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COMBAT AIR – TRAINING AIRSPACE

CAP1616 Stage 3A Consultation Strategy

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1. Introduction

1.1 This document forms part of the document set required in accordance with the requirements of the CAP1616 airspace change process and aims to provide adequate evidence to satisfy Stage 3 Consult Gateway - Step 3A.

1.2 Previous documents have reduced the number of design concepts to one, albeit this option has been developed through an iterative process involving engagement with key stakeholders. This proposal uses existing airspace structures, expanding on the already existing EGD323, and is the preferred option. The “do nothing” option has been discounted as it does not meet the key design principle requirements, specifically as it does not provide a suitable portion of airspace for modern combat aircraft to train within. There is still scope for feedback on the specific details of the concept option upon which we are consulting. The preferred option may be refined based on responses provided through Stage 3 consultation.

2. Engagement Activities Completed to Date

2.1 DAATM, as the lead for this ACP, has conducted continuous engagement with NATS, the Combat Air community (both UK & US) and with wider MOD stakeholders via the MAUWG over the last 18 months. This ACP is derived from the on-going work conducted by the Flexible Use of Airspace State Programme (FSP). In addition to the routine FSP Steering Group meetings several MOD/NATS workshops have been held. Given the requirement and the likely location and levels of the final solution, stakeholder engagement for the generation of design principles has predominately been with NATS, airports and airlines.

2.2 Since the completion of the Stage 2 Design and Assess gateway, the MOD has continued engagement with key stakeholders. A summary of significant activities undertaken so far is below:

- 17 Nov 16: Lakenheath initial stakeholder engagement – NATS, CAA, MOD (DAATM, USAFE UK, Typhoon, F35, Tornado)
- 14 Dec 16: FASIIG 24
- 23 Feb 17: UK/USAFE F35 Working Group
- 15 Mar 17: FASIIG 25
- 4 Apr 17: FSP Feasibility and Options Working Group – NATS, MOD
- 25 Apr 17: FSP Feasibility and Options Working Group – NATS, MOD
- 23 May 17: MAUWG 3
- 8 Jun 17: F35 Military stakeholder engagement
- 21 Jun 17: FASIIG 26
- 20 Sep: FASIIG 27
- 10 Oct 17: FSP stakeholder meeting
- 17 Oct 17: Combat Air airspace options telcon – USAFE UK, DAATM, Typhoon, Tornado
- 30 Oct 17: Combat Air Interoperability Working Group – USAFE, USAFE UK, HQ AIR, Typhoon, Tornado, F35, AWC, DAATM
- 1 Nov 17: MAUWG 4
- 30 Nov 17: FASIIG 28
- 4 Dec 17: FSP way forward – NATS, CAA, DAATM, F35, USAFE UK
- 16 Feb 18: Engagement Letter to airlines and airports
- 28 Feb 18: Combat Air Interoperability Working Group – USAFE, USAFE UK, HQ AIR, Typhoon, Tornado, F35, AWC, DAATM
- 2 Mar 18: FASDSG
- 22 Mar 18: FASIIG 29, project brief
- 9-10 Apr 18: Prestwick simulator airspace trial, NATS and MOD
- 18 Apr 18: Combat Air engagement event RAF Coningsby
- 25 Apr 18: Engagement Letter to airlines and airports
- 26 Apr 18: Engagement Letter BGA
- 17 May 18: MAUWG 5
- 23 May 18: Meeting to discuss post-simulator trial report and recommendations, NATS, MOD, FSP
- 5 Jun 18: Meeting with Newcastle Airport
- 7 Jun 18: JANSC
- 19 Jun 18: Meeting with NATS and ISTAR FHQ to discuss potential conflict with UK Orbit Areas
- 22 Jun 18: FASDSG
- 27 Jun 18: Engagement and update letter to extended stakeholder community
- 5 Jul 18: Updated Engagement letter sent to extended stakeholder community
- 11 Jul 18: Engagement letter with proposed design details sent to Northern Regional Airspace User Working Group

2.3 The FASIIG community was briefed on the ACP in Mar 18; whilst there was little feedback from the attendees, it was commented that the MOD was not managing current segregated airspace particularly well. This perception was echoed in feedback from Stage 1 and 2 engagement with stakeholders. It was explained to the FASIIG audience, which is backed up in ACP and FSP documentation, that the MOD is addressing some known inefficiencies in airspace management. This has been taken further since the FASIIG with the development of a series of trials to specifically improve tactical (Level 3) airspace management. To gain maximum capacity from the constrained UK airspace, there is also a requirement for other airspace users (principally those en-route) to ensure they can benefit from the opportunities presented when the MOD hands back previously segregated airspace.

2.4 The most recent engagement activities have continued to focus on refining the option for a redevelopment of EGD323. As such, NATS conducted a 2-day simulator trial of the latest proposed design in Apr 18, which included support and input from MOD personnel. The trial focussed on the flows of civil traffic and their interactions with military activities to assess the impacts of activating the larger volume of segregated airspace. Several recommendations were made following the trial; whilst many of these are internal to NATS, a few potential issues were highlighted that have required further MOD assessment, these issues have been resolved through adaptations to the design and changes to existing operational procedures.

2.5 Feedback was requested from Newcastle International Airport, DTVA, Humberside Airport, Norwich Airport and airlines to ascertain if there were any issues or concerns regarding the proposal.

2.6 A letter from Newcastle lead to a meeting at the airport on 5 Jun 18 with the conclusion that there were no major concerns or showstoppers at this stage. A response from Humberside airport generated a discussion regarding the potential issue of combat aircraft departing segregated airspace at short notice into confliction with IFR traffic inbound to Humberside. The MOD has accepted that this is a concern and have addressed it within the proposal.

2.7 Feedback from Virgin and BA was centred on their perception that the MOD does not manage airspace efficiently. As highlighted above, the MOD accepts that efficient and effective ASM is a key aspect of improved FUA and work is already underway to introduce improvements in this area through this ACP and the FSP.

2.8 The engagement feedback we have received, coupled with the simulator trial work conducted by NATS, has been considered in the continuing evolution of the preferred option that will be taken forward for broader consultation in Stage 3.

2.9 The MOD wrote to an extended stakeholder community on 27 Jun 18 to commence engagement on a broader scale in advance of the public consultation and to update those who had already been asked to comment. Feedback relevant to the proposal will be included in the consultation material for consideration and further comment.

2.10 Following the latest engagement letter the MOD has discussed Durham Tees Valley's concerns and addressed them through raising the base level of some bookable airspace segments and extending the agreement to prevent military aircraft leaving segregated airspace into class G airspace without an ATS from the overland areas.

3. Consultation Strategy: Audience, Approach, Materials and Length

3.1 This is a proposal to redevelop EGD323, where much of segregated airspace has an anticipated base level of FL50. The airspace with a base level of FL50 is entirely over the sea but where there is a portion of airspace over the land, the base level is proposed to be FL150. This is an M2 airspace change being conducted in accordance with CAP1616.