

Requirements and Guidance on the Airspace Change Process for Non-Permanent Airspace Change Proposals

CAP 1616k (aligned to CAP 1616 version 6)

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Revision history

CAP 1616k aligns to CAP 1616, Airspace Change Process, version 6.

CAP 1616k replaces CAP 1616g for those non-permanent airspace change proposals to which the new Air Navigation Guidance 2026 applies. CAP 1616k ensures that the airspace change process is aligned with the Secretary of State's latest directions and guidance to the CAA.

CAP 1616k also takes account of feedback received through the CAA's 2025 consultation on proposed changes to CAP 1616. CAP 1616k continues our ongoing objective to continuously improve clarity, consistency and usability of the guidance, while maintaining the underlying principles of safety, transparency, proportionality and accountability to support evidence-based decision making.

Chapter 1

Introduction

Who is this document for?

- 1.1 This document outlines the process for non-permanent airspace change proposals in the UK. It is primarily intended for those responsible for originating and progressing the airspace change (sponsors). It may also be relevant to anyone impacted by, or interested in, non-permanent airspace change proposals in the UK.
- 1.2 This document sets out the process for most temporary changes to airspace design and airspace trials. Exclusions to this process are set out in paragraph 2.7.

Purpose of this document

- 1.3 This document contains the requirements sponsors need to comply with when progressing a non-permanent airspace change proposal and guidance on how those requirements can be achieved.
- 1.4 This document should not be read in isolation, and all readers should read [CAP 1616, Airspace Change Process version 6](#) before referring to this document.

Definitions

- 1.5 Terms explained or defined in [CAP 1616, Airspace Change Process](#) have the same meaning in this document.
- 1.6 Throughout this document, the expected degree of compliance with the requirements and associated guidance is defined as:
 - 1.6.1 '**Must**' is used to refer to a mandatory requirement that must be met in full unless it has been agreed in advance with the CAA that it is not necessary to do so. To deviate from a **must** requirement the sponsor must formally write to the CAA in advance of the relevant submission, setting out a valid rationale for deviating from the **must** requirement and outlining any proposed alternative actions. The CAA will formally respond to accept or reject the request. We can request further information to enable us to make such a determination. All correspondence will be published on the airspace change portal.
 - 1.6.2 '**Should**' is used to refer to a requirement that is expected to be met in full unless the sponsor provides an acceptable rationale that it would be

disproportionate to do so. To deviate from a **should** requirement, the sponsor must include a valid rationale for a proportional variation from a **should** requirement in their submitted documentation. There is no need for pre-approval from the CAA. However, sponsors should note that we may not accept the rationale for the variation included in the submission and can require further information from the sponsor and/or the sponsor could be required to return to the relevant requirement to complete it.

1.6.3 **'May'** is used to refer to an action that the 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 sponsor to complete a **may** requirement. In these circumstances, the relevant **may** requirement(s) will be identified in the briefing and guidance meeting at Step 1.

1.7 The use of **must**, **should** or **may** in bold throughout this document is as defined above. Any other use of these words throughout this document relates to their common use in the English language and are not shown in bold.

Chapter 2

Scope of the non-permanent airspace change process

Introduction

- 2.1 The [Air Navigation Directions 2026](#) direct the CAA to determine proposals to make temporary changes to airspace design and proposals for airspace trials (both as defined in those directions). The Air Navigation Directions 2026 also direct the CAA to develop and publish procedures, and guidance on such procedures, for the development, making and consideration of such airspace change proposals (see the Air Navigation Directions 2026, direction 4(1)).
- 2.2 Sponsors may be uncertain whether a temporary change to airspace design or an airspace trial is the most appropriate mechanism to achieve their objectives. The examples below are not exhaustive but illustrate circumstances where a temporary change to airspace design or an airspace trial may be appropriate.
- 2.3 Example circumstances where a temporary change to airspace design may be appropriate:
 - 2.3.1 Establishing temporary airspace structures to enable an activity to take place. For example, a national-scale sporting event or short-term activity that may pose a risk to other airspace users.
 - 2.3.2 Temporarily increasing airspace access for all, or for a specific category (or categories) of airspace users.
- 2.4 Example circumstances where an airspace trial may be appropriate:
 - 2.4.1 Enabling the testing or evaluation of new airspace users.
 - 2.4.2 Temporarily increasing airspace access for all, or for a specific category (or categories) of airspace users.
 - 2.4.3 Demonstrating new operational capabilities for aircraft or air traffic management technology.
 - 2.4.4 Enabling the trial of an instrument flight procedure.
 - 2.4.5 Supporting the development and integration of new airspace user groups.
 - 2.4.6 Supporting military requirements, such as the introduction of a new aircraft type.
- 2.5 For the purposes of this process, a temporary change to airspace design or an airspace trial are both considered non-permanent airspace change proposals.

Although both involve changes that are implemented for a limited and predefined period, they serve different purposes and the process sponsors must follow differs in some respects. The purpose, nature, and intended outcomes will determine whether a non-permanent airspace change should be progressed as a temporary change to airspace design or an airspace trial.

- 2.6 Approval of a non-permanent airspace change does not create any presumption that the change will become permanent. Any permanent implementation of the airspace change would require a separate proposal to be progressed through the applicable permanent airspace change process in accordance with [CAP 1616, Airspace Change Process](#).

Exclusions

- 2.7 The following are excluded from the non-permanent airspace change process:
- 2.7.1 Permanent changes to airspace design.
 - 2.7.2 Temporary restrictions of flying established in accordance with Article 239 of the [Air Navigation Order 2016](#).
 - 2.7.3 Temporary controlled airspace established for royal fixed-wing flights.
 - 2.7.4 Temporary changes to airspace design established to meet urgent UK military or national security requirements, as agreed with the relevant UK Government department.
 - 2.7.5 Temporary alterations to instrument flight procedures arising from the establishment of any of the above.

Temporary changes to airspace design

- 2.8 For the purposes of this process, a temporary change to airspace design is a change to the notified airspace design that is implemented for a limited and predefined period that is no longer than required to support a specific event or operational requirement.
- 2.9 A temporary change to airspace design approved by the CAA is to last for such a fixed period as the CAA considers appropriate, which is normally not to be more than 180 consecutive days (from the first day of a proposal being activated/notified) unless the CAA determines otherwise (see the Air Navigation Directions 2026, direction 4(4)(c)).
- 2.10 At the end of the approved period, the airspace will revert to its previous classification, structure or operational arrangements, unless otherwise approved by the CAA.

Airspace trials

- 2.11 Direction 2 of the Air Navigation Directions 2026 defines an airspace trial as changes to airspace design or air traffic control operational procedures (which, if subsequently made permanent, would constitute a relevant planned and permanent distribution of air traffic), for a fixed duration for the purposes of:
- a) investigating the feasibility of, or validating proposals for, innovative airspace design, technology, or air traffic control operational procedures, or
 - b) assessing their performance and effect, or
 - c) supporting the development and integration of new airspace user groups into UK airspace.
- 2.12 For the purposes of this process, an airspace trial is implemented for a defined period to test, evaluate or gather evidence on a proposed airspace design and/or proposed air traffic control operational procedures. The evidence gathered may be used to inform future decisions on airspace design, airspace policy or operational arrangements.
- 2.13 An airspace trial approved by the CAA is to last for such fixed period as the CAA considers appropriate, which is normally not to be more than three years unless the CAA determines otherwise (see the Air Navigation Directions 2026, direction 4(5)(c)).
- 2.14 At the end of the approved trial period, the airspace will revert to its previous classification, structure or operational arrangements, unless otherwise approved by the CAA. The CAA may also, where the CAA considers it appropriate, safe, and practical to do so, require an airspace trial to end before the end of the period for which it was approved (see the Air Navigation Directions 2026, direction 4(5)(d)).

Chapter 3

Process overview and additional information

Non-permanent airspace change process overview

- 3.1 The non-permanent airspace change process applies to both a temporary change to airspace design and an airspace trial. The process requirements differ from those applicable to permanent airspace changes, reflecting the temporary and time-limited nature of these proposals. Where there are differences between the process for a temporary change to airspace design and an airspace trial, these are identified within this guidance.
- 3.2 The duration of the process will depend on the nature and complexity of the airspace change proposal and the time required by the sponsor to complete the applicable assessment requirements. Sponsors should also account for the time required to undertake implementation, safety assurance, change management and airspace notification requirements when planning their proposal. They should also consider any activities outside the non-permanent airspace change process that may be required and need to be progressed in parallel, and whether implementation of any approved proposal is dependent on the success or timing of those activities.
- 3.3 **Step 1, initiate** is intended to enable early, proportionate engagement between the sponsor and the CAA and to ensure that all relevant regulatory considerations are identified at the outset. The process begins with the submission of a statement of need, followed by a briefing and guidance meeting where the airspace change proposal, its objectives and potential impacts are discussed with the CAA.
- 3.4 We recognise that proposals may be at varying levels of maturity and that sponsors will have different levels of understanding at this stage. Accordingly, both the level of detail included in the statement of need and the scope of discussion during the briefing and guidance meeting may be tailored to ensure that the sponsor receives appropriate guidance to progress their proposal.
- 3.5 The principal output of the briefing and guidance meeting is the Step 2 assessment scope plan. It sets out the work that the sponsor must complete during Step 2 and forms the basis on which the airspace change proposal will subsequently be assessed by the CAA. The non-permanent airspace change process indicates the types of assessment, evidence and engagement activities that sponsors will need to complete. We will determine what is required for a specific proposal on a case-by-case basis, proportionate to its nature, scale, duration and anticipated impacts.

- 3.6 An airspace trial must be supported by a trial plan. For airspace trials the Step 2 assessment scope plan will also include requirements relating to the trial plan, including the questions to be answered by the trial, the evidence to be collected, monitoring arrangements, success criteria and any proposed trial phases.
- 3.7 After the briefing and guidance meeting the sponsor publishes the agreed outputs, and the CAA publishes the Step 2 assessment scope plan, on the airspace change portal.
- 3.8 In **Step 2, design, assess and engage** the sponsor develops or refines the proposed design and undertakes the assessments and engagement activities identified in the Step 2 assessment scope plan. These assessments, where relevant, consider safety and policy, operational factors, noise impacts, and impacts on protected areas and European sites, by comparing the impacts of the airspace change proposal against the current airspace environment. The sponsor undertakes any stakeholder engagement required by the Step 2 assessment scope plan and considers the feedback received as part of the development of the proposal. The sponsor may find [CAP 3299, The CAA's Air Navigation Functions Guidance](#) useful when completing these stages.
- 3.9 In **Step 3, update and submit** the sponsor assesses any engagement feedback, finalises the design and updates their assessment of its impacts before submitting their final airspace change proposal to the CAA.
- 3.10 In **Step 4, CAA decision** the CAA reviews and assesses the final airspace change proposal and decides whether or not to approve it. Following receipt of a completed proposal, the CAA will normally aim to make a decision within 28 days. Conditions or modifications may be attached to the decision.
- 3.11 If approved, **Step 5, implement** is where the airspace change proposal is implemented and the sponsor fulfils any conditions or modifications specified in the CAA's decision.
- 3.12 Throughout the development of an airspace change proposal, sponsors may seek guidance on the requirements of the process from the CAA's Airspace Regulation team. Such guidance is intended to assist sponsors in understanding and applying the requirements of the process but does not predetermine the CAA's decision at Step 4.

The airspace design priorities

- 3.13 An explanation of the CAA's airspace functions and our duties when we carry them out, including our duty to take account of the statutory guidance from the Secretary of State in the [Air Navigation Guidance 2026](#), can be found in [CAP 1616, Airspace Change Process](#).

- 3.14 The Air Navigation Guidance 2026 includes the government's objectives for UK airspace design, and guidance on how the CAA and airspace change sponsors should balance these objectives¹, by setting policy priorities for the CAA's airspace functions² referred to as the airspace design priorities. The CAA is guided to apply or implement the airspace design priorities by prioritising outcomes in the following order³:
1. Airspace Design Priority 1 (ADP1): ensure safety and viability of the design.
 2. Airspace Design Priority 2 (ADP2): within the possibilities remaining after prioritising ADP1, enable aviation activity permitted by planning decisions, including any relevant conditions, and government planning policy statements.
 3. Airspace Design Priority 3 (ADP3): within the possibilities remaining after prioritising ADP1 and ADP2, minimise change to the areas where aircraft noise is currently experienced from aircraft below 5,000 feet above mean sea level (AMSL).
 4. Airspace Design Priority 4 (ADP4): within the possibilities remaining after prioritising ADP1, ADP2, and ADP3, minimise, as much as is practicable and realistic to do so, the total adverse noise impacts of aircraft below 5,000 feet AMSL.
 5. Airspace Design Priority 5 (ADP5): within the possibilities remaining after prioritising ADP1, ADP2, ADP3 and ADP4, prioritise flight efficiency where aircraft are at 5,000 feet AMSL and above.
- 3.15 In accordance with paragraph 104 of the Air Navigation Guidance 2026, the CAA should consider whether it is appropriate to apply the airspace design priorities to non-permanent airspace change proposals. Such changes are by their nature short-term and are often to test out new processes and procedures in order to provide an evidence base to support future policy development or air traffic management arrangements. It may therefore not be appropriate to apply the airspace design priorities for situations where new and innovative procedures are being trialled or tested.
- 3.16 At the briefing and guidance meeting, the CAA will discuss with the sponsor how to apply any or all of the airspace design priorities to any non-permanent airspace change proposal.

¹ See paragraph 43 of the Air Navigation Guidance 2026.

² See paragraph 40 of the Air Navigation Guidance 2026.

³ See paragraph 45 of the Air Navigation Guidance 2026.

The Airspace Modernisation Strategy

- 3.17 The Air Navigation Directions 2026 require the CAA to take account of the Airspace Modernisation Strategy when determining a proposal for a temporary change to airspace design. We are not directed to do so when determining a proposal for an airspace trial.
- 3.18 At the briefing and guidance meeting, the CAA will discuss with sponsors how they should take account of the Airspace Modernisation Strategy.

Taking into account the airspace design priorities and the Airspace Modernisation Strategy in the non-permanent airspace change process

- 3.19 Permanent airspace changes are means to implement the Airspace Modernisation Strategy. Non-permanent airspace changes are used for specific, time-limited operational objectives.
- 3.20 Applying the airspace design priorities in the permanent airspace change process involves working through the priorities in sequence to identify an overall draft design(s). Conversely, the sponsor of a non-permanent airspace change proposal will usually come to the CAA with an airspace design in mind for a specific operational purpose.
- 3.21 We will not expect the sponsor of a non-permanent airspace change to use the airspace design priorities to identify an overall draft design. In the non-permanent airspace change process, the objective drives a draft design, not the airspace design priorities.
- 3.22 However, we will take the airspace design priorities into account when we decide whether to approve a non-permanent airspace change proposal. How we do so is different for a temporary change to airspace design and for an airspace trial. We provide some information on how we will do that below. However, we will discuss this in more detail with the sponsor at the briefing and guidance meeting.

Temporary changes to airspace design

- 3.23 Temporary changes to airspace design are short-term, often for a specific time-limited operational purpose. They do not trial new or innovative procedures or processes and are not a means to learn or innovate. Temporary changes to airspace design will need to take account of the Airspace Modernisation Strategy. When considering proposals for temporary changes to airspace design the CAA will take account of the operational objectives of the proposal.
- 3.24 We will only approve a temporary change to airspace design if it is safe and viable (see ADP1). A design is viable if it is operationally flyable and enables the operational objectives, complies with UK law and international obligations and is

capable of incorporation into the performance of the wider aviation network design and overall airspace management in the UK.

- 3.25 Where relevant, we will take account of ADP2 (enabling aviation activity permitted by planning decisions, including any relevant conditions, and government planning policy statements) when considering the proposal. This may include temporary changes that support events, activities or operations for which planning permission or other relevant approvals have been granted. Some temporary changes to airspace design may also have an impact on capacity at other airports or in the wider aviation system. Given the temporary nature of these changes, we may nevertheless approve the proposal where it is appropriate to do so. We will consider the circumstances of each proposal and discuss our approach with the sponsor at the briefing and guidance meeting.
- 3.26 Due to the temporary nature of the change, we are unlikely to apply ADP3 (minimise change to the areas where aircraft noise is currently experienced from aircraft below 5,000 feet AMSL) to the proposal. However, we may do so depending on the circumstances.
- 3.27 Due to the temporary nature of the change, we are unlikely to apply ADP4 (minimise, as much as is practicable and realistic to do so, the total adverse noise impacts of aircraft below 5,000 feet AMSL) to the proposal. However, we may do so depending on the circumstances.
- 3.28 Due to the temporary nature of the change, we are unlikely to apply ADP5 (prioritise flight efficiency where aircraft are at 5,000 feet AMSL and above) to the proposal. However, we may do so depending on the circumstances.
- 3.29 Temporary changes to airspace design will need to take account of the Airspace Modernisation Strategy.

Airspace trials

- 3.30 We will only approve a temporary change to airspace design for the purpose of an airspace trial if it is safe (see ADP1).
- 3.31 However, we may approve a temporary change to airspace design for the purpose of an airspace trial even if we are not assured that the design is viable. Airspace trials are focused on the testing of a particular procedure, concept or operating method to generate evidence for future decisions. We would expect to approve an airspace trial even if the proposed design does not align fully with current policy where its purpose is to generate evidence, test innovation or inform future policy development (see ADP1).
- 3.32 The trial plan (see paragraphs 3.38 to 3.43) provides the mechanism through which any departure from existing policy is justified and assessed by the sponsor and, if applicable, approved by the CAA.

- 3.33 Where relevant, we will take account of ADP2 (enabling aviation activity permitted by planning decisions, including any relevant conditions, and government planning policy statements) when considering the proposal. The relevance and weight to be given to ADP2 will depend on the purpose, scope and nature of the proposal. We will consider the circumstances of each proposal, including the extent to which the trial supports or may affect aviation activity enabled by planning decisions or government planning policy statements, and discuss our approach with the sponsor at the briefing and guidance meeting.
- 3.34 Due to the temporary nature of the change, we are unlikely to apply ADP3 (minimise change to the areas where aircraft noise is currently experienced from aircraft below 5,000 feet AMSL) to the proposal. However, we may do so depending on the circumstances, including the scale, duration and expected noise impacts of the proposal.
- 3.35 Due to the temporary nature of the change, we are unlikely to apply ADP4 (minimise, as much as is practicable and realistic to do so, the total adverse noise impacts of aircraft below 5,000 feet AMSL) to the proposal. However, we may do so depending on the circumstances, including the scale, duration and expected noise impacts of the proposal.
- 3.36 Due to the temporary nature of the change, we are unlikely to apply ADP5 (prioritise flight efficiency where aircraft are at 5,000 feet AMSL and above) to the proposal. However, we may do so depending on the circumstances, including the scale, duration and expected flight efficiency impacts of the proposal.
- 3.37 Although a temporary change to airspace design for the purpose of an airspace trial does not need to take account of the Airspace Modernisation Strategy, when considering whether to approve the trial (and the conditions that we apply to any approval) we will take account of the government policy priorities for UK airspace. This will include the government's objectives for enabling new users to be integrated into UK airspace.

Trial plan and multi-phase trial

- 3.38 An airspace trial must be supported by a trial plan. The trial plan should explain the purpose of the trial, the questions the trial is intended to answer, the evidence that will be collected and the criteria that will be used to assess the outcomes of the trial.
- 3.39 The trial plan should demonstrate why an airspace trial is required, what uncertainty the trial is intended to address and how the information gathered will support future decisions. The level of detail should be proportionate to the scale, complexity and potential impacts of the proposal.
- 3.40 Where an airspace trial is intended to investigate the viability of a concept, operational procedure or airspace design, the trial plan should identify the

assumptions being tested and the evidence required to determine whether those assumptions are valid.

- 3.41 Some trials may need to be conducted in more than one phase. This is likely where progression to a later phase depends on data, evidence or experience obtained during an earlier phase.
- 3.42 For a multi-phase trial, the trial plan should describe:
- 3.42.1 The purpose of each phase.
 - 3.42.2 The timings of each phase.
 - 3.42.3 The activities that will take place in each phase.
 - 3.42.4 The evidence to be collected during each phase.
 - 3.42.5 Any safety risk mitigation provided or required for progress between phases.
 - 3.42.6 Any criteria or decision points for progressing between phases.
 - 3.42.7 The approvals or dependencies required before a subsequent phase can commence.
- 3.43 The CAA may approve a trial in phases and may require sponsors to provide evidence from a phase before determining whether a subsequent phase can proceed. The CAA may also require additional assessment of the impacts, or engagement, before progression between phases where we determine this is necessary.

Scaling of the non-permanent airspace change process

- 3.44 The CAA is directed to expedite proposals (see the Air Navigation Directions 2026, direction 4(2)(a)), and in accordance with our regulatory principles the CAA will apply the non-permanent airspace change process in a reasonable and proportionate manner. While some elements of the process must be included and cannot be scaled (see the Air Navigation Directions 2026, direction 4(2) and the Air Navigation Guidance 2026, paragraphs 99 to 103), the CAA will determine the scope and level of detail required to satisfy the Step 2 requirements on a case-by-case basis. This will be set out in the Step 2 assessment scope plan, which will be published following the briefing and guidance meeting.
- 3.45 In developing the Step 2 assessment scope plan the CAA will take account of the nature, scale, duration and anticipated impacts of the airspace change proposal. This will inform the assessments, engagement activities, information and evidence required to enable the CAA to make a decision, together with how comprehensively each requirement must be addressed. The level of evidence

necessary to demonstrate compliance with each requirement will also be determined on a proportionate basis.

- 3.46 The Step 2 assessment scope plan will be published on the airspace change portal to provide transparency regarding the assessments, evidence and engagement activities applicable to the airspace change proposal and the extent to which they are expected to be undertaken.

Parallel activities

- 3.47 For many non-permanent airspace change proposals, activities outside of the non-permanent airspace change process will also be required. These activities may include the need to obtain a regulatory approval from the CAA, or another regulator, or may be operational, safety assurance or implementation related.
- 3.48 Where relevant, the CAA will take account of these activities when determining the requirements set out in the Step 2 assessment scope plan. Information, evidence or assurance generated through other activities may be capable of satisfying some of the requirements of the non-permanent airspace change process, helping to ensure that the process remains proportionate and avoids unnecessary duplication.
- 3.49 Parallel activities may include:
- 3.49.1 Authorisations related to unmanned aircraft systems, including UK specific operations risk assessment (SORA) based applications for an operational authorisation.
 - 3.49.2 Air traffic management or unmanned aircraft systems traffic management changes, including procedural or system developments (including a trial under GEN 03)⁴.
 - 3.49.3 Spaceflight licensing or operational approvals.
 - 3.49.4 Aerodrome, air navigation service provider or flight procedure development approvals or other activities.
 - 3.49.5 Planning, environmental or other statutory approval processes.
- 3.50 It is important to remember that the sponsor of the airspace change proposal and the entity responsible for the parallel activity may not always be the same. Where separate entities are involved, the sponsor must ensure that parallel activities are appropriately coordinated and that the requirements of all relevant processes are

⁴ See [CAP 670, Air Traffic Services Safety Requirements](#), Part B, Section 4: GEN 03: Safety Requirements for Operational Trials in Air Traffic Services

fulfilled. This includes ensuring that any dependencies affecting the airspace change process are identified and managed appropriately.

Submission checklist and template

- 3.51 The CAA provides a submission checklist and template to help sponsors progress through the non-permanent airspace change process and prepare their final airspace change proposal.
- 3.52 The checklist identifies the activities and information sponsors should have completed during Steps 1 and 2 before progressing to final submission. The submission template provides the structure sponsors must use to submit their final airspace change proposal to the CAA at Step 3.
- 3.53 Sponsors should familiarise themselves with both documents at an early stage and use them throughout the development of their proposal. The submission checklist and template, together with further guidance on completing and submitting them, can be found on the [CAA website](#).
- 3.54 The submission checklist and template support the requirements in CAP 1616k but do not replace them. Sponsors remain responsible for completing the requirements identified in their Step 2 assessment scope plan and providing sufficient evidence to support the CAA's assessment and decision.

Additional guidance for specific applications

- 3.55 The CAA expects to publish worked examples, illustrative scenarios and associated example Step 2 assessment scope plans for a range of common airspace change proposal types, to help sponsors understand how the non-permanent airspace change process is likely to be applied to different types of proposals. These materials will be available on the CAA website.
- 3.56 These materials will be intended to help sponsors understand the likely scope of the requirements in the process that may apply to their situation, the level of detail that may be required and the typical activities that may need to be completed before a proposal can be submitted. This will assist sponsors in planning resources, costs and timescales at an early stage of proposal development.
- 3.57 Where relevant, these materials may also illustrate how information, evidence or assurance generated through other regulatory, operational, safety assurance, planning or implementation processes can be taken into account within the non-permanent airspace change process. This may include examples showing how the CAA has taken account of such activities when developing a Step 2 assessment scope plan and the extent to which sponsors may utilise evidence generated through those processes to avoid unnecessary duplication, as directed (see the Air Navigation Directions 2026, direction 4(2)).

- 3.58 These materials are provided for guidance only and do not replace the proposal's specific requirements determined by the CAA following the briefing and guidance meeting. The final requirements for any proposal will be set out in the Step 2 assessment scope plan published by the CAA.

Extension requests

- 3.59 If the sponsor wishes to extend the duration of a previously approved non-permanent airspace change, they must submit an extension request to the CAA specifying the additional period sought.
- 3.60 Requests must be submitted before the original approval period expires. Sponsors should note that we normally require a minimum of 28 days to assess an extension request. Where the sponsor wishes to extend a change without a break in implementation, relevant UK Aeronautical Information Service submission deadlines and any other implementation activities must also be considered.
- 3.61 The extension request must include a justification for the extension and details of any complaints received during implementation. The justification should explain why the extension is required and why the objectives of the original approval could not reasonably be achieved within the approved timescale.
- 3.62 The CAA will assess whether the justification supports the extension request and whether the analysis, stakeholder engagement and impact assessments that informed the original approval remain valid. Where circumstances have changed, or where the evidence is no longer considered current or sufficient, we may require relevant aspects of the process to be repeated or updated. We will also take into account any complaints or other relevant information received since the original approval, as these may provide evidence of the actual impacts of the approved operation.
- 3.63 If the combined duration of the original approval and the requested extension exceeds one year, we will review whether the original noise impact assessment remains appropriate and may require the assessment to be updated or supplemented before reaching a decision.
- 3.64 An extension request does not automatically result in an extension being granted. The extension decision will reference the original decision and will normally focus on matters relevant to the extension request. The associated decision record will therefore normally identify any changes to the original proposal, any new evidence considered by the CAA and any additional or amended conditions or modifications that apply to the extended approval period.
- 3.65 If an extension request is approved, the sponsor must complete the applicable implementation and publication requirements before the extension is brought into effect.

Chapter 4

Step 1 - Initiate

Statement of need

- 4.1 Before the statement of need is submitted, sponsors should familiarise themselves with relevant CAA policies and guidance. Information on [various aspects of airspace in the UK](#) and a list of useful references, including CAA airspace policy statements, can be found on the [CAA website](#).
- 4.2 Prior to submitting a statement of need, sponsors may also choose to approach the CAA for specific guidance, depending on the nature of the proposed airspace change. The initial point of contact is airspace.regulation@caa.co.uk.

Requirement 1: The sponsor must complete and submit a statement of need (ARF 1916)

- 4.3 The statement of need initiates the airspace change process. It enables the CAA to determine whether a temporary change to airspace design or an airspace trial is the appropriate mechanism by clearly setting out the airspace change proposal's scope, objectives and intended outcomes.
- 4.4 As well as explaining the proposal's objectives, the statement of need allows the sponsor to provide a high-level overview of where, when and how they intend to deliver their airspace change proposal, as well as who will be involved, using the information available at that point.
- 4.5 The sponsor **must** submit the statement of need to the CAA using the [ARF 1916 statement of need](#) form. The ARF 1916 form is the structured way the sponsor provides the above information. The sponsor **should** provide the following information in their statement of need:

Section 1: Proposal type

- 4.6 The sponsor selects and confirms whether the proposal is a temporary change to airspace design or an airspace trial.

Section 2: Objectives and intended outcomes

- 4.7 A concise but clear description of the objectives and intended outcomes of the proposed temporary change to airspace design or airspace trial, including:
- 4.7.1 Why the proposal is needed, for example the problem, limitation or issue it is intended to address.
- 4.7.2 What the airspace change proposal is intended to achieve.

- 4.7.3 For an airspace trial, what it is aiming to investigate, prove or validate.
- 4.7.4 For an airspace trial, how it aligns with the definition of an airspace trial (see paragraph 2.11).

Section 3: Location and airspace description

- 4.8 The sponsor should use plain language descriptions supported by data, where possible, and include how the airspace currently operates, not just where it is. Relevant information includes:
 - 4.8.1 Geographic area.
 - 4.8.2 Vertical and lateral limits.
 - 4.8.3 Current airspace structure and usage.
 - 4.8.4 Related past or current airspace changes.
 - 4.8.5 Any early design concepts (optional, only if draft design ideas exist at this stage).
- 4.9 When referencing related airspace changes, the sponsor may source and reference material from the [airspace change portal](#).

Section 4: Timescales

- 4.10 This should include:
 - 4.10.1 Proposed operating dates and times.
 - 4.10.2 An indicative delivery timeline.
- 4.11 The sponsor should provide realistic time estimates for any parallel activities and show how this fits the delivery timeline.

Section 5: Stakeholders and supporting information

- 4.12 This is an opportunity for the sponsor to identify key stakeholders that may be integral to the development of the proposal, summarise any early engagement activity, and highlight any known issues that could affect progress. The sponsor may include:
 - 4.12.1 Key organisations involved.
 - 4.12.2 Early engagement activity.
 - 4.12.3 Risks or dependencies.
- 4.13 The CAA will review section 3 of the statement of need and identify if the proposal falls within the strategic area of the UK Airspace Design Service (UKADS). We may clarify with the UKADS provider whether there is any potential impact of the proposal on an airspace change proposal being developed by the

UKADS provider. Following this, the CAA may require the UKADS provider to attend the briefing and guidance meeting.

Briefing and guidance meeting

Requirement 2: At the briefing and guidance meeting, the sponsor must brief the CAA on the proposed airspace change and produce the outputs from the meeting

- 4.14 A briefing and guidance meeting will be required for all airspace change proposals. The meeting will normally be conducted in person, although it may be possible to complete the briefing and guidance meeting in various ways.
- 4.15 The sponsor **must** deliver a briefing to the CAA on the proposal. Supporting information **should** be provided verbally, visually or in writing, as appropriate. This should include details of any related regulatory, operational, safety assurance, planning or implementation activities being undertaken outside of the non-permanent airspace change process, where these are relevant to the proposal or its implementation.

Briefing and guidance meeting agenda

- 4.16 The briefing **must** follow a standard agenda provided by the CAA. The agenda is intended to build upon the information submitted within the statement of need and provide the CAA with sufficient information to understand the airspace change proposal, its objectives, potential impacts and any associated dependencies. It will be structured as follows:

Introduction

- 4.17 A brief outline of the purpose of the briefing and guidance meeting.

Sponsor briefing

- 4.18 This will include a structured review of the submitted statement of need. The sponsor may expand on the content of the statement of need and provide any additional information that will assist the CAA in understanding the airspace change proposal.
- 4.19 The sponsor **should** outline any relevant parallel activities associated with the proposal, including their current status, the responsible entity, anticipated timelines and any dependencies on the non-permanent airspace change process.
- 4.20 The sponsor **must** provide an overview of how they intend to develop the proposal and satisfy the requirements of the non-permanent airspace change process.

- 4.21 For an airspace trial, the sponsor **must** provide an overview of the proposed trial plan, including:
- 4.21.1 The purpose of the trial.
 - 4.21.2 The questions the trial is intended to answer.
 - 4.21.3 The evidence to be collected.
 - 4.21.4 The timing and duration of the trial and any proposed phasing of the trial.
 - 4.21.5 Key milestones and dependencies.
 - 4.21.6 How the trial outcomes will be assessed.
- 4.22 Where the viability of the proposed airspace design or operational procedure forms part of the purpose of the trial, the sponsor **should** explain the assumptions to be tested and the evidence required to assess them.
- 4.23 The sponsor will have the opportunity to ask questions and seek clarification from the CAA.

CAA guidance

- 4.24 Where the CAA determines that the non-permanent airspace change process is the appropriate mechanism for progressing the airspace change proposal, the briefing and guidance meeting provides an opportunity for the CAA to discuss relevant regulatory considerations and provide guidance on the process.
- 4.25 This may include discussion of:
- 4.25.1 The current airspace environment.
 - 4.25.2 Relevant regulatory considerations, and potential for exceptions if required.
 - 4.25.3 The potential applicability of the airspace design priorities.
 - 4.25.4 Relevant aviation policy.
 - 4.25.5 Impact assessments.
 - 4.25.6 Stakeholder engagement.
 - 4.25.7 Interactions with parallel activities.
 - 4.25.8 Trial plan requirements.
 - 4.25.9 Implementation considerations.

Outcome of the briefing and guidance meeting

- 4.26 Following consideration of the information provided by the sponsor, the CAA will determine whether the non-permanent airspace change process is the appropriate mechanism for progressing the airspace change proposal.
- 4.27 In reaching that determination, the CAA may:
- 4.27.1 Confirm that the statement of need could reasonably be progressed through a temporary change to airspace design or an airspace trial.
 - 4.27.2 Identify an alternative mechanism because we do not consider the non-permanent airspace change process to be appropriate.
 - 4.27.3 Decide that further information is required.
- 4.28 If insufficient information has been provided for the CAA to understand the proposal or determine the Step 2 assessment scope plan, we may request further information or schedule a further briefing and guidance meeting.

Sponsor outputs from the briefing and guidance meeting

- 4.29 The sponsor **must** develop a record of what was discussed and agreed with the CAA during the briefing and guidance meeting.
- 4.30 This must include:
- 4.30.1 Briefing and guidance meeting agenda.
 - 4.30.2 Briefing and guidance meeting minutes.
 - 4.30.3 Proposed timeline.
 - 4.30.4 Any other material, such as presentations.
- 4.31 If following the briefing and guidance meeting the information provided in the original statement of need requires updating, the proposer **must** revise it.
- 4.32 Sponsors must submit the briefing and guidance meeting outputs to the CAA for review within five working days of the briefing and guidance meeting, or within an alternative timeline agreed with the CAA. We will aim to review the documentation within five working days of receipt and provide the sponsor with any comments.
- 4.33 Following the CAA's review, the sponsor **must** publish the statement of need, the briefing and guidance meeting agenda, meeting minutes, agreed timeline and any other relevant material on the airspace change portal.
- 4.34 If, at any step of the process, an amendment to the agreed and published timeline is required, the sponsor **must** notify the CAA of any proposed amendments to the agreed timeline at the earliest opportunity so that a revised timeline can be agreed. This includes circumstances where amendments to the

timeline are required to meet the process requirements, or where the sponsor is unable to meet an agreed submission date. Timeline amendment request forms can be found on the [CAA website](#).

- 4.35 Any sponsor-led amendment to the agreed timeline must be supported by justification from the sponsor explaining why the amendment is required, before being accepted by the CAA.
- 4.36 Sponsors must publish the new agreed timeline on the airspace change portal.

Step 2 assessment scope plan

- 4.37 Following the briefing and guidance meeting the CAA will determine the process requirements that will be applicable to the airspace change proposal during Step 2, and document them within a Step 2 assessment scope plan. This is the principal output of the briefing and guidance meeting and forms the basis on which the proposal will subsequently be assessed by the CAA.
- 4.38 The Step 2 assessment scope plan may identify:
 - 4.38.1 The level of detail and scope required to describe the current airspace environment.
 - 4.38.2 The level of detail and scope required in the impact assessments.
 - 4.38.3 If parallel CAA regulatory approval processes can address any of the non-permanent airspace change process requirements in full or part (for example, an operational authorisation (UK SORA based application), a GEN 03 trial approval or a spaceflight licence).
 - 4.38.4 Applicable airspace design priorities and any associated evidence requirements.
 - 4.38.5 Trial plan requirements.
 - 4.38.6 Requirements relating to multi-phase trials.
 - 4.38.7 Information or evidence that may be relied upon from other processes or parallel activities.
- 4.39 The process requirements identified within the Step 2 assessment scope plan will be proportionate to the nature, scale, complexity, duration and anticipated impacts of the proposal.
- 4.40 Where relevant, the CAA may determine that information, evidence or assurance generated through parallel activities may be relied upon to satisfy particular requirements of the non-permanent airspace change process. This is intended to avoid unnecessary duplication and support a proportionate regulatory approach.

- 4.41 The Step 2 assessment scope plan will be published by the CAA on the airspace change portal to provide transparency regarding the requirements applicable to the proposal.
- 4.42 The Step 2 assessment scope plan reflects the CAA's understanding of the proposal and its anticipated impacts at the time it is produced. Sponsors should apply the plan proportionately as the proposal develops and should ensure that any assessments, evidence and engagement remain appropriate to the proposal being taken forward. Where significant changes arise that could materially affect the scale, nature, duration or impacts of the proposal, sponsors should seek guidance from the CAA. Failure to identify or address such changes may result in the CAA requesting additional information or clarification during our assessment and decision-making process.

Airspace change portal

Requirement 3: The sponsor must create an entry for their airspace change proposal

- 4.43 Detailed guidance on how to set up an airspace change portal account and create an airspace change proposal entry will be provided by the CAA following the briefing and guidance meeting. We will provide a unique reference number for the airspace change proposal (ACP-YYYY-XXX).
- 4.44 Sponsors **should** add a potentially affected area on the airspace change portal. This allows stakeholders to search by location for airspace change proposals that could have an impact on them.
- 4.45 The potentially affected area can be developed by using a combination of the following shapes:
- 4.45.1 Circle: latitude and longitude of the centre point is recorded, with radius calculated and recorded in metres.
 - 4.45.2 Rectangle: latitude and longitude of northwest and southeast points are recorded.
 - 4.45.3 Polygon with unlimited points: latitude and longitude are recorded for each point entered.
- 4.46 When an airspace change proposal is created, its default status is set to 'pre-published', meaning that the portal page is not visible to stakeholders and the proposal cannot progress through the airspace change process.
- 4.47 After creation, the status **must** be changed to 'in progress' to make it visible to stakeholders accessing the airspace change portal. Sponsors can add a status comment to provide additional context, which will remain visible at each step until it is removed or replaced.

- 4.48 Relevant information and documentation for each airspace change proposal is published on the airspace change portal. Publication enables transparency for all stakeholders which is a key principle of the airspace change process. Sponsors **must** keep the airspace change portal up to date throughout the process.
- 4.49 The following information must not be published, or must be redacted in any documents that are published, on the airspace change portal:
- 4.49.1 Personal information such as names, telephone numbers and email addresses.
 - 4.49.2 Specific technical data related to the design of instrument flight procedures. This data is submitted to the CAA by approved procedure design organisations, not sponsors, and is subject to a separate CAA review process. A list of useful references, including those related to instrument flight procedure design, can be found on the [CAA website](#).
- 4.50 At the request of the sponsor, the CAA may agree to the sponsor withholding material or redacting information if the CAA agrees that it should not be published (in the same way that we might apply an exemption(s) from the obligation to disclose information in response to a request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 or the Environmental Information Regulations 2004):
- 4.50.1 for reasons of national security; and/or
 - 4.50.2 in some circumstances because disclosing it would be likely to prejudice someone's commercial interests.
- 4.51 We are unlikely to agree to withhold large amounts of information and will only accept the redaction of the minimum information necessary.

Chapter 5

Step 2 - Design, assess and engage

- 5.1 The requirements in this chapter must be completed in accordance with the Step 2 assessment scope plan published by the CAA following the briefing and guidance meeting. The Step 2 assessment scope plan identifies which requirements are applicable to the proposal and the level of detail expected for each requirement.
- 5.2 Unless otherwise specified, the information, evidence and assessments completed during Step 2 should be proportionate to the nature, scale, duration and anticipated impacts of the proposal.

Current airspace environment

Requirement 4: The sponsor must describe the current airspace environment

- 5.3 The scope and level of detail of the current airspace environment **must** be consistent with the requirements identified in the Step 2 assessment scope plan.
- 5.4 The current airspace environment explains what happens today in the area where the airspace change is being considered. The content included should be relevant to the airspace change proposal and the level of detail should be proportionate to the proposal's scale and complexity. Information from the statement of need and the briefing and guidance meeting will be a good starting point.
- 5.5 In most cases, qualitative information will be sufficient to describe the current airspace environment, though quantitative data **may** be included where it strengthens the assessment.
- 5.6 The current airspace environment **should** include, where relevant, the following types of information:
- 5.6.1 Airspace design and infrastructure: details of airspace classification, current airspace structures (including adjacent airspace structures where relevant), routes and instrument flight procedures, and communication, navigation and surveillance facilities, including air navigation service providers.
 - 5.6.2 Airspace usage analysis: current airspace users, aircraft types, number and frequency of movements, typical flight behaviours/patterns and typical operating altitudes.

- 5.6.3 Airspace operational diagrams: visual representations of current aircraft flows, procedures and airspace structures and locations of aerodromes.
- 5.6.4 Operational efficiency and complexity: including delays and known choke points.
- 5.6.5 Potential safety risks: any operational or design-related risks in the current operation.
- 5.6.6 Existing noise impacts below 5,000 feet AMSL (where practicable to determine).
- 5.6.7 Location of noise sensitive buildings such as schools, places of worship and hospitals⁵ overflown below 5,000 feet AMSL (where possible to determine). Sponsors can obtain noise sensitive buildings data from the [Ordnance Survey Points of Interest](#) website.
- 5.6.8 Protected areas overflown below 5,000 feet AMSL. In this document, we use the term protected areas to mean National Parks, National Landscapes (and National Scenic Areas in Scotland), the Broads and Sites of Special Scientific Interest.
- 5.6.9 European sites overflown below 2,000 feet AMSL. In this document, we use the term European sites to mean Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and candidate SACs, Special Protection Areas (SPA) and potential SPAs, Ramsar sites and proposed Ramsar sites, and compensatory habitats (areas secured to compensate for damage to SACs, SPAs and Ramsar sites). Sponsors can search for the locations of protected areas and European sites on the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) [MAGIC](#) website⁶.
- 5.6.10 Location specific legal obligations: planning conditions or requirements, including a maximum number of flights and/or passengers permitted from, or a minimum level of capacity required at, an airport, noise preferential routes or noise abatement procedures set by planning authorities (such planning conditions are sometimes referred to as section 106 agreements by reference to [section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990](#)), noise action plans pursuant to [The Environmental Noise \(England\) Regulations 2006](#), and any directions,

⁵ Noise sensitive buildings are defined as all types of primary, secondary and tertiary education establishments, places of worship, and hospitals and hospices.

⁶ There is currently no publicly available database which provides information on areas of compensatory habitat (areas secured to compensate for damage to SACs, SPAs and Ramsar sites). We recommend contacting the Statutory Nature Conservation Bodies who may be able to provide further information on these sites.

requirements or prohibitions made by the Secretary of State pursuant to section 78 of the [Civil Aviation Act 1982](#) in relation to airports designated under section 80 of that Act.

Design development

Requirement 5: The sponsor must develop a draft design

- 5.7 When developing a draft design, the sponsor **must** ensure that it addresses the statement of need and aligns with the objectives and intended outcomes of the airspace change proposal.
- 5.8 The sponsor **must** provide a description of the draft design and how it is intended to operate. This should include sufficient detail to enable the CAA to understand the proposal, such as the geographical area affected, periods of operation, access arrangements and proposed airspace management.
- 5.9 When developing the draft design, sponsors should consider the impacts and implications of those factors which have been identified in the current airspace environment (see Requirement 4). Sponsors should also consider other ongoing airspace change proposals that may have an impact on their proposal. Consideration of these factors at an early stage in the process will help to develop an appropriate draft design and minimise the impact on stakeholders.
- 5.10 The sponsor **must** maintain a record of the assumptions and constraints that have informed the development of the draft design. This means any factors that have been assumed to be true, as well as any limitations, restrictions or requirements that have influenced the design.
- 5.11 The non-permanent airspace change process is intended to support the development and assessment of a single draft design. Sponsors should only develop multiple designs where there is a clear need to do so, recognising that the assessment of multiple designs will increase process complexity. Where a sponsor considers that more than one draft design is necessary, they should discuss this with the CAA before progressing further, so that the implications for the process can be considered and the Step 2 assessment scope plan updated.

Impact assessments

- 5.12 The sponsor must assess the impacts of the airspace change proposal against the current airspace environment described at Requirement 4. The impact assessments must be clear, accessible, proportionate, and focussed on providing stakeholders with accurate information about the anticipated impacts of the proposal.
- 5.13 The sponsor must complete the assessments in accordance with the Step 2 assessment scope plan. The assessments are:

- 5.13.1 Safety and policy assessment.
- 5.13.2 Operational impact assessment.
- 5.13.3 Planning assessment.
- 5.13.4 Noise assessment.
- 5.13.5 Protected areas assessment.
- 5.13.6 European sites assessment.
- 5.14 The Step 2 assessment scope plan will identify how parallel activities can be accounted for in these assessments.
- 5.15 Specific requirements for these impact assessments are detailed in Requirements 6 to 11.

Requirement 6: The sponsor must conduct a safety and policy assessment for the airspace change proposal

Safety assessment

- 5.16 The sponsor **must** assess how the proposed activity and associated airspace arrangements maintain a high standard of safety and, where possible, enhance current levels of safety.
- 5.17 The assessment may draw upon information, evidence or assurance generated through other regulatory processes, including safety assessments, operational authorisations, military approvals, air navigation service provider safety assessments or other recognised regulatory approvals.
- 5.18 The sponsor **should** identify:
 - 5.18.1 The safety assumptions underpinning the airspace change proposal.
 - 5.18.2 Any hazards or safety risks associated with the airspace change proposal.
 - 5.18.3 Any dependencies required to maintain safe operation.
 - 5.18.4 Any mitigations proposed to manage those risks.
- 5.19 The sponsor **must** explain how safety considerations have been incorporated into the proposed design and how any mitigations will be implemented.

Policy assessment

- 5.20 The sponsor **must** explain how the airspace change proposal aligns with legislation, as well as government and CAA policy applicable to the proposal.
- 5.21 The Step 2 assessment scope plan may identify particular legislation, policy considerations, policy questions, and relevant priorities within the Airspace

Modernisation Strategy that the sponsor should address as part of the assessment.

- 5.22 Where implementation of the airspace change proposal, if approved, relies upon exemptions, dispensations, approvals or other regulatory decisions, the sponsor should identify these and explain any dependencies relevant to implementation.
- 5.23 Where the Step 2 assessment scope plan identifies a particular policy issue or question relevant to the airspace change proposal, the sponsor must provide sufficient information and evidence to enable the CAA to understand the issue, its relevance to the proposal and how it has been addressed.

Airspace trials and bridging policy gaps

- 5.24 For airspace trials the sponsor **should** explain how the airspace change proposal supports learning, evidence gathering, innovation, operational development or future policy development.
- 5.25 Where the purpose of the airspace trial is to investigate a concept, operation, procedure, technology or airspace design for which policy is incomplete, evolving or does not yet exist, the sponsor **should** explain:
 - 5.25.1 The uncertainties being investigated.
 - 5.25.2 The evidence the trial is intended to generate.
 - 5.25.3 How that evidence will be collected and assessed.
 - 5.25.4 How the trial outcomes may support future operational, regulatory or policy decisions.
- 5.26 This explanation provides the information necessary for the CAA to assess the viability of the airspace change proposal.
- 5.27 Where an airspace trial is proposed in phases, the sponsor **should** explain how evidence gathered during one phase will support progression to subsequent phases and identify any associated assumptions, dependencies and potential decision points. Where progression depends on the successful completion of an earlier phase, the sponsor **should** explain how the evidence generated during that phase will support the safety, operational or viability case for later phases. The trial plan **should** identify any criteria that will be used to determine whether progression from one phase to the next phase can be justified.

Requirement 7: The sponsor must conduct an operational impact assessment for the airspace change proposal

- 5.28 The sponsor **must** assess the operational impact of the airspace change proposal for relevant aviation stakeholders within, accessing, transiting or

conducting activities adjacent to the operating area that is the subject of the proposal and in the surrounding airspace and operational environment.

Within the operating area

5.29 The sponsor **must** assess the operational impact of the proposed activity within the operating area and on traffic accessing or transiting the operating area. This could include:

- 5.29.1 Access to airspace, including details of segregation or accommodation measures and access to airspace for emergency service or other priority operations.
- 5.29.2 Operating procedures.
- 5.29.3 Controlling authority impacts and provision, including airspace management measures.

Wider impacts

5.30 The sponsor **must** assess the wider operational impacts of the proposal. This could include:

5.30.1 Airspace users:

- Changes to aircraft routings, including the associated impacts on flight frequency and altitudes, together with any resulting geographic displacement or changes to the timing of operations.
- Other airspace users including, but not limited to, recreational flying, gliding, helicopters, unmanned aircraft, military flying and ballooning.
- The impact on pilot situational awareness.
- The impact on airspace complexity.

5.30.2 Aerodromes and air navigation service providers:

- Impacts on aerodromes and air navigation service providers.
- Changes to instrument flight procedures.
- Communications, navigation and surveillance considerations.
- Capacity, resilience or wider network implications.

5.30.3 Other:

- Impacts from launch trajectories for spaceflight activities.

5.31 The sponsor must explain the significance of any identified impacts and describe any mitigations or management measures proposed to address them.

- 5.32 Where relevant, information, evidence or assurance generated through another regulatory process may contribute to the assessment. The Step 2 assessment scope plan will identify where information from other processes or parallel activities may be relied upon and any supplementary evidence required.

Requirement 8: The sponsor must conduct a planning assessment for the airspace change proposal

- 5.33 The sponsor **must** identify any planning considerations relevant to the airspace change proposal.
- 5.34 The purpose of this requirement is to enable the CAA to understand whether implementation of the proposal, if approved, is subject to planning permission and whether those considerations have influenced the proposed airspace arrangements.
- 5.35 Where relevant, the sponsor **should** identify:
- 5.35.1 Any planning permissions associated with, or impacted by, the airspace change proposal, or on which the proposal is dependent.
 - 5.35.2 Any planning conditions or obligations relevant to the airspace change proposal.
 - 5.35.3 Any assumptions, constraints or requirements arising from the planning process that have influenced the airspace change proposal.
 - 5.35.4 Any dependencies between the airspace change proposal and a planning decision or planning related process.
- 5.36 Where a planning permission exists, the sponsor **should** explain how the airspace change proposal supports the activity authorised through that process and identify any planning related conditions or requirements that are relevant to the proposal.
- 5.37 To avoid unnecessary duplication of work, information or evidence generated through a planning process may be relied upon where relevant. The sponsor **should** identify the source of that information and explain how it relates to the airspace change proposal.
- 5.38 The existence of a planning permission does not remove the requirement to assess the impacts of the airspace change proposal. However, sponsors are not normally expected to repeat work that has already been undertaken through the planning process where that information remains relevant and can be relied upon. The CAA will determine what requirements can be removed or amended from the non-permanent airspace change process as a consequence of relying on work undertaken in a planning process.

Requirement 9: Where required by the Step 2 assessment scope plan, the sponsor must conduct a noise assessment for the airspace change proposal

- 5.39 In line with government guidance, the CAA requires sponsors to consider and undertake an assessment of both the direct and indirect (consequential) noise impacts arising from an airspace change proposal that affects the distribution of air traffic below 5,000 feet AMSL. The noise assessment is used to identify stakeholders likely to be affected by noise impacts and who therefore must be informed of the airspace change if the proposal is approved. The noise assessment must also be included in any material used by the sponsor to provide information to these affected stakeholders.
- 5.40 The Secretary of State has guided the CAA that certain airspace change proposals are exempt from the requirement to assess noise impacts, and these are outlined in more detail in paragraphs 5.45, 5.47 and 5.51 (see the [Air Navigation Guidance 2026](#), paragraph 86). This statutory guidance does not affect the need to consider the impacts on protected areas and European sites.
- 5.41 For airspace change proposals that do not fall within the scope of the noise assessment exemptions, the requirements for the noise assessment are largely dependent on the duration of the proposed airspace change. However, the following information **must** be included irrespective of duration:
- 5.41.1 Operational diagrams⁷ illustrating the estimated overflight of participating aircraft and other aircraft consequentially impacted as a result of the airspace change proposal.
 - 5.41.2 Details of the frequency of flights, timings and typical altitudes of participating aircraft and other aircraft consequentially impacted as a result of the airspace change proposal. For airspace trials, information on the expected frequency of flights (both absolute and as a percentage of total traffic) during the airspace trial period.
- 5.42 Where a proposed change has a duration of less than one year, the sponsor **must** present an assessment of the following noise impacts:
- 5.42.1 Noise levels exceeding 65 dB L_{ASmax}⁸ from day flights (0700 to 2300) and 60 dB L_{ASmax} from night flights (2300 to 0700) at key locations from participating aircraft and other aircraft consequentially impacted as a

⁷ Operational diagrams portray a representation of how the airspace is to be used. These diagrams are used to illustrate the patterns of current or anticipated aircraft movements on geographical maps and are often based upon radar track data.

⁸ L_{ASmax} is the maximum sound level measured during an aircraft event, using frequency weighting A and time-weighting S (Slow). Often abbreviated to L_{Amax} or L_{max}.

result of the airspace change proposal. Key locations that should be avoided from overflight below 5,000 feet AMSL include residential properties and noise sensitive buildings such as schools, places of worship and hospitals which the sponsor will have identified in the current airspace environment (see Requirement 4). The height of key locations must be taken into account while calculating L_{ASmax} levels.

- 5.43 Where a proposed change has a duration of more than one year but less than three years, the sponsor **must** present an assessment of the following noise impacts:
- 5.43.1 For noise from day flights (0700 to 2300), 65 dB L_{ASmax} footprints⁹ that illustrate the loudest and most frequent types of participating aircraft and other aircraft consequentially impacted as a result of the airspace change proposal.
 - 5.43.2 For noise from night flights (2300 to 0700), 60 dB L_{ASmax} footprints that illustrate the loudest and most frequent types of participating aircraft and other aircraft consequentially impacted as a result of the airspace change proposal.
 - 5.43.3 Equivalent footprints that illustrate where the airspace trial traffic and other aircraft consequentially impacted as a result of the proposal would otherwise have flown (this assumes that any aircraft that participates in an airspace trial or is consequentially impacted would have flown on an alternative route that reflects current operations).
- 5.44 Sponsors **must** describe what key data and evidence was collected, and what assessment methodology was followed to calculate the outputs for each of the metrics in the noise impact assessments. The sponsor **must** use up-to-date and credible, and clearly referenced data sources, with modelling carried out in line with relevant best practice.

Noise assessment: Ministry of Defence (MoD)

- 5.45 Paragraph 86 of the Air Navigation Guidance 2026 states that the CAA is not required to take into account direct noise impacts when considering airspace change proposals of the following kinds:
- 5.45.1 A proposal submitted by or on behalf of the MoD, for aircraft operated by or on behalf of the armed forces.

⁹ L_{ASmax} footprints are lines on a map or diagram that connect points with the same maximum sound level (L_{ASmax}) generated by a single aircraft flight event (for example, a take-off, landing or overflight). The area enclosed by a footprint represents all locations where aircraft noise is equal to, or greater than, the specified L_{ASmax} value.

5.45.2 The elements of a proposal submitted which includes aircraft operated by or on behalf of the armed forces.

5.46 However, anticipated noise impacts resulting from indirect (consequential) changes to traffic patterns of other airspace users due to such airspace change proposals must continue to be assessed in line with the noise requirements in paragraphs 5.39 to 5.44.

Noise assessment: unmanned aircraft systems (UAS)

5.47 In accordance with paragraphs 86 and 95 of the Air Navigation Guidance 2026, the CAA is not required to take into account the impacts on the environment when considering a proposal for an airspace trial which has been submitted for the purpose of enabling UAS flights to support policy development and learning or a temporary airspace change proposal to facilitate government policy to enable new users in order to promote economic growth.

5.48 Paragraphs 87 and 88 of the Air Navigation Guidance 2026 state that noise complaints during such a trial or temporary airspace change should be required to be monitored by the sponsor and reported to the CAA. Noise attitude surveys should be undertaken as a condition of sufficient trials to build an evidence base to enable future government policy to be developed to support this activity whilst taking into account its impacts on all stakeholders. This specific guidance is time-limited while a definitive noise policy for UAS operations is in development. The Government will update the Air Navigation Guidance 2026 to reflect its revised policy in a further version.

5.49 The CAA will advise sponsors in the Step 2 assessment scope plan if their proposal falls within the scope of the requirement to undertake a noise attitude survey.

Noise assessment: spaceflight activities

5.50 Details of the legislative background and duties placed on the CAA regarding spaceflight activities can be found in paragraphs 1.48 to 1.53 of [CAP 1616, Airspace Change Process](#).

5.51 To avoid duplication of effort, paragraph 86 of the Air Navigation Guidance 2026 states that the CAA is not required to take into account the impacts on the environment when considering a proposal for an airspace change which has been submitted to facilitate spaceflight activities where the environmental impact has already been considered as part of a licence application for a launch or spaceport licence under the [Space Industry Act 2018](#).

5.52 However, the CAA is required to take into account any consequential impacts on other aviation activity and airspace users as a result of an airspace change proposal sponsored for the purpose of spaceflight activities. Therefore, for airspace change proposals facilitating vertical spaceflight activities, sponsors

must provide an assessment of the indirect (consequential) impacts on other airspace users.

- 5.53 For airspace change proposals facilitating vertical spaceflight activities where an environmental assessment has not already been considered as part of a Space Industry Act 2018 licensing application, the sponsor **must**, irrespective of duration, provide an additional assessment of the direct noise impacts from the spaceflight activities including the following metrics:

Direct impacts: spaceflight activities

- 5.54 Noise metrics for assessment of direct impacts from spaceflight activities are necessarily different from those used to assess noise from civil aircraft.
- 5.55 Sponsors **must** consider single noise events.

Operational diagrams

- 5.56 Sponsors **must** present all the trajectories of space launches, including all staged returns.

Noise exposure footprints

- 5.57 Sponsors **must** map all areas exposed to spaceflight noise exceeding 80, 85, 90, 95, 100, 105, 110, 115 and 120 dB L_{ASmax}^{10} . Noise footprints **must** be overlaid on a suitable map background (for example, Ordnance Survey) identifying any exposed dwellings and noise sensitive buildings (for example, schools, places of worship and hospitals).

Structural damage assessment

- 5.58 Sponsors **must** map all areas exposed to spaceflight noise exceeding 100, 105, 110, 115 and 120 dB L_{Zmax}^{11} . The maps **must** illustrate any structures in the area impacted above 100 dB L_{Zmax} .
- 5.59 For noise exposure footprints and the structural damage assessment, PC software [RUMBLE](#), which calculates rocket launch noise, is available free of charge from the US Transportation Research Board and is populated with a database of several US launch vehicles.

Sonic boom assessment

- 5.60 Sponsors **must** provide an assessment of sonic boom for all phases of flight, including any stages or vehicles that return to the launch pad or area. In general, sonic booms over land should be avoided. Where this is not possible, the maximum overpressure on land should not exceed 47.88 pascals (Pa) or one pound per square foot (psf). Areas exposed to sonic boom **should** be mapped to

¹⁰ Slow time weighted L_{ASmax} .

¹¹ Z weighted (unweighted) L_{max} .

illustrate the maximum overpressures on land. Software [PC Boom](#), which calculates sonic boom noise, is available free of charge from the US Transportation Research Board.

Probability of awakening (night-time launches, 2300 to 0700 only)

- 5.61 Sponsors **must** assess the probability of awakening¹² for night-time launches calculated based on L_{ASmax} noise exposure and using the awakening estimation function defined in the [Guidance to the regulator on environmental objectives relating to the exercise of its functions under the Space Industry Act 2018](#).

Exposure to repeated noise events

- 5.62 For applicable airspace change proposals consisting of multiple spaceflight operations, sponsors **must** provide a report on:

5.62.1 Human receptors (dwellings and noise sensitive buildings).

5.62.2 Wildlife receptors¹³.

- 5.63 Where there is a difference, all assessments should be modelled assuming predominant meteorological conditions and the weather conditions which are favourable for launch.

Indirect (consequential) impacts: other airspace users

Operational diagrams

- 5.64 For impacts below 5,000 feet AMSL, over any inhabited areas, sponsors **must** provide operational diagrams representing indirect (consequential) impacts on other airspace users when the airspace change proposal results in an alteration to their traffic patterns.
- 5.65 Operational diagrams provide supporting evidence to aid the description of other airspace users' traffic movements. These operational diagrams might include the categories of airspace, typical general aviation traffic patterns at lower altitudes, and air traffic service routes at higher altitudes.

Noise levels or footprints

- 5.66 For impacts below 5,000 feet AMSL, over any inhabited areas and where more than 10 other airspace users' operations are altered per day, sponsors **must** assess their resulting noise impacts according to the noise metrics set out in paragraphs 5.39 to 5.44.

¹² In the absence of a rocket noise awakening probability function, the probability of awakening is based on [Elmenhorst, E-M. et al. \(2012\)](#), adapted for the faster event rise time typical of a rocket noise event and defined in [2018 guidance](#).

¹³ Farm animals and any wildlife identified as part of the habitats regulations assessment.

Requirement 10: Where required by the Step 2 assessment scope plan, the sponsor must conduct a protected areas assessment for the airspace change proposal

- 5.67 The CAA has statutory duties regarding protected areas under various non-aviation environmental legislation. Sponsors must provide sufficient information to enable the CAA to assess whether an airspace change proposal could affect these areas.
- 5.68 Protected areas are defined in paragraph 5.6.8. Details of the legislative background and duties placed on the CAA regarding assessment of protected areas can be found in paragraphs 1.39 to 1.43 of [CAP 1616, Airspace Change Process](#).
- 5.69 The sponsor **must** assess the impact of their airspace change proposal, including all direct and indirect (consequential) impacts, on protected areas for proposals that have the potential to alter flight behaviours below 5,000 feet AMSL.
- 5.70 Sponsors **must** show how they have considered and taken account of these impacts by identifying any such protected areas overflown below 5,000 feet AMSL using operational diagrams.

Protected areas assessment: Ministry of Defence (MoD)

- 5.71 Impacts on protected areas that are a direct result of aircraft operated by or on behalf of the armed forces (including civil aircraft when carrying out military functions under contract) **must** be assessed, in addition to any indirect (consequential) impacts from other airspace users.

Protected areas assessment: unmanned aircraft systems (UAS)

- 5.72 Sponsors of airspace change proposals submitted for the purposes of conducting UAS flights **must** also assess the impacts on protected areas from both UAS flights as well as indirect (consequential) impacts from other airspace users.

Protected areas assessment: spaceflight activities

- 5.73 Sponsors **must** also assess impacts on protected areas for all airspace change proposals facilitating spaceflight activities for both direct impacts from spaceflight activities, unless this environmental impact has already been considered as part of a licence application under the [Space Industry Act 2018](#), as well as indirect (consequential) impacts from other airspace users.

Requirement 11: Where required by the Step 2 assessment scope plan, the sponsor must conduct a European sites assessment for the airspace change proposal

- 5.74 The CAA has statutory duties regarding European sites under various non-aviation environmental legislation, in particular, the need to conduct a habitats regulations assessment. Sponsors must provide sufficient information to enable the CAA to assess whether an airspace change proposal is likely to have a significant effect on these areas.
- 5.75 European sites are defined in paragraph 5.6.9. Further information on the habitats regulations assessment and the CAA's duties in relation to the airspace change process is provided in paragraphs 1.44 to 1.47 of [CAP 1616, Airspace Change Process](#).
- 5.76 To determine whether an airspace change proposal is likely to have a significant effect on a European site and therefore whether an appropriate assessment under the habitats regulations assessment is required, sponsors **must** answer the CAA's early screening criteria questions to perform the early screening exercise. Additional evidence can be requested by the CAA, and all responses must be supported with a clear, evidence-based rationale.
- 5.77 For the purposes of these early screening criteria, the overall zone of influence for potential impacts on European sites relates to flights at an altitude of 2,000 feet AMSL and below. For airspace change proposals related to aircraft operations at an airport, this can be approximated to sites within 12 kilometres (km) of the aerodrome reference point. For other types of airspace change proposals, for example, for airspace change proposals that do not relate to an airport or proposals involving operations of unmanned aircraft systems, the altitude of 2,000 feet AMSL will need to be applied to these specific proposals.
- 5.78 The early screening exercise is only required for airspace change proposals that have the potential to alter flight behaviours below 2,000 feet AMSL.

Early screening criteria questions

- Q1. For airspace change proposals related to aircraft operations at an airport, are there any European sites within a radius of 12 km of the aerodrome reference point?

- Q2. In the current airspace environment, are any European sites overflowed by an aircraft passing directly overhead or within 1,770 feet¹⁴ of its boundary at 2,000 feet or below?
- Q3. Does the draft design result in aircraft¹⁵ overflying European sites directly overhead, or within 1,770 feet of its boundary at 2,000 feet or below?
- Q4. Are there any changes to the air traffic patterns (laterally and vertically) within the zone of influence when comparing the impacts of the draft design with the current airspace environment?
- Q5. Are there any changes to the number of air traffic movements within the zone of influence when comparing the impacts of the draft design with the current airspace environment?
- Q6. Compared to the current airspace environment, will aircraft altitudes over any European site increase without causing a consequential decrease over another site?
- Q7. Compared to the current airspace environment, will the number of aircraft overflights decrease over any European site without consequentially increasing over another site¹⁶?

5.79 No further assessment of European sites will be necessary if the answers to the early screening criteria questions mean that the CAA concludes that the proposal is unlikely to have a significant effect on a European site. However, the rationale and supporting evidence must be set out in the sponsor's answers to the screening questions.

5.80 The CAA anticipates that most non-permanent airspace change proposals will be able to screen out the need for further consideration under the habitats regulations assessment at Step 2. However, where this is not the case, we will provide further guidance on the information we will require from the sponsor and the process to be followed to complete an appropriate assessment. This could

¹⁴ [CAP 1498, Definition of overflight](#) sets out the metric as it relates to airspace regulation. Adopting this definition, for a 48.5° elevation angle threshold, overflight would be experienced from any aircraft flying at a height of 2,000 feet and within a lateral distance of approximately 1,770 feet from the boundary of a European site.

¹⁵ Sponsors must consider the environmental impacts resulting from their direct airspace operations as well as any environmental impacts caused due to indirect (consequential) changes on the flight behaviour of other airspace users.

¹⁶ If more than one European site is overflowed, consideration must be given to whether changes at each individual location are positive, remain the same, or are negative. A habitats regulations assessment can only be screened out where there is no change or where there is benefit to all relevant European sites.

include a requirement for the sponsor to engage with the relevant Statutory Nature Conservation Body.

European sites assessment: Ministry of Defence (MoD)

- 5.81 Impacts on European sites that are a direct result of aircraft operated by or on behalf of the armed forces (including civil aircraft when carrying out military functions under contract) **must** be assessed, in addition to any indirect (consequential) impacts from other airspace users.

European sites assessment: unmanned aircraft systems (UAS)

- 5.82 Sponsors of airspace change proposals submitted for the purposes of conducting UAS flights **must** also assess the impacts on European sites from both UAS flights as well as indirect (consequential) impacts from other airspace users.

European sites assessment: spaceflight activities

- 5.83 Sponsors **must** also assess impacts on European sites for all airspace change proposals facilitating spaceflight activities for both direct impacts from spaceflight activities, unless this environmental impact has already been considered as part of a licence application under the [Space Industry Act 2018](#), as well as indirect (consequential) impacts from other airspace users.

Engagement

Requirement 12: Where required by the Step 2 assessment scope plan, the sponsor must engage relevant aviation stakeholders

- 5.84 The sponsor **must** identify aviation stakeholders who are likely to be impacted by the airspace change proposal and decide which methods and tools are most appropriate to reach and engage them.
- 5.85 The purpose of engagement is to investigate whether the airspace change proposal will be safe and operationally viable. Relevant aviation stakeholders could include local airspace users, air navigation service providers, aerodromes, Defence Airspace and Air Traffic Management (DAATM) and relevant members of the National Air Traffic Management Advisory Committee (NATMAC). The sponsor **must** explain which stakeholders have been identified, the methodology used to identify them, and how they have been engaged as part of the final airspace change proposal submission.
- 5.86 The sponsor **must** engage for a sufficient period to enable effective engagement. The duration **must** be proportionate to the scale, complexity and expected impacts of the airspace change proposal and take account of stakeholders' needs. The length of the engagement should provide all stakeholders with enough time to conscientiously consider the engagement materials and provide feedback. Consideration should be given to allow

appropriate time for organisations who may need to undertake internal review and complete their governance processes before submitting a formal response.

- 5.87 Any periods that could affect participation, such as major holidays, school holidays, or election periods should also be considered, allowing extra time where appropriate.
- 5.88 In their final airspace change proposal submission, the sponsor **must** clearly detail the start and end dates of the engagement period and provide a rationale for the length of engagement.
- 5.89 Engagement materials **must** provide enough information for stakeholders to understand the airspace change proposal, so they can give informed responses. Sponsors **must** include the following in their engagement materials:
 - 5.89.1 An explanation of the airspace change proposal, including how the draft design addresses the statement of need (see Requirement 5). For an airspace trial, this must explain what it is aiming to investigate, prove or validate.
 - 5.89.2 A description of the current airspace environment (see Requirement 4) and an explanation of the impacts of the proposal using the impact assessments developed in Step 2 (see Requirements 6 to 11).
 - 5.89.3 The anticipated start and end dates of the proposed airspace change.
 - 5.89.4 Clear labelling and explanation of all data contained in text or graphics, including the source of the data and how up to date it is.
 - 5.89.5 Instructions that clearly explain how to provide feedback, including dates of the engagement period and how to contact the sponsor with any questions or queries.
 - 5.89.6 A request for feedback using clear, appropriate and unbiased questions.
 - 5.89.7 An explanation of the next steps, such as how the feedback will be analysed and used.
- 5.90 The sponsor **must** monitor responses during the engagement activity and demonstrate that reasonable steps have been taken to elicit a response from stakeholders. For example, we recommend that reminder notifications are sent at pre-determined intervals during the engagement period.
- 5.91 Some feedback may be provided informally, for example at a meeting. Sponsors will need to determine how to incorporate this feedback transparently. It may be that the sponsor requests that such feedback is repeated formally so that it can be taken into account. However, informal feedback should only be taken into account where this is made transparent to all stakeholders and the CAA.

- 5.92 The sponsor **must** maintain records of the engagement activity which will form part of the evidence that will need to be submitted to the CAA alongside the final airspace change proposal at Step 3. Any correspondence between stakeholders and the sponsor **must** be included for transparency.

Chapter 6

Step 3 - Update and submit

Updating the design

Requirement 13: The sponsor must assess the feedback, finalise the design and update their assessment of its impacts

Assess feedback

- 6.1 Sponsors **must** review the feedback received during engagement and assess whether any changes to the design, associated procedures, mitigations or supporting evidence are appropriate considering the matters raised.
- 6.2 Sponsors are not required to amend the airspace change proposal in response to all feedback, but they **must** be able to explain how the feedback has been considered and the reasons for any decisions taken. The sponsor's explanation of the issues raised, the actions taken in response and the rationale for any matters not addressed **must** be included within the final airspace change proposal.

Update the current airspace environment

- 6.3 Sponsors **must** update the current airspace environment following completion of engagement and reflect any relevant changes identified through the engagement process.

Update the airspace change proposal

- 6.4 Sponsors **must** finalise the airspace change proposal, incorporating any necessary amendments arising from engagement, technical assessments, modelling, simulation, procedure design activities or other relevant considerations. All changes and the reasons for them **must** be clearly documented.
- 6.5 Sponsors **must** include a realistic implementation date and approved project timeline within the final airspace change proposal. This should take account of the decision and implementation processes, operational requirements, stakeholder dependencies, finalising letters of agreement and air navigation service providers' safety assessments, training, infrastructure, instrument flight procedure validation activities, parallel activities and any other relevant factors.

Update the impact assessments

- 6.6 Sponsors **must** update all impact assessments developed in Step 2 to reflect the final airspace change proposal, including any changes to the airspace design,

instrument flight procedures, operational use, timing, duration or underlying data. The assessments **must** demonstrate how anticipated impacts have changed since Step 2.

- 6.7 Where the noise assessment identifies stakeholders likely to be affected by noise impacts, sponsors **must** describe the methods that will be used to inform them and the information that will be provided if the airspace change proposal is approved. The noise assessment, together with the reasons for the airspace change and its duration, **must** be included in any material used by the sponsor to inform those stakeholders.
- 6.8 Sponsors **must** assess whether any changes to the airspace change proposal have substantially altered its impacts and determine whether additional engagement is required. Any additional engagement should be proportionate to the scale of the change and targeted where appropriate.

Operational delivery arrangements

- 6.9 Sponsors **must** identify and document any operational delivery arrangements required to support implementation of the airspace change proposal.
- 6.10 Where the proposal includes special use airspace, sponsors **must** describe the arrangements that will be used to ensure its safe and efficient management and operation. This could include identifying individuals, organisations, processes and procedures responsible for the management of the airspace and demonstrating how activity will be safely contained within the approved lateral and vertical dimensions of the special use airspace structure.
- 6.11 Where the airspace change proposal relies upon operational, technical or procedural arrangements with another organisation, sponsors **must** identify those arrangements and explain how they will be implemented and managed.
- 6.12 Sponsors **must** identify any interdependencies with affected air navigation service providers, aerodromes or other relevant organisations and establish suitable arrangements to manage any operational, technical, procedural or training impacts. This could include the development of new agreements or amendments to existing agreements, where appropriate.

Trial plan

- 6.13 For airspace trials, sponsors **must** review and update the trial plan, where necessary, to reflect the final airspace change proposal, the updated impact assessments and any relevant stakeholder feedback.
- 6.14 Any changes made to the trial plan must be clearly documented. This includes, where applicable:
 - 6.14.1 Trial objectives.

- 6.14.2 The questions the trial is intended to answer.
- 6.14.3 The evidence to be collected.
- 6.14.4 Success criteria.
- 6.14.5 Monitoring and reporting arrangements.
- 6.14.6 Assumptions being tested.
- 6.14.7 The methodology used to assess trial outcomes.
- 6.15 Where the trial is proposed to be undertaken in more than one phase, the sponsor **must** also review and update any phasing arrangements to ensure they remain appropriate. This should include, where applicable:
 - 6.15.1 The purpose of each phase.
 - 6.15.2 The evidence to be collected during each phase.
 - 6.15.3 Criteria or decision points for progressing between phases.
 - 6.15.4 Any approvals, dependencies or prerequisites for progression to a subsequent phase.
 - 6.15.5 Any changes to the scope, duration or activities of a phase.
- 6.16 Sponsors **must** explain the rationale for any changes to the trial plan or phasing arrangements.

Aeronautical information and instrument flight procedures

- 6.17 Sponsors **must** prepare the aeronautical information necessary to support the final airspace change proposal, including, where required, completion of an aerodata spreadsheet. The latest version of the aerodata spreadsheet can be obtained by contacting the CAA.
- 6.18 Where relevant, sponsors **must** ensure that technical instrument flight procedure submissions are updated by an approved procedure design organisation and ready for submission.

Submission of the final airspace change proposal

Requirement 14: The sponsor must submit their final airspace change proposal to the CAA

- 6.19 Sponsors **must** submit their final airspace change proposal using the CAA submission checklist and template that can be found on the [CAA website](#).
- 6.20 The submission template forms the primary structure for the final airspace change proposal and is intended to provide a consistent and transparent record

of how the sponsor has completed the requirements identified within the Step 2 assessment scope plan.

- 6.21 It is important for the sponsor to include a description of the process undertaken to develop the final design and clearly provide all details of any changes and anticipated impacts in their final airspace change proposal. Sponsors may find [CAP 3299, The CAA's Air Navigation Functions Guidance](#) useful when preparing this.
- 6.22 Sponsors **must** complete all applicable sections of the submission template and provide sufficient information, evidence and supporting material to:
- 6.22.1 Enable aviation stakeholders to understand the airspace change proposal and its anticipated impacts.
 - 6.22.2 Enable the CAA to assess the airspace change proposal and reach a regulatory decision.
- 6.23 Supporting information should include, where relevant, detail associated with related parallel activities (for example, UK SORA based UAS operational authorisation applications, licence applications or other supporting approvals) where this information is necessary for aviation stakeholders and the CAA to understand and assess the airspace change proposal.
- 6.24 The final airspace change proposal **must** include:
- 6.24.1 The final design being submitted for decision and how it will operate.
 - 6.24.2 How the requirements identified within the Step 2 assessment scope plan have been addressed.
 - 6.24.3 An explanation of the issues raised in engagement, the actions taken in response and the rationale for any matters not addressed.
 - 6.24.4 Evidence of the engagement activity.
 - 6.24.5 Any changes made to the airspace change proposal during its development and the reasons for those changes.
 - 6.24.6 The updated impact assessments.
 - 6.24.7 Any proposed mitigations, monitoring arrangements or implementation measures.
 - 6.24.8 Any dependencies on parallel regulatory, operational, safety assurance or implementation activities.
- 6.25 Where a section of the submission template does not apply to the proposal, the sponsor should explain why it is not applicable.

- 6.26 Supporting reports, technical documents, annexes and appendices may be submitted where necessary to support the proposal. Any such material should be clearly referenced within the submission template.
- 6.27 Where a proposal includes aeronautical data, instrument flight procedures or other specialist technical information, sponsors **must** ensure that the relevant information is submitted in accordance with applicable CAA requirements.
- 6.28 Sponsors **must** submit the final airspace change proposal by the date agreed with the CAA. Where the sponsor is unable to meet the agreed submission date, they should notify us at the earliest opportunity. A revised timetable may need to be agreed, taking account of implementation timescales, regulatory priorities and any relevant dependencies.
- 6.29 Following receipt of the final airspace change proposal, the CAA will review the submission to determine whether sufficient information has been provided to commence assessment. Where further information or clarification is required, we may request additional information before commencing our assessment.
- 6.30 Sponsors **must** publish their final airspace change proposal on the airspace change portal at the same time as submitting to the CAA, or shortly after. This must not include any technical instrument flight procedure documentation provided via the approved procedure design organisation.

Chapter 7

Step 4 - CAA decision

Provision of further information

Requirement 15: The sponsor, when requested, must provide the CAA with any further information required for a regulatory decision to be made.

- 7.1 Sponsors **must** provide any supplementary information, technical corrections or clarifications requested by the CAA. In some cases, those items may result in the sponsor making an amendment to their airspace change proposal. Such amendments should not substantially alter the proposal.
- 7.2 This requirement is intended to reduce the risk of an airspace change proposal not being approved due to small errors in documentation or technical issues rather than matters of substance. Where appropriate, the CAA may give the sponsor an opportunity to provide more information, clarify matters or make corrections instead of referring them back to an earlier stage of the process.
- 7.3 If the request for information is material to the CAA's ability to continue to progress its review and assessment then, in agreement with the sponsor, the process may be paused to allow the sponsor to complete the required work.
- 7.4 Where a request for information is likely to impact the target implementation date, the CAA will normally publish a delay explanation statement on the airspace change portal.
- 7.5 The CAA's expectation is that there is unlikely to be a requirement for additional engagement. However, sponsors **must** consider whether any amendments they make to their airspace change proposal as a result of clarifications/questions substantially alter the design and/or its impacts previously engaged on such that additional engagement could be required. Where they believe this to be the case, the sponsor **must** inform the CAA.
- 7.6 The need for any additional engagement will be determined in discussion with the CAA and will be considered on a case-by-case basis. The requirement for any additional engagement will be determined proportionately, informed by the scope of the original proposed airspace design and the nature of the amendment.
- 7.7 Where the CAA determines that additional engagement is required, we will inform the sponsor. Depending on the extent of additional engagement required,

the CAA may publish a statement on the airspace change portal explaining the requirement and how the sponsor should proceed.

7.8 To maintain transparency, where additional engagement is not required, the sponsor **should**:

7.8.1 Ensure that clarifications/questions are answered and published on the airspace change portal within any agreed period.

7.8.2 Resubmit any updated documents as 'version 2.0' (and subsequent versions where required) with any changes clearly identified.

7.8.3 Publish the CAA's request and the sponsor's correspondence log and/or meeting minutes relating to any revisions on the airspace change portal once the matter has been resolved.

CAA decision and modifications

7.9 The CAA will make a decision in Step 4 whether, or not, to approve the airspace change proposal.

7.10 If the CAA makes a decision to approve a non-permanent airspace change proposal, then we may make an approval subject to such modifications and conditions as we consider necessary (see the [Air Navigation Directions 2026](#), directions 4(4)(a) and 4(5)(a)). The required modifications will not normally substantially alter the design as engaged upon and the modifications will normally better achieve the expected impacts or outcomes. If conditions are applied, they will be intended to ensure the change is implemented in accordance with relevant legislation, regulation and policy.

Chapter 8

Step 5 - Implement

Implement the change

Requirement 16: The sponsor must fulfil any modifications or conditions set out in the CAA's regulatory decision

- 8.1 If the CAA approves an airspace change proposal, there may be modifications or conditions attached to the decision. Sponsors **must** address the relevant modifications or conditions during implementation of the airspace change.

Requirement 17: The sponsor must inform any stakeholders likely to be affected by noise impacts as identified through the noise assessment

- 8.2 The sponsor's assessment of noise impacts is used to identify stakeholders likely to be affected by noise impacts who must be informed of the airspace change before implementation, if the final airspace change proposal is approved.
- 8.3 The noise assessment, together with the reasons for the airspace change and its duration, **must** be included in any material used to inform these stakeholders. Sponsors **must** provide the CAA with evidence that stakeholders likely to be affected by noise impacts have been appropriately informed in accordance with Requirement 9.

Requirement 18: The sponsor must notify relevant aviation stakeholders of the airspace change

- 8.4 Sponsors **must** ensure that all relevant aviation stakeholders are aware of the airspace change sufficiently in advance of its implementation.
- 8.5 In Step 3, as part of the final airspace change proposal, the sponsor will have set out what aeronautical information needs to be published to inform airspace users. This will normally include a notice to aviation (NOTAM), aeronautical information circular, aeronautical information publication supplement, or a combination of these.
- 8.6 Following the CAA's decision, the sponsor **must** publish the aeronautical information. The process for publication depends on who the sponsor is:
- 8.6.1 If the sponsor is an air navigation service provider or a licensed or certificated aerodrome, the CAA will issue a change request authority. The sponsor **must** then submit a change request, including validated aeronautical data, to the UK Aeronautical Information Service via the

[Aurora Data Originators Portal](#). This must be done in line with the relevant submission cut-off dates for the intended publication date.

8.6.2 If the sponsor is not an air navigation service provider or a licensed or certificated aerodrome, the CAA will submit the change request to the UK Aeronautical Information Service on the sponsor's behalf, using the validated aeronautical data and documentation that was submitted in the final proposal.

8.7 In addition to formal publication requirements, the sponsor **should** consider using other appropriate channels to raise awareness of the airspace change among affected stakeholders. Depending on the nature and scale of the change, this could include:

8.7.1 Sharing information with representative bodies, including Defence Airspace and Air Traffic Management (DAATM).

8.7.2 Liaising with the CAA where there may be impacts beyond UK airspace or other international considerations.

8.7.3 Briefing airport consultative committees or flight operations groups.

8.7.4 Informing affected aerodromes, aircraft operators, air navigation service providers and flying clubs.

8.7.5 Using relevant press, appropriate aviation publications, websites, online platforms or general aviation events to raise awareness.

8.8 Information provided to stakeholders **should** include:

8.8.1 When the airspace change will start and finish.

8.8.2 Where the CAA decision can be found.

8.8.3 How to contact the sponsor while the airspace change is in effect.

8.8.4 How the sponsor will manage the transition into and out of the airspace change.

Post-implementation

Requirement 19: Following implementation, the sponsor must ensure the change maintains a high standard of safety

8.9 Following implementation, sponsors **must** ensure the change maintains a high standard of safety and take any necessary actions to achieve this. Such actions may or may not affect the approved airspace design.

8.10 If a sponsor needs to take an unexpected action to maintain a high standard of safety as a consequence of the airspace change, they **must** immediately inform

the CAA and provide details of the actions taken. There are two possible outcomes:

- 8.10.1 the CAA accepts the action was necessary and does not alter the approval of the original decision; or
 - 8.10.2 the sponsor may need to make a minor post-implementation amendment to the approved design.
- 8.11 Sponsors **must** inform and discuss with the CAA any intention to make a minor post-implementation amendment and provide a report (usually within six weeks of notifying intent), with evidence to support the requirement, which will be published on the airspace change portal.
- 8.12 The CAA will review the sponsor's report (usually within 28 days of receipt) and determine whether the proposed amendment:
- 8.12.1 remains within the scope and intent of the original airspace change approval;
 - 8.12.2 better achieves the objectives, impacts or outcomes anticipated by the original approval; and
 - 8.12.3 would not substantially alter the approved airspace design or its anticipated impacts.
- 8.13 If the CAA agrees that a post-implementation amendment should be made, the CAA will publish a statement to that effect on the airspace change portal. This agreement is not a new airspace change decision because the amendment remains consistent with the original approval.
- 8.14 If the post-implementation amendment is accepted by the CAA, the sponsor **must** inform stakeholders of the amendment and its expected effects.
- 8.15 Where the CAA determines that the proposed amendment falls outside the scope or intent of the original approval, substantially alters the approved design, or results in materially different impacts from those considered when the original decision was made, the amendment will not be approved, and we will provide guidance to the sponsor.
- 8.16 If the sponsor is required to submit a new statement of need and commence a new airspace change proposal, the CAA will consider how best to expedite that proposal, as directed by the Secretary of State. This will include consideration of how to scale the process and how not to duplicate work already carried out by the sponsor (or others), as guided by the Secretary of State.

Requirement 20: The sponsor must provide information requested by the CAA throughout the duration of the approved airspace change

- 8.17 The sponsor **must** provide any information, data, analysis, records or explanations requested by the CAA during the airspace change, or as a consequence of its implementation. Examples could include:
- 8.17.1 Implementation and operation of the approved airspace change.
 - 8.17.2 Operational performance or effectiveness of the approved airspace change.
 - 8.17.3 Safety, environmental or operational impacts.
 - 8.17.4 Stakeholder feedback, complaints or other matters raised during the approved airspace change.
 - 8.17.5 Compliance with any conditions or modifications attached to the CAA's decision.
 - 8.17.6 Monitoring, reporting or evidence gathering requirements associated with the approved airspace change.
 - 8.17.7 Any other matter relevant to the CAA's ongoing regulatory oversight of the approved airspace change.
- 8.18 The sponsor **must** provide the requested information within the timescale specified by the CAA, unless otherwise agreed by the CAA.
- 8.19 Where the information provided identifies outcomes or operational issues that differ materially from those anticipated in the approved proposal, the sponsor **should** explain the reasons for those differences and identify any actions taken, or proposed, to address them.

Engagement and complaints handling

Requirement 21: The sponsor must monitor any noise complaints received regarding the airspace change, and report them to the CAA

- 8.20 The sponsor **must** provide a mechanism for anyone impacted by noise impacts from the airspace change to be able to make a complaint.
- 8.21 At the end of a temporary change to airspace design, or if requesting an extension, the sponsor **must** inform the CAA about any noise complaints received or provide a nil return.
- 8.22 For airspace trials, the sponsor **must** inform the CAA about any noise complaints received (including nil returns) at regular intervals, which will be specified as part of the CAA's decision at Step 4. If the basis of the noise complaints suggests to the CAA that the sponsor failed to provide adequate information to stakeholders

before implementation, or that the trial is not meeting its objectives, the CAA will give careful consideration as to whether it is in the public interest to end the trial as soon as it is safe and practicable to do so.

Requirement 22: The sponsor must, if relevant issues are identified, consider what actions they can take to address those issues within the constraints of the final airspace design

- 8.23 The sponsor **must** inform the CAA about any other relevant issues identified and complaints received. These can include:
- 8.23.1 Complaints from airspace users about the airspace change not resulting in anticipated outcomes.
 - 8.23.2 Information relating to operational issues, including safety issues, that have not previously been identified.
 - 8.23.3 New information on noise impacts and/or impacts on protected areas and European sites that differs significantly from what was proposed or expected.
- 8.24 If these issues arise, the sponsor **must** consider what actions they can take to address those issues.
- 8.25 Any actions taken to address issues must remain within the constraints of the airspace design approved by the CAA.

Post-trial report

Requirement 23: For airspace trials, the sponsor must produce a post-trial report

- 8.26 Sponsors **must** submit a post-trial report to the CAA. Airspace trials can vary in size, scale and complexity and the appropriate level of post-trial report will be detailed in a condition attached to the CAA decision at Step 4. The information required could include the following:
- 8.26.1 Whether the objectives and intended outcomes of the trial were successfully achieved.
 - 8.26.2 Whether assumptions made in the original impact assessments remain valid having considered the information collected during the trial.
 - 8.26.3 Data requested by the CAA to inform future policy.
 - 8.26.4 A summary of any feedback or noise complaints received, or any issues identified, and any actions taken as a result.