

## **Airspace Inquiry - Terms of Reference and Call for Evidence**

The All-Party Parliamentary Group on General Aviation (APPG-GA) is parliament's largest APPG, With 174 MPs and Peers [\[1\]](#). The parliamentary group works to educate parliamentarians and ministers about the role that aviation plays in society and our economic nation's prosperity. The APPG has five expert Working Groups covering Airfields, Airspace, Tax & Regulations, Heritage Aviation and STEM Jobs & Skills.

The APPG-GA believes that the UK's airspace belongs to everyone. Removing it from certain users must come with responsibilities. Equitable access is therefore paramount. This paper has been produced by the Airspace Working Group and follows the announcement during July 2018 that the APPG-GA intends to investigate the way that airspace is managed in the UK.

### **Inquiry Purpose and Scope**

The inquiry will study all components of governance and process that result in airspace decisions and make recommendations on how to improve the current system. In addition to making representations to ministers on the findings, MPs and Lords may wish to introduce legislation to change the current law.

Focussing primarily on lower airspace, the inquiry is likely to cover topics such as;

- Current and potential future issues relating to the overall strategy, policy and principal mechanics guiding airspace design, management and the measurement of effective performance
  - The principal current and potential future influences on airspace strategy and policy as identified by different stakeholder groups
  - The underlying principles that should be used to guide all airspace-related matters (e.g. proportionality; need to maintain currency/relevance of designs; retire designs when no longer required; periodic independent reviews - e.g. by National Audit Office - of the efficiency and effectiveness of airspace strategy, policy and specific mechanisms; equitable consideration of all stakeholder groups; requirement for evidence-based inputs; reference to best practice; etc.)
  - Assessment of the efficiency and effectiveness of current airspace-related processes
  - Delegations of authority, including the allocation of accountabilities, responsibilities, roles and interests
  - The role of non-governmental organisations that are a part of the established airspace system (e.g. NATS)
  - The case for making change in priority geographical areas
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- Whether airspace change sponsors should make financial contributions in return for taking away airspace from other users – similar to so-called Section 106 provisions in national planning policy

## **Airspace Report Recommendations**

The all-party group will invite stakeholders to submit evidence through a formal Call for Evidence process, hold Hearings in the Palace of Westminster as part of their Inquiry, and produce a written report. The report, which will include specific recommendations, is expected to cover:

- Governance and management of the UK's airspace
- Parliamentary and ministerial oversight
- Government role
- CAA roles and responsibilities
- NATS roles and responsibilities
- What the overarching policy objectives should be for airspace
- What measures should be in place to increase efficiency and ensure equitable access for all airspace users
- What measures should be in place to monitor and withdraw underutilised areas of controlled airspace
- What measures should be in place to ensure governance and process remains fit for purpose
- And who pays

## **Next Steps**

A general Call for Evidence opens today and will **close on 31<sup>st</sup> October 2018**.

Formal invitations will be issued to certain stakeholders, but any organisation that wishes to present evidence and make representations should do so in written format addressing the broad headings in this Terms of Reference discussion paper to present their evidence.

Please email: [AirspaceInquiry@GeneralAviationAPPG.uk](mailto:AirspaceInquiry@GeneralAviationAPPG.uk)

Please note that your evidence will ordinarily be published.

Witness invitations to give evidence will be sent out in November. Based on the Call for Evidence response, APPG-GA intend to hold a number of oral witness hearing sessions in the Palace of Westminster. These will be both broadcast live and taped.

## **Follow up**

The APPG-GA Airspace Inquiry report will be published in 2019. This will include recommendations for ministers. A formal response to the report will be requested from government ministers. MPs and Peers may decide to introduce legislation in order to bring findings into effect.