

Airspace Modernisation – 2019 Progress Report

CAP 1862



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Executive Summary

1. In 2017, the Government updated the CAA's strategic role for airspace modernisation by issuing new Air Navigation Directions. Consistent with our role as specialist aviation regulator and our statutory responsibilities, we are required to prepare and maintain a co-ordinated strategy and plan for the use of UK airspace for air navigation up to 2040, including for the modernisation of the use of such airspace.
2. Our Airspace Modernisation Strategy¹ (AMS) responds to that requirement, setting out the detailed initiatives that industry must deliver to achieve the objectives envisaged in current government policy.
3. The strategy sets out the ends, ways and means of modernising airspace, initially focusing on the period until the end of 2024.² The **ends** are derived from UK government and relevant international policy and the **ways** of achieving them are set through 15 initiatives that include new airspace design, new operational concepts and new technologies. To establish the **means** of delivering modernised airspace, such as the resources needed, the strategy requires industry-led entities responsible for delivery to draw up delivery plans, with progress overseen by the CAA.
4. The CAA must report to the Secretary of State annually on the delivery of the strategy, and for 2019 this is provided in the following chapters.

¹ CAP1711 Airspace Modernisation Strategy December 2018

² 2024 corresponds to the end of the next Single European Sky Performance Scheme reference period (RP3). https://ec.europa.eu/transport/modes/air/single-european-sky/ses-performance-and-charging/performance-and-charging-schemes_en

5. In Chapter 2 we provide an update on governance, policy and regulatory process since the publication of the airspace modernisation strategy. Key steps have been taken including:
 - The refinement of the governance structure.
 - The establishment of the Airspace Change Organising Group (ACOG).
 - The identification of support funding.
 - The progression of legislation³ to compel sponsors to develop airspace changes.
 - Increasing CAA resources to deal with our new roles and workload.
6. In Chapter 3 we provide an overview of current delivery plans and our assessment of progress towards completion of each major initiative. This has been done in the form of a 'RAG' status.
7. Six of the 15 initiatives are assessed as on track overall (green), with nine requiring attention (compared to eight previously reported in the AMS). None are assessed as having 'major issues'.
8. Initiative 1 'Direct Route Airspace' has been implemented, and NERL will monitor usage by airlines. Initiative 2 'Free Route Airspace' has been assessed as green (compared to amber previously) with NERL currently consulting⁴ on a phased delivery programme.
9. However, the complexity and uncertainty in Initiatives 10 – 'Airspace Classification Review' and 12 – 'Radio Frequency Spectrum' means we have assessed these as amber (compared to green previously).

³ The Air Traffic Management and Unmanned Aircraft Bill was announced in the Queen's Speech on 14 October 2019 and introduced in the House of Lords on 22 October 2019. The Bill was subsequently dropped when Parliament was dissolved on 6th November 2019.

⁴ <https://consultations.airspacechange.co.uk/nats/fra-d1/>

10. For Initiative 10, whilst short term actions are in progress to respond to recent amendments to the Air Navigation Directions⁵, including launching an airspace classification review consultation⁶, the longer term timescales are driven by EU laws. The UK's current bespoke airspace arrangements (compared to other Member States) will require a longer period to reach compliance. It is also dependent on other initiatives, and will require careful co-ordination to ensure safety is maintained during this large scale change. The CAA has been liaising with European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) and the European Commission who are aware of the complexity involved in UK airspace, and the need for an extended transitional period. The updated RAG status therefore reflects the current position until an extended period is formalised.
11. Initiative 12 has now been assessed as amber (requiring attention), to reflect the uncertainty around securing adequate spectrum at the World Radio Conference without robust studies that define system characteristics and protection criteria. This is also subject to requirements from other non-aeronautical industries for spectrum allocations as demand for radio spectrum is increasing sharply, particularly as societal use of wireless technologies grows.
- 1.2 NERL has set up ACOG to undertake impartial and objective coordination to prepare an airspace change masterplan, starting with southern UK. The co-ordinated airspace redesign (covered by Initiatives 4 and 5) is one of the most complex challenges of the AMS. ACOG have now also taken on the programme management of FASI-N. The legislation introduced into the House of Lords would have enabled sponsors to be directed to develop airspace changes in the masterplan process. Ministers will need to consider whether to reintroduced it based on preference and

⁵ <https://www.caa.co.uk/Commercial-industry/Airspace/Airspace-change/Legislative-framework-to-airspace-change/>

⁶ <https://consultations.caa.co.uk/corporate-communications/airspace-classification-review-2019-2020/>

Parliamentary time. The CAA remains of the view that this legislation is fundamental to the delivery of the future UK masterplan.

12. A number of delivery risks were presented in the Strategy in 2018. We judged that the highest risk was in relation to a potential lack of co-ordination in Initiative 4 'FAS Implementation South' due to the complexity expected. This risk is expected to reduce in 2020 now that ACOG has been established within NERL, but will remain critical. We will continue to monitor this. Further detail on the work that needs to be undertaken in 2020 is included in this report, including the need for a new regulatory process to assess and accept a co-ordinated implementation plan for airspace changes.
13. There are also significant dependencies on ACOG's success across other initiatives such as 6 'Queue Management', 7 'Satellite Navigation Route Replications' and 8 'Satellite Navigation Route Redesigns'.
14. The CAA intends to develop a more comprehensive progress report in 2020 when the CAA's oversight team is in place.

Chapter 1

Co-sponsor updates

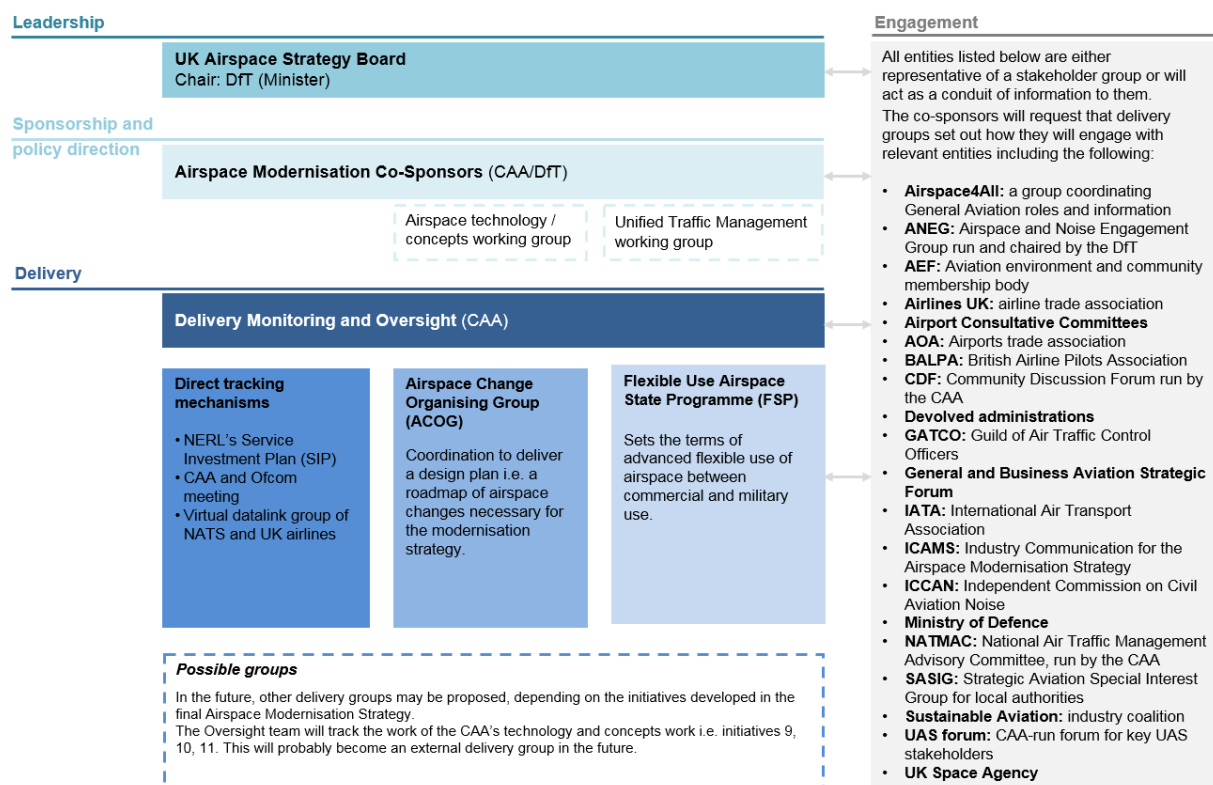
Governance

- 1.1 In the last year the CAA has run a joint engagement programme, alongside the Department for Transport (DfT), to reach all entities listed in the engagement section of the governance structure. We have updated stakeholders and listened to feedback.
- 1.2 The CAA have since refined the Governance structure. In particular we intend to:
- Include working groups covering initiatives that are at a developmental stage i.e. where policy must be developed before industry can commence delivery.
 - Simplify the industry delivery entities and the means of tracking progress.
 - Amend the stakeholder engagement groups based on the feedback received.
- 1.3 A revised structure is included below in Figure 1.1. This replaces the structure in the annex (CAP1711b)⁷ to the Airspace Modernisation Strategy, jointly owned with the DfT.
- 1.4 The Airspace Strategy Board (ASB) sits at the top of the governance structure for the UK Airspace Modernisation and has convened three times since it was established in Autumn 2018. It is chaired by the Department for Transport Aviation Minister, and brings together a wide range of interested aviation stakeholders to discuss national airspace

⁷ <https://publicapps.caa.co.uk/modalapplication.aspx?appid=11&mode=detail&id=8961>

policy and the strategic objectives of modernisation. Details of membership, terms of reference and minutes are published.⁸

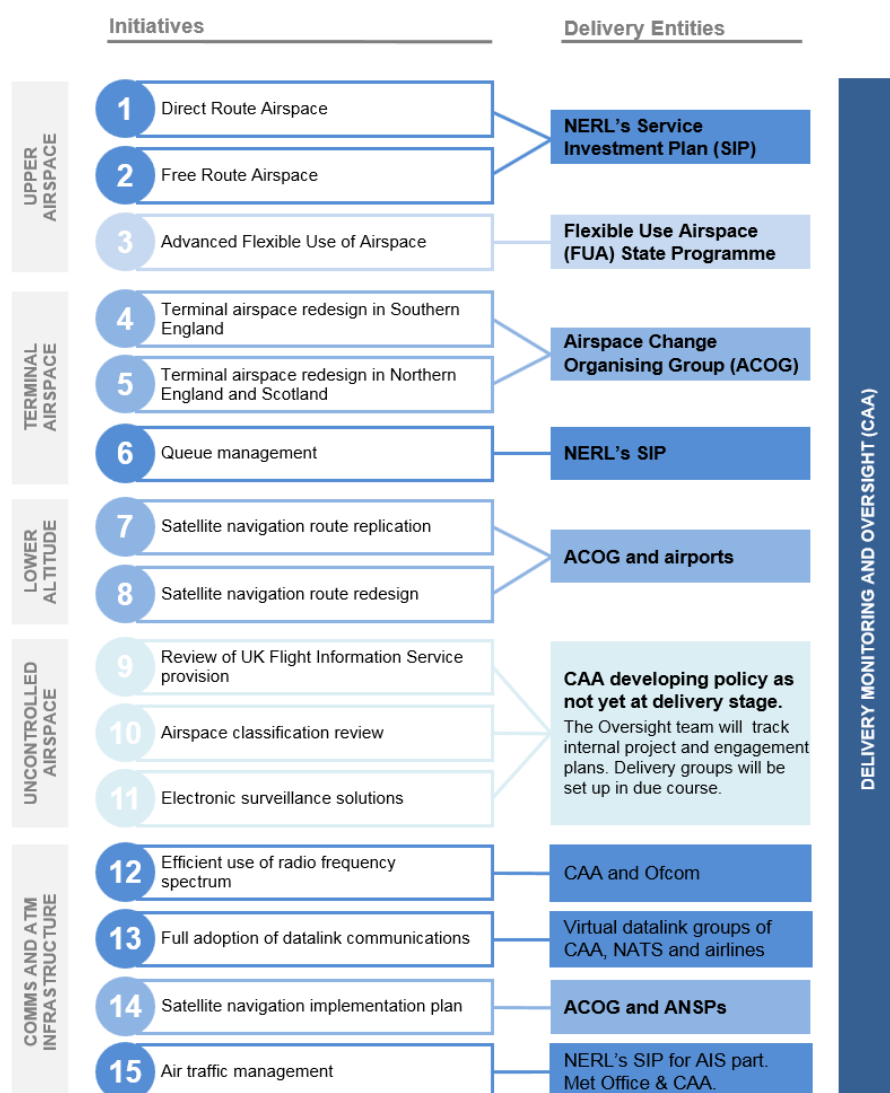
Figure 1.1 – Proposed Governance Structure Update



1.5 Figure 1.2 below also shows the delivery entities for each initiative and the means of tracking progress.

⁸ <https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/airspace-strategy-board>

Figure 1.2 – Delivery Entities and Progress Tracking



Policy and Regulatory Architecture

Co-ordinating a systemised airspace design for the UK

- 1.6 As part of our strategy and plan, the DfT and CAA (as co-sponsors of airspace modernisation) commissioned NERL to begin to develop a co-ordinated implementation plan for airspace changes (or airspace change masterplan) in the south of the UK, and to create a co-ordination group (now known as the Airspace Change Organising Group (ACOG)) to lead the airspace change implementation plan.