

Engagement on Progressive Aerodrome Airspace Design Guidance

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Executive Summary

The Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) is seeking views on draft guidance that introduces a proportionate, flexible approach to designing airspace structures around UK aerodromes. This framework sets out how additional or alternative airspace constructs, used individually or in combination, can deliver incremental improvements in safety and efficiency.

The guidance provides a structured “toolbox” of airspace options and introduces decision frameworks that support sponsors in selecting the least restrictive, minimum-volume solution capable of achieving an acceptable level of safety performance.

The draft reflects the objectives of the Airspace Modernisation Strategy (AMS), including the move toward more flexible, risk-based airspace design, better integration with adjacent controlled airspace and increased use of digital data services. It is intended to complement CAP 1616 by assisting change sponsors during the development of conceptual design options prior to consultation.

The CAA invites aerodrome operators, air navigation service providers, instrument flight procedure designers, airspace designers and users and other stakeholders to comment on the clarity and practicality of the proposed guidance.

Chapter 1

Purpose of this engagement document

Why are we seeking feedback?

- 1.1 The CAA is seeking feedback to ensure that the proposed guidance is clear, proportionate and workable across the diverse operational environments found at UK aerodromes. Your views will help confirm whether the approach supports consistent, risk-based decision-making and whether the design considerations and airspace options are presented in a way that is readily usable by change sponsors.
- 1.2 Stakeholder input is essential to ensure the final guidance reflects operational realities and can be applied effectively within the existing CAP 1616 framework. Responses will directly inform the refinement of the document prior to publication.

Why now?

- 1.3 The CAA is seeking views now because there is currently no consolidated guidance that explains how proportionate airspace structures can be designed around aerodromes within the existing regulatory framework. As wider work under the AMS progresses, it is important to provide clear, consistent material that supports coherent and transparent airspace design decisions. Feedback from stakeholders is requested to ensure that the guidance is accessible, clearly presented and sufficiently comprehensive to serve as a practical and reliable resource for aerodrome airspace design.

Chapter 2

Engagement on draft guidance

Purpose of this engagement

- 2.1 This engagement seeks feedback to confirm that the draft guidance distributed in conjunction with this document is usable and sufficiently comprehensive to support proportionate and transparent design of airspace structures around aerodromes. The aim is to ensure the material is accessible, readable and fit for purpose before it is finalised. It is important to the CAA that the document achieves the objectives for its stakeholders, so while the CAA is not required to seek feedback on the practicality of the documents they publish, it is felt that it is important to do so on this occasion to achieve the optimum product for the end user.

Scope of this engagement

- 2.2 Respondents are invited to review the draft guidance and provide comments on its clarity, structure, completeness and practical applicability.
- 2.3 This engagement is limited to the presentation and usability of the guidance. It is not seeking views on the policy basis or regulatory requirements for the airspace structures described. The guidance is not intended to imply when the CAA considers a particular airspace structure should be used; rather, it explains the tools available to an airspace change sponsor once a need for air traffic services has been determined. It also does not request views on whether particular airspace structures would be suitable at specific aerodromes, which remains subject to the CAP1616 airspace change process.

Conduct of this engagement

- 2.4 The engagement will be open for 4 weeks from 28th April to 26th May 2026.
- 2.5 The engagement will be administered via the CAA consultation portal and anybody who has access to the link sent out in conjunction to this document will be able to respond during the engagement period.

Request for feedback

- 2.6 For ease of reference for stakeholders, a list of the questions is also included in [Annex A](#).

Conclusion of the engagement

- 2.7 Once the engagement has ended, if we consider it necessary, we may publish a short summary of engagement responses and how we have taken these into account as well as publishing a final version of the guidance.

CAA focal point

- 2.8 Stakeholders seeking clarification on the proposals detailed herein should contact Airspace & ATM Policy via email with the subject header 'Engagement on Progressive Aerodrome Airspace Design Guidance' at airspace.policy@caa.co.uk.

ANNEX A

Engagement questions

The survey

Section 1 – Stakeholder information

The first part of the survey is intended to gather information on who is providing the survey response. Stakeholders will be offered the opportunity for their response to be published anonymously, otherwise your name and, if appropriate, organisation may be published alongside your response in our subsequent report.

Section 2 – Feedback

The next part of the survey asks a series of questions relating to the clarity, structure, completeness and practical applicability of the draft material.

- Is the structure and flow of the draft material logical and easy to follow? If no, please provide any suggested improvements.
- From your perspective, is any content omitted that you would expect to be included in guidance of this nature? If yes, please outline the areas you believe require inclusion.
- Are there any parts of the guidance that would benefit from additional explanation, context or elaboration to support a clear understanding of its intent and application? If so, please specify which areas and what further detail would be helpful.
- Is the draft material practically applicable for airspace change sponsors in preparing, developing or supporting an airspace change proposal under the CAP1616 process? If not, please explain any limitations or challenges you foresee.
- Do you have any further comments, observations or recommendations?