

Airspace Change Proposal

Consultation Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

ACP-2024-039



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1. Airspace Change Process

1.1 What is Airspace?

- 1.1.1 Airspace is the 'invisible infrastructure' in the sky which helps aircraft operate safely. It includes the flight paths that aircraft take when arriving and departing from an airport,
- 1.1.2 Airspace can be controlled and uncontrolled; this means that in some areas there are restrictions on which aircraft and/or pilots can fly in the airspace to protect other airspace users such as commercial airliners. To enter most controlled airspace, pilots must get permission from Air Traffic Control. There are different classifications of controlled airspace that have varying requirements.
- 1.1.3 For more information on airspace categories and classes, please see information available on the CAA website here - <https://www.caa.co.uk/commercial-industry/airspace/airspace-change/understanding-airspace/>

1.2 Who is responsible for aviation in the UK?

- 1.2.1 The Department for Transport (DfT) is responsible for all aviation policy in the UK, including airspace. The Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) is responsible for its regulation and for the Airspace Change Process which all airports must follow where changes to airspace are proposed. Doncaster Sheffield Airport is responsible for the design of any changes to flight paths into and out of the airport and for sponsoring an airspace change proposal (ACP).

1.3 What is Airspace Change and CAP1616?

- 1.3.1 Airspace Change is the process through which flight paths, routes, controlled airspace boundaries and controlled airspace classification can be changed.
- 1.3.2 When changes to airspace are proposed, an airport is required to follow the CAA's Airspace Change Proposal (ACP) process, this is known as CAP1616.
- 1.3.3 CAP1616 is a 7-stage process which places great importance on engaging and consulting on airspace proposals throughout the process with a wide range of stakeholders, including potentially affected communities.
- 1.3.4 Doncaster Sheffield Airport was granted permission to combine Stages 1 and 2 of the CAP1616 process, successfully passing Stage 1 on 30 April 2026 and Stage 2 on 11 May 2026. More information on Stage 1 and Stage 2 can be found on the CAA's Airspace Change Portal, [here](https://airspacechange.caa.co.uk/PublicProposalArea?PID=656)¹.

¹ <https://airspacechange.caa.co.uk/PublicProposalArea?PID=656>

- 1.3.5 Doncaster Sheffield Airport's consultation is based on Version 5 of the CAP1616 guidance, which can be viewed [here](#).²

1.4 How does Airspace Change work?

- 1.4.1 Airspace Change is conducted in line with a process set out by the Civil Aviation Authority, termed CAP1616. Initially, in Stage 1, a 'sponsor' (the party trying to change the airspace) needs to produce a Statement explaining why the change is needed. Design Principles are then worked up in collaboration with key stakeholders.
- 1.4.2 Stage 2 'Develop and Assess' sees multiple options worked up and then assessed against the Design Principle established in Stage 1. Following this assessment, a shortlist of options is taken to the first of three phases of appraisal called the 'Initial Options Appraisal'. After the Initial Options Appraisal, the options may be shortlisted before moving onto the Stage 3 'Full Options Appraisal'. The Full Options Appraisal identifies the options for public consultation and this consultation forms one of the main parts of Stage 3. This is where we are now.

1.5 What is the Airspace Modernisation Strategy?

- 1.5.1 The Airspace Modernisation Strategy (AMS), also known as [CAP1711](#)³, is a document published by the DfT and CAA in December 2018. The document describes how the airspace within the UK is reaching capacity and, due to the age of the design, includes features that restrict the aviation industry's ability to improve its operational and environmental performance.
- 1.5.2 The AMS sets out a new shared objective between the CAA and the DfT for modernising airspace which is to deliver quicker, quieter, and cleaner journeys and create more capacity for the benefit of those who use and are affected by UK airspace.

1.6 Where is Doncaster Sheffield Airport now in the Airspace Change Process?

- 1.6.1 We are now in Stage 3, where we have carried out our second appraisal on the remaining options, called the Full Options Appraisal (FOA), and have planned and prepared for this Consultation by producing a Consultation Strategy and our Consultation Material. The material is available to view [here](#).⁴

² <https://www.caa.co.uk/data-and-publications/publications/documents/content/cap1616v5/>

³ <https://www.caa.co.uk/data-and-publications/publications/documents/content/cap1711/>

⁴ <https://consultations.airspacechange.co.uk/doncaster-airport/dsa-airspace>

2. Our Proposals

2.1 What is Doncaster Sheffield Airport proposing to do and why?

- 2.1.1 Doncaster Sheffield Airport (DSA) is proposing to restart operations and return passenger and cargo flights to the region. In March 2024, City of Doncaster Council (CDC) secured a 125-year lease for the site, and began work to reinstate the airport licence, establish a local air traffic control service, and prepare for scheduled flights.
- 2.1.2 An important element of this plan is an Airspace Change Proposal (ACP). The purpose of the ACP (ACP-2024-039) is to allow DSA to reinstate controlled airspace and introduce the arrival and departure routes needed to reopen safely and bring passenger and cargo flights back to the region
- 2.1.3 The reopening of DSA is the centrepiece of South Yorkshire Airport City (SYAC), a major regional growth programme designed to restore aviation services and unlock thousands of new jobs across advanced manufacturing, engineering, logistics and green technologies. The project is being delivered through a partnership between national government, the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority and CDC.

2.2 Why is an Airspace Change Proposal required for the reopening of DSA?

- 2.2.1 Following the closure of Doncaster Sheffield Airport, the CAA removed all controlled airspace and flight procedures which supported the airports operations. For DSA to once again become operational, new controlled airspace and procedures must be implemented without disrupting the current network.
- 2.2.2 An Airspace Change Proposal enables potential designs to be adequately assessed and allows industry stakeholders to provide vital input to help achieve the best final airspace design.

2.3 Why can't the previous airspace structure be reused?

- 2.3.1 During the development of design options for this proposal, Doncaster Sheffield Airport developed an option which looked to reintroduce the notified airspace arrangements for DSA that were in place at the time of the airport's closure in 2022. This was called Option 1.
- 2.3.2 However following feedback from relevant stakeholders, it was made clear that DSA should try to reduce the volume and/or classification of controlled airspace to reduce the impact on other airspace users; this feedback has led to the creation of design options 2, 3 and 0.

2.4 How was the proposal been developed?

- 2.4.1 Airspace change options are required to be developed throughout various stages of the CAP1616 process. The table below gives a high-level overview of the stage and links to where further information can be found:

Airspace Change Stage	Summary	Link to Documents (CAA Portal) ⁵
Stage 1	In August 2025, DSA submitted a Statement of Need (SoN) to the CAA.	Statement of Need
	In September 2025, DSA had an assessment meeting with the CAA. The purpose of the assessment meeting is for the change sponsor to present and discuss its SoN, and to enable the CAA to consider whether it falls within the scope of the formal airspace change process. DSA and the CAA also discussed the scaling of this ACP.	Assessment Meeting Presentation Assessment Meeting Minutes
	DSA carried out engagement with relevant stakeholders to describe the Current Day scenario and to develop a set of Design Principles for this proposal. The aim of the Design Principles is to provide a framework against which design options can be developed and evaluated.	Stage 1 Submission Document
Stage 2 (A)	DSA developed a single option for the airspace change proposal. This option was shared with the same stakeholders and at the same time as the proposed design principles. Feedback from this engagement was then used to generate additional options and to provide more information on the baseline scenario. The final part of Stage 2(A) was to qualitatively assess the options against the Design Principles and produce a Design Principle Evaluation.	Stage 2(A) Design Options & Design Principle Evaluation
Stage 2 (IOA)	Stage 2B requires the Change Sponsor to carry out an Initial Options Appraisal of the (IOA) of the airspace change options which proceed from Stage 2A. The initial appraisal described the options under assessment and the baseline options, before explaining the methodology used to assess each option and the IOA outcome. Following this the document explained, based on the IOA, which options have been taken forward to Stage 3 and the preferred option(s).	2(B) Initial Options Appraisal

⁵ All documents can be viewed on the CAA Portal - <https://airspacechange.caa.co.uk/PublicProposalArea?pID=656>

2.5 How has the proposal been assessed?

- 2.5.1 As part of Stage 3 of CAP1616 we undertake a Full Options Appraisal (FOA). This is where we assess a baseline “do nothing” pre-implementation scenario and then compare it against the options to understand the benefits and impacts of each option. CAP1616 sets out the assessment categories including Safety, Noise, Greenhouse Gas Emissions/Fuel burn, Air quality, tranquillity, biodiversity, impacts to general aviation, and other costs associated with the change. For more information, please see our Full Options Appraisal document or alternatively there is a summary in the Communities and local area interest main consultation document. These documents are available on our Citizen Space consultation website, <https://consultations.airspacechange.co.uk/doncaster-airport/dsa-airspace>.

3. Implementation (if successful)

3.1 When is the airport likely to open?

- 3.1.1 Doncaster Sheffield Airport aims to prepare for scheduled passenger and cargo services to return from 2027/28.
- 3.1.2 Whilst all efforts are being made for Doncaster Sheffield Airport to open as quickly as possible, including the CAA agreeing to allow the ACP to progress at a faster pace through the combining of Stages 1 and 2, all forecasts are estimates and dependent on the success of the ACP.

3.2 I've seen aircraft flying to/from DSA already, what flights are those?

- 3.2.1 Whilst DSA is not yet a licensed airport, there are a small number of movements made by 2Excel Aviation, which have been approved by CDC. These flights do not carry passengers or cargo and operate on an unlicensed basis.
- 3.2.2 Passenger and cargo flights will be unable to return to the airport until reinstatement of the airport licence and the establishment of a local air traffic control service.

4. Engagement

4.1 What engagement has already been done?

- 4.1.1 During earlier stages of the process, Doncaster Sheffield Airport engaged with relevant stakeholders. A full list of these stakeholders can be found in Appendix B of our Consultation Strategy.
- 4.1.2 These stakeholders included local councils and authorities, the National Air Traffic Management Committee (NATMAC), other Airports and Airfields local to Doncaster Sheffield Airport, the wider Aviation Industry, Environmental Bodies, the Airport Consultative Committee and Community Groups.

4.2 How have you determined which stakeholders are relevant in Stage 3?

- 4.2.1 Doncaster Sheffield Airport has kept all previously contacted stakeholders on its notification list for Stage 3, to ensure all those who may be interested are given an opportunity to engage. However, new consultees have been identified based on those communities who could experience some change as a result of the proposals, those who represent these communities, and those who represent seldom-heard communities. There is more information about our consultation audience in our Consultation Strategy.

4.3 What happens to the feedback received?

- 4.3.1 All the feedback received is published on the Citizen Space consultation website (<https://consultations.airspacechange.co.uk/doncaster-airport/dsa-airspace>). Once the consultation closes, Doncaster Sheffield Airport will then collate, review and categorise the consultation responses.
- 4.3.2 Responses will be categorised into those which may lead to a change in the design and those which would not. We will then produce a Consultation Response document which summarises the consultation and our response to issues raised. This will also be published on the [CAA's Airspace Change Portal](https://airspacechange.caa.co.uk/PublicProposalArea?PID=656), <https://airspacechange.caa.co.uk/PublicProposalArea?PID=656>.

4.4 Where can I find out more information?

- 4.4.1 You can find out more about this airspace change in our consultation documents, which are all held on our Citizen Space consultation website.
- 4.4.2 As part of the consultation, we will be holding multiple drop-in events and online webinars where there will be an opportunity to ask questions. For further details of how to join these and to read our consultation material, please see our Citizen Space consultation website, <https://consultations.airspacechange.co.uk/doncaster-airport/dsa-airspace>.

4.5 I'm supportive of Doncaster Sheffield Airport reopening, should I still respond to the consultation?

- 4.5.1 Yes. We want to hear all views on the reopening of Doncaster Sheffield Airport to ensure we fully understand public perceptions of the proposal. Submitting a response makes sure your support is recorded.
- 4.5.2 Even a brief response is helpful, and you can choose the level of detail you include.

4.6 How do we know you'll listen to us?

- 4.6.1 Following CAP1616 guidance, we will produce a Consultation Response document that will summarise the consultation, the responses we received, and how these have influenced the final proposal. This document will be assessed by the CAA to ensure we have accounted for stakeholder concerns.