

TAG Farnborough Airport Airspace Change Proposal - FAQ

What is an Airspace Change Proposal (ACP)?

It is a formal UK Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) process that is being undertaken by TAG Farnborough Airport in order to introduce a new airspace design to benefit airport operations. The standard published process is outlined in CAA guideline documents CAP724 and CAP725.

What do you mean by airspace?

Airspace is the vertical and lateral extent within which fixed wing aircraft, helicopters and other types of aircraft fly. Airspace is categorised by the CAA in a number of ways, which determine the rules governing its operation and the requirements placed on pilots and air traffic controllers.

How is airspace currently managed at the airport?

TAG Farnborough Airport currently operates within Class G airspace (uncontrolled airspace), which is shared with other airports, gliding sites and general aviation activities. Presently, while controlling airport traffic, TAG Farnborough radar controllers have to observe and take account of non-airport traffic, which can result in longer, less direct routings, less predictable climb or descent profiles for aircraft flying out of or into the airport and an increase in cockpit and air traffic control workload during take-offs and landings.

While TAG Farnborough Airport operates to the highest safety standards within the current airspace environment, Class G airspace is less able to efficiently support predictable and structured arrivals and departures that are required to maintain an efficient operation as the number of air transport movements (ATMs) increases at the airport. TAG Farnborough Airport currently handles approximately 25,000 ATMs per annum and has approval to increase the number of ATMs up to 50,000 per annum by 2019.

Why does TAG Farnborough Airport propose to change its airspace?

The objective of the proposed airspace change is to create a new operating environment with elements of 'controlled' airspace, which offers all airspace users predictability and consistency of operation. Creating a known air traffic control environment will assist the airport in catering for an increasing number of air transport movements and do so in a way which benefits efficiency and safety for many airspace users, and the environment.

What is controlled airspace?

Controlled airspace is a defined area of airspace within which all aircraft must be in communication with air traffic control and follow its instructions.

What are the benefits of the proposed airspace change?

The proposed airspace change aims to create a more predictable flow of air traffic to and from TAG Farnborough Airport, which has a number of advantages.

Overall airspace efficiency

A new airspace environment with controlled airspace would create more predictability in planning and managing operations, and also enable the introduction of routes based on advanced navigation standards. This could result in the following benefits:

- More precise and efficient inbound and outbound flight paths
- Fewer flights at low altitudes as arriving aircraft will remain higher for longer and departing aircraft will climb higher more quickly
- Net reduction in people overflown
- Reduced delays (both on the ground and in the air)

Creating more efficient airspace at TAG Farnborough Airport would benefit airport traffic, other airspace users and the environment.

Other general aviation airspace users would maintain the ability to cross the airspace with permission from air traffic control or to fly around the airspace.

Safety

While the current Class G airspace is managed in accordance with the highest safety standards, TAG Farnborough Airport is committed to continually identifying ways to advance safety standards. By changing to a new airspace environment, which includes controlled airspace, the airport will be able to create a known and more predictable environment.

Environment

With improvements in efficiency and safety, a new airspace environment could achieve reductions in noise around the airport as well as reduced fuel usage and emissions over time (including CO₂), compared with doing nothing.

However, in developing design options, there is a balance to be struck between competing benefits. For example, low-level altitude routings may prioritise the avoidance of areas of population to reduce the impact of noise but could lead to an increase in track miles, thereby potentially negating the fuel-saving benefits. The consultation seeks to explain this balance and asks for feedback.

If implemented, how will the ACP affect local people in and around TAG Farnborough Airport?

The impact on local residents and stakeholders has been of primary importance throughout the pre-consultation design phase.

Noise is an important consideration for local people and the proposed design option aims to further reduce the impact of noise; for instance, by optimising arrival and departure routes.

Will it lead to an increase in noise for local people?

Overall, the new airspace design should lead to less noise as new arrival and departure routes will be optimised to further reduce the overall noise impact.

The proposed design aims to minimise delays for arriving aircraft, resulting in less people being overflown at low altitudes, as well as reducing delays to aircraft on the ground waiting to depart.

Will the Airspace Change Proposal affect the hours of operation?

No. There will be no change to the airport's hours of operation.

Who will prepare the Airspace Change Proposal?

The proposal will be prepared by TAG Farnborough Airport; the 'sponsor' of the proposal as defined by the CAA. The airport has also contracted NATS, the UK air navigation service provider, who has considerable experience in carrying out airspace changes, to assist in technical and operational aspects.

Who will review the Airspace Change Proposal and how will a final decision be made?

Airspace Change Proposals follow a series of prescriptive steps outlined in CAA document CAP725. Before the proposal is submitted, there is comprehensive engagement with stakeholders and a formal consultation phase of at least 12 weeks, when anyone is welcome to respond, including members of the public.

After the consultation ends, we will analyse and consider all the feedback, and produce a report detailing our findings and any changes to the design. We will then write and submit an Airspace Change Proposal (ACP).

Once submitted, the ACP will be reviewed by the CAA's Safety and Airspace Regulation Group (SARG), which is legally obligated to ensure that airspace changes are undertaken fairly, properly and with demonstrable high levels of engagement and consultation. SARG will make a decision on whether to approve the proposal and can add conditions that it deems appropriate. SARG is required to make its decisions in accordance with its remit as outlined in CAP724 and CAP725.

What has happened so far?

The initial airspace design phase began in October 2012. This has involved continued engagement with key aviation stakeholders to help develop preliminary design options. A number of these options have been simulated and analysed for operational integrity and this has resulted in a single option being developed.

TAG Farnborough Airport is taking its proposed design to formal consultation, where both aviation and non-aviation stakeholders are encouraged to formally submit feedback on the

proposed airspace changes.

A consultation document outlining the proposed airspace changes was released at the start of the consultation.

Why are you only presenting on design option?

We considered and discarded many permutations of airspace and routes in the vicinity of the airport, which is why this consultation presents only the main design option. Before reaching the one presented here, several major options were each discussed with operational air traffic control experts, aircraft operators and the local aviation community amongst others. All feedback gathered during consultation will be analysed, potentially leading to design alterations if considered appropriate. See Part A of the consultation document for a summary of discarded options.

What is consultation?

Consultation for proposed airspace changes is intended to gather feedback from organisations that could be affected by the proposal and will be carried out in accordance with government recommended best practices. The public are also encouraged to respond and there will be public meetings where TAG Farnborough Airport and NATS representatives will explain the proposal.

All feedback from both aviation and non-aviation stakeholders will be considered and used to modify the proposed design option where appropriate.

What is the purpose of consultation?

CAA Airspace Change guidance document CAP725 states: "Consultation is the only way to ensure that the proposal has taken account of the interests of all airspace users and the society."

Consultation is a way in which interested parties can raise considerations to ensure the design option is balanced between competing needs.

The design taken to the formal 12-week and 5-day consultation is not final and can be influenced by participants' feedback.

When does consultation take place?

Formal consultation takes place from 0900 on 3rd February 2014 to 2300 on 2nd May 2014, a period of 12 weeks and 5 days.

Exactly who will you consult?

TAG Farnborough Airport encourages all interested parties, including the general public, to respond to the consultation. Please study the website and consultation document, and answer the consultation questions to ensure your feedback counts.

Who have you already consulted with?

TAG Farnborough Airport and NATS air traffic control experts have held meetings, discussions and workshops with aviation stakeholders in order to inform the airspace design options. Other non-aviation agencies have also been briefed on progress, for example the

Farnborough Aerodrome Consultative Committee (FACC).

Public representatives (including MPs, district and borough councils), statutory bodies, the military and environmental groups are also being consulted.

How can interested parties participate in the formal consultation?

The TAG Farnborough Airport Airspace Change Proposal website (www.consultation.tagfarnboroughairport.com) provides comprehensive information about the Airspace Change Proposal and the consultation process. Key dates have been published via the website and other media. The airport will ensure that communication during the process is timely, relevant and comprehensive.

The website includes a downloadable consultation pack, the consultation document, the consultation feedback form as well as further information.

The airport is holding public meetings and sessions to explain the background to anyone wishing to understand the airspace changes being proposed. Paper versions of the consultation material will be made available at these meetings.

The primary means of submitting responses to the consultation will be electronic via an online feedback form on the TAG Farnborough Airport Airspace Change Proposal website. In instances where an online submission is not possible, interested parties will be able to make a submission by post.