

Issued: 21 December 2015

NATS VOR Replacement Programme

This Information Notice contains information that is for guidance and/or awareness.

Recipients are asked to ensure that this Information Notice is copied to all members of their staff who may have an interest in the information (including any 'in-house' or contracted maintenance organisations and relevant outside contractors).

Applicability:	
Aerodromes:	All Aerodrome Operators
Air Traffic:	All ATS
Airspace:	All NATMAC Representatives
Airworthiness:	Not primarily affected
Flight Operations:	All AOC Holders and General Aviation Pilots
Licensed/Unlicensed Personnel:	Not primarily affected

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The NATS has historically operated 46 Doppler VHF Omni Range (DVOR) navigation beacons across the UK to provide an en-route navigation service as either stand alone beacons or co-located with Distance Measuring Equipment (DME) beacons. The age of these facilities means that either replacement or withdrawal has become necessary. In line with the ECAC-wide Navigation Strategy and following the extension of the mandate for the carriage of RNAV equipment to all levels in controlled airspace, the CAA has approved in principle a reduction in the VOR infrastructure from 46 to 19 sites. Equipment at the retained sites will gradually be replaced and each replacement will result in the facility being unavailable for use for approximately three months with any co-located DME also being unavailable during this period.

2 Scope

- 2.1 The replacement of Otringham (OTR), Berry Head (BHD) and Lands End (LND) has been completed. The replacement of Talla (TLA) is currently under way but its return to service has been delayed until 14 January 2016 because the flight inspection provider has cancelled all flight trials before the end of December. Similarly, the replacement of Seaford (SFD) is under way and its return to service has been delayed until 22 January 2016 for the same reason. Replacement of the next facility, Compton (CPT) is due to commence on 19 January 2016 and the work will take approximately three months. Each replacement is subject to an impact assessment.

2.2 The unavailability of the Compton (CPT) VOR/DME will have the following impacts::

- There are a number of promulgated ATS routes detailed in the UK AIP that are based on the CPT VOR. All of these routes are within airspace where the carriage of RNAV 5 equipment is mandatory and therefore the unavailability of the VOR will only reduce levels of redundancy and will have minimal impact on these routes.
- Swanwick Area and Terminal Control – The impact on Swanwick Centre during the period of unavailability of the CPT VOR and DME will be minor.
- MoD – There will be no impact on MoD operations during the CPT replacement period.
- Birmingham Airport – The CPT outage will present no issues for the airport but they were concerned about potential additional workload for TC. However, TC are aware of the outage and are happy that it presents no issues. Birmingham will be liaising directly with their operators.
- Bristol Airport – Bristol airport have submitted a UK AIP Supplement for an RNAV overlay for their BRI 1C STAR. A similar mitigation was put in place for the earlier BHD VOR outage. Given that aircraft will be arriving from an RNAV environment this should mitigate the CPT outage. If, for any reason, aircraft are unable to fly the RNAV overlay Swanwick have confirmed that they will provide navigational assistance.
- Cardiff Airport – Similar to Bristol above, Cardiff have submitted a UK AIP Supplement for an RNAV overlay for their CDF 1C STAR with a similar mitigation having been used during the BHD outage. If necessary Swanwick will provide navigational assistance as with Bristol above.
- London City Airport – The impact of the unavailability of the CPT VOR and DME will be minor.
- London Heathrow Airport – The impact will be minimal for the duration of the outage. The outage of the CPT VOR will be notified on the ATIS and any aircraft unable to fly an RNAV/FMS overlay of the CPT SID (estimated to be no more than two per week) will be offered tactical vectors and levels to achieve the departure routeing. For easterly operations there is a revised SID utilising the London VOR/DME.
- Air Transport Operators – The unavailability of the CPT VOR and DME during the replacement period will not require any additional mitigations to be implemented and will not require any additional aircraft capability as:
 - o RNAV 5 is mandated within the UK at all en-route levels
 - o There is a high percentage (> 99%) of RNAV 1 capable aircraft who are able to fly the RNAV SID from Heathrow Airport as a mitigation to the unavailability of the conventional CPT SID during the replacement period.
- General Aviation – In addition to the Airports listed above, Blackbushe, Thruxton, Kemble, Gloucester, Oxford, Wycombe and White Waltham have been contacted to ensure that their users (including Flying Clubs/Schools) have been informed about the proposed outage of the CPT VOR and DME. A NOTAM will be published to ensure that the wider aviation community is aware.

2.3 The next facility due to be replaced is Strumble (STU) between May and August 2016. Details of the relevant information from its Impact Assessment will be promulgated in due course.