

**20<sup>th</sup> December 2024**

Air Space Modernisation (CAP 3029)  
Civil Aviation Authority  
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Via email: [airspace.modernisation@caa.co.uk](mailto:airspace.modernisation@caa.co.uk)

**To whom it may concern,**

This is CISHA'S response to CAP 3029 : *"Airspace modernisation consultation on a UK Airspace Design Service"* consultation. Individual Heathrow forums, communities, stakeholders and individuals, many of whom are actively engaged with CISHA, will also have submitted responses to the consultation. This response is focused on key aspects of the consultation.

The contents of this response can be made public.

**General Remarks**

Air space change represents one of the most sensitive topics for communities. Even minor changes can have an impact on the population and, in a congested air space environment like the south-east, changes can cascade impact.

We support the need for a more transparent and efficient process which helps to eliminate uncertainty for communities and stakeholders and is able to deliver safe and fair solutions. We do, however, believe that credible political oversight must be built into any outcome to ensure that communities have confidence in the process and any eventual compromise and that meaningful engagement, as close to the communities (individual airports) as possible is maintained. That suggests the DfT maintains its roll to "call-in" changes of both national significance and major changes in and around London where the impacts will be considerable.

## **Selected Consultation Responses**

**Consultation question 1: In general terms, do you agree that a single airspace design entity in the form of a UK Airspace Design Service (UKADS) provider, properly scoped, funded and implemented, would address the challenges identified and improve delivery confidence in airspace modernization ?**

Yes, we would hope this joined up approach would increase transparency and reduce confusion and suspicion. We also believe that a more cohesive approach will ensure that published timelines are maintained. Slippage causes confusion and additional worry within communities. Ultimately, political decision making on the final changes across the London area seems essential; and that the guidance that the design authority is to work through should itself be transparent, and the implied tradeoffs brought out clearly for communities and others.

**Consultation question 2: What are your views on our proposal that the end-state UKADS scope encompasses all ACPs in UK airspace ?**

Yes, we support this particularly since due to the UK's geography and the relatively congested airspace of south-east England.

**Consultation question 3: What are your views on our proposal that the short-term UKADS scope should be the London TMA region ?**

Yes, and we agree with the London TMA 'plus' definition for UKADS Scope. Considering interdependencies at this stage is essential, in particular, for those communities which are primarily impacted by Heathrow traffic but because they are further out experience the impact of other airport flows.

**Consultation question 4: What are your views on our proposals for the UKADS scope in the medium term ?**

**Our proposed medium-term scope includes other ACPs deemed a priority, such as masterplan clusters at risk, changes mandated by law, and specific state-wide changes supporting the Airspace Modernisation Strategy. Please note that the CAA has already**

**published prioritisation principles for airspace change and a delivery plan for the Airspace Modernisation Strategy.**

We agree. Additionally taking into account future changes linked to performance / environmental legislation.

**Consultation question 5: Do you have any views on our proposed two-phase approach ?**

We support the approach especially since it places a strong priority on the London TMA.

**Consultation question 6: Do you have any views on the models that have been considered ?**

We support the lead model option as being a pragmatic choice.

**Consultation question 7: Do you have any views on our proposal that NERL takes on the initial task of providing airspace design services through UKADS1 ?**

We support NERL undertaking the role but we would wish to see robust oversight from sponsors, with a governance structure that recognises the political choices involved in major airspace changes, and which provides the community with reassurance about the approach.

**Consultation question 8: Do you consider that in progressing a particular cluster of the masterplan, UKADS1 should take over ACOG's current coordination or masterplanning role for that cluster ?**

Yes. This would be essential to simplify the process and increase transparency.

**Consultation question 9: Do you agree that organisations should be able to continue sponsoring ACPs that are in scope of UKADS1 if UKADS1 is not able to prioritise them ?**

Yes. This is particularly relevant for an airport the size of Heathrow.

**Consultation question 10: Do you agree with the proposals for UKADS1's remit ?**

We understand the holistic approach to the remit, but we need to be conscious of a deep suspicion held by communities of the independence of NATS based on its ownership. It is vital that independence is taken into account, and the importance of focus on the overall benefits to society including system benefits, rather than just 'the needs of the network'.

**Consultation question 11: Do you agree with the approach we propose for consultation and engagement on ACPs, including who pays for these activities ?**

Yes

About right as outlined in Scenario A but we would wish to see more detail on governance and engagement to ensure that adequate consultation takes place. In line with the Air Navigation Guidance we stand ready to look at our own role as an ACC in that process, and would seek to work constructively with other parties (including other ACCs and UKACC) to ensure joined up engagement arrangements are effective in delivering meaningful consultation and engagement and arguably look at our own role in that process.

The underpinning philosophy of these suggests that individual airports cannot lead consultation for multi airport changes.

Joined up, timely and transparent community - friendly consultations which encompass all relevant changes within a reasonable time period will be essential to ensure constructive debate, challenge and helpful mitigations where possible.

**Consultation question 12: What are your views on our transition proposals ?**

About right.

**Consultation question 13: What are your views on our proposal that, where appropriate, UKADS1 should merge the existing ACPs into a single ACP for the cluster or deployment ?**

We support Option 3 representing the most effective way of creating a coherent and effective approach. The complexity of the potential changes would need careful management in terms of option appraisal of alternative approaches and the associated trade offs, consultation arrangements, and a recognition that ultimate decisions may need to be political in nature rather than technocratic e.g. via call in. The contradiction between merging of ACPs and single ACPs still existing does not escape us.

**Consultation question 14: What are your views on our proposal that the CAA approves each transition plan ?**

This is essential and will provide an opportunity for direct engagement with the CAA on a particular plan.

**Consultation question 15: What changes would you propose to amend and/or supplement CAP 1616 in order to accommodate the UKADS ?**

None at present but we look forward to contributing to this consultation.

**Consultation question 16: What are your views on our proposals for UKADS1 governance ?**

The proposals seem logical but the detail will be important. Sponsors should ensure there is regular independent assurance of the programme of work, given the risks of failure or slippage, to ensure it stays on track. As a pivotal ACC, CISHA would be happy to play a role in the recruitment of members of the UKADS1 Advisory Board: it is important these members are trusted by all stakeholders including communities. We suggest that it will be critical to include community perspectives, and expertise in community engagement, on the advisory board too although we appreciate the challenges of introducing geographic bias, nonetheless it cannot just be airlines and consumers.

**Consultation question 17: Would these proposals give sufficient reassurance that potential conflicts of interest arising from NERL providing airspace design services through UKADS1 are mitigated ?**

Yes, with sufficient independent audit and assurance of the separation of interests within NATS, and with assurance of the technical inputs and outputs to avoid bias.

**Consultation question 18: What are your views on our proposed new Airspace Design Charge to meet the efficient costs of NERL in providing an airspace design service through UKADS1 and to create a UK Airspace Design Support Fund for other eligible UK airport ACPs ?**

We support the principle that ‘user pays’.

**Consultation question 19: Which elements of expenditure on an ACP do you think should be eligible under the UK Airspace Design Support Fund ?**

We do not have a firm view on this but there are strong arguments for a UK Airspace Design Support Fund covering more of the expenditure. It logically follows a more joined up approach to air space design which is not based on silos of interest.

**Consultation question 20: Do you have any views on our proposed concept for UKADS2 ?**

About right.

**Consultation question 21: Do you have any other comments about the proposals in this consultation document or about the accompanying Regulatory Impact Assessment? Is there anything we have missed ?**

Whilst the Air Navigation Guidance provides clear parameters on many elements of an option appraisal, it is important to recognise from the outset that not all elements of the framework are monetised (including several aspects of noise disbenefit), and so even the best cost-benefit analysis of options may not always produce clear ‘technocratic’ answers. A degree of judgement will be needed in discriminating between options, some of which may have very different consequences for communities.

We would finish by stressing that as ultimately the direction of travel suggests ‘trade-offs’ and compromise the need for clarity of decision-making and transparent and meaningful engagement is more important than ever.

Yours faithfully

**CISHA**

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