

RAF Brize Norton Consultation – Airspace Change Proposal

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This is a proposal to ‘increase the dimensions of the controlled airspace (CAS) design surrounding Brize Norton and to provide connectivity between RAF Brize Norton and the national airways network’, in co-ordination with a similar exercise being carried out by London Oxford Airport at Kidlington. After 40 years of the existing CAS, the size and complexity of the aircraft has increased and the CAS is no longer adequate to ensure the safety of military and civilian aircraft over Oxfordshire.

This is because military aircraft breach the existing CAS unavoidably, risking contact with civilian aircraft in the surrounding uncontrolled ‘class G’ airspace. Enlarging the ‘class D’ CAS would also provide links to the national air corridors. Currently, the risk of a mid-air collision is rated ‘HIGH’. ‘Reportable Safety Events’ are listed in A5.

The new area would extend some 20 nautical miles from the aerodrome and would include the air above Great Coxwell, with military aircraft descending to 4,500 feet (See CTA4 in A6.1.4 on page 75).

A number of alternative solutions were dismissed, as described in Section 4 of the Consultation document and ‘the new flight procedures have been designed to replicate the current operations as far as practicable’ (6.1). In practice, Great Coxwell residents already experience military flights overhead and ‘there are no plans to increase the number of flights’ (6.2).

It seems likely that low-level civilian flights might reduce in the wider CAS, although they would continue to be able to pass through the CAS, with prior permission.

There are to be public consultation events (see the RAF Brize Norton website for details) and other ways to respond (7.0), with a deadline of 22 March 2018. A consultation report is to be published, followed, some weeks later, by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) response to the final proposal.

Stakeholders include the CAA, aviation organisations, local aerodromes, CPRE, Friends of the Earth, National Trust, Natural England and local authorities (A2).

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