

***Airspace Issues***

**What this paper is about**

Provides a summary of the key issues of interest to ACCs relating to the CAA's Future Airspace Strategy (FAS), the London Airspace Management Programme (LAMP) and the CAA's current consultation on the airspace change process. The paper is essentially to provide background for agenda items 5(b) and (c) and provide an opportunity for delegates to discuss the issues of concern.

**Points for Discussion**

- The current implementation programme for FAS and how ACCs have been involved in the airspace modernisation programme at their airport
- Delegates' initial views on the proposed changes to the airspace change process;
- Any matters arising from the CAA's presentations at the meeting.

**Possible Action**

Dependent on issues raised at the meeting

## **Future Airspace Strategy (FAS)**

1. As reported to the Annual Meeting over the past few years, throughout Europe there is a move to simplify and harmonise the way airspace and air traffic control is used through the Single European Sky project. In the UK and Ireland the CAA is meeting those and other issues through the Future Airspace Strategy (FAS) which sets out a plan to modernise airspace by 2020.

2. Achieving sustainable growth in aviation is dependent on improving the way air traffic is managed and moves around the airspace. Advancements in 'Air Traffic Management' (ATM) can generate significant commercial, environmental and safety benefits including:

- Fuel savings from more direct routeing and greater flight efficiency are expected to generate direct financial benefits to operators.
- Time savings from more direct routeing and the provision of additional capacity when and where required are expected to generate direct financial benefits to operators.
- CO2 savings from more direct routeing and greater flight efficiency are expected to generate societal benefits.
- Noise reductions from less aircraft holding at low levels are expected to generate societal benefits.
- Passenger time savings from more direct routeing and the provision of additional capacity when and where required are expected to generate societal benefits.
- FAS deployment will enable airports to optimise runway efficiency and better manage queuing on the ground.
- FAS concentrates on increasing the flow of information that is shared across airports, strengthening their resilience to unexpected events and poor weather and introducing new operating techniques to better sequence departures.
- Re-designing the airspace structure and route network will enable operators to make the most of the capability of their aircraft to fly more continuous climbs and descents into and out of airports

3. The FAS Deployment Plan<sup>1</sup> joins up the individual investment plans of operators, airports and air traffic control bodies, with the FAS roadmap, to establish a credible delivery programme. The plan describes the new ATM capabilities that will be deployed in the UK and UK/Ireland Functional Airspace Block between 2013 and 2020. It represents the first step towards delivering the FAS proposal, and in turn the European wide Single European Sky initiative to modernise the operations of the aviation sector.

4. The paper<sup>2</sup> presented to last year's Annual Meeting in Manchester set out the progress that has been made across the UK in taking forward FAS and the implementation of new navigation technology (PBN) and the issues that had been experienced at some member ACCs. Stuart Lindsey, Manager Airspace Regulation, CAA will present an update on FAS at the meeting.

## **London Airspace Management Programme (LAMP)**

5. The first phase of the London Airspace Management Programme (LAMP) went live on 4 February 2016, following approval by the CAA in November 2015. The changes pave the way for wider modernisation of airspace to deliver more efficient flights, saving fuel and reducing CO2 emissions, and reducing noise, keeping aircraft higher for longer and minimising areas regularly overflown.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.caa.co.uk/Commercial-industry/Airspace/Future-airspace-strategy/Targets-and-time-scales---Future-airspace-strategy/>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.ukaccs.info/15almfiles/15caafasreview.pdf>

6. LAMP seeks to modernise the route system over London and the southeast. LAMP is being progressed by NATS which provides air traffic control for the route network across the whole of the UK. It involves collaboration between NATS and individual airports in the development of, and consultation on, changes to airspace management; collaboration ensures that modernisation achieves both network and local benefits.

### **PBN Airspace Design Guidance**

7. In April this year, the CAA issued CAP1378: Airspace Design Guidance: Noise Mitigation Considerations when Designing PBN Departure and Arrival Procedures<sup>3</sup>. This document explores the impacts and possibilities of using PBN routes to mitigate noise impacts and does not make reference to the stand-alone benefits of performance based versus conventional navigation. It provides options for consideration by airspace designers and sponsors and a common reference when considering aircraft noise mitigation in the placement of PBN routes.

8. The CAA acknowledges that there will be no optimal solution that addresses all stakeholder needs but a balance will be required in order to find the most acceptable route positioning or operating concept. The optimal solution will be heavily dependent on the local circumstances; establishing 'what good looks like' across the local collective of stakeholders will remain the key factor in identifying which solution is most appropriate in any given circumstance. For example, for some stakeholders, concentration on a single route avoiding main population centres may be their preferred option, whereas others may seek multiple routes to disperse traffic or achieve periods of relative relief from aircraft noise. ACCs may wish to refer to this helpful guidance document when considering the implementation of new routes and/or the use of new navigation technology at their airports.

### **CAA consultation on changes to the airspace change process**

9. The CAA is currently consulting<sup>4</sup> on proposed changes to the airspace change process. The consultation runs until 15 June.

10. The consultation has been issued following a report by consultants which considered that there were a number of faults with the existing airspace change process. The report identified a number of issues mainly focusing on the need for greater transparency and better engagement with stakeholders. The consultants found that there was a lack of trust in the current process and there was a lack of conviction that the CAA were doing enough to engage with all stakeholders. As a result airspace decisions reached by the CAA were sometimes greeted with suspicion.

11. In response the CAA state that they wish to design a fair, transparent and engaging process for handling airspace change proposals, striking the right balance between the interests of passengers and the aviation industry (including private flyers), and people affected by aircraft noise and emissions that impact on air quality (and, more widely, climate change). However the CAA advises that a number of issues are out of scope. This is due to the fact that these are related to government policy (including metrics and NPRs). The CAA further state that their objective is to optimise their process to ensure that all stakeholders are adequately consulted as part of a transparent, proportionate process. The process should be impartial and evidence-based, and should take proper account of the needs and interests of all affected stakeholders.

12. The CAA is seeking to respond to the criticisms by introducing a number of changes to the existing process. They wish to introduce four gateways into the process at key stages - definition; options appraisal, consultation and decision. Stakeholders would be involved at each gateway and their views sought. At these stages the CAA would validate all information and sign it off. The CAA would also oversee engagement with stakeholders to ensure that this was effective. All information

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<sup>3</sup> <http://publicapps.caa.co.uk/docs/33/CAP%201378%20APR16.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> [https://consultations.caa.co.uk/policy-development/proposals-for-revised-airspace-change-process/consult\\_view](https://consultations.caa.co.uk/policy-development/proposals-for-revised-airspace-change-process/consult_view)

about a proposal would be fully accessible through an online portal. There would be public evidence sessions at which stakeholders could present their views.

13. The consultants also recommended an independent oversight committee to monitor the process. The CAA is not accepted this recommendation on the grounds that they do not consider that such a committee would add value. There is also the issue as to how such a committee might be staffed - the main source of expertise is likely to be within the CAA, NATS and Government and hardly support the principle of independence.

14. Trevor Metson, Policy Development, CAA will present an overview of the consultation on the principles for the changes to the airspace change process at the meeting.

### **Issues for ACCs**

15. It is welcome that the CAA is willing to engage more with all affected stakeholders. This would help ensure that airspace changes are accepted by all those affected and avoid the existing disputes. However it is disappointing that the issue of metrics seems to fall out of scope. One of the key factors in gaining local trust is having information that is readily understandable and accepted by all parties especially the local community. It would seem that the existence of a common, accessible and accepted information base is vital if local communities are to be fully engaged and buy in to airspace change proposals. Whilst the development of an online portal will clearly help with the issue of transparency, the information on the portal needs to be accepted as the base information on which decisions will be made.

16. The CAA's willingness to seek to engage with local stakeholders is welcome. However greater clarity as to who these might be would be helpful. Given that airport consultative committees operate on a statutory basis, it would have been expected that ACCs might have been highlighted as a key local stakeholder. At some airports, there has been a proliferation of local interest groups. In many cases, it has been difficult to identify who they represent. The CAA might be facing a challenge in identifying local representation groups and should seek to clarify the position.

17. As regards an independent oversight committee, the CAA's doubts about the added value this might provide would seem justified. The membership could probably only be drawn from a limited panel of qualified experts - mainly in the CAA and government. Having one part of the CAA oversee another part of the organisation hardly supports the principle of independence.

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