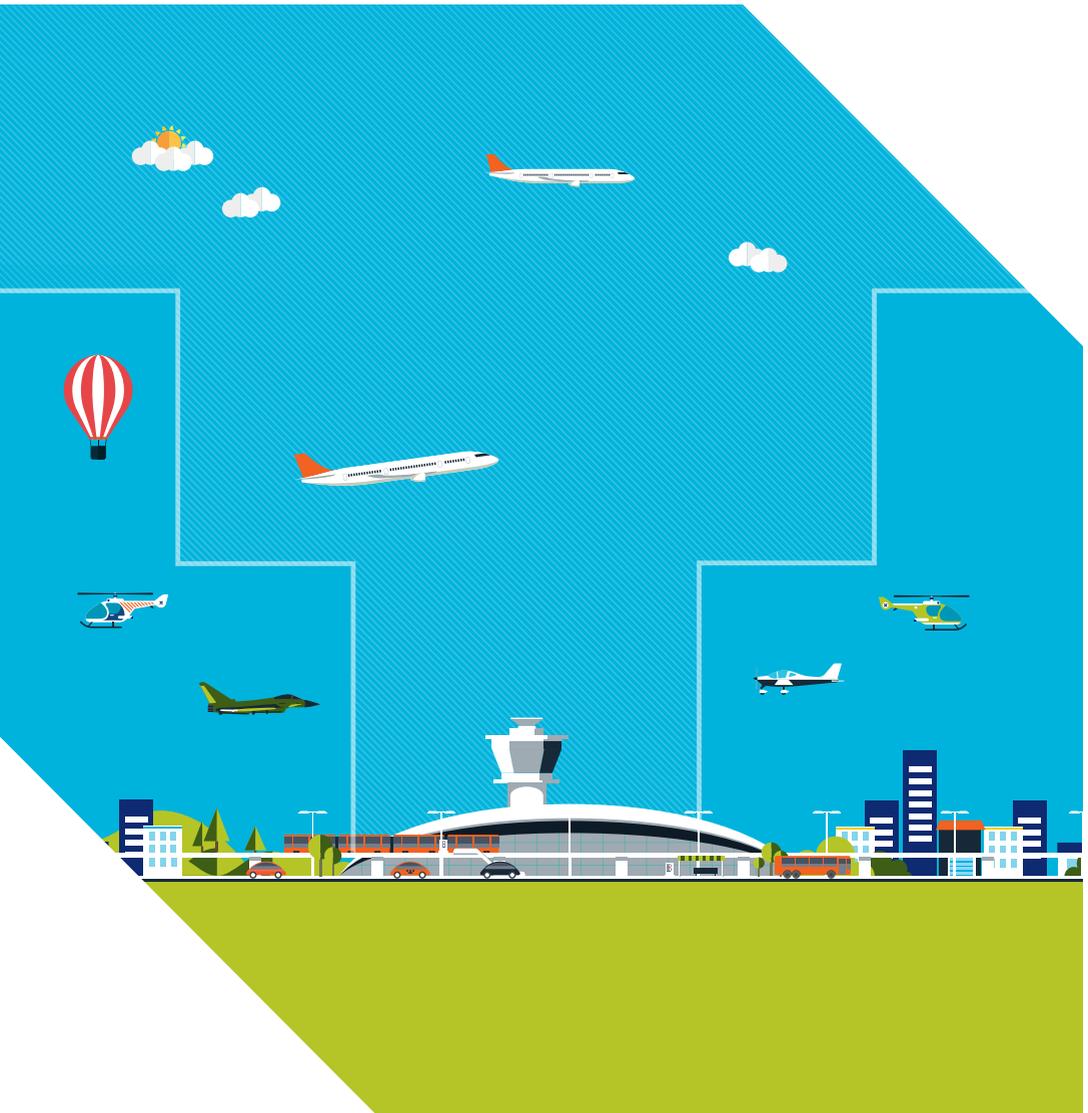


How decisions about the UK's airspace are made

CAP1616D



What is airspace and how does it work?

Our airspace is a key part of our national infrastructure.

Although you can't physically see it, the airspace above our heads is divided into complex structures to enable its many different users, from commercial airliners to military jets and private pilots, to fly safely.

In controlled airspace, the type of airspace primarily used by airlines, air traffic controllers manage the airspace to deliver safe and efficient operations based on an aircraft's flight plan and wishes of the pilot. They decide the safest and most efficient routing for every aircraft (taking into account aspects like weather and other aircraft), within the scope of the airspace design structure.

What is the CAP1616 airspace design change process?

CAP1616 was launched in January 2018 and is the process we at the Civil Aviation Authority use to make decisions on proposals to change the design of the UK's airspace.

It is an evidence-based system that was designed in consultation with stakeholders to be fair, transparent, consistent and proportionate.

The process has seven stages and four gateway sign-offs that give greater certainty that the change sponsor is following the process correctly. It places emphasis on the importance of engagement with people and organisations affected by airspace changes.

It is not designed to be a referendum of views but it is the process by which we gather the evidence to make a decision fairly having considered the views of all the various stakeholder groups, in accordance with our duties in Section 70 of the Transport Act 2000.

A key pillar of the transparency of CAP1616 is the online airspace portal found at <https://airspacechange.caa.co.uk/>. Here, airspace changes are submitted and monitored, stakeholder comments can be made, and viewed, and relevant documentation can be inspected.

It is important stakeholders participate in the CAP1616 process and we encourage everyone to engage with the organisation proposing a change to the airspace (known as a change sponsor in CAP1616) whenever possible.

CAP 1616: Roles and responsibilities

UK Civil Aviation Authority

- The CAA is the airspace regulator and primary decision-maker, responsible for administering the airspace change process and providing guidance on the process to stakeholders.
- It is not responsible for developing airspace designs or instigating airspace changes.
- It is bound by statutory duties, must adhere to directions, and take in to account environmental guidance provided by the Secretary of State.
- The CAA runs the online airspace portal where airspace changes are submitted and monitored, stakeholder comments can be made, and relevant documentation can be viewed.

The change sponsor

- The change sponsor owns the airspace change proposal and is responsible for developing it, including taking into account feedback from relevant stakeholders.
- Anyone can sponsor an airspace change proposal – although it is typically an airport or air navigation service provider.

Stakeholders

- Stakeholders who may be impacted by airspace changes can engage with change sponsors on all aspects of a proposal.
- Engagement in the first two stages is designed to be at a representative level but all stakeholders need to be consulted formally on a proposal at the consultation stage (Stage 3).
- Generally, the change sponsor collates all the stakeholder views and presents these to the Civil Aviation Authority. In some cases, stakeholders are also able to make their views known directly to the Civil Aviation Authority before it makes its decision at a Public Evidence Session.

Parliament & government

- Parliament and the Government are responsible for setting the CAA's statutory objectives, outlining the Civil Aviation Authority's functions and responsibilities and providing it with any further guidance.
- For certain types of airspace change, the Secretary of State may also decide to call-in a particular airspace change proposal and to make a decision instead of the Civil Aviation Authority.

Independent Commission on Civil Aviation Noise (ICCAN)

- ICCAN is the independent UK body responsible for creating, compiling and disseminating best practice to the aviation industry on the management of civil aviation noise and advising government in this area.
- Within the airspace change process, ICCAN's role is to provide best-practice guidance on noise management techniques and on the accessibility of noise information.
- We expect change sponsors to be mindful of ICCAN's role and guidance throughout the process and to factor it into a proposal where relevant.

Seven stages of CAP 1616

Stage 1 - Define

The seven-stage process begins with the change sponsor preparing a Statement of Need. This sets out what it is seeking to achieve by changing the airspace design and the change sponsor meets with us to discuss it. This is followed by engagement by the change sponsor with those potentially affected by the proposed change on the underlying design principles. At this point, we will agree with the change sponsor the timeline for each of the gateways.

Stage 2 - Develop & Assess

The change sponsor continues to liaise with stakeholders and develops one or more options. It then carries out an initial appraisal of the impacts, both positive and negative.

Stage 3 - Consult

Once it has narrowed down the design options, the change sponsor prepares a consultation and assesses who needs be included. The change sponsor consults with those interested parties, including, where appropriate, local communities.

Stage 4 - Update and Submit

In the light of responses in the consultation the change sponsor may modify the proposals before making a formal submission of the proposal to us for a decision.

Stage 5 - Decide

We assess the proposal and, depending on the type of airspace change being proposed, will do the following:

- Hold a Public Evidence Session so that affected stakeholders can engage directly with the decision maker;
- Issue a draft decision either approving or rejecting the proposal, pending further comments;
- Issue a 'minded to' decision at the request of the Secretary of State who may have 'called in' the proposal; or
- Issue a final decision either approving or rejecting the proposal.

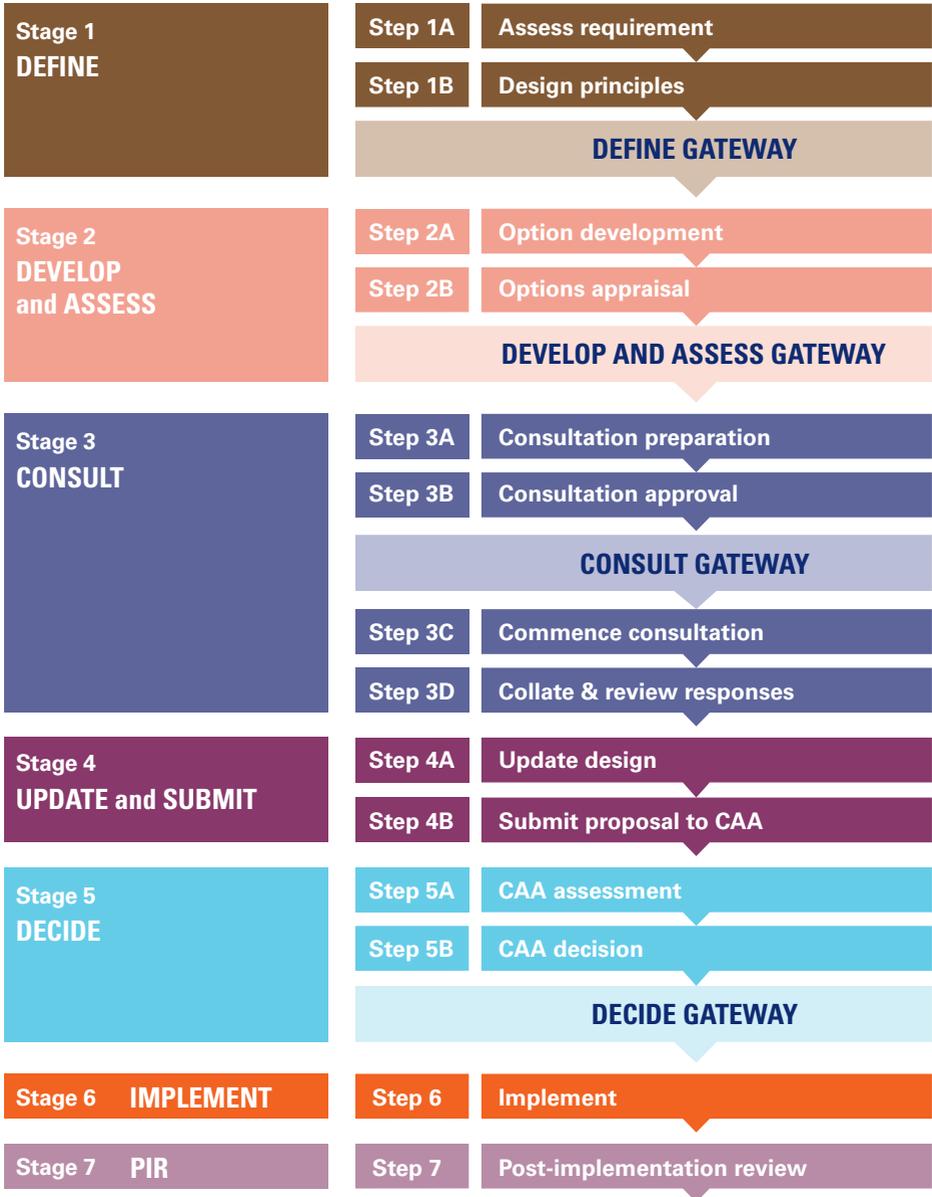
Stage 6 - Implement

If the proposal is approved, the change sponsor will implement the changes. During the first year of implementation the change sponsor must gather feedback and data on how the airspace is functioning.

Stage 7 - Post-Implementation Review

We carry out a review of the change, usually after 12 months of operation. It is important to note though that this is not a review of the decision itself, but a review to make sure the change is doing what is said it would.

What does the airspace change process look like?



When and how can you get involved

Engagement with people and organisations affected by airspace changes is a core part of the CAP1616 process. It places the responsibility for this engagement primarily on Change Sponsors and they must use it to inform the development of their proposal.

We therefore advise all stakeholders to engage with Change Sponsors whenever possible and to actively participate in the consultations associated with their airspace change proposals.

During the first two stages, change sponsors are only required to engage at a representative level, but they may choose to go further. At Stage 3 – Consult though, they need to engage with all stakeholders, including impacted communities.

The opportunities throughout the process where stakeholders can engage directly with the Civil Aviation Authority:

- Step 5A – You may be able to attend a Public Evidence Session.
- Step 5B – You may be able to submit feedback on the Civil Aviation Authority's draft decision on the airspace change proposal.
- Stage 7 – You submit feedback on the impact of an airspace change for the Civil Aviation Authority to consider in its Post Implementation Review.

It is important that we strike a balance between the transparency of the process and our independence as a decision maker. We are therefore not able to substantively respond to queries or comments in relation to any specific aspect of an airspace change proposal, outside of the appropriate points in the CAP1616 process.

The PPR decision-making process

From the February 2020 the Civil Aviation Authority will have a new decision-making role for a wholly new category of airspace change. This category is known as a planned and permanent redistribution of air traffic through changes in air traffic control operational procedure. We refer to this as PPR for short.

The PPR decision-making process is based on a shortened version of our airspace change process.

Before the PPR process begins, the air navigation service provider goes through an important internal 'trigger' process whereby it identifies whether any proposed change in air traffic control operational procedure meets the criteria for a 'relevant PPR' and must therefore go through the PPR decision-making process.

Airspace modernisation

The Government and the Civil Aviation Authority believe that airspace modernisation is necessary and is providing leadership to support this. The aviation industry is coming together to deliver the benefits through a coordinated airspace modernisation programme.

Airspace modernisation aims to make journeys quicker, quieter and cleaner, and deliver more capacity. This additional capacity will also directly support jobs and generate economic benefits beyond the airport fence.

It aims to create opportunities to reduce the aviation industry's environmental impact by reducing carbon and managing noise. We will see less of a need for stacking, where aircraft join a circular queue to land at busy airports, reducing carbon emissions and bringing noise benefits to those who live beneath them.

Airspace modernisation will change the noise impacts for some communities, and while some will see a reduction in noise, others may experience more noise.

New technology may provide an opportunity for concentrated flight routes avoiding populated areas, or multiple routes to provide respite. Whether approved flight paths are concentrated or dispersed will be informed by local circumstances and in consultation with local communities.

New technology and new airspace designs may also provide opportunities to reduce the amount of controlled airspace required by airports for commercial flights, allowing greater access for general aviation users.

The Government and the Civil Aviation Authority have tasked an organisation called NATS (En Route) plc (NERL) with preparing a coordinated implementation plan for airspace changes (or airspace change masterplan), including its programme management – starting with Southern England. It is expected that this masterplan will be published and included in the Airspace Modernisation Strategy in late 2020.

This masterplan will set out where airspace change could be taken forward to provide benefits, to consider potential conflicts, trade-offs and interdependencies, and set out a preferred implementation plan. The masterplan will not include the detail of individual airspace designs or solutions. The change sponsor of individual changes (usually an airport) will develop the design and consult local communities as of the design process.

Airports will be consulting closely with local communities and other airspace users in 2021/22 so if you live near one of the airports making changes you will get to have your say on the flight path options.



To see current airspace changes, please visit
our portal: airspacechange.caa.co.uk