



Shaping the future: London Gatwick's Route 4 Airspace Change

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

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1.1 Why do you need to transition to a satellite-based system?

The upgrade to satellite-based navigation is a long-term strategic requirement as outlined in the Government's airspace modernisation strategy, thus all UK airspace will eventually have to comply with this requirement as the existing technology, currently serving Route 4, is being phased out. You can read more about this in Chapter 1 of our Main Consultation Document.

1.2 Will the satellite-based system mean that aircraft fly the exact same route every time?

Satellite-based navigation is inherently more precise and therefore tends to result in increased concentration of traffic around the published route track. This has a mixed effect of potentially increasing the overflight of communities or locations directly under the flight path, while reducing overflight of locations around the path.

In earlier stages of this process, we agreed a set of design principles with local stakeholders. One of those principles is to disperse aircraft so overflown communities have some respite. We have included that optionality within our proposals - you can read more about the options - and the reason each option has been designed the way it has - in Chapters 2 to 4 of the Main Consultation Document (Table 2 is the full list of the Design Principles), and the Full Options Appraisal.

1.3 What was the historical preferential route?

All the background information to Route 4, including the flight path, the historic challenges with the route, and what is flown today can be found within our Main Consultation Document - Chapters 1 to 3.

1.4 Where can I find more information about the noise impacts for the four options?

Chapter 4 of the Main Consultation Document sets out each of the four options we are consulting on, including the geographical differences between the options. This is shown visually with both the track and the noise shadow included. We also have tools on our website with more information:

1. We have an animated video which brings together all four options, and we have four standalone videos which help explain each of the options in more detail.
2. We also have a postcode look up tool which illustrates the different impacts of each option relative to a specific location.

Chapter 5 details the process followed to assess each of the shortlisted options against the baseline, while Chapters 6 and 7 show the relative impact of each option vs current day as well as the conclusions and preferred option recommendation resulting from the assessment.

1.5 What will happen to this consultation if the air navigation guidance is changed?

The Government has recently consulted on changes to the Air Navigation Guidance, the outcome of which may impact how noise impacts are assessed as part of the airspace change process in the future. The Route 4 airspace change is guided by CAP1616v5 and the Air Navigation Guidance 2017, which considers the noise impacts of aircraft flying between 4000ft and 7000ft. The impacts assessed as part of this consultation use the criteria set out in the Air Navigation Guidance 2017.