

Truncation of London Heathrow WOBUN and BUZAD SIDs (ACP-2017-73) – Post Implementation Review

CAP 2133



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Published by the Civil Aviation Authority, 2021

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First published 2021

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Executive summary

1. The CAA's airspace change process is a seven-stage mechanism that is set out in detail in CAP 725¹/CAP1616². Under this process NATS and Heathrow Airport Ltd submitted an Airspace Change Proposal (ACP) to reduce the length of the "WOBUN" and "BUZAD" Standard Instrument Departures (SIDs) to the CAA on 11th December 2017. The aim of this ACP was to improve aircraft fuel efficiency by reducing the length of time aircraft would plan to fly at low level and thus reducing the amount of fuel needed to be carried (aircraft burn more fuel at lower levels than at higher ones and must carry sufficient fuel to fly the planned route).
2. The proposals were accepted by the CAA on 22nd February 2018 and implemented on 24th May 2018. Competing priorities for the allocation of resources meant that the CAA was unable to start the Post Implementation Review (PIR) one year after implementation as would normally be expected. Instead the CAA commenced the PIR of the impact of its decision and the implemented change on 17th April 2020. The content and outcome of the review process by the CAA is discussed in detail in this report.
3. On 2 January 2018 the CAA introduced a new process for making a decision whether or not to approve proposals to change airspace design. Irrespective of whether the CAA decision to approve the change was made under the previous process (set out in CAP 725), we will conduct all Post Implementation Reviews in accordance with the process requirements of CAP1616. However, when assessing the expected impacts against the actual impacts we will use the methodology adopted at the time of the original CAA decision in order to do so. In this particular case, the airspace change was conducted in accordance with the CAA's SID Truncation Policy³. As such, the change followed a "lighter touch" process than the full CAP 725 requirements, since it was aimed at delivering environmental benefits by removing a requirement to carry unnecessary fuel, without changing the vertical and lateral trajectories actually flown by aircraft.
4. During the review process, the CAA considered the formal response from the Sponsor which is contained in the Sponsor's documents:
 - Post Implementation Review Feedback Form

¹ <https://publicapps.caa.co.uk/modalapplication.aspx?appid=11&mode=detail&id=395>

² <https://publicapps.caa.co.uk/modalapplication.aspx?appid=11&mode=detail&id=8127>

³ <https://publicapps.caa.co.uk/modalapplication.aspx?catid=1&pagetype=65&appid=11&mode=detail&id=6027>

- Post Implementation Review Report
- Post Implementation Engagement Evidence

Redacted versions of these documents are available on the CAA website.

5. As a result, the CAA has reached the following conclusion:

The CAA is satisfied that, following the adoption of mitigation actions to improve clarity (publication of NOTAMs, adding route information to the SID descriptions in the UK AIP, additional information added to some third party SID charts, direct communication with specific airlines), the truncation of the WOBUN and BUZAD SIDs back to UMLAT and ULTIB has satisfactorily achieved the intended objectives, and the change is confirmed.

6. This report provides the information the CAA has reviewed and taken into account before reaching these conclusions.

Scope and background of the PIR

What is a Post Implementation Review?

7. The CAA's approach to decision-making in relation to proposals to approve changes to airspace is explained in its Guidance on the Application of the Airspace Change Process, CAP [725/1616]. This detailed Guidance provides that the seventh and last stage of the process is a review of the implementation of the decision, particularly from an operational perspective, known as a Post Implementation Review (PIR).
8. The Guidance states that the purpose of a PIR "is for the change sponsor to carry out a rigorous assessment, and the CAA to evaluate, whether the anticipated impacts and benefits in the original proposal and published decision are as expected, and where there are differences, what steps (if any) are required to be taken".
9. If the impacts are not as predicted, the CAA will require the change sponsor to investigate why and consider possible mitigations or modifications for impacts that vary from those which were anticipated to meet the terms of the original decision.
10. A PIR is therefore focused on the effects of a particular airspace change proposal. It is not a review of the decision on the airspace change proposal, and neither is it a re-run of the original decision process.