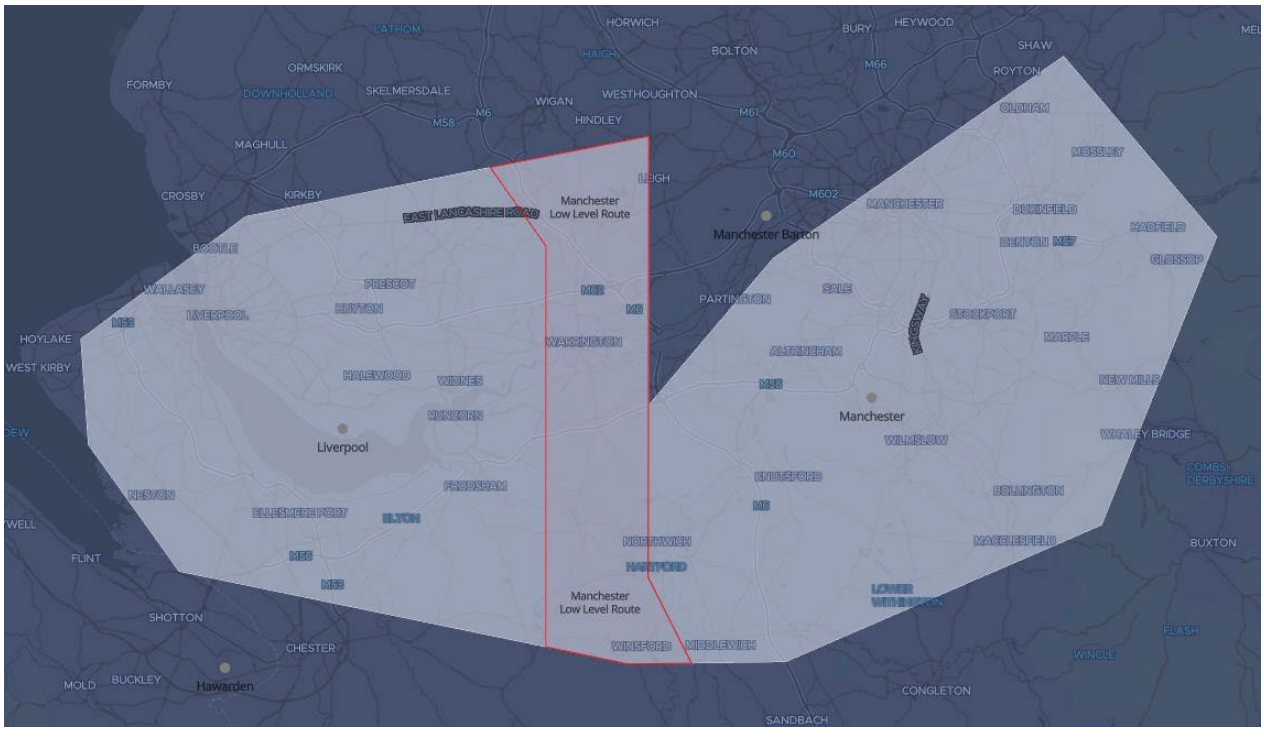

Figure 2 – Current day design of Manchester and Liverpool CTRs. Manchester has a large CTR within which the MLLR is contained

This MLLRs exemption, however, is set to expire at the end of May 2024 with an extension only possible to coincide with the implementation of any amendment to the airspace.

In July 2023 we also published the findings of our comprehensive review into the MLLR and highlighted a number of safety concerns. This includes the risk of mid-air collisions and limited emergency landing options due to urban sprawl.

These findings, and the impending expiration of the exemption has meant we need to look to amend the MLLR to uphold its safety and accessibility.

Our proposal

After detailed analysis and collaboration with both Manchester and Liverpool Airports, we are proposing an amendment to the MLLR with four core elements. The proposed elements are:

- Reclassifying the current Class D MLLR airspace to Class G airspace.
- Implementing a Restricted Area within the reclassified airspace
- A maximum altitude within the Class G airspace of 1500ft – 200ft higher than the MLLR currently permits.
- Creating Class G airspace wider than today's MLLR.

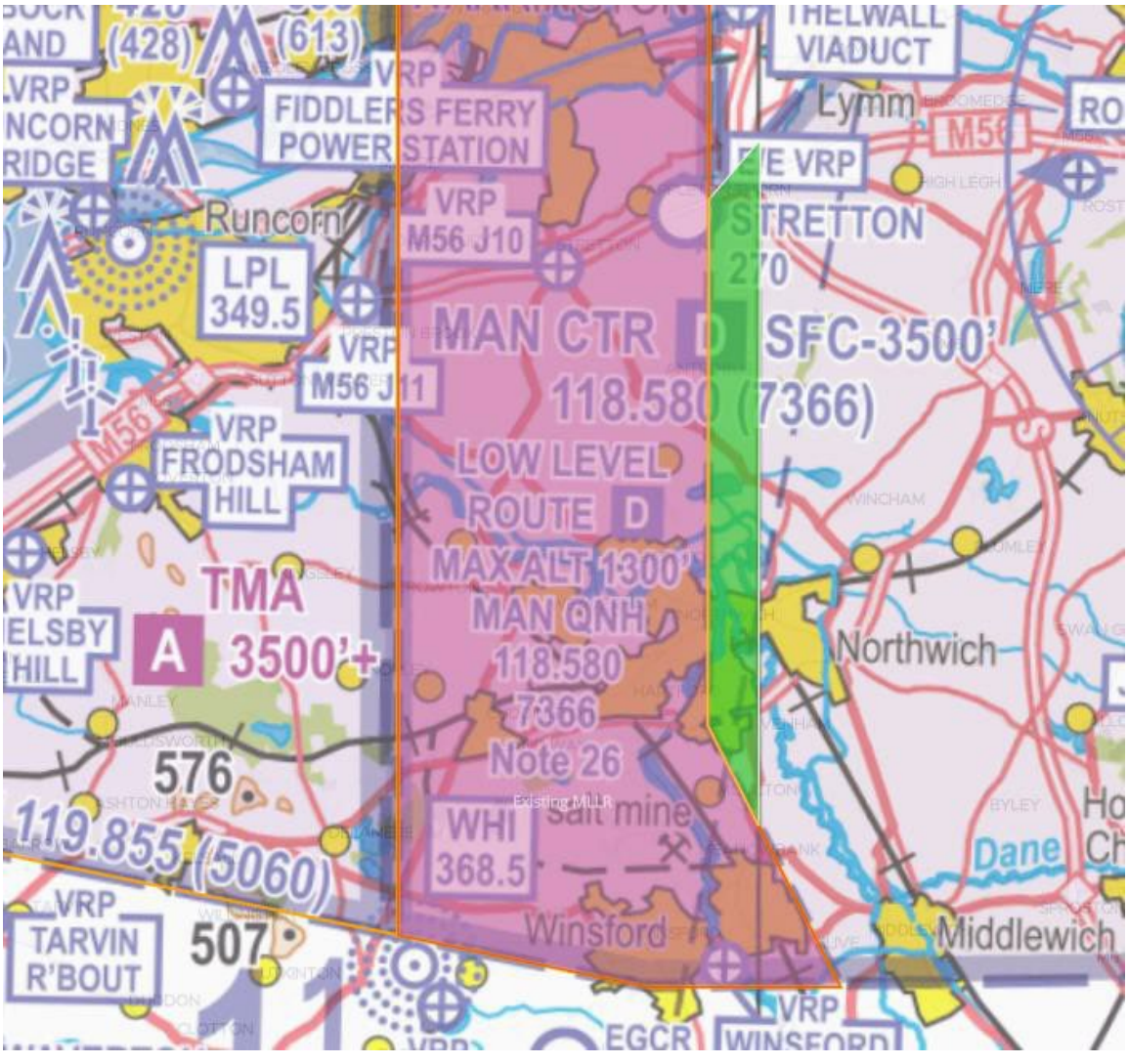

Figure 3 - Visual depiction of extended areas of Class G airspace (marked in green) on VFR chart

Expected effects of our proposal

We believe that this change will benefit UK airspace as a whole by improving safety in the MLLR while maintaining equitable access.

To evaluate the potential impacts of the proposed amendment, we analysed current usage patterns and made projections about future traffic in the UK. This approach allows us to assess the expected effects of the amendment and inform our decision-making process. Additionally, we benchmarked our proposal against the implications of reverting to full Class D restrictions to understand the constraints and broader impacts on safety, efficiency, and the environment.

Safety has been at the forefront of the design process, and the proposed change is expected to have a positive impact on safety in the region. We conducted joint Hazard Identification (HAZID) sessions with Manchester and Liverpool Airports' controlling authorities. These sessions identified and assessed potential hazards, ensuring the proposed changes maintain high safety standards. The feedback from stakeholders has been extremely positive, indicating that the amendment should improve safety by simplifying the airspace and reducing the risk of unintentional infringements.

The proposed amendment is not anticipated to have a significant impact on noise and the environment. While the amendment will broaden the airspace, it is not expected to intensify overflight activity or noise levels. Our environmental assessment predicts no significant changes. The proposal aims to provide more Class G airspace, reducing congestion for GA traffic, and offering more options for emergency landings, further enhancing safety.

We expect this proposal to have a broadly positive impact on the aviation community. It maintains or improves access to the airspace and supports local GA airfields, contributing positively to local economies and aviation businesses. Operational costs are expected to remain consistent with current levels, avoiding the need for increased staffing or additional costs associated with reverting to Class D airspace.

Published by the Civil Aviation Authority, May 2024

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First published 21 May 2024
Republished as version 2 on 22 May 2024

This edition includes the closing date and link to the consultation on page 2. No other changes to content have been made.

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