

Frequently Asked Questions

What are Standard Instrument Departure Procedures (SID's)?

SID's are designated Instrument Flight Procedure (IFP) departure routes linking an aerodrome, or a specified runway at an aerodrome, with a specified significant point. This is normally on a designated Air Traffic Service (ATS) Route at which the en-route phase of flight commences.

Why is London Southend Airport (LSA) doing this now?

The introduction of SID procedures is necessary to reflect current Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) policy and because of the introduction of controlled airspace in the vicinity of LSA, which provides connectivity to the London Terminal Control Area. LSA's introduction of SID's will provide connectivity to the route structure within and beyond the London Terminal Control Area. The change from Preferred Departure Routes (PDR's) to SID procedures brings LSA into line with other airports connected to busy terminal airspace.

Why wasn't this included with the Airspace Change Proposal for Controlled Airspace?

In the previous consultation we were unable to include comprehensive details of the formal SID's that would need to be introduced because of the pending major changes to the route structure and airspace management arrangements in the south-eastern part of the London Terminal Control Area (LTMA). These changes were being developed by NATS in a major airspace project known as the London Area Management Programme (LAMP).

At the time of the development of the LSA controlled airspace proposals the NATS-proposed LAMP airspace configuration and arrangements were not sufficiently developed. Whilst NATS and LSA were working closely together on developing the future airspace arrangements in the LTMA for LSA arriving and departing traffic, the timetables for the two projects were not compatible to allow them to be implemented at the same time. Instead, with the agreement of the CAA, it was concluded that, as an interim measure, the existing PDR's from LSA that had been in place for many years should remain until the LAMP Phase 1a route structure within the LTMA had been finalised and an implementation schedule established. LAMP Phase 1a was implemented in February 2016.

What happens to the existing S106 Noise Abatement Procedures?

The Noise Abatement Procedures currently in place at London Southend Airport for departing aircraft do not change as a consequence of this proposal.

What is an Airspace Change Proposal (ACP)?

An ACP is a formal UK Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) process that is followed in order to introduce a new airspace design in proximity to an airport. The process is outlined in CAA guideline documents CAP724 and CAP725.

What is consultation?

Consultation for proposed airspace changes is intended to gather feedback from both individuals and organisations that could be affected by the proposal and will be carried out in accordance with government recommended best practices. The public are also encouraged to respond and if required, there will be Information Sessions where the airspace development team will be on hand explain the proposal.

All feedback from both aviation and non-aviation stakeholders will be considered and used to modify the proposed design(s) where appropriate.

Who will review the airspace change proposal and how will a final decision be made?

Airspace Change Proposals follow a series of prescriptive steps outlined in CAA document CAP725. Before the proposal is submitted, there is comprehensive engagement with stakeholders and a formal consultation phase of at least 12 weeks, when anyone is welcome to respond, including members of the public.

Once submitted, the proposal will be reviewed by the CAA's Safety and Airspace Regulation Group (SARG) which is legally obligated to ensure that airspace changes are undertaken fairly, properly and with demonstrable high levels of engagement and consultation. SARG will make a decision on whether to approve the proposal and can add conditions that it deems appropriate. SARG are required to make its decisions in accordance with its remit within a specified time limit as outlined in CAP724 and CAP725.

Dispersion v Concentration of Tracks

The issue of concentration verses dispersal is addressed by Government policy as outlined in the DfT "Guidance to the Civil Aviation Authority on Environmental Objectives Relating to the Exercise of its Air Navigation Functions". This states:

(para 7.3) "the balance of social and environmental advantage lies in concentrating aircraft taking off from airports along the fewest possible number of specified routes and that these routes should avoid densely populated areas as far as possible. The framework also stresses that any changes to departure routes should avoid significantly increasing the number of people affected by aircraft noise."

(para 7.5) "The Government supports the adoption of Performance Based Navigation (PBN) as endorsed by Future Airspace Strategy (FAS). PBN will mean that aircraft following a particular route will adhere to that route more consistently than they do the historic conventional routes. This will

increase the concentration of traffic and impact over the areas directly beneath the published Noise Preferential Route (NPR), but will reduce the overall extent of the areas overflowed, thereby offering the potential to reduce the number of people exposed to noise from aircraft flying below 7,000ft (amsl).”

(para 7.6) “The policy on concentration versus dispersal has general application i.e. it is not confined to the designated airports. In the case of Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted this policy is given effect by the Secretary of State’s requirement for most departing aircraft to follow the NPRs which form the initial part of the SIDs. Many other airports also require pilots to adhere to NPRs or similar procedures designed to reduce disturbance in the vicinity of the airport.”

It should be noted that there are no NPRs in place at LSA, instead there are Noise Abatement Procedures which are a condition under our S106 agreement.

The improvement of navigational accuracy which results from upgrading air routes defined by ground based radio beacons (“conventional” navigation), to more precise RNAV routes, is a legal requirement under European Law. This is being enforced in the UK by CAA mandates. In principle this upgrading of the air navigation system will result in flight paths being more concentrated along the route centrelines. However since the majority of aircraft already fly using informal “RNAV overlays” of the conventional routes, to a large extent this concentration has already happened over the course of many years. The introduction of published RNAV departure and arrival routes serves to formalise the use of RNAV, and will compel the minority of aircraft operators who do not already use RNAV, to adopt it.

What is RNAV?

Area navigation (RNAV) is a method of instrument flight rules (IFR) navigation that allows an aircraft to choose any course within a network of navigation beacons, rather than navigate directly to and from the beacons. This can conserve flight distance, reduce congestion, and allow flights into airports without beacons.

An RNAV specification is designated as RNAV X, e.g. RNAV 1. The expression 'X' (where stated) refers to the lateral navigation accuracy in nautical miles, which is expected to be achieved at least 95% of the flight time by the population of aircraft operating within the airspace, route or procedure.

Do the new SID’s mean increased traffic at LSA?

No this consultation / proposal is not about increasing traffic levels.

This consultation is about how to modernise the existing routes to improve the overall operational and environmental performance of the airspace. The consultation is not about increasing the number of flights. The change from conventional navigation to RNAV will not influence the number of aircraft flying to/from LSA.

The proposed change has no impact on the airport’s capacity limit as set out in the planning conditions (Section 106 Agreement) under which the airport operates.

Why should we believe what you say in your consultation document?

It is in nobody's interest to present incorrect or misleading information in the consultation material. We take our responsibilities very seriously and whenever we present proposed changes we always seek to present the best available information as straightforwardly as we can.

The process for airspace change is regulated by the CAA. As part of this change process we are required to analyse performance after one year of use, and demonstrate that the change is working as anticipated. If the CAA determines this not to be the case then they may require us to make further changes to rectify the situation which would be costly and time consuming.

How do I know you have considered my response?

All feedback from this consultation will be given due consideration and reported transparently in a report. The consultation responses and analysis will all be made visible to the CAA as part of our airspace change proposal. The CAA will only approve an airspace change if they have evidence to show that we have followed the correct processes.

Should the consultation exercise highlight any significant and relevant issue that we have not taken into account, then we are duty bound to act on it.