



Ministry
of Defence

Watchkeeper Force Headquarters
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22nd October 2021

AIRSPACE CHANGE PROPOSAL ACP-2021-006

Introduction

Throughout Spring and Summer 2021 the Ministry of Defence, specifically 47th Regiment Royal Artillery, successfully trialled the operation of the British Army Watchkeeper Remotely Piloted Air System (RPAS) from Keevil Airfield, Wiltshire.

This was achieved through the publication of a Temporary Danger Area (TDA) that was approved by the CAA after consultation with local and national stakeholders. This was required in order to facilitate the Beyond Visual Line of Sight operation of Watchkeeper from Keevil in order to provide critical training objectives over Salisbury Plain Training Area.



In total, 21 live sorties were conducted which provided a significant output for aircrew, groundcrew and engineers in a unique and challenging training environment. It also provided an opportunity for local stakeholders to engage with and understand the Watchkeeper capability and operating procedures.

As a result of this success, it is now the intent of the MOD to fly Watchkeeper from Keevil Airfield on a more regular basis. The long-term output from Keevil Airfield is anticipated to provide a bespoke location to train, generate and enhance RPAS capability whilst supporting essential wider military training on Salisbury Plain.

Permanent Airspace Change Proposal

The MOD has initiated an Airspace Change Proposal (ACP) to facilitate the safe operation of Watchkeeper in accordance with all UK Military Aviation Authority policy and legislation for RPAS operations.

Any change to UK airspace is required to follow a set process laid down in the Civil Aviation Publication (CAP) 1616. This process aims to ensure a fair and transparent dialogue between the Change Sponsor (in this case the MOD) and any affected stakeholders.

The CAP 1616 process comprises seven stages. Each stage is considered by the CAA sequentially based on a pre-agreed timeline¹. The process is not solution-driven and each stage informs the next. In this instance, the requirement is to fly large RPAS Beyond Visual Line of Sight between Keevil Airfield and Salisbury Plain Danger Area EG D123. This was presented to the CAA at the first stage of the ACP process and the CAA has agreed that an airspace change is an appropriate means by which to achieve this. All documentation relating to the ACP can be found on the CAA's Airspace Portal.

Design Principles

The first stage of the CAP 1616 process is 'DEFINE' and Sponsors are required to develop design principles on which to then take forward when developing options later in the process. The MOD wishes to engage with stakeholders and is asking for your feedback on the initial draft principles. The Sponsor will then submit a final Design Principles document to the CAA after all feedback has been received.

The MOD will engage with NATMAC members and has also selected local stakeholders from an area within a radius approximately 30 miles of Keevil Airfield, many of whom were considered previously during the Temporary Danger Area proposal.

The MOD would like to understand which elements of the airspace design principles you deem important and would like to be considered. At this stage we are not seeking feedback on the wider proposal as stakeholders will have an opportunity to do this later in the Airspace Change process once the proposal has been developed in greater detail.

As a stakeholder you are now invited to consider the draft design principles. The list is not exhaustive, but you may wish to comment on the following:

- Are there any other design principles you would like the MOD to consider?
- Are there any design principles that you would you like the MOD to consider discounting?
- Should the MOD prioritise some design principles ahead of others? And if so, which principles are the most important to you?
- Do you require / would you like any more detail to be included in the design principles?

Any additional detail or reasoning behind your feedback is also encouraged.

Draft Design Principles

A	Provide a safe environment for all airspace users.
B	Provide sufficient airspace to meet all technical requirements for the Watchkeeper RPAS platform.
C	Minimise the impact to other airspace users, both in terms of activation and volume of airspace required.
D	Endeavour to make the airspace as accessible as possible to all types of air user.

¹ The timeline for this ACP can be found online on the CAA Airspace Portal

E

Use standard airspace structure where possible (conformity, simplicity and safety).

Feedback

All the details of this airspace change proposal are available on the CAA's Airspace Change Portal. The ACP identification number is ACP-2021-006.

Feedback can be provided in the following ways:

Email: 47RA-Project-LOVERIDGE@mod.gov.uk

Letter: Project LOVERIDGE
FAO Regimental Operations Officer
47th Regiment Royal Artillery
Horne Barracks
SALISBURY
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We would also like to take this opportunity to offer to brief you personally if you have any specific questions regarding our proposal.

Responses regarding the Draft Design Principles are required by Friday 19th November 2021.