



Airspace Classification Review

AMEND

MANCHESTER LOW LEVEL ROUTE

ENGAGEMENT MATERIALS – CAP 3027L

Published by the Civil Aviation Authority, 2024

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The latest version of this document is available in electronic format at: www.caa.co.uk

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CHAPTER 1 Tier One Engagement

Kick Off Meeting Slides – 04/10/2024

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Airspace Classification Review

MLLR Amend – Kick off session 04/10/2023

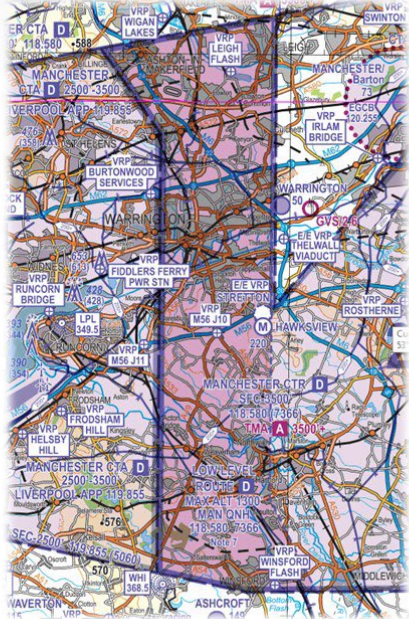



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Options

1. Class G, raise height to 1500ft, widen and speed restriction (RA)
2. Class G, raise height to 1500ft and speed restriction (RA)
3. Class G, widen and speed restriction (RA)
4. Class G and speed restriction (RA)

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Follow up meeting slides – 29/11/2024

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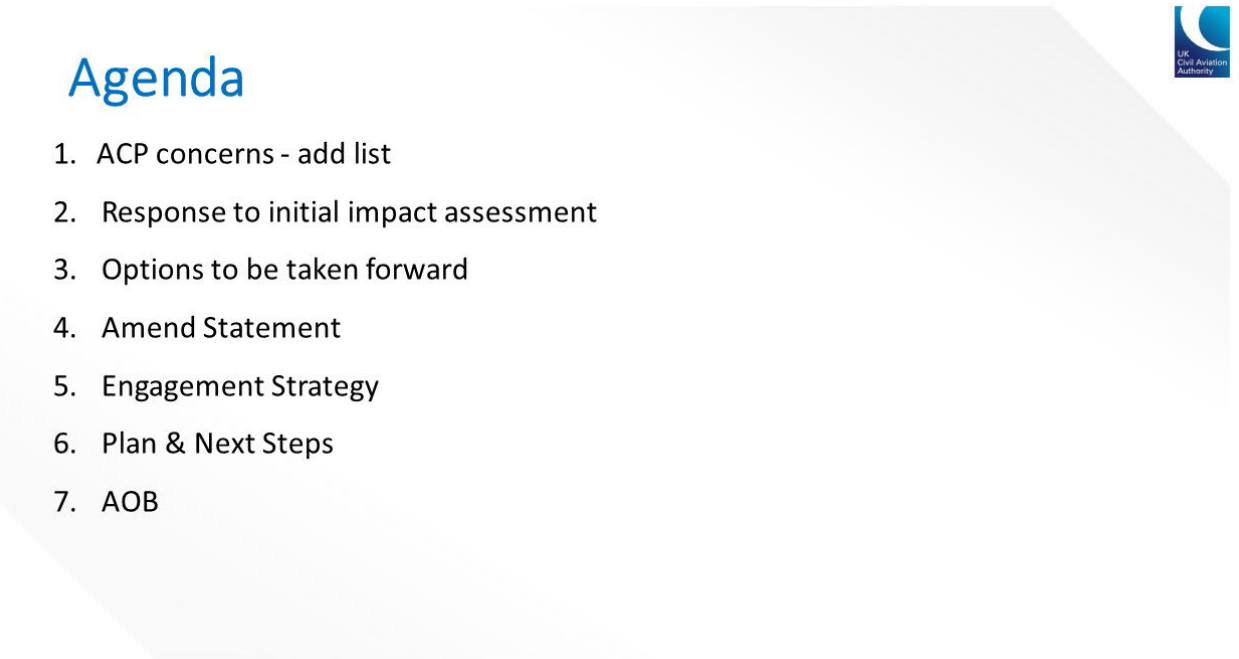


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MLLR Amend – Follow up meeting 29/11/23

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Agenda

1. ACP concerns - add list
2. Response to initial impact assessment
3. Options to be taken forward
4. Amend Statement
5. Engagement Strategy
6. Plan & Next Steps
7. AOB

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ACP Concerns

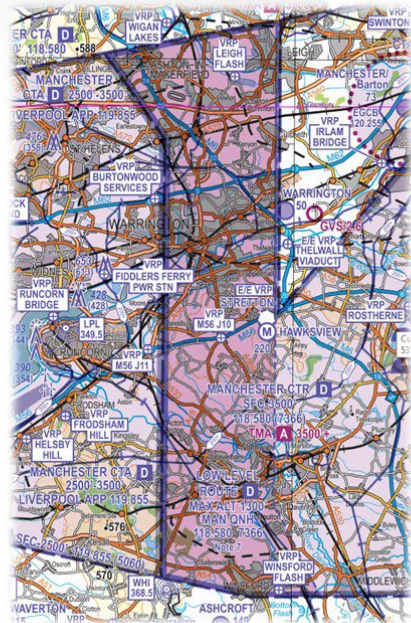
- Responsibility of ACP sponsor to measure the potential impact on baseline and propose how it will be managed
- The sponsors responsibility when it comes to equitable access and their ACP
- Manchester's IIA regarding non-precision approaches

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Options to be taken forward

1. Class G, raise height to 1500ft, widen and speed restriction (RA)
2. Class G, raise height to 1500ft and speed restriction (RA)
3. Class G, widen and speed restriction (RA)
4. Class G and speed restriction (RA)



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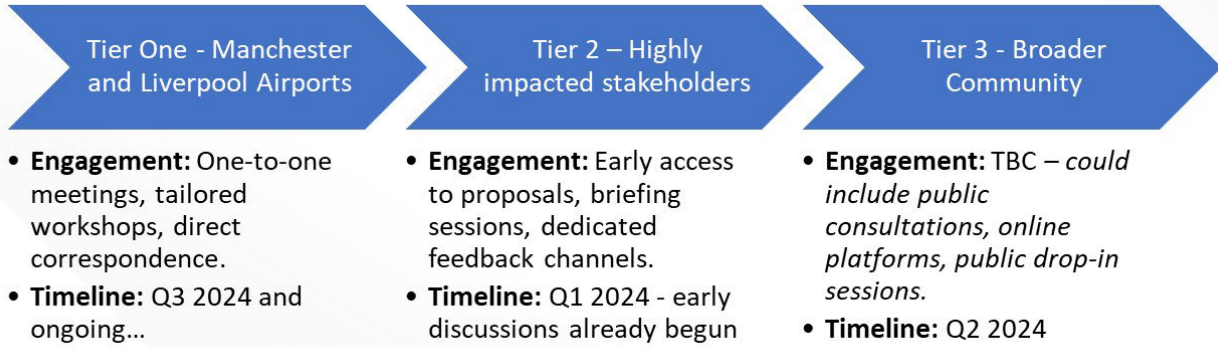
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Engagement Strategy

Objective

Ensuring our amend proposal is as informed as possible through effective engagement with stakeholders through tailored communication and feedback mechanisms that are proportionate to the proposal's impact



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Plan & Next Steps

- Issue Amend Statement
- Discussion on ACP concerns with AR Tech Reg
- Implementation of Restricted Area – workshop in December
- HAZIDs in January

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Timeline

Activity	2023												2024																													
	Q3						Q4						Q1				Q2				Q3				Q4																	
Feasibility																																										
Safety Assurance																																										
Environmental, Operational Case etc																																										
Engagement (4-6 weeks - industry specific engagement)																																										
Prepare submission																																										
Approvals & Implementation Plan																																										
ARAC Changes & Comms																																										

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HAZID Session - 08/01/24 -09/01/24

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The slide features a blue background with a pixelated map of the United Kingdom on the right side. The title 'Airspace Classification Review' is prominently displayed in a white-bordered box on the left. Below the title, the text 'MLLR Amend – HAZID 08/01/24 -09/01/24' is visible. The UK Civil Aviation Authority logo is located in the top right corner.

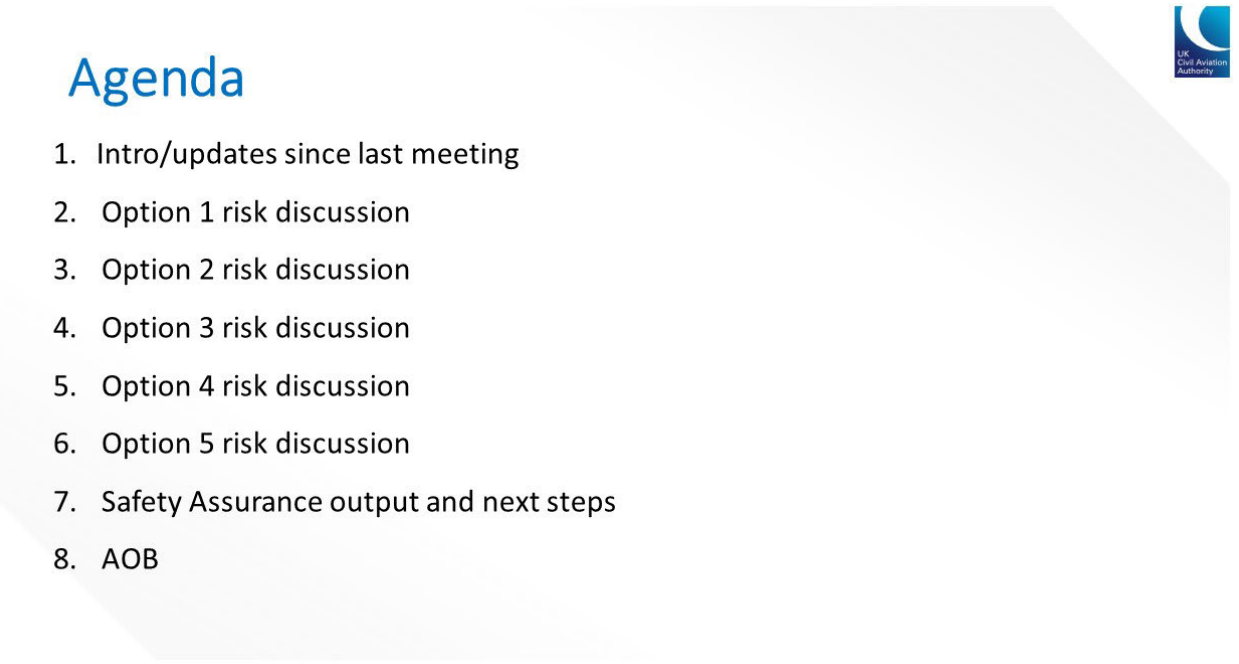
Airspace Classification Review

MLLR Amend – HAZID 08/01/24 -09/01/24

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The slide has a light grey background with a white-bordered box containing the agenda items. The UK Civil Aviation Authority logo is in the top right corner.

Agenda

1. Intro/updates since last meeting
2. Option 1 risk discussion
3. Option 2 risk discussion
4. Option 3 risk discussion
5. Option 4 risk discussion
6. Option 5 risk discussion
7. Safety Assurance output and next steps
8. AOB

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Option 1 Risk Discussion

- *Class G, raise height to 1500ft, widen to the east (nominally 1-2NM) and a restricted area that would apply to the entire volume (140kts speed restriction, 5km minimum visibility, wake turbulence CAT and a specific QNH).*
- Widen to the east 0.7NM
- Specific Aerodrome QNH

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Option 2 Risk Discussion

- *Class G, raise height to 1500ft and a restricted area that would apply to the entire volume (140kts speed restriction, 5km minimum visibility, wake turbulence CAT and a specific QNH).*
- Specific Aerodrome QNH
- Monitor impact on Liverpool through the PIR
- LPL – comes out as a monitored risk – they need to work this through

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Option 3 Risk Discussion

- *Class G, widen to the east (nominally 1-2NM) and a restricted area that would apply to the entire volume (140kts speed restriction, 5km minimum visibility, wake turbulence CAT and a specific QNH).*
- Widen to the east 0.7NM
- Specific Aerodrome QNH
- Wake turbulence needs to be explored further – is it required
 - Look at internal data – MORs etc – if not we can remove

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Option 4 Risk Discussion

- *Class G and a restricted area that would apply to the entire volume (140kts speed restriction, 5km minimum visibility, wake turbulence CAT and a specific QNH).*

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Option 5 Risk Discussion

- *Do nothing option – ORS4 exemption expires, and the airspace reverts to standard Class D airspace.*

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Day 2

1. Recap of yesterday
2. Risk ownership
3. Any impacts on existing risks
4. Next steps

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Next Steps

- Safety assurance write up – due by Fri 16th Feb
 - Based on Option 1
 - Articulate hazards and risk scores
- Engagement & Consultation preparations
- Plan

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CHAPTER 2

Tier Two Engagement

Early Awareness Email – 19/10/2023

From: Gareth Shaw <Gareth.Shaw@caa.co.uk>
Sent: 19 October 2023 13:52
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: Alex Coleman <Alex.Coleman@caa.co.uk>
Subject: Manchester Low Level Route

Hi,

My name is Gareth Shaw and I work for the CAA as the Airspace Amend Lead within the Airspace Classification (AC) team. In my role I am currently leading a project to look at potential changes to the airspace of the Manchester Low Level Route (MLLR). The project itself is still in its infancy but in our initial kick off meeting with key ANSP stakeholders it was identified that your operation is one of the commercial entities using the route today.

As such we would like to draw your attention to the report on the MLLR which we published in July of this year, [CAP2564: Airspace Classification Review: Manchester Low-Level Route 2023](#). In the report you will see the problems identified with the MLLR and also the proposed elements of change we are considering to improve the operation of this volume of airspace. There is no requirement for you to feedback on this report to us however if you would like to do so please feel free to reply to this email. We welcome any and all feedback.

I will ensure the email address used for this contact (if you would prefer another please advise us) is added to our engagement strategy to allow you the full chance to comment on our work at the public consultation stage of any final amendment proposed.

Thank you for your time

Gareth Shaw

Airspace Amend Lead
Airspace Modernisation Delivery Team
Airspace, ATM & Aerodromes
UK Civil Aviation Authority

Invitation to Tier 2 Information Session – 12/02/2024

From: Gareth Shaw <Gareth.Shaw@caa.co.uk>
Sent: Monday, February 12, 2024 4:51 PM
To: airspace classification <airspace.classification@caa.co.uk>
Cc: Alex Coleman <Alex.Coleman@caa.co.uk>
Subject: Manchester Low Level Route change proposals

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Dear Stakeholder,

I am writing to you on behalf of the UK Civil Aviation Authority, regarding our proposed amendments to the Manchester Low-Level Route (MLLR).

Established in 1967, the MLLR is an essential airspace structure within the Manchester Control Zone, spanning from ground level to 1300 feet above mean sea level (AMSL). It facilitates north-south routing between Manchester and Liverpool Airports' adjoining Class D airspaces, providing a crucial transit path without the need for a verbal ATC crossing clearance. The exemption that enables this, however, is set to expire in May 2024.

Due to the expiration of this exemption and the risks we identified in our review of the MLLR in 2023 ([CAP2564](#)), including mid-air collision risks and airspace infringement challenges, we are now moving forward with a proposed amendment to this volume of airspace.

Our Proposed Amendments

Following our initial review of the MLLR and intensive engagement with both Manchester and Liverpool Airports, we are proposing an amendment comprised of the following four solution elements:

1. Reclassification to Class G Airspace

- **Objective:** Simplify access policy and address the non-standard operation of Class D airspace.
- **Details:** By reclassifying the MLLR to Class G airspace, we aim to alleviate the perceived complications of the existing MLLR procedure and facilitate easier transitions for aircraft leaving the MLLR to the east and west. Airspace above the new class G would no longer be part of the CTR and would be renamed a CTA but would remain class D.

2. Raising the Altitude Available to 1500ft

- **Objective:** Mitigate Mid-Air Collision (MAC) and land safely risks, while aligning with broader UK airspace design policy.
- **Details:** This change will provide more airspace to accommodate General Aviation (GA) flights, offering additional altitude for safer emergency landing options and glide time. It aligns with UK policy on the design of Controlled Airspace Structures, maintaining a 500ft vertical separation with any Instrument Flight Procedures (IFP) or Air Traffic Service (ATS) routes as well as recommended minimum altitudes to be used in airspace design.

3. Implementation of a Restricted Area (RA)

- **Objective:** Mitigate Mid-Air Collision (MAC) risk.
- **Details:** The RA will enable the continuation of current MAC risk-lowering restrictions within Class G airspace. Restrictions under consideration include a 140 knots speed limit, minimum in-flight visibility of 5km, adoption of a Liverpool QNH for flights beneath the newly formed CTA, and a limit on aircraft type by UK wake vortex category.

4. Widening the MLLR

- **Objective:** Mitigate Mid-Air Collision (MAC) risk. and land safely risks, provide emergency landing options in non-populated areas.
- **Details:** We are proposing to increase the MLLR's width to the east by approximately 0.65nm. Please see the [attached chart](#) for more details. This widening will provide more airspace for aircraft operation, reducing congestion and allowing pilots to avoid overflying built-up areas, thereby enhancing the potential safety of emergency landings. The design of this widening is fully compliant with existing ILS paths and maintains the required vertical separation from both IFP and aircraft operating inside controlled airspace (CAS). In line with the European Action Plan for Airspace Infringement Reduction, our proposal also involves defining new boundaries using land-based, easily identifiable reference points. These include a railway T-junction, Budworth Mere, and a major motorway intersection, along with the line of longitude 02°30'W. This design facilitates easier GPS navigation for pilots, ensuring they remain outside CAS and providing clear visibility on VFR charts.

How you can help with shape the proposal

- We value your expertise, experience and input in this matter. Therefore, we are hosting two in-person briefing sessions to discuss these proposals in detail and gather any valuable feedback you may have on our proposal.

Date and Times	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 26 February 2024 - 14:00 to 16:00 • 27 February 2024 - 10:00 to 12:00
Venue	CAA's Manchester Regional Office, First Floor, Atlantic House, Atlas Business Park, Simonsway, Wythenshawe, Manchester, M22 5PR
RSVP	Please email airspace.classification@caa.co.uk to confirm your attendance at whichever session is most convenient for you.

Your participation will be instrumental in helping us further shape the future of the MLLR and ensuring it continues to serve the needs of all airspace users effectively and safely.

Please confirm your attendance by 12:00 on 21st February.

Following this session, we will be using your feedback to refine our proposal before consulting with the broader community in the Spring.

We look forward to working with you as we progress our proposed amendment. In the meantime, should you have any questions or require further information before the session, please feel free to contact me at airspace.classification@caa.co.uk

Best wishes,

Gareth Shaw

Airspace Amend Lead
Airspace Modernisation Delivery Team
Airspace, ATM & Aerodromes
UK Civil Aviation Authority

Follow up to invitation – 21/02/2024

From: airspace classification
Sent: Wednesday, February 21, 2024 10:03 AM
To: airspace classification <airspace.classification@caa.co.uk>
Cc: Alex Coleman <Alex.Coleman@caa.co.uk>; Gareth Shaw <Gareth.Shaw@caa.co.uk>
Subject: RE: Manchester Low Level Route change proposals

Dear Stakeholder,

Further to my email last week, I wanted to send a gentle reminder about our briefing sessions on the proposed amendments to the Manchester Low-Level Route (MLLR).

Your expertise and insights are crucial to us as we seek to improve the operation of the MLLR, ensuring it continues to meet the needs of all airspace users safely and efficiently. The sessions are designed to provide an in-depth overview of the proposed changes, including the reclassification to Class G Airspace, adjustments in altitude, implementation of a Restricted Area, and the widening of the MLLR, as well as to gather your feedback which is instrumental in shaping our final proposal.

Date and Times	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 26 February 2024 - 14:00 to 16:00 • 27 February 2024 - 10:00 to 12:00
Venue	CAA's Manchester Regional Office, First Floor, Atlantic House, Atlas Business Park, Simonsway, Wythenshawe, Manchester, M22 5PR
RSVP	Please email airspace.classification@caa.co.uk to confirm your attendance at whichever session is most convenient for you.

If you have not yet confirmed your attendance, please do so by replying to this email or contacting us at airspace.classification@caa.co.uk with your preferred session. We are keen to include as many perspectives as possible in our discussions and value your contribution highly.

We look forward to working with you as we progress our proposed amendment. In the meantime, should you have any questions or require further information before the session, please feel free to contact me at airspace.classification@caa.co.uk

Best wishes,

Gareth Shaw

Airspace Amend Lead
 Airspace Modernisation Delivery Team
 Airspace, ATM & Aerodromes
 UK Civil Aviation Authority

Slides for Tier 2 Information Session



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Introductions and agenda



- Why the MLLR must change
- Design Objectives
- Proposed Solution Elements
- Your questions
- Next steps

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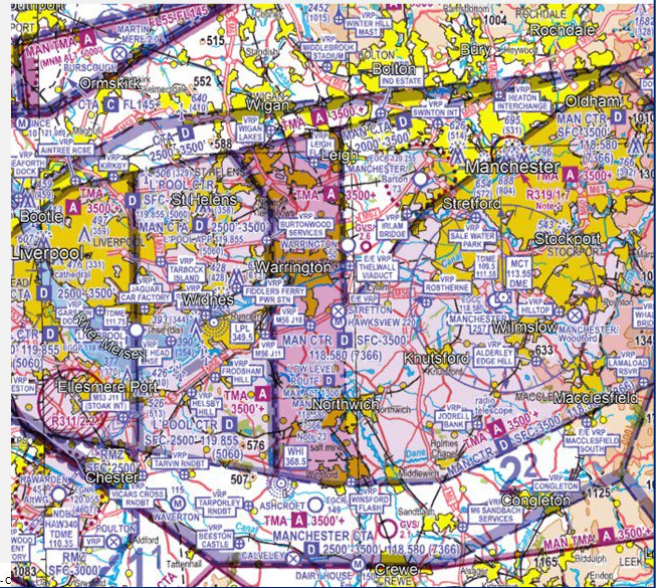
Why the MLLR must change

Class D Exemption Expiry

MAC Risk

Airspace Infringements

Ability to land safely



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Design objectives

Objective A – Ensure high levels of safety

Objective B – Simplify airspace in the region

Objective C – Reduce airspace infringements

Objective D – Meet the objectives of the CAA's Airspace Modernisation Strategy (AMS)

Objective E – Adhere to the Air Navigation Directions

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Proposed Solution Elements



Reclassification
to Class G

Raising the
altitude
available to
1500ft

Implementation
of a Restricted
Area

Increasing the
width of the
MLLR

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Implementation of a Restricted Area

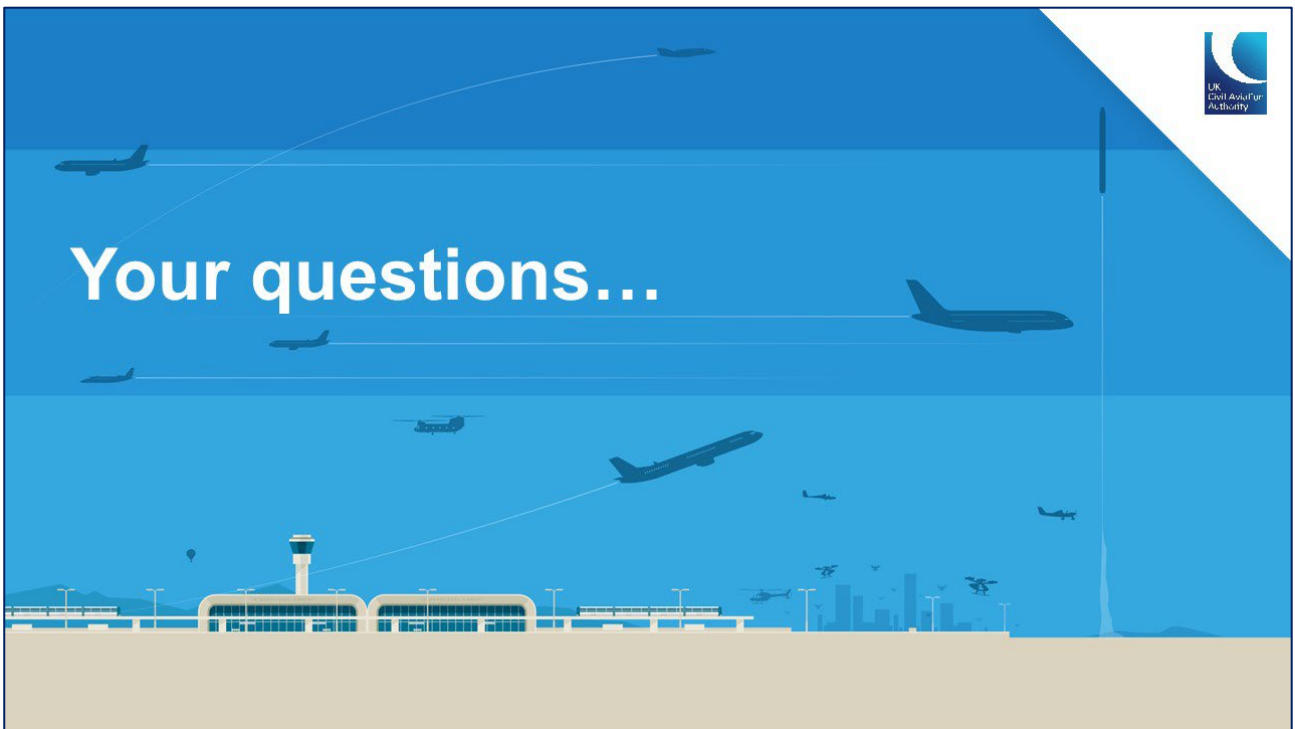
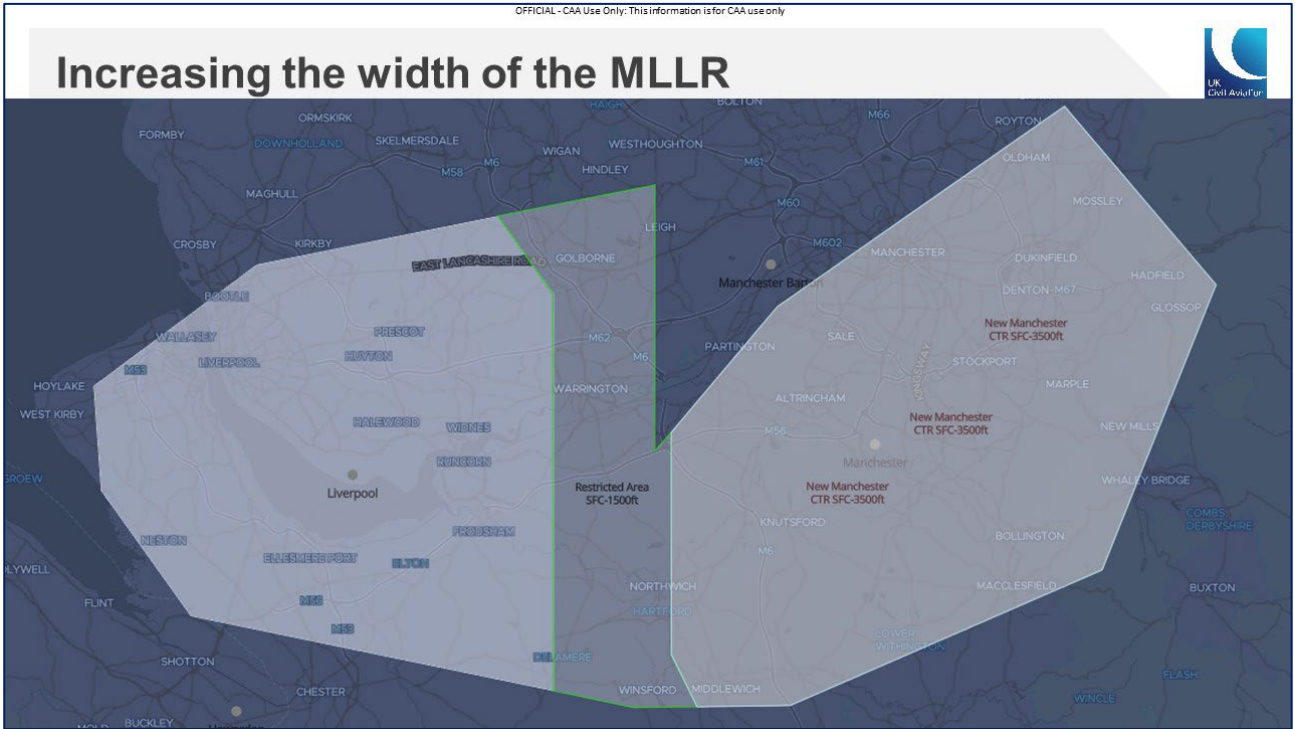


Maximum
speed limit
of 140
knots

Minimum
in-flight
visibility of
5km

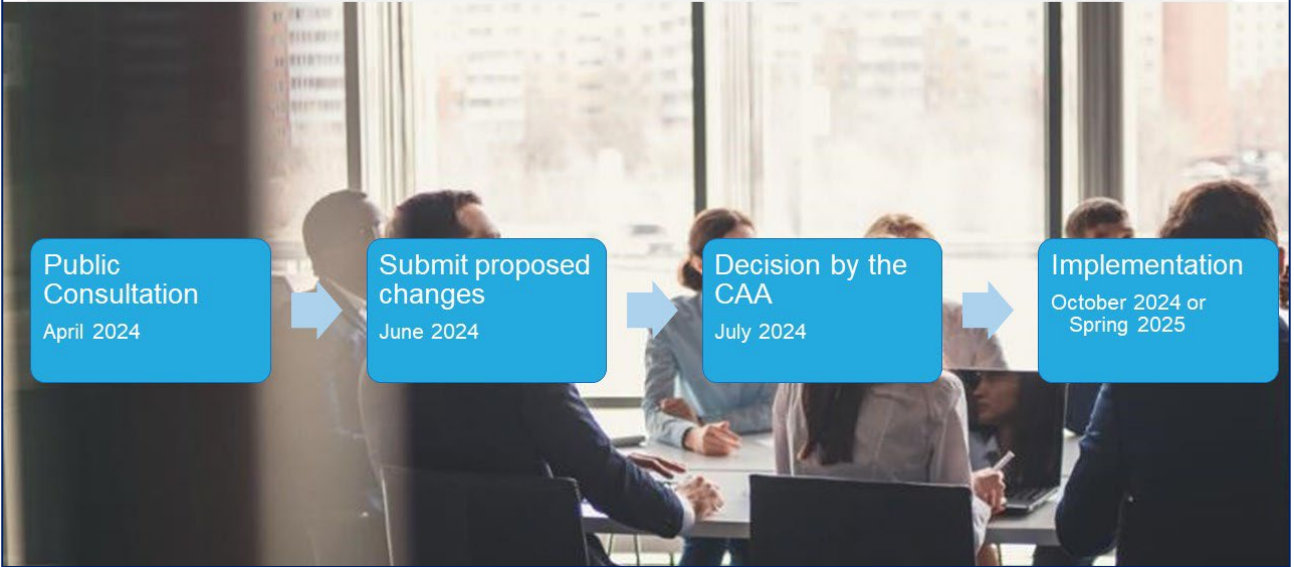
QNH
mandate?

Wake
turbulence
restriction?

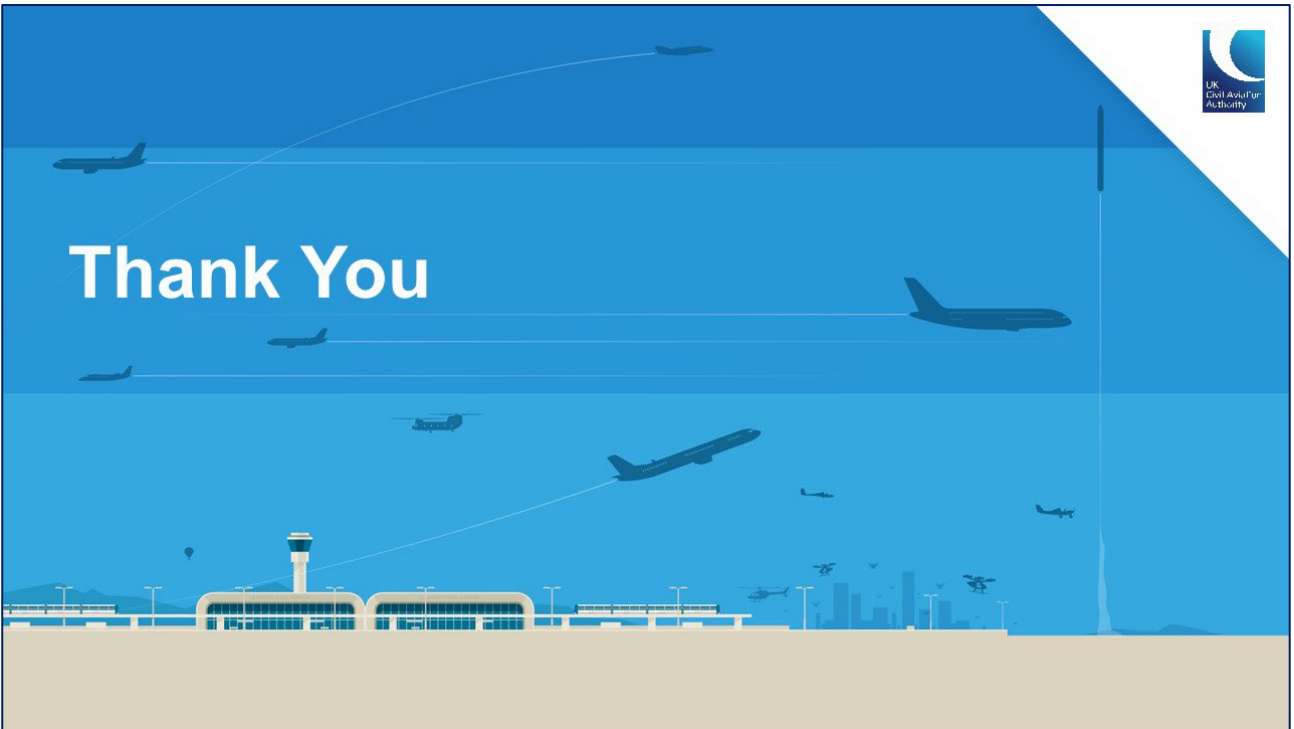


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Next steps



Thank You



CHAPTER 3

Tier Three Engagement

Engagement Exercise Materials

Online engagement webpage

Please see our dedicated engagement web page <https://consultations.caa.co.uk/safety-and-airspace-regulation-group/proposed-amendment-to-mllr/>

Engagement document

Please see CAP2992 at www.caa.co.uk/CAP2992

Easy to read engagement summary

Please see CAP2992a at www.caa.co.uk/CAP2992a

Stakeholder Email – 21/05/2024

Alex Coleman

From: UK CAA <airspace.classification@caa.co.uk>
Sent: 21 May 2024 13:02
To: Alex Coleman
Subject: [External] Public engagement on changes to the Manchester Low Level Route (MLLR) launched

Email not displaying correctly? [View it in your browser.](#)



Public engagement on changes to the Manchester Low Level Route (MLLR) launched

We are writing to inform you of the UK Civil Aviation Authority's [public engagement activity](#) on its [proposed amendment](#) to the volume of airspace currently known as the Manchester Low Level Route (MLLR).

Our [review of the airspace](#), published in July last year, uncovered a number of safety concerns, notably the risk of mid-air collisions (MAC), which endanger both air traffic and ground communities. Additionally, challenges in ensuring safe emergency landings due to urban expansion, risks of airspace infringements due to proximity to Class D airspace, and discrepancies in pilot GPS navigation software further complicate MLLR operations.

These findings, along with the fact that the current rule exemption that allows the MLLR to operate as it does, underscores the urgent need for amendments to mitigate these risks and enhance safety for all airspace users.

Our proposals

After detailed analysis and collaboration with both Manchester and Liverpool Airports, we are now proposing an amendment to the MLLR with four core elements. The proposed elements are:

- Reclassifying the current Class D MLLR airspace to Class G uncontrolled airspace.
- Implementing a Restricted Area within the reclassified airspace.
- A maximum altitude within the Class G airspace of 1500ft – 200ft higher than the MLLR currently permits.
- Creating Class G airspace 0.65 nautical miles wider than today's MLLR along its eastern boundary.

We have conducted a thorough Hazard Identification (HAZID) session with the neighbouring airspace controlling authorities and determined that the

proposed amendment will improve safety within the MLLR, while not negatively impact the safety of their existing operations. We also do not expect the amendment to have any negative impacts on the aviation community or local communities.

Have your say

We encourage anyone with an interest in this airspace, including local communities, to participate in our public engagement, which ends on 15 July 2024. This can be accessed through the [UK Civil Aviation Authority's dedicated engagement page](#).

We will also be holding a public drop-in information session to allow all stakeholders to come and speak to the project team and learn more. The details of this session are:

Date and time: 4 June 2024, 12:45 - 18:15

Venue: Hartford Village Hall, 244 Chester Rd, Hartford, Northwich CW8 1LW

Finally, it is important to note that this proposal to amend the MLLR is being presented by the UK Civil Aviation Authority and is a wholly separate piece of work to the airspace change proposals being presented by both Manchester and Liverpool Airports, as part of the FASI program.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss this further, please contact us at airspace.classification@caa.co.uk

*Airspace Classification team
UK Civil Aviation Authority*

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You are receiving this email because of your interest in airspace change-related information.

Our mailing address is:
The CAA
45-59 Kingsway
London, WC2B 6TE
United Kingdom

Skywise – 21/05/2024

Alert: SW2024/107

May 21, 2024

SW2024/107

Public engagement on changes to the Manchester Low Level Route (MLLR) launched

The UK Civil Aviation Authority is proposing changes to the Manchester Low-Level Route (MLLR) to enhance safety and access. This includes amending the area to Class G airspace, introducing a Restricted Area, raising the maximum altitude to 1500ft, and expanding the airspace eastward by 0.65 nautical miles.

Share your thoughts on our [dedicated engagement website](#).

The public engagement closes on 15 July 2024.

SW2024/107

Local Media Briefing – 21/05/2024

Sent via email or on PR Gloop as an email to local newspapers in Manchester/Liverpool area

UK Civil Aviation Authority Launches Public Engagement on Manchester Low-Level Route Amendments

The UK Civil Aviation is holding a public information session on its proposals to improve airspace safety in the North West area.

This forms part of its [stakeholder engagement](#) on [proposed amendments](#) to a section of airspace in the North West known as the Manchester Low-Level Route (MLLR). The MLLR provides pilots with a direct route through the airspace where Manchester and Liverpool airspace connects, without the need for pilots to fly over high terrain or water.

The UK Civil Aviation Authority is holding its drop-in information session on 4 June 2024 between 12:45 and 18:15. This will be at the Hartford Village Hall, Northwich.

Local residents and the aviation industry are also invited to share their input on these proposed amendments through the regulator's [dedicated engagement webpage](#).

For background:

Aimed at enhancing safety, the proposed amendments address concerns identified in a [comprehensive review](#), including the risk of mid-air collisions and challenges in ensuring the ability for pilots to make safe emergency landings.

The key changes proposed are:

- Reclassification to Class G airspace
- Implementation of a Restricted Area
- An increase in maximum altitude
- An extension of the airspace boundary.

For further inquiries, please contact airspace.classification@caa.co.uk.

- **About the MLLR:** The Manchester Low-Level Route (MLLR) is an airspace corridor within the Manchester Control Zone (CTR), spanning from the ground level to 1300 feet above mean sea level (AMSL).
- **Current Operations:** At present, the MLLR operates as an important airspace structure with a unique exemption within Manchester Airport's Class D Controlled Airspace. It continues to provide a crucial north-south routing for aircraft, enabling them to navigate efficiently between Manchester and Liverpool Airports' adjoining Class D airspaces. This corridor is particularly significant because it allows VFR traffic to transit through a busy and complex airspace without the need for air traffic control (ATC) crossing clearance, which would otherwise be required. This feature of the MLLR is not just a convenience but a safety measure, ensuring smoother flow and reduced risk of conflicts in a region with high air traffic.
- **Proposed Amendments:** The CAA proposes the following changes:
 - Reclassifying the current Class D MLLR airspace to Class G uncontrolled airspace.
 - Implementing a Restricted Area within the reclassified airspace.
 - A maximum altitude within the Class G airspace of 1500ft – 200ft higher than the MLLR currently permits.
 - Creating Class G airspace 0.65 nautical miles wider than today's MLLR along its eastern boundary.
- **Public Engagement Activity and Drop-in Session:** The UK Civil Aviation Authority is committed to engaging with stakeholders through the six week public engagement exercise. A drop-in session is also being held to provide stakeholders with information, gather feedback, and address any concerns from the community and stakeholders. The details of this session are:
 - Date: 4 June 2024
 - Time: 12:45 – 18:15
 - Venue: Hartford Village Hall, 244 Chester Rd, Hartford, Northwich CW8 1LW

Trade Media Briefing – 21/05/2024

Sent via email or on PR Gloop as an email to GA trade media

UK Civil Aviation Authority Launches Public Engagement on Manchester Low-Level Route Amendments

The UK Civil Aviation Authority has launched its [public engagement](#) on [proposed amendments](#) to a section of airspace in the North West known as the Manchester Low-Level Route (MLLR). The MLLR provides pilots with a direct route through the airspace where Manchester and Liverpool airspace adjoins, without the need for pilots to fly over high terrain or water.

Aimed at enhancing safety and operational efficiency, the proposed amendments address critical safety concerns identified last year in a [comprehensive review](#), including the risk of mid-air collisions and challenges in ensuring the ability for pilots to make safe emergency landings.

The key changes proposed are:

- Reclassification to Class G airspace

- Implementation of a Restricted Area
- An increase in maximum altitude
- An extension of the airspace boundary.

These amendments are designed to mitigate safety risks while maintaining the integrity of existing operations.

Stakeholders, including the aviation community and local residents, are invited to share their input on these proposed amendments. The engagement details and access to relevant documents are available on the regulator's dedicated webpage.

The UK Civil Aviation Authority is also holding a public drop-in information session on 4 June 2024 between 12:45 and 18:15. This will be at the Hartford Village Hall, Northwich.

For further inquiries, please contact airspace.classification@caa.co.uk.

Notes to Editors:

- **About the MLLR:** The Manchester Low-Level Route (MLLR) is an airspace corridor within the Manchester Control Zone (CTR), spanning from the ground level to 1300 feet above mean sea level (AMSL).
- **Current Operations:** At present, the MLLR operates as an important airspace structure with a unique exemption within Manchester Airport's Class D Controlled Airspace. It continues to provide a crucial north-south routing for aircraft, enabling them to navigate efficiently between Manchester and Liverpool Airports' adjoining Class D airspaces. This corridor is particularly significant because it allows VFR traffic to transit through a busy and complex airspace without the need for air traffic control (ATC) crossing clearance, which would otherwise be required. This feature of the MLLR is not just a convenience but a safety measure, ensuring smoother flow and reduced risk of conflicts in a region with high air traffic.
- **Proposed Amendments:** The CAA proposes the following changes:
 - Reclassifying the current Class D MLLR airspace to Class G uncontrolled airspace.
 - Implementing a Restricted Area within the reclassified airspace.
 - A maximum altitude within the Class G airspace of 1500ft – 200ft higher than the MLLR currently permits.
 - Creating Class G airspace 0.65 nautical miles wider than today's MLLR along its eastern boundary.
- **Public Engagement Activity and Drop-in Session:** The UK Civil Aviation Authority is committed to engaging with stakeholders through the six week public engagement exercise. A drop-in session is also being held to provide stakeholders with information, gather feedback, and address any concerns from the community and stakeholders. The details of this session are:
 - Date: 4 June 2024
 - Time: 12:45 – 18:15
 - Venue: Hartford Village Hall, 244 Chester Rd, Hartford, Northwich CW8 1LW

Public Engagement Drop-in Session Materials



Manchester Low Level Route

Welcome

Welcome to our engagement drop-in session on our proposal for the Manchester Low-Level Route (MLLR).

The MLLR is a vital part of the UK's airspace, designed to support the needs of general aviation in this region. Our goal is to gather your valuable feedback on proposed amendments aimed at enhancing safety, efficiency, and [accessibility](#).

This session offers an overview of the current MLLR, why changes are proposed, and how these changes can benefit both the aviation sector and the public. Your input is crucial in shaping the future of our airspace.



Figure 1 The location of the MLLR overlaid on a satellite image map





Manchester Low Level Route

Context

History of the MLLR

The MLLR is a volume of airspace within the Manchester Control Zone (CTR), extending from ground level up to 1300 feet above mean sea level (AMSL). Established in 1967 and originally called the 'Special Low-Level Route', it was created following the end of large fixed-wing operations by the US military at RAF Burtonwood. This route facilitated access to Manchester Barton Aerodrome by allowing Visual Flight Rules (VFR) flights through the Manchester CTR.

How the MLLR Works Today

Today, the MLLR is essential for providing a north-south route for aircraft within Manchester Airport's controlled airspace. It enables safe navigation through the Class D airspace of Manchester and Liverpool Airports without requiring air traffic control (ATC) clearance, simplifying access for pilots and reducing ATC workload.



Figure 2 Screenshot of VFR 1:500,000 map (Edition 47, 2024) showing the location of the MLLR (pink north-south corridor in image centre)





Manchester Low Level Route

Context

Exemption to Class D Airspace

The MLLR operates under an exemption, ORS4 No.1596, which allows aircraft to transit without verbal ATC clearance if they follow specific conditions: VFR operations, maximum airspeed of 140 knots, at least 5 km visibility, Mode-C transponder code 7366 (or 7367 for solo students), and monitoring Manchester Approach frequency 118.580 MHz. This exemption, initially set to expire on 31st May 2024, has been extended by 12 months.



Figure 3 Tracks of non-commercial aircraft movements in and around the MLLR in 2023.

Current Users of the MLLR

The MLLR is primarily used by recreational general aviation (GA) aircraft. In 2023, 5,635 aircraft tracks were recorded, mainly fixed-wing aircraft (66%) and some military helicopters (2-3%) from RAF Shawbury. Most pilots use the MLLR for north-south travel, with significant activity near Manchester Barton Aerodrome.





Manchester Low Level Route

Why the MLLR must change

Issues and Risks Identified

Mid-Air Collision Risk: The current MLLR poses a significant risk of mid-air collisions, which endangers both air safety and people on the ground.

Emergency Landing Concerns: There is a lack of available sites for emergency landings beneath the MLLR due to significant urban development over the past 50 years, increasing the risk to persons and property on the ground during emergencies.

Airspace Infringements: The number of airspace infringements in and around the MLLR's Class D controlled airspace (CAS) is a safety concern. The CAA's 'Take 2' initiative advises pilots to maintain a buffer from controlled airspace, but this could inadvertently increase mid-air collision risks by funnelling traffic along the MLLR's centreline.

GPS Navigation and VFR Software: While pilot GPS and VFR 'moving map' software enhance navigational awareness, discrepancies between these tools and official aeronautical information can occur. These tools are not CAA regulated, and in the MLLR, the potential for opposite-direction traffic increases the risk of collisions. The limited altitude range in the MLLR adds to this risk. However, the recent inclusion of MLLR "ruleset" information in some moving map software is a positive step towards reducing airspace infringement risk.

Exemption Expiry

The Manchester Low Level Route (MLLR) currently operates within Class D airspace under specific exemptions listed in ORS4 No.1596, effective from April 18th, 2024. These exemptions allow pilots to fly through the MLLR without obtaining verbal clearance. Previously, this was managed by ORS4 No.1545, which expired on May 31st, 2024.

The CAA has extended the exemptions temporarily through ORS4 No.1596, permitting current MLLR procedures to continue until May 31st, 2025, or until the proposed changes are implemented. Continuous extensions of these exemptions are not considered acceptable.

Therefore, the MLLR will either change according to this proposal or revert to standard Class D rules, requiring verbal ATC clearance for all aircraft. We believe our proposal lowers risk for airspace users compared to reverting to standard Class D operations. If not approved, the CAA will notify the flying community about reverting to standard Class D procedures.



Manchester Low Level Route

Design Objectives

To address the issues and risks identified, we established clear design objectives to shape our proposed solutions for the MLLR. These objectives ensure our proposal tackles the challenges and maximizes improvement opportunities.

Objective A – Maintain a High Standard of Safety

Safety is our top priority at the CAA. Our goal is to minimize mid-air collision (MAC) risks and increase emergency landing options for pilots. We aim to provide a safe and simple crossing solution between the controlled airspace of Manchester and Liverpool airports, avoiding the high-risk routes over the Pennines or the Irish Sea. All elements of our proposal have been thoroughly discussed with, and supported by, the ATC units at both airports to ensure safety.

Objective B – Simplify Airspace in the Region

Our proposed solution aims to offer a straightforward and safe transit option through controlled airspace without requiring pilots to navigate over high ground or water. We strive to maintain the simplicity of flying through the region without needing to communicate with ATC, adhering to UK regulations on air traffic services.

Objective C – Reduce Airspace Infringements

Airspace infringements increase MAC risk and are a key focus for the CAA. Our data shows a rise in airspace infringements within the Manchester CTR since 2021, with non-adherence to current rules being a significant factor. Our design aims to minimise the likelihood of infringements, following the European Action Plan for Airspace Infringement Risk Reduction.

Objective D – Meet the CAA's Airspace Modernisation Strategy (AMS)

The AMS envisions fair and equitable access to UK airspace. Our solution aims to maintain access to this airspace without requiring ATC clearance, aligning with the AMS's goals.

Objective E – Adhere to the Air Navigation Directions

The MLLR currently sits within Manchester's Class D CTR, but no service is provided to aerodrome traffic within it. The CAA's policy states that airspace should be classified as Class D only if necessary for aerodrome traffic. Our proposal adheres to the Air Navigation Directions and CAA policy, ensuring the airspace classification reflects the actual usage, promoting safety and efficiency.





Manchester Low Level Route

Our proposal

We are proposing four core elements to amend the Manchester Low Level Route.

Reclassification to Class G

We propose changing the MLLR to Class G uncontrolled airspace. This change will remove the need for verbal ATC clearance and simplify procedures for pilots. However, this reclassification would reduce some safety measures, so we propose implementing a Restricted Area to mitigate risks.

Implementation of a Restricted Area

To ensure safety, we propose introducing a Restricted Area (RA) with specific conditions:

- Maximum speed limit of 140kts IAS.
- Minimum in-flight visibility of 5km.
- Mandatory use of local aerodromes' QNH.
- Maximum aircraft weight limit of 40,000kg
- Exemptions for Police, Air-Ambulance, and Search and Rescue flights ensure essential operations can continue unrestricted.

Raising the Altitude to 1500ft

We propose increasing the Class G airspace altitude to 1500ft AMSL, raising it by 200ft from the current MLLR. This change will provide more airspace for general aviation, enhancing safety and reducing the risk of mid-air collisions (MAC).

Increasing the Width of the Airspace

We propose widening the airspace to reduce MAC risks and improve emergency landing options. This wider route will provide more space in the busy airspace and allow pilots to avoid overflying populated areas.



Figure 4 Visual depiction in green shading of extended areas of Class G airspace on VFR chart



Manchester Low Level Route

Effects of our proposal

Methodology

We evaluated the potential impacts of the proposed airspace changes by analysing current usage patterns and traffic forecasts in the UK. Our assessment includes both qualitative and quantitative data. We also considered the implications of reverting to full Class D restrictions, examining the constraints and broader impacts on safety, efficiency, and the environment. Throughout this process, safety remains our top priority, as mandated by Section 70 of the Transport Act 2000.

Safety

Safety is paramount. The proposed amendments address identified safety issues with the MLLR and align with our design objectives. Joint Hazard Identification (HAZID) sessions with Manchester and Liverpool Airport's ATC units confirmed that the changes would not negatively impact safety. Stakeholder feedback has been positive regarding our commitment to high safety standards.

Our proposal aims to maintain or reduce ATC workload. Without the exemption, reverting to Class D would increase ATC workload, reduce controller capacity, and degrade safety barriers. Increased congestion and mid-air collision (MAC) risk could result from aircraft waiting for clearance outside controlled airspace.

Simplifying airspace entry procedures and maintaining clear visibility requirements will help reduce airspace infringements. The proposed changes enhance safety by providing more Class G airspace and raising the altitude, offering more space for general aviation (GA) operations and improving emergency landing options.

The Aviation Community

The proposal is expected to have a positive impact on the aviation community. It maintains current access levels to airspace and expands its volume, benefiting GA users. The economic impact is expected to be positive, supporting local GA airfields and aviation businesses. Operational costs should remain consistent, and commercial traffic at Manchester and Liverpool airports will not be affected.





Manchester Low Level Route

Effects of our proposal

Local Communities

The proposal is not anticipated to significantly impact local communities. GA traffic is expected to remain steady, with no significant increase in noise or overflight activity. The widening of the MLLR will distribute GA traffic more evenly, minimising potential disturbances. The proposal enhances safety, benefiting both airspace users and residents below flight paths.

Environment

The proposed amendment is not expected to significantly impact environmental factors such as tranquillity, biodiversity, air quality, noise, and CO2 emissions. The reclassification of airspace and associated restrictions will have minimal impact on sensitive areas like the Witton Lime Beds. The proposal avoids increased overflights of environmentally significant sites, preserving natural habitats.

Next steps

We are now seeking your views on our proposal through our engagement exercise. This closes for comment at **midnight on 16 July 2024**

Throughout this engagement exercise, your responses will be monitored, collated and assessed.

After the engagement period closes, the CAA's Airspace Classification team will collect, carefully analyse and categorise all responses that have been received during the engagement exercise.

An engagement response document will be published to set out clearly where any issues raised have been tackled and how they have been resolved. It will also confirm, based on engagement feedback, the option to be submitted to Airspace Regulation or where changes have been made as a result of feedback, to the final design.





Manchester Low Level Route

How to respond

We are now seeking your views on our proposal through our dedicated engagement page here:

<https://consultations.caa.co.uk/safety-and-airspace-regulation-group/proposed-amendment-to-mlr>

The engagement exercise closes at midnight on 16 July 2024

You may also send your responses by letter to the following address:

MLLR Amendment Engagement
Airspace Classification Department
UK Civil Aviation Authority
Aviation House
Beehive Ring Road
Crawley, RH6 0YR



Local Media Briefing – 08/07/2024

Sent via email or on PR Gloop as an email to local newspapers in Manchester/Liverpool area

UK Civil Aviation Authority Extends Public Engagement on Manchester Low-Level Route Amendments

The UK Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) is extending the public engagement period for its proposals to improve airspace safety in the North West area. This extension to our [stakeholder engagement](#) aims to provide additional time for local people and other stakeholders to share their views on [proposed amendments](#) to the Manchester Low-Level Route (MLLR). The new closing date for comments is now 05 August 2024 at 23:59.

The Manchester Low-Level Route (MLLR) is a crucial section of airspace in the North West that offers pilots a direct pathway between Manchester and Liverpool. This route enables pilots to navigate the airspace where the two regions connect, avoiding the need to fly over high terrain or bodies of water.

The UK CAA encourages all stakeholders, including local residents and members of the aviation industry, to take advantage of this extended period to review the proposals and provide their valuable input through the regulator's dedicated engagement webpage.

For further information and to submit your comments, please visit the regulator's [dedicated engagement webpage](#).

For background:

Aimed at enhancing safety, the proposed amendments address concerns identified in a [comprehensive review](#), including the risk of mid-air collisions and challenges in ensuring the ability for pilots to make safe emergency landings.

The key changes proposed are:

- Reclassification to Class G airspace
- Implementation of a Restricted Area
- An increase in maximum altitude
- An extension of the airspace boundary.

For further inquiries, please contact airspace.classification@caa.co.uk.

- **About the MLLR:** The Manchester Low-Level Route (MLLR) is an airspace corridor within the Manchester Control Zone (CTR), spanning from the ground level to 1300 feet above mean sea level (AMSL).
- **Current Operations:** At present, the MLLR operates as an important airspace structure with a unique exemption within Manchester Airport's Class D Controlled Airspace. It continues to provide a crucial north-south routing for aircraft, enabling them to navigate efficiently between Manchester and Liverpool Airports' adjoining Class D airspaces. This corridor is particularly significant because it allows VFR traffic to transit through a busy and complex airspace without the need for air traffic control (ATC) crossing clearance, which would otherwise be required. This feature of the MLLR is not just a convenience but a

safety measure, ensuring smoother flow and reduced risk of conflicts in a region with high air traffic.

- This proposal to amend the MLLR is being developed by the UK Civil Aviation Authority and relates to airspace provided for smaller general aviation aircraft. It is a wholly separate piece of work to the airspace change proposals being prepared by both Manchester and Liverpool Airports, as part of the FASI program. Our proposal does not affect commercial aviation traffic in to or out of either of these airfields.
- **Proposed Amendments:** The CAA proposes the following changes:
 - Reclassifying the current Class D MLLR airspace to Class G uncontrolled airspace.
 - Implementing a Restricted Area within the reclassified airspace.
 - A maximum altitude within the Class G airspace of 1500ft – 200ft higher than the MLLR currently permits.
 - Creating Class G airspace 0.65 nautical miles wider than today's MLLR along its eastern boundary.

Stakeholder Email – 08/07/2024

Alex Coleman

From: UK CAA <airspace.classification@caa.co.uk>
 Sent: 08 July 2024 15:20
 To: Alex Coleman
 Subject: [External] Extended - Public engagement on changes to the Manchester Low Level Route (MLLR)

Email not displaying correctly? [View it in your browser.](#)



Extension of public engagement on changes to the Manchester Low Level Route (MLLR)

We are writing to inform you that the UK Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) has extended the public engagement period for its proposed amendments to the Manchester Low-Level Route (MLLR). The new closing date for comments is now 5 August 2024.

As a reminder, this proposal to amend the MLLR is being developed by the UK Civil Aviation Authority and relates specifically to airspace provided for smaller general aviation aircraft. It is a wholly separate piece of work from the airspace change proposals being prepared by both Manchester and Liverpool Airports as part of the Future Airspace Strategy Implementation (FASI) program. Our proposal does not affect commercial aviation traffic in or out of either of these airfields.



Figure 1 Screenshot of VFR 1:500,000 map (Edition 47, 2024) showing the location of the MLLR (pink north-south corridor in image centre)

Background

Our [review of the airspace](#), published in July last year, uncovered a number of safety concerns, notably the risk of mid-air collisions (MAC), which endanger both air traffic and ground communities. Additionally, challenges in ensuring safe emergency landings due to urban expansion, risks of airspace infringements due to proximity to Class D airspace, and discrepancies in pilot GPS navigation software further complicate MLLR operations.

These findings, along with the fact that the current rule exemption that allows the MLLR to operate as it does, underscores the urgent need for amendments to mitigate these risks and enhance safety for all airspace users.

Our proposals

After detailed analysis and collaboration with both Manchester and Liverpool Airports, we are now proposing an amendment to the MLLR with four core elements. The proposed elements are:

- Reclassifying the current Class D MLLR airspace to Class G uncontrolled airspace.
- Implementing a Restricted Area within the reclassified airspace.
- A maximum altitude within the Class G airspace of 1500ft – 200ft higher than the MLLR currently permits.
- Creating Class G airspace 0.65 nautical miles wider than today's MLLR along its eastern boundary.

We have conducted a thorough Hazard Identification (HAZID) session with the neighbouring airspace controlling authorities and determined that the proposed amendment will improve safety within the MLLR, while not negatively impact the safety of their existing operations. We also do not expect the amendment to have any negative impacts on the aviation community or local communities.

Have your say

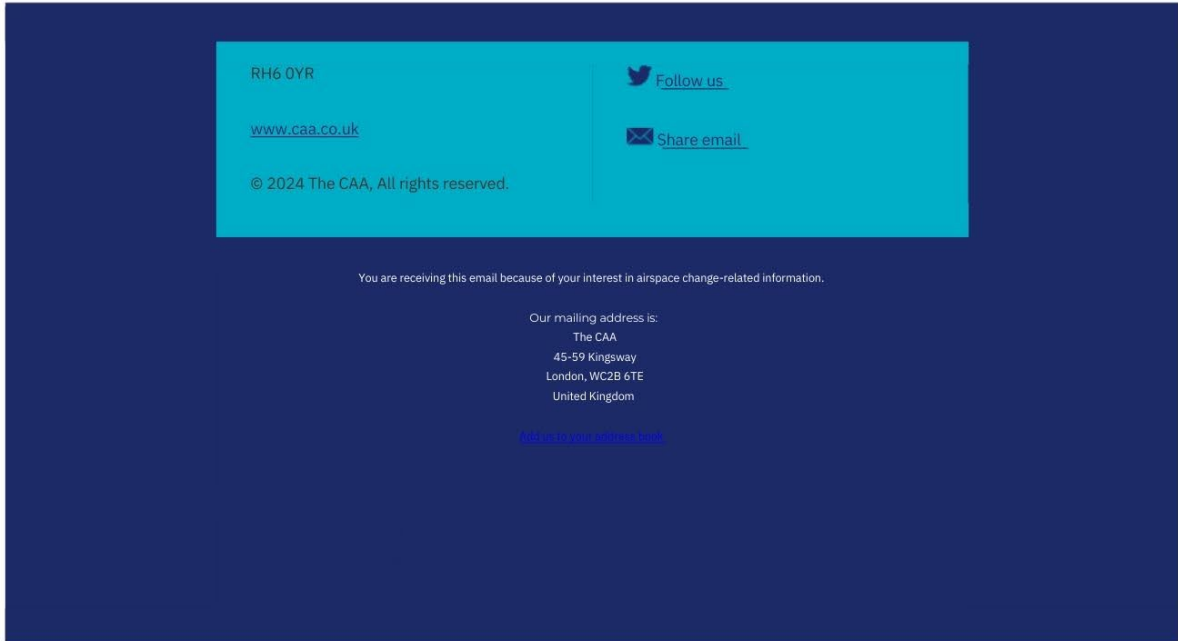
We encourage anyone with an interest in this airspace, including local communities, to participate in our public engagement, by the new date of 5 August 2024. This can be accessed through the [UK Civil Aviation Authority's dedicated engagement page](#).

If you have any questions or would like to discuss this further, please contact us at airspace.classification@caa.co.uk

Airspace Classification team
UK Civil Aviation Authority

The CAA
Aviation House
Beehive Ring Road
Crawley
West Sussex

Main Switchboard
0330 022 1500

A dark blue rectangular area containing white text and links. At the top left, it says 'RH6 0YR' and 'www.caa.co.uk'. Below that is '© 2024 The CAA, All rights reserved.'. On the right side, there are two links: 'Follow us' with a Twitter icon and 'Share email' with an envelope icon. Below this area, centered, is the text 'You are receiving this email because of your interest in airspace change-related information.' followed by 'Our mailing address is:' and the address 'The CAA, 45-59 Kingsway, London, WC2B 6TE, United Kingdom'. A link 'View our mailing address' is provided below the address.

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Skywise – 08/07/2024

Alert: SW2024/161

Jul 8, 2024

SW2024/161

Extension of public engagement on changes to the Manchester Low-Level Route (MLLR)

The UK Civil Aviation Authority is extending the public engagement period for the proposed changes to the Manchester Low-Level Route (MLLR) to enhance safety and access. This includes amending the area to Class G airspace, introducing a Restricted Area, raising the maximum altitude to 1500ft, and expanding the airspace eastward by 0.65 nautical miles.

Share your thoughts on our [dedicated engagement website](#).

New closing date: 5 August 2024

SW2024/161

Twitter Post – 08/07/2024



We're extending the public engagement period for the proposed amendments to the Manchester Low-Level Route, aimed at enhancing safety and efficiency for light aircraft pilots in the Manchester area ✈️

Find out more [👉 consultations.caa.co.uk/safety-and-air...](https://consultations.caa.co.uk/safety-and-air...)

#aviation



LinkedIn Post – 08/07/2024

 **Civil Aviation Authority**
113,900 followers
1h • 

We're extending the public engagement period for the proposed amendments to the Manchester Low-Level Route, aimed at enhancing safety and efficiency for light aircraft pilots in the Manchester area 

The amendments include:

- Reclassification to Class G airspace
- Implementation of a Restricted Area
- An increase in maximum altitude
- An extension of the airspace boundary

The new closing date for public engagement is 05 August 2024.

Visit our dedicated website to provide your feedback  <https://lnkd.in/eEwkVTtj>

#aviation



 UK Civil Aviation Authority

Manchester Low Level Route Consultation

 Marnie Burroughs and 11 others 2 reposts

 Like  Comment  Repost  Send

Twitter Post – 05/08/2024



UK Civil Aviation Authority @UK_CAA · Aug 5



Our consultation for the proposed amendments to the Manchester Low-Level Route closes today.


This is aimed at enhancing safety and efficiency for light aircraft pilots in the Manchester area. ✈️


consultations.caa.co.uk/safety-and-air...

#aviation







LinkedIn Post – 05/08/2024




Civil Aviation Authority
116,137 followers
1mo • 

This is your chance to give your viewpoint for the proposed changes to the Manchester Low-Level Route.


Aimed at enhancing safety and efficiency for light aircraft pilots in the Manchester area, the amendments include:

-  Reclassification to Class G airspace
-  Implementation of a Restricted Area
-  An increase in maximum altitude
-  An extension of the airspace boundary

The consultation closes on 5 August 2024.

How to provide your feedback  <https://lnkd.in/eEwkVTtj>

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Manchester Low Level Route Consultation