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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

- 1.1 The air traffic services licence granted to NATS (En Route) plc (“NERL”) under the Transport Act 2000 (the “Licence”) requires NERL to have due regard to guidance issued by the CAA in relation to how it provides:
- the UK Airspace Design Service (“UKADS”, and referred to as the Airspace Design Service in the Licence); and
 - the UK Airspace Coordination Service (“UKACS” and referred to as the Airspace Coordination Service in the Licence).
- 1.2 This document sets out the activities NERL must carry out when providing the UKACS.¹ NERL must have due regard to the requirements of any written strategic objectives document issued by the Secretary of State² and NERL should also have due regard to guidance which applies to NERL’s provision of the UKACS and UKADS.³
- 1.3 The requirements and guidance in this document do not relate to how NERL prepares and progresses an airspace change proposal, including those which NERL is sponsoring as the UKADS provider, or those subject to coordination by NERL as the UKACS provider. Such proposals must follow the CAP 1616 airspace change process⁴, which includes opportunities for stakeholders to engage with NERL and for them to be consulted about the proposal.
- 1.4 This document is also published under our function to publish and develop procedures (and guidance on such procedures) for making changes to airspace design in the Air Navigation Directions made by the Secretary of State as it contains obligations on sponsors who are required to work and cooperate with NERL so that it can provide the UKACS efficiently and effectively.
- 1.5 Save where otherwise provided, terms used in this document have the meanings assigned to them in the Licence.

¹ CAP 3225 Economic Regulation of NERL: Decision to modify NERL’s Licence to support the implementation of a UK Airspace Design Service www.caa.co.uk/cap3225

² [Statutory guidance UKADS and UKACS licence obligations: strategic objectives](#)

³ CAP 3219 Guidance for the UK Airspace Design and Coordination Services www.caa.co.uk/cap3219

⁴ [Airspace change process | UK Civil Aviation Authority](#)

CHAPTER 2

Requirements and associated guidance

- 2.1 NERL's role, as the provider of the UKACS, is to facilitate coordination of certain aspects of the strategically important interdependent airspace change proposals where the UKADS is not being provided (as set out in the strategic objectives issued by the Secretary of State).
- 2.2 Provision of the UKACS requires NERL to **facilitate coordination between the sponsors of strategically important interdependent airspace change proposals forming "clusters" (Relevant Sponsors) and prepare a cumulative assessment and safety strategy outputs encompassing all the proposed airspace change proposals in that cluster (see Requirements 1 to 4 below).**
- 2.3 Subject to coordination with Relevant Sponsors and the agreement of the CAA, NERL may provide support to airspace change proposals, where Relevant Sponsors are designated as responsible for such strategically important interdependent airspace change proposals.

Monitor strategically important interdependent airspace changes needed and provide advice

- 2.4 NERL's Licence defines a strategically important interdependent airspace change proposal with reference to this guidance:

A "strategically important interdependent airspace change proposal" means an airspace change proposal which the CAA has decided may make a significant contribution to achieving airspace modernisation and is interdependent with at least one other airspace change proposal.

There are several ways in which an airspace change proposal may make a significant contribution to achieving airspace modernisation. For example, if the proposal is likely to improve the overall performance of the airspace at a national and/or regional level:

- from an operational perspective, in terms of safety, capacity, efficiency and resilience
- from a consumer perspective, in terms of choice, value and the multiplied economic benefits of air connectivity

- in terms of supporting the aviation sector to reach net zero emissions by 2050, and limit and, where possible, reduce the total adverse effects from aviation noise
- in terms of integrating other airspace users including General Aviation, the Military, remotely piloted aircraft and other new and emerging forms of aviation.

An airspace change proposal may also be determined to be strategically important if it influences the decisions made about an airspace change proposal determined to be strategically important under the criteria above i.e. is interdependent with it, for example:

- where an airspace change proposal forms part of a coordinated overall airspace design improving the performance of the airspace at a national or regional level
- where an airspace change proposal either enables or constrains other strategically important airspace change proposals because of its location, altitude, timing or sequencing.

2.5 A strategically important interdependent airspace change proposal will often be an en-route or commercial airport airspace change proposal (or a combination of both) as these proposals will often improve airspace performance at a system-wide national or regional level. In addition, an airspace change proposal that enables or constrains these proposals will be considered a strategically important interdependent proposal if it needs to be part of a coordinated design.

2.6 **Requirement 1: NERL as UKACS provider shall:**

- i. monitor the ongoing need for strategically important airspace change proposals in the UK;**
- ii. determine whether each is interdependent with one or more other airspace change proposal(s). If so identified, and having engaged with all relevant sponsors, NERL shall provide advice to the CAA and DfT that such airspace change proposals should form part of a “cluster” of interdependent airspace change proposals and be coordinated by NERL as part of its UKACS;**
- iii. keep under review the need for coordinating any existing or new strategically important airspace change proposals;⁵**

⁵ As at the date of publication of this guidance, the sponsors of strategically important airspace change

iv. keep under review progress by Relevant Sponsors and advise the DfT and CAA if sufficient progress is not being made in accordance with the coordinated timetable for that cluster.

- 2.7 The CAA and DfT will decide whether to accept NERL's advice on the number, location and membership of all clusters. The CAA will publish any decisions on which airspace change proposals are considered strategically important and interdependent and whether they form part of a cluster requiring coordination by NERL as part of its UKACS. These decisions will result in obligations on NERL, as UKACS provider, and Relevant Sponsors as set out in Requirements 2, 3 and 4.

Deliver cumulative assessment outputs

- 2.8 Sponsors of linked airspace change proposals are required under the CAP 1616 airspace change processes and guidance to conduct a combined environmental assessment, using a methodology discussed and agreed with the CAA (an Agreed Methodology).
- 2.9 NERL (by its former unit, known as the ACOG) developed an acceptable means of complying with this CAP 1616 requirement for airspace change proposals it was coordinating: the cumulative assessment framework (CAF). The CAF has been endorsed by the CAA as an Agreed Methodology and comprises of three parts:
- **CAF Part 1** – This consists of a review and reporting of route interdependencies, design conflicts and trade-off decisions following the development of options by Relevant Sponsors
 - **CAF Part 2** – A full cumulative analysis. The performance data from the individual CAP 1616 options appraisals carried out by the Relevant Sponsors is collated. This is also made available for Relevant Sponsors to describe consistently in their consultations.
 - **CAF Part 3** – Final cumulative analysis following public consultation. The performance data from the individual CAP 1616 options appraisals undertaken by the Relevant Sponsors in the cluster following any changes is collated. This final cumulative assessment should set out how consultation has informed the development of the final designs. This final analysis is available for Relevant Sponsors to describe in their airspace change proposal submitted to the CAA for decision.

proposals requiring coordination as part of the UKACS are currently those airports and NERL airspace changes in the West (Bristol), Manchester (Manchester, Liverpool, East Midlands, Leeds Bradford) and Scottish (Edinburgh, Glasgow) clusters.

- 2.10 Requirement 2: For each cluster where NERL is providing the UKACS, NERL is required to deliver the combined environmental assessment using an Agreed Methodology. The current Agreed Methodology is the CAF developed by NERL (by its former unit, known as the ACOG), unless an alternative methodology is agreed between NERL and the CAA.**
- i. NERL is required to submit CAF Parts 1 and 2 (or the equivalent in any alternative Agreed Methodology) to the CAA alongside the CAP 1616 ‘consult’ gateway (or equivalent stage in any successor airspace change process) material submitted by the Relevant Sponsors.**
 - ii. Relevant Sponsors are required to cooperate with NERL and provide all required information to NERL to facilitate delivery of the combined environmental assessment, whether through the CAF or through an alternative Agreed Methodology, aligning their designs and developments for their airspace change proposals. Relevant Sponsors will be unable to launch their consultations until they have all passed through their CAP 1616 ‘consult’ gateway (or equivalent stage in any successor airspace change process) which includes a CAA assessment of CAF Parts 1 and 2 (or the equivalent in an alternative Agreed Methodology).**
 - iii. NERL is required to provide Relevant Sponsors with appropriate guidance, as may be required, in order to aid cooperation.**
 - iv. NERL is required to summarise and communicate the overall proposal for each cluster of strategically important interdependent airspace changes alongside the Relevant Sponsor consultations.**
- 2.11 The CAA strongly recommends that Relevant Sponsors use common tools or formats to present their collective designs as a whole in order to aid stakeholder understanding. Relevant Sponsors’ public consultation material should include consistent details of the cumulative assessment so that the public can understand how any trade-offs have influenced the individual airspace change proposals.
- 2.12 Requirement 3:**
- i. NERL is required to deliver CAF Part 3 (or the equivalent in any alternative Agreed Methodology) alongside the Relevant Sponsors’ final CAP 1616 airspace change proposal submissions, for assessment by the CAA.**
 - ii. Relevant Sponsors are required to cooperate with NERL and to provide all required information to NERL to facilitate delivery of the CAF Part 3 (or the equivalent in an alternative Agreed Methodology), aligning their**

designs and developing their airspace change proposals following consultation.

iii. NERL is required to provide Relevant Sponsors with appropriate guidance, as may be required, in order to aid cooperation.

- 2.13 *Note: For certain clusters, for example those containing only one strategically important airspace change proposal sponsored by an airport, and a network airspace change proposal sponsored by NERL, there may not be a need to provide CAF Parts 2 and 3 (or the equivalent in an alternative Agreed Methodology) due to the absence of combined effects.*
- 2.14 *In such a situation, NERL is required to submit CAF Part 1 (or the equivalent in an alternative Agreed Methodology) to the CAA alongside the CAP 1616 'consult' gateway (or equivalent stage in any successor airspace change process) material submitted by the Relevant Sponsors (see Requirement 2(i)) making clear why it considers there is no need to provide CAF Parts 2 and 3 (or the equivalent in an alternative Agreed Methodology). The CAA will decide whether CAF Parts 2 and 3 are required.*

Deliver safety strategy outputs

- 2.15 NERL (by its former unit, known as the ACOG) developed a Safety Strategy, which is a framework for Relevant Sponsors to identify and coordinate safety responsibilities where there are interactions between several airspace change proposals.
- 2.16 The Safety Strategy requires that the Relevant Sponsors develop and continue to be responsible for the development of safety cases for their individual airspace change proposals in a coordinated manner. The output of the Safety Strategy sets out roles and responsibilities for safety assurance, which assists the CAA in understanding the complex safety responsibilities within the system-wide design.
- 2.17 As set out in CAP 1616, responsibility for the adequacy of the risk assessment and mitigation rests with the sponsor of the airspace change proposals or designated controlling authority, as owners of the safety arguments, who must comply with all relevant legal and regulatory requirements.
- 2.18 **Requirement 4:**
- i. Relevant Sponsors are required to cooperate with NERL and to provide all required information to NERL to facilitate delivery of the outputs from the Safety Strategy. The Safety Strategy developed by NERL (by its former unit, known as the ACOG) shall be followed, unless an alternative methodology is agreed between NERL and the CAA.**

- ii. **Relevant Sponsors are required to align their responsibilities within their airspace change proposals with the outputs of the Safety Strategy (or the equivalent in an alternative Agreed Methodology).**
- iii. **NERL is required to provide Relevant Sponsors with appropriate guidance, as may be required, in order to aid cooperation.**
- iv. **NERL is required to submit the outputs of the Safety Strategy (or the equivalent in an alternative Agree Methodology) to the CAA alongside the Relevant Sponsors’ final airspace change proposal submissions, for assessment by CAA.**

Overall process

2.19 The following diagrams illustrate the key steps of the process (as set out in the requirements above) for progressing clusters of strategically important interdependent proposals through CAP 1616 – at both the current CAP 1616 ‘consult’ and ‘decision’ stages.

Figure 2.1 –Coordination process at CAP 1616 ‘consult’ stage

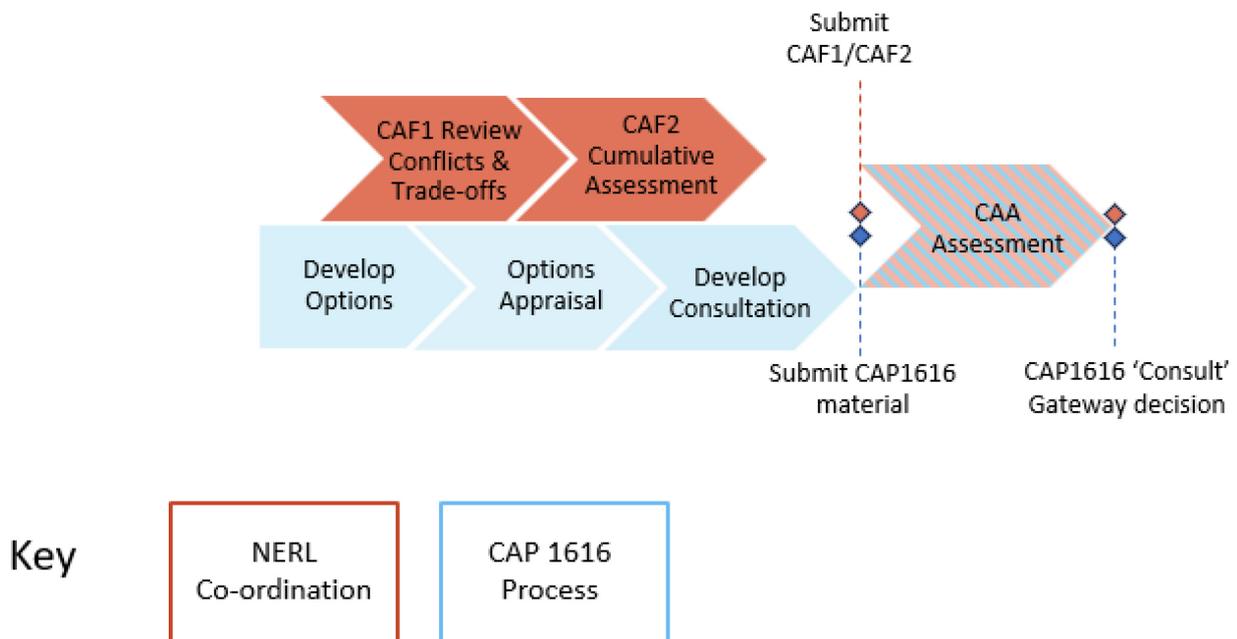
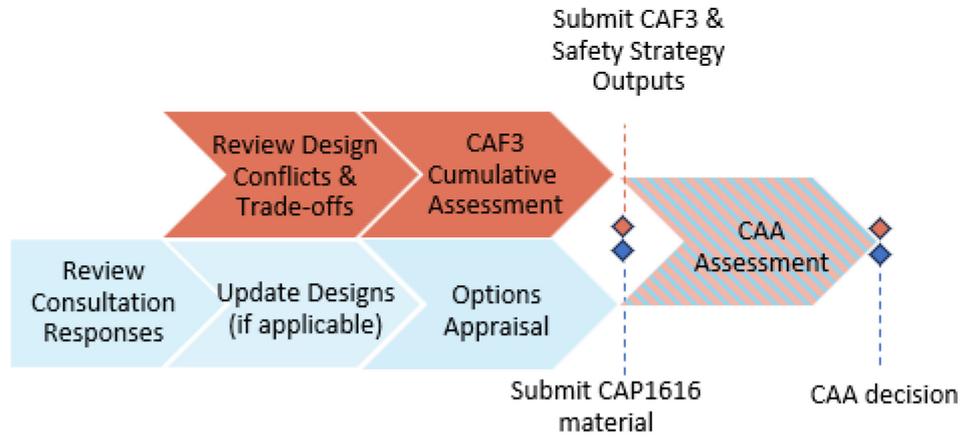


Figure 2.2 –Coordination process at CAP 1616 ‘decision’ stage



Key

