



Doncaster Sheffield Airport

Airspace Change Proposal 2024-039

City of Doncaster Council is inviting feedback on Stages 1 and 2 of the airspace change process

Introduction to this engagement

The Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) Airspace Change Process, known as CAP1616, sets out how any proposed changes to UK airspace must be developed, assessed and approved. A key requirement of CAP1616 is that the organisation putting forward an Airspace Change Proposal (ACP) must engage with stakeholders early in the process.

City of Doncaster Council (CDC) is sponsoring ACP-2024-039 to reinstate the controlled airspace and procedures needed for Doncaster Sheffield Airport (DSA) to reopen safely and bring passenger and cargo flights back to the region.

In Stage 1 of the CAP1616 process CDC must:

- explain why an airspace change is needed
- describe the current situation at DSA
- develop a set of design principles; and
- share that information with stakeholders and ask for their views.

In Stage 2 of the process CDC must:

- share the baseline scenario (what happens if nothing changes to the airspace)
- present the initial design option or options
- seek stakeholder feedback on the option(s); and
- show how feedback has influenced the development or refinement of the proposal.

This document brings together all the information needed to support the engagement for Stage 1 and Stage 2 of the CAP1616 process for the DSA ACP.

About South Yorkshire Airport City

The reopening of DSA is the centrepiece of South Yorkshire Airport City (SYAC), a major regional growth programme designed to restore aviation services and unlock thousands of new jobs across advanced manufacturing, engineering, logistics and green technologies. The project is being delivered through a partnership between national government, the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority and CDC.

Government backing for the SYAC programme has enabled significant investment to prepare the airport for reopening, reflecting the national importance of restoring regional connectivity, supporting trade and driving economic growth across the North. The airport's return forms part of the Government's wider devolution agenda, demonstrating how locally led, nationally supported investment can deliver regeneration, skilled employment and long-term prosperity.

Why is an ACP needed for DSA

DSA closed in 2022 after the previous airport operator withdrew, which led to the CAA removing the controlled airspace and flight procedures that supported its operations. In March 2024, CDC secured a 125-year lease for the site, and began work to reinstate the airport licence, establish a local air traffic control service, and prepare for scheduled passenger and cargo services to return from 2027/28. Restoring DSA's airspace and procedures is essential for this.

As a result, the ACP is a core part of the SYAC programme. Airlines have been clear that they cannot operate from DSA until a safe and efficient airspace structure is in place to support commercial flights.

CAP1616 process overview

Figure 1 opposite, summarises the seven stages of the CAP1616 process. Each stage has its own outputs and a Gateway. At each Gateway, the CAA checks whether the stage's requirements have been met. Once they are, the sponsor can move on to the next stage.

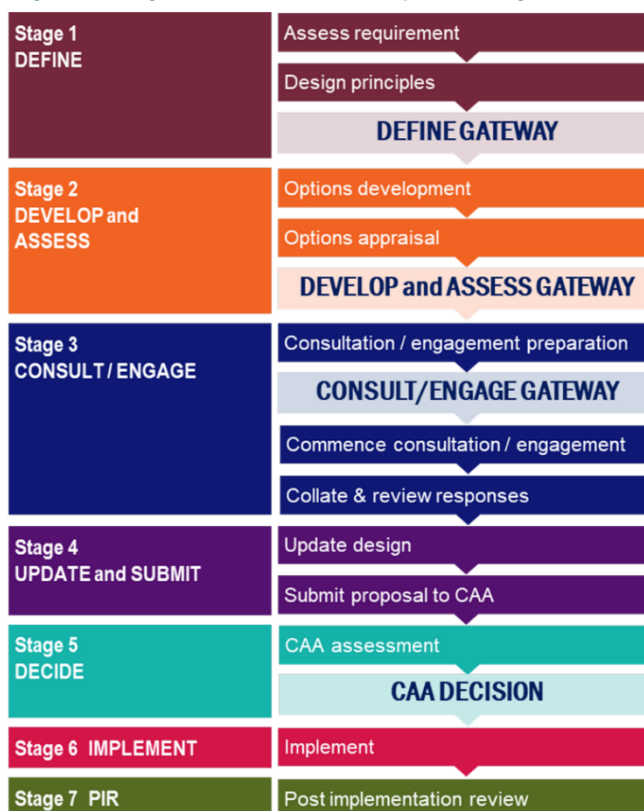
The CAA has agreed that for ACP-2024-039 it is appropriate for CDC to work through Stages 1 and 2 of the process together. This means the required outputs from both stages will be developed and submitted for a CAA Gateway assessment at the same time.

This combined approach helps keep the ACP on track for DSA's planned reopening, while remaining fully compliant with the CAP1616 requirements.

Who is engaged in Stages 1 and 2

At Stages 1 and 2, engagement focuses on representative stakeholders including local authorities, aviation organisations, neighbouring airports, airspace users, community representatives and environmental groups. These stakeholders are involved early in the process because they can offer informed, technical and location-specific insight that helps refine the ACP before it progresses to full public consultation in Stage 3.

Figure 1: Stages of the CAP1616 Airspace Change Process



Outputs required from Stage 1: Define

To meet the Stage 1 requirements CDC first prepared a **Statement of Need**, which explains why a change is required, what the ACP aims to achieve, what airspace issues or opportunities exist, and what the current situation is. The Statement of Need is summarised in the box below and can be viewed in full [here](#).

CDC held an **Assessment Meeting** with the CAA in September 2025 to review the Statement of Need, agree how the process will be applied, the timeline and the next steps. The Assessment Meeting briefing slides and minutes can be viewed [here](#). Next, CDC must describe the **Current Situation**, setting out how the airport site is operating at present, and establish a list of **Design Principles** for how design options will be developed and evaluated. This information is described in the sections below and is shared with stakeholders to help shape the foundations of the design before detailed work begins.

Summary of ACP-2024-039 Statement of Need

- The aim of the ACP is to restore the controlled airspace and flight procedures that DSA needs to operate safely and efficiently. This includes Standard Instrument Departures, Standard Terminal Arrival Routes and Instrument Approach Procedures.
- CDC's business plan is based on a mix of passenger services, general and business aviation, and renewed cargo operations. Forecasts show that DSA could return to its previous traffic levels within around five years of reopening, handling about 25,000 flights a year. Around half of these are expected to be commercial passenger flights, with the rest made up of general aviation, business aviation, cargo, training and positioning movements.
- The airport sits in a busy and complex part of UK airspace, close to other major airports in the Manchester Terminal Manoeuvring Area and areas with high levels of general aviation. The airlines that have already shown interest in operating from DSA have been clear that controlled airspace is essential in this region to ensure safe passenger operations and smooth access to the wider air traffic network.
- The proposed design will be based on the airspace structure and procedures used before the airport closed, with refinements made as needed through stakeholder engagement and in line with other regional airspace changes.
- Reintroducing controlled airspace and associated procedures will improve safety by protecting commercial traffic and ensuring safe integration with other airspace users.

Current Situation

The airport is located around six miles southeast of Doncaster and nineteen miles east of Sheffield. The site has a single runway, 2,894 metres long, aligned roughly northeast (compass heading 020) to southwest (compass heading 220).

At present, the airport is unlicensed, which means it cannot handle commercial flights with fare-paying passengers or undertake flying training involving larger aircraft. A licence from the CAA for these activities is currently being pursued by CDC.

Since the airport closed in 2022, no commercial flights have operated to or from the site. The only aviation activity currently taking place is a small number of movements by 2Excel Aviation, which were approved by CDC. These flights do not carry passengers or cargo and operate on an unlicensed basis.

With the controlled airspace and supporting procedures removed after closure, the site currently has no active air traffic control service, no published instrument procedures and no regulated airspace protection for arriving or departing aircraft.

Although the physical infrastructure remains, the airport is not operating as a commercial aerodrome. There are no scheduled flights, no regular business or general aviation activity and no cargo operations.

This is the baseline from which the ACP is being developed. Prospective airlines have requested the reinstatement of controlled airspace, flight procedures and air traffic control services to enable the safe and efficient return of regular commercial operations.

Design Principles

The Design Principles set the framework for how design options for the ACP are developed and evaluated. They must reflect the aims set out in the Statement of Need and will guide the design choices made as the ACP progresses.

CAP1616f requires ACP sponsors to use three Mandatory Design Principles (MDPs) and to consider the discretionary and bespoke principles listed in the guidance. The mandatory principles are:

- **MDP Safety** - The ACP must maintain a high standard of safety and should seek to enhance current levels of safety.
- **MDP Policy** - The ACP should not be inconsistent with relevant legislation, the CAA's Airspace Modernisation Strategy or Secretary of State and CAA's policy and guidance.
- **MDP Environment** - The ACP should deliver the Government's key environmental objectives with respect to air navigation as set out in the Government's Air Navigation Guidance 2017.

In addition to the three MDPs, DSA reviewed the 18 Discretionary Design Principles (DDPs) set out in CAP1616f. These principles are optional, but sponsors must consider them and decide which are relevant to their proposal. After reviewing the list, CDC proposes to adopt one discretionary principle:

- **DDP Technical** - The ACP should consider the impacts on air navigation service providers and other aviation stakeholders such as nearby airport operators.

This principle has been selected because DSA sits in a busy and complex region, and future airspace changes to modernise the wider Manchester Terminal Manoeuvring Area will need to be taken into account.

CAP1616f also allows sponsors to develop Bespoke Design Principles (BDPs) where the local context requires something specific. Bespoke principles are created by sponsors to reflect local circumstances or previous arrangements that must be considered when shaping the airspace design options. CDC proposes to adopt one bespoke principle:

- **BDP Noise Preferential Routes** - Noise Preferential Routes (NPRs) for DSA departures were established through a public consultation in 2018 as part of an earlier ACP. Because these routes were recently consulted on, CDC does not propose to modify them further as part of this ACP unless required for safety or integration. This ACP should therefore not change DSA's existing NPRs unless this is necessary to support safe operations or integration with other airspace structures.

We welcome your views on these proposed design principles.

Please tell us whether you agree with them and whether there are any changes or additions you think we should consider at this stage.

CDC will review all feedback and update the non-mandatory design principles where appropriate. Any new or revised principles we adopt will be shared with stakeholders.

Please email feedback to: DSA@Doncaster.gov.uk

Outputs required from Stage 2: Develop and Assess

To meet the Stage 2 requirements of CAP1616, CDC must share the **Do-Nothing baseline scenario** for the ACP, which in this case means the current situation outlined above continues and the airport remains closed with no commercial, business or general aviation activity.

CDC must also present its **Initial Design Options** to stakeholders and seek their feedback.

At this stage, CDC is proposing one initial design option: to reinstate the same controlled airspace structure and flight procedures that were in operation before the airport closed in 2022. CDC considers this the most practical starting point because the previous airspace structure was developed in line with airline requirements, informed by widespread consultation on an earlier ACP, and operated safely for many years. Reinstating it is likely to provide a stable foundation for the return of passenger, cargo and general aviation flights, while still allowing refinements to be explored through stakeholder engagement and consultation as part of the development of this ACP.

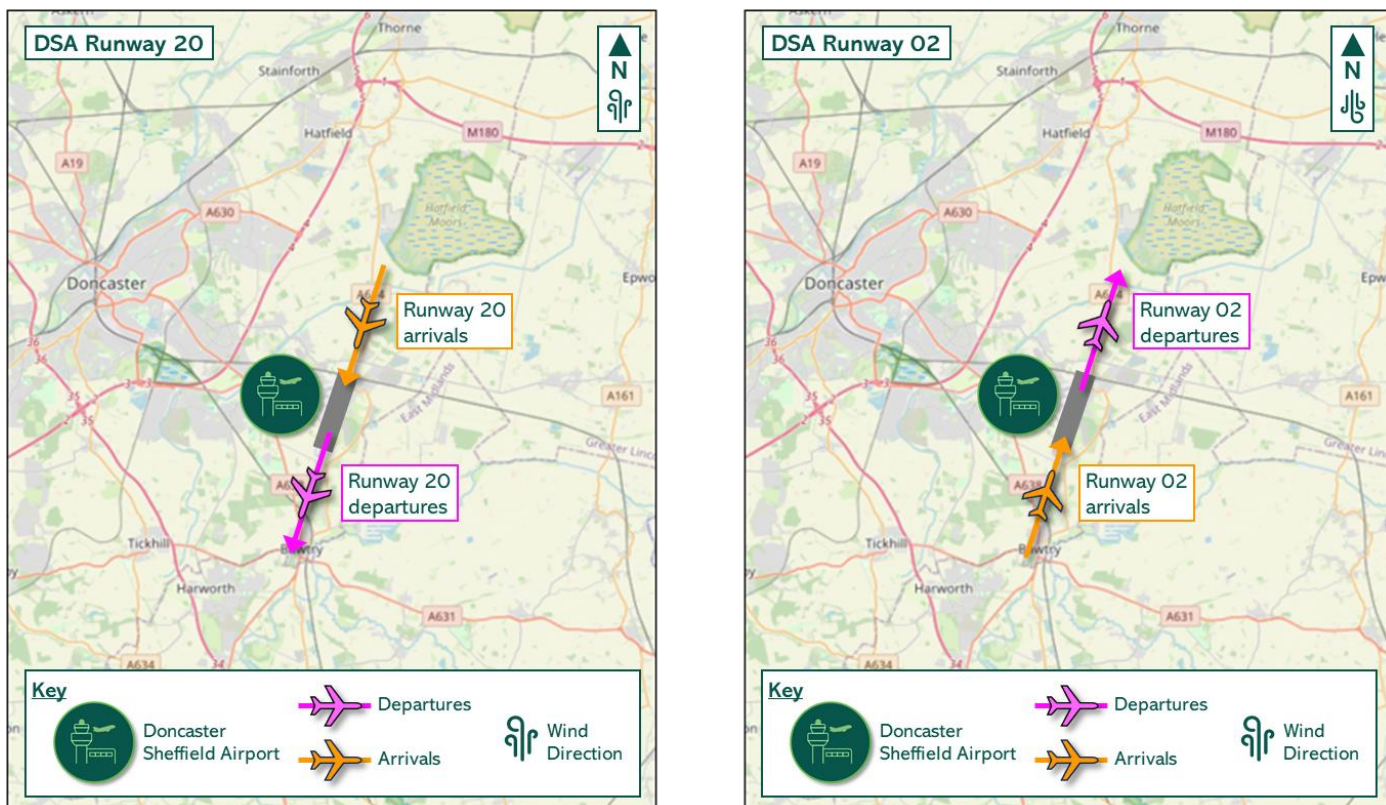
Description of the Initial Design Option

The purpose of the Stage 2 engagement is to gather feedback from representative stakeholders on CDC's proposal to reinstate the same airspace arrangements that were in place at the time of closure. The following section summarises the previous controlled airspace structure and flight procedures that CDC is proposing to reinstate. This initial design option may be refined further before the full public consultation in Stage 3, depending on the feedback received throughout this engagement.

DSA Runway Operating Modes

DSA operates with a single runway that can be used in two directions, Runway 02 and Runway 20. The direction in use depends on the wind, as aircraft must take off and land into the wind for safe and efficient performance. When winds blow from the south, the airport operates in Runway 20 mode, with departures to the southwest and arrivals from the northeast. When winds blow from the north, operations switch to Runway 02 mode, with departures to the northeast and arrivals from the southwest. Because south westerly winds are most common in the UK, Runway 20 is used more frequently. Figure 2 below, illustrates the two DSA runway operating modes.

Figure 2: DSA Runway Operating Modes



Historic flight track data

Figure 3 below, shows actual arrival and departure flight tracks for DSA when the airport was operating in Runway 20 mode, during the period 01 December 2021 to 30 November 2022. The orange shading represents the distribution of arrival tracks, while the pink lines show the more concentrated departure paths. Overlaid on the map are the airport's former Control Zone (CTR) and Control Areas (CTAs), which formed the controlled airspace structure in place before the airport closed in 2022. The chart provides a real-world picture of how aircraft approached from the north and departed to the south during Runway 20 operations, and how those tracks sat within the controlled airspace that protected commercial traffic.

Figure 4 on the next page, shows the equivalent flight track data for the same period, but for operations on Runway 02, with aircraft approaching from the south and departing to the north.

The charts are included to help stakeholders understand the previous operating environment and to support feedback on CDC's proposal to reinstate the same controlled airspace structure and procedures as a starting point for this ACP.

Figure 3: DSA Runway 20 actual flight tracks, 01/12/21 – 30/11/22

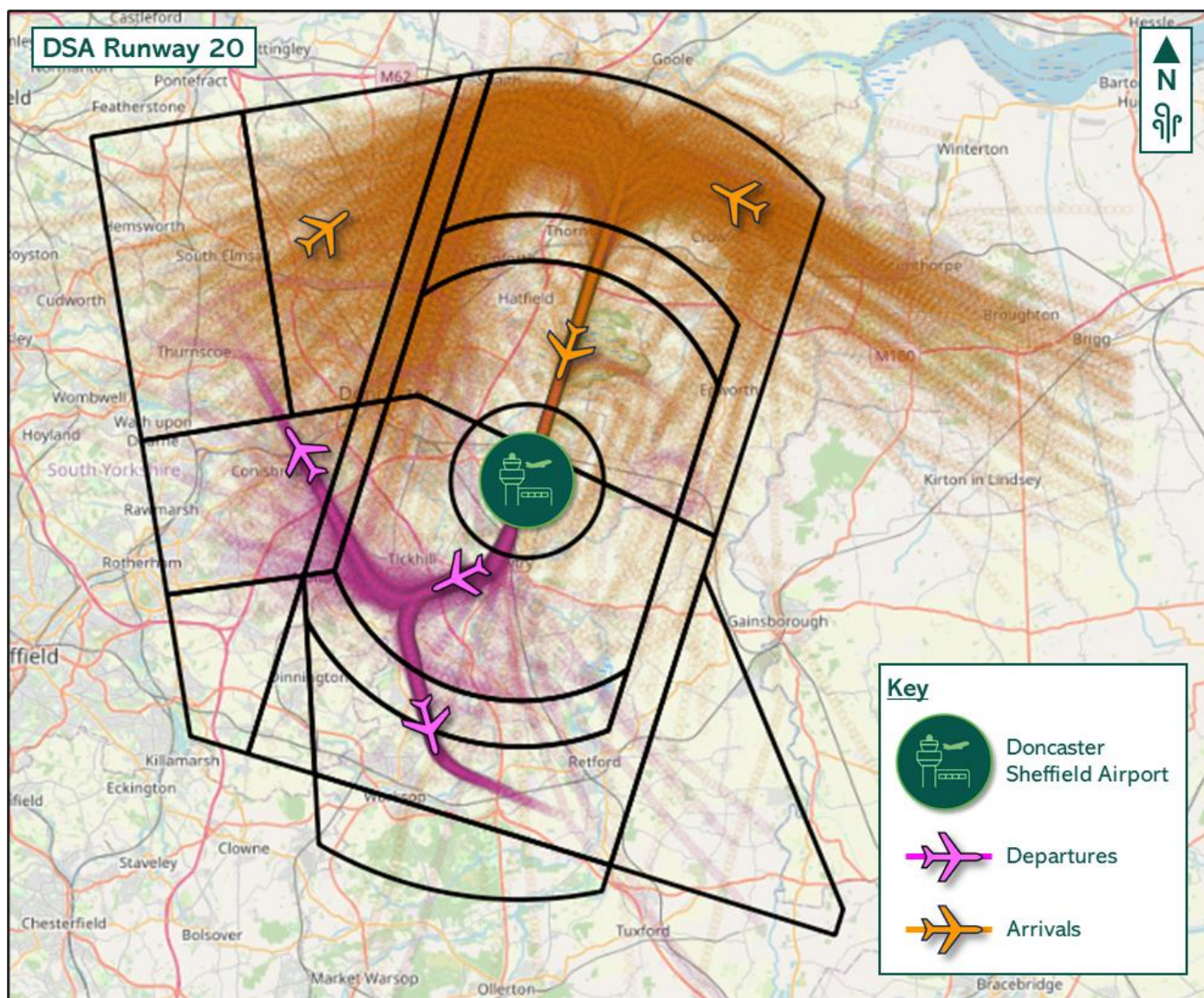
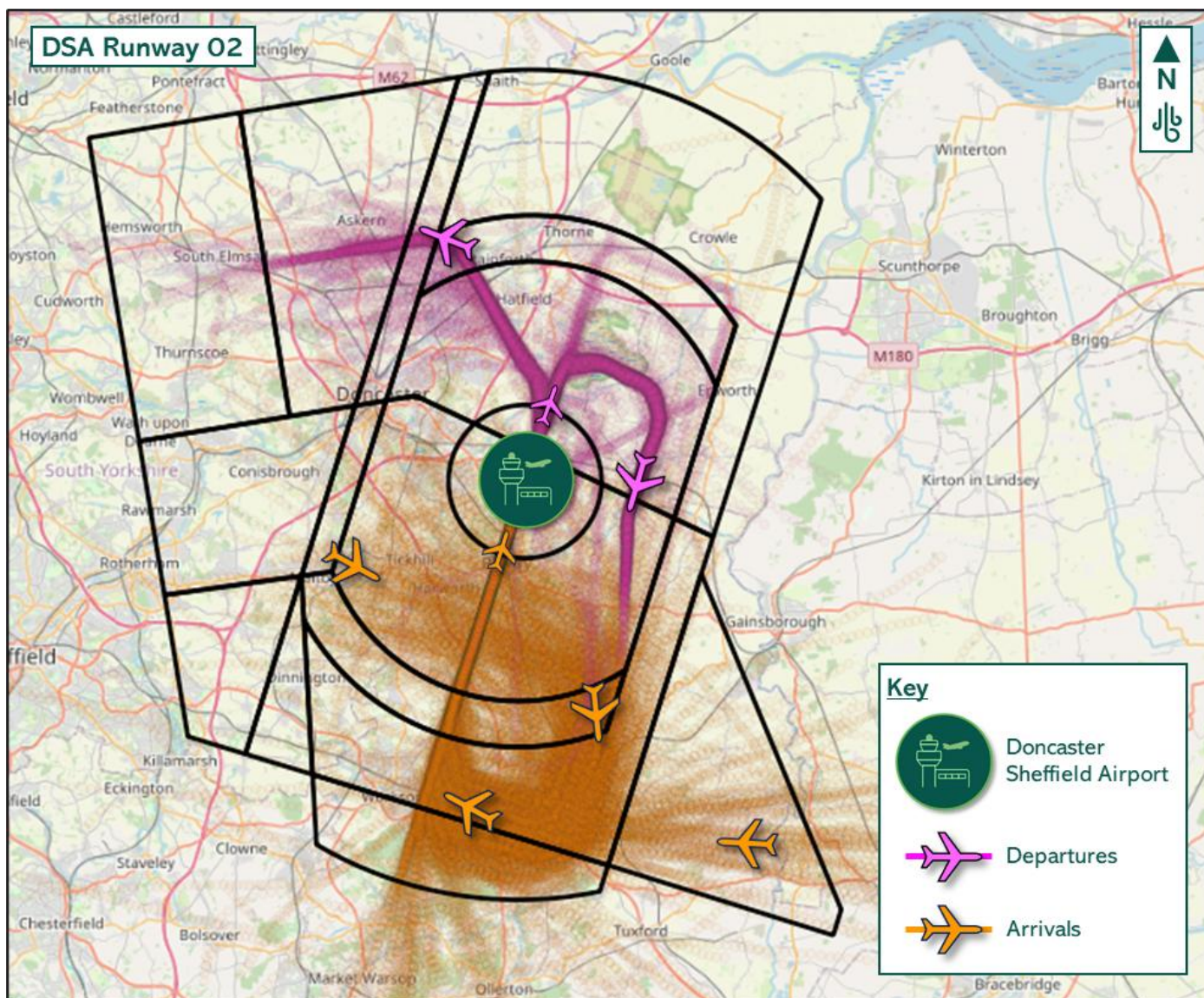


Figure 4: DSA Runway 02 actual flight tracks, 01/12/21 – 30/11/22



Initial Design Option: Proposed Controlled Airspace Structure

CDC's initial design option is to reinstate the same controlled airspace structure that was in place before the airport closed. Under this option, the airport would operate on a 24-hour basis, as it did previously. Night operations would continue to be managed through a Night Noise Quota System, expected to follow the principles set out in the Airport Noise Restrictions Notice used for Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted airports. This provides a recognised framework for managing night-time noise.

The reinstated airspace would include the Doncaster Sheffield Control Zone (CTR) and a series of Control Areas (CTAs). These were previously established as Class D airspace, providing air traffic control services for aircraft entering or operating within the area. The exception was CTA 13, which operated as Class E with an associated Transponder Mandatory Zone (TMZ) and Radio Mandatory Zone (RMZ) to ensure appropriate surveillance and communications for all users accessing that segment of airspace.

Air traffic services would be provided by a full air traffic control unit, delivering Tower and Approach (Radar) services consistent with the airport's former operation. Recruitment for operational personnel is underway to support the re-establishment of these services.

The reinstated airspace structure would also include the same Visual Reporting Points (VRPs), entry and exit lanes, and Visual Flight Rules (VFR) routes previously published for DSA. These elements support safe integration between controlled and uncontrolled airspace and provide predictability for general aviation operations

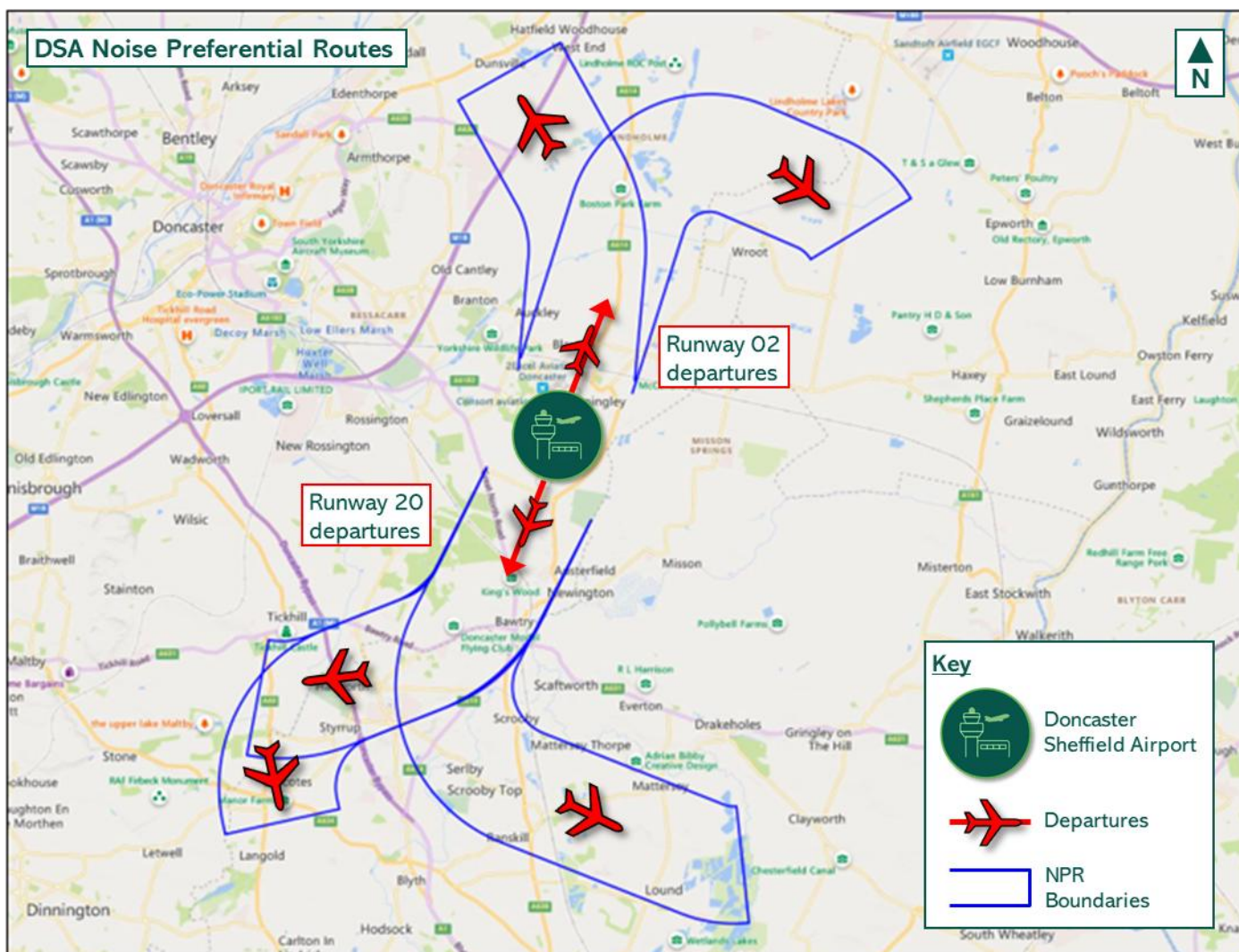
More detailed descriptions of the proposed airspace structure, including the lateral and vertical limits and associated co-ordinates, are available on request. An aeronautical chart illustrating the former controlled airspace structure that the initial design option for this ACP proposes to reinstate is shown in Figure 5 on the next page.

As part of the initial design option, CDC proposes to retain the Noise Preferential Routes (NPRs) that were previously in place for departures from DSA. NPRs are established paths that departing aircraft must follow after take-off to help manage and minimise noise over nearby communities.

Under the initial design option for reinstating the former NPRs, all departing jet aircraft weighing more than 5,700 kg would be expected to remain within the NPR boundaries as they climb away from the airport, unless air traffic control instructs them otherwise or a deviation is required for safety.

Figure 6 on the next page, shows the boundaries of the former NPRs for departures from Runway 20 and 02 that CDC proposes to reinstate as part of the initial design option for this ACP.

Figure 6: Former DSA NPR boundaries that would be reinstated under the initial design option



Initial Design Option: Departures

As part of the initial design option, CDC proposes to reinstate the three RNAV 1 Standard Instrument Departures (SIDs) that were previously used from Runway 20 at DSA, shown in **Figure 7** on the next page. A SID is a published departure route that guides aircraft from the runway to the wider air traffic network. It provides a safe, predictable path for aircraft to follow after take-off, supporting efficient operations and helping to separate traffic. RNAV 1 is a type of modern navigation that allows aircraft to follow precise routes using onboard systems rather than relying only on ground-based beacons. For aircraft not capable of flying RNAV 1 procedures, Omni-Directional Departure procedures will continue to be available.

Each SID leads aircraft towards a specific waypoint (a fixed position in the airspace, defined by coordinates) that aircraft navigate towards. From that point, aircraft join the onward route to their destination.

The previous airspace arrangements for Runway 20 included two RNAV 1 SIDs to the waypoint UPTON and one RNAV 1 SID to the waypoint ROGAG. CDC proposes to include all three of these SIDs in the initial design option.

- **UPTON SID (short/right-turn):** This SID turns aircraft to the right shortly after take-off and is the shorter of the two procedures. It was the standard departure clearance for aircraft routing towards UPTON and is proposed to remain the default option.
- **UPTON SID (long/left-turn):** This route takes aircraft left after departure and is longer. It would be used when an aircraft cannot achieve the climb gradient required on the shorter SID, or when airspace restrictions are in place to protect gliding activity to the south west of DSA.
- **ROGAG SID:** This SID directs aircraft towards the waypoint ROGAG and provides an alternative route for traffic departing Runway 20 depending on their destination and airspace requirements.

For Runway 02, the initial design option proposes to reinstate two former RNAV 1 SIDs (and the associated Omni-directional departures), one that turns left to UPTON and one that turns right to ROGAG, as shown in **Figure 8** on the next page.

Figure 7: Former DSA Runway 20 SIDs that would be reinstated under the initial design option

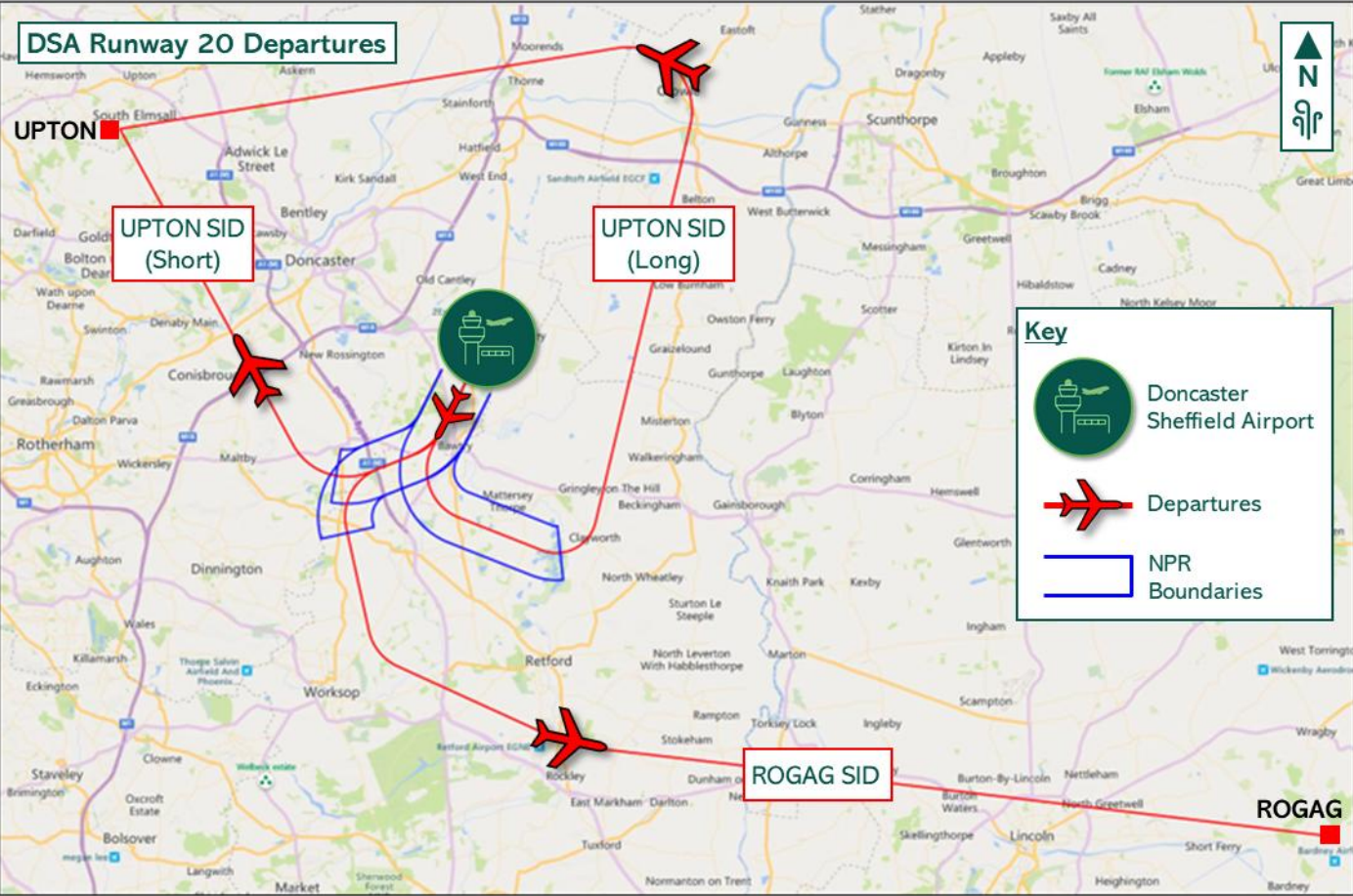


Figure 8: Former DSA Runway 02 SIDs that would be reinstated under the initial design option

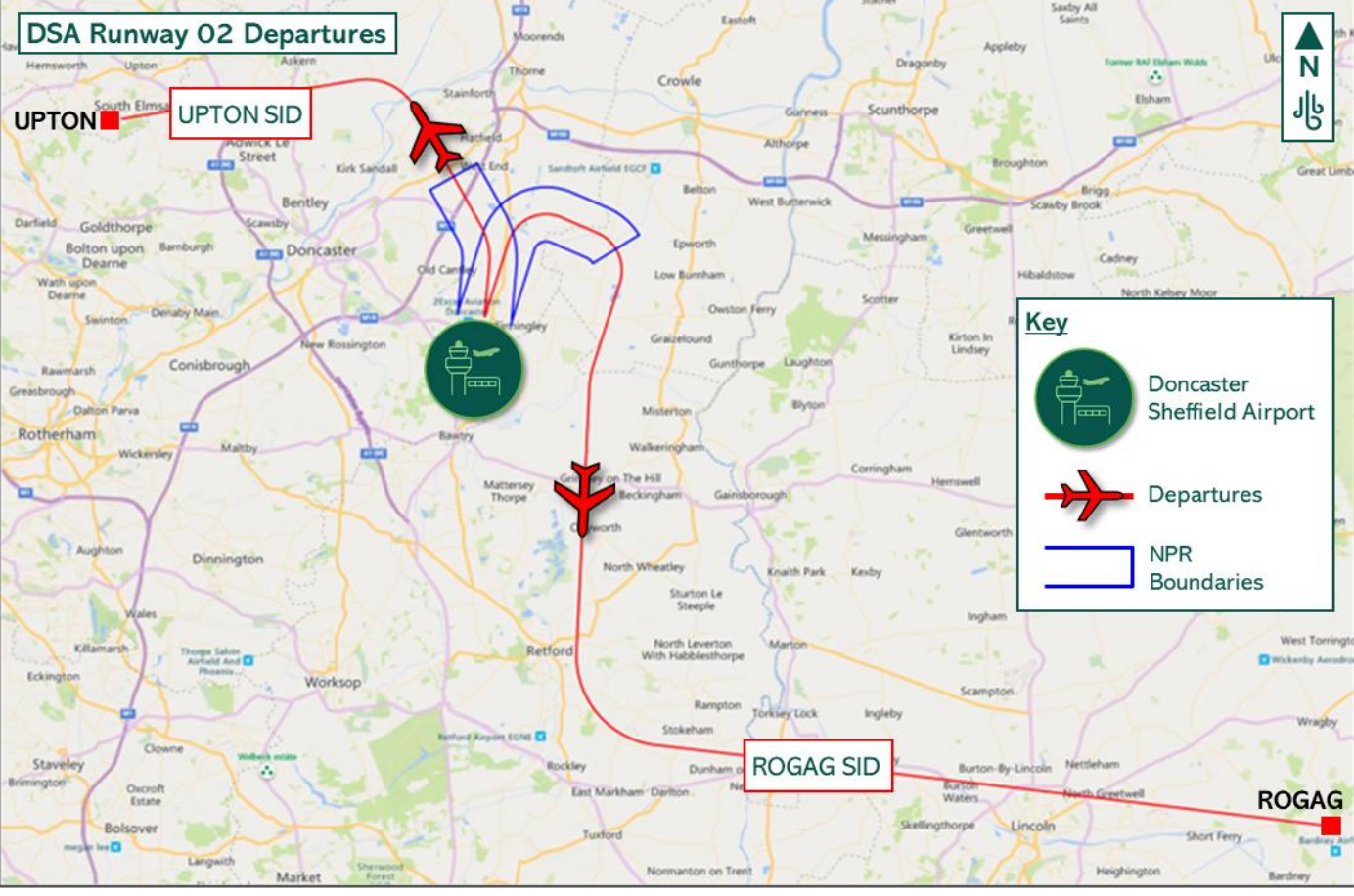
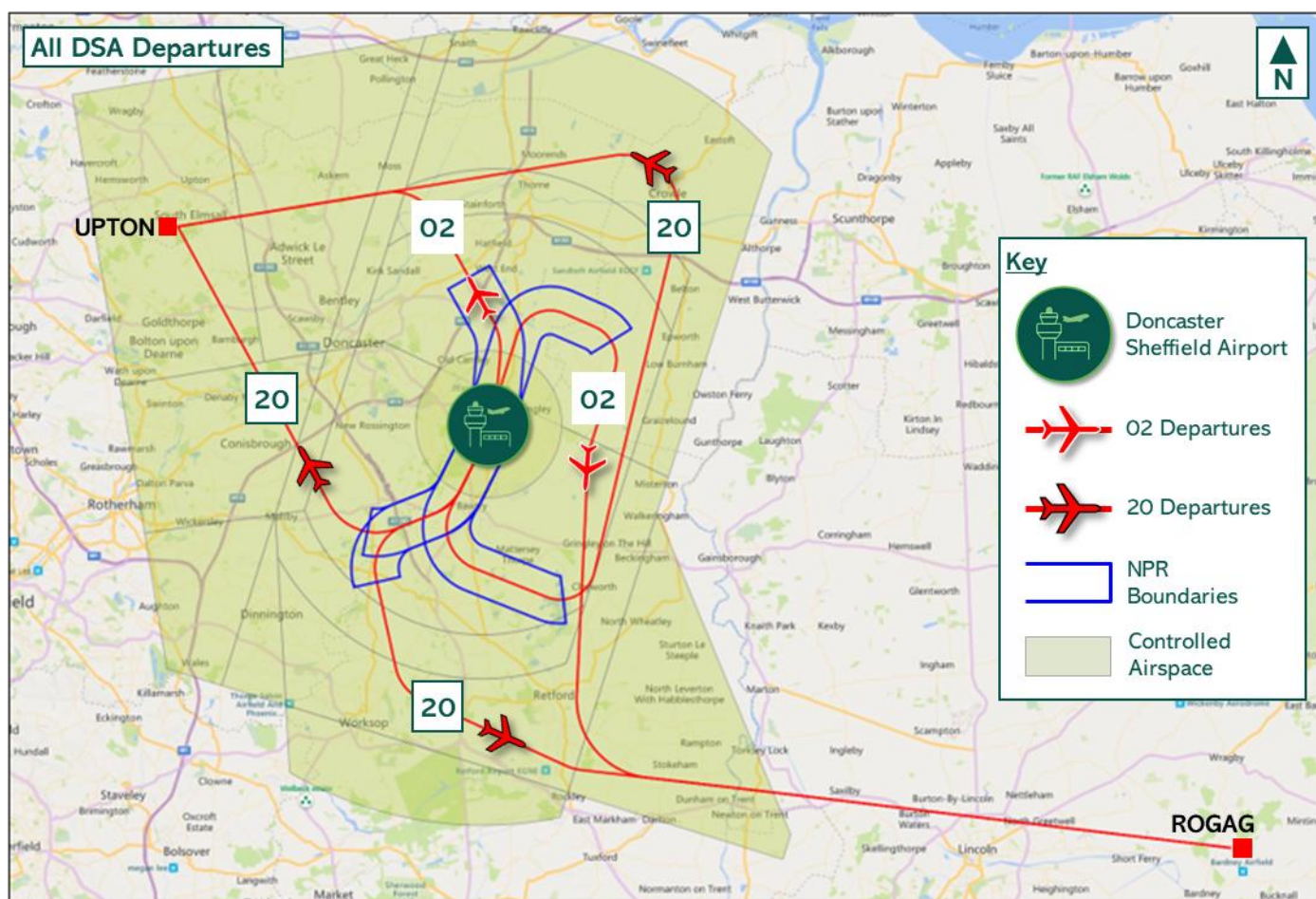


Figure 9 below, shows all the proposed departure routes for both runways included in the initial design option, along with their associated Noise Preferential Routes, and the controlled airspace within which the procedures would be contained.

Figure 9: All proposed DSA departure routes included in the initial design option



Initial Design Option: Arrivals

Figure 10, on the next page, illustrates the typical arrival patterns for Runway 20 when DSA was operational, which CDC propose to reinstate as part of the initial design option for this ACP.

The red shading shows the spread of arrival tracks at 7,000 ft and below, where aircraft were being sequenced for final approach. Aircraft joining from the upper airspace network were usually routed towards the airport overhead, where air traffic control would tactically vector them into an orderly landing sequence. Vectoring is when air traffic controllers provide an instruction to pilots in the form of a direction (heading based on a compass bearing) to maintain safe and efficient operations. Controllers may also instruct pilots to climb or descend.

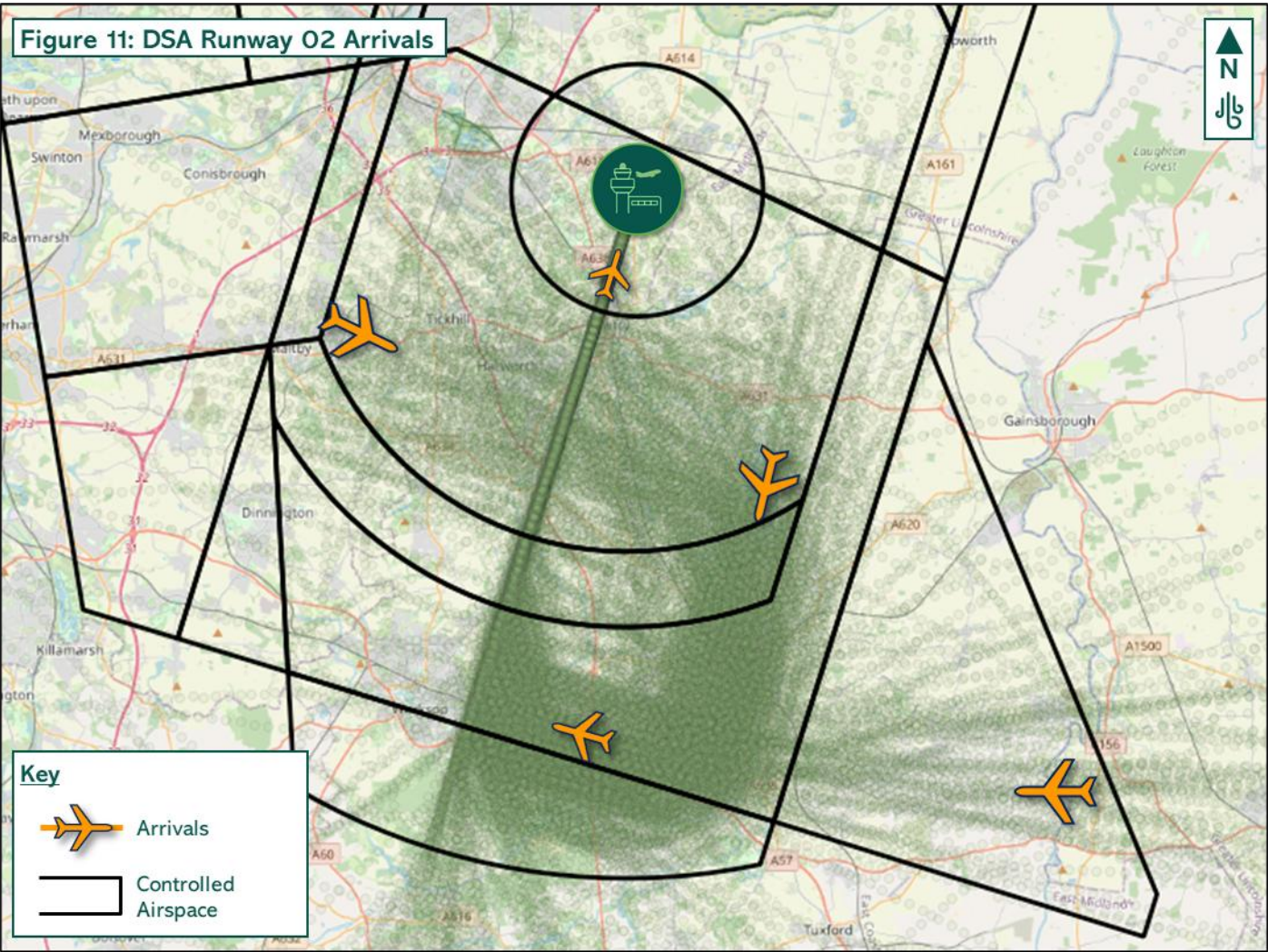
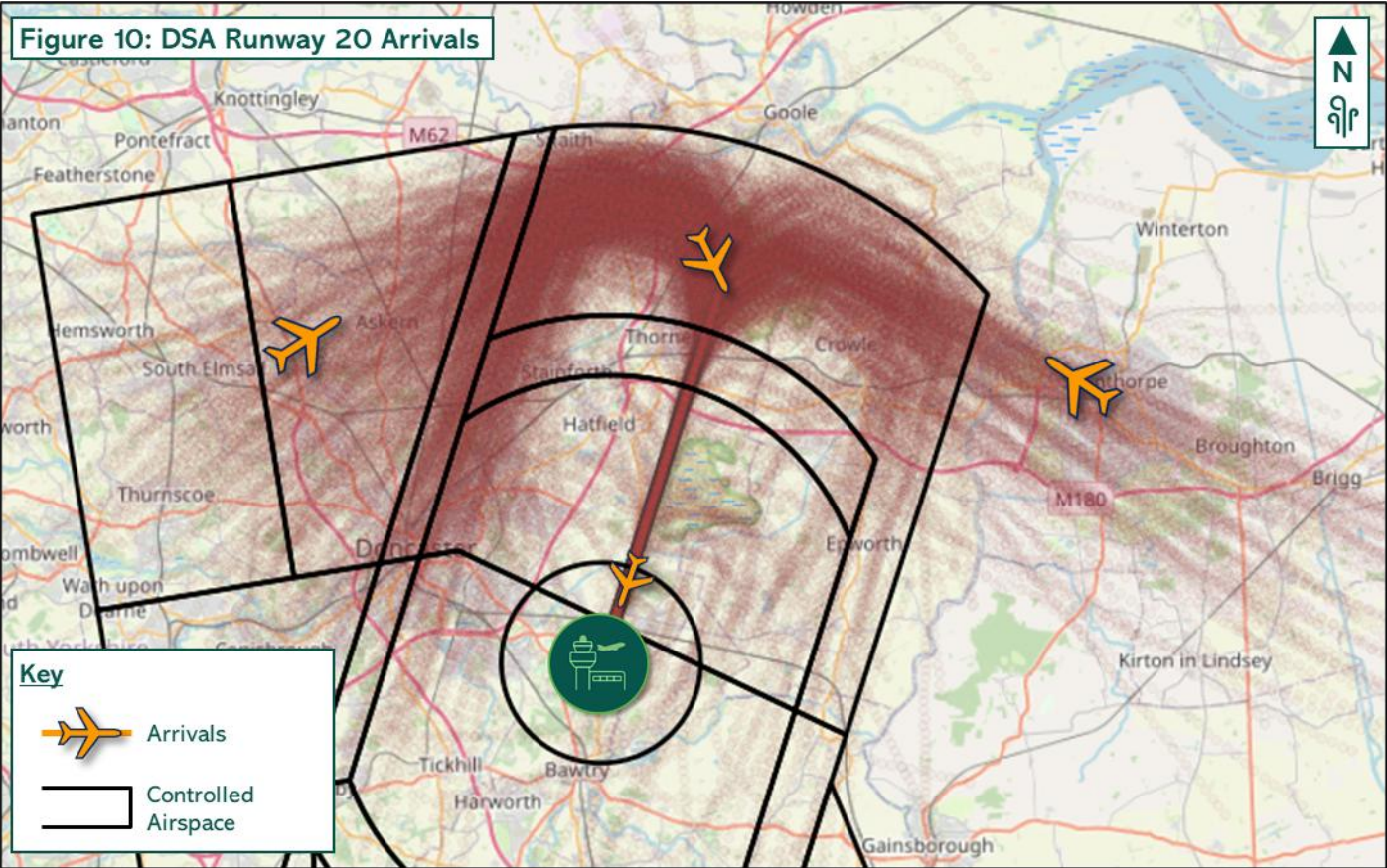
When traffic levels and airspace permitted, controllers often provided a more direct route towards final approach, reducing the need for aircraft to track overhead the airfield. Aircraft could join the final approach from either the east (Crowle) or west (Snaith), depending on their direction of entry and ATC sequencing requirements.

Figure 11, also on the next page, shows the equivalent arrival patterns for Runway 02, which would likewise be reinstated under the initial design option.

The green shading represents arrivals at 7,000 ft and below. As with Runway 20, aircraft were typically routed towards the airport overhead and vectored, or given a more direct track to final approach where conditions allowed. Arrivals most commonly joined from the east (Retford/Gamston) side of the airport.

Both runway directions were previously supported by a full suite of instrument approach procedures, including ILS/DME, LOC/DME, NDB/DME and RNP APCH. These procedures provided defined lateral and vertical guidance to pilots, supporting safe and predictable approaches in a wide range of weather conditions. CDC proposes to reinstate these procedures within the initial design option, and more detailed information on the individual instrument approaches is available on request as part of this engagement.

Figure 10 and Figure 11: Typical arrival patterns for Runway 20 and 02 included in the initial design option



DSA Planning Restrictions and Traffic Forecasts

Aircraft must land and depart into the wind for safety. When winds are calm and either runway direction could be used, DSA's planning conditions place a restriction on night-time operations. Specifically, Runway 20 may not be used for take-off between 23:00 and 07:00, meaning Runway 02 is the designated Preferential Runway at night. This planning requirement will continue to influence how departures are managed, and is therefore an important factor in the operation and impact of DSA's airspace and procedures.

A movement is either an arrival or a departure. DSA has planning consent to operate up to 56,918 Air Transport Movements (ATMs) per year which includes a mix of passenger, cargo and business/ General Aviation movements.

Table 1 below, summarises the actual annual movements at DSA between 2019 and 2022. In peak periods, the airport could see 5 to 6 movements per hour. With the first new passenger services expected to begin in 2027/28, current forecasts indicate that DSA will return to its previous 2022 Air Transport Movement levels from around 2032. These forecasts help shape the ACP by indicating the scale of future traffic the reinstated airspace will need to accommodate safely and efficiently.

Table 1: DSA Actual Air Transport Movements, 2019 to 2022

Year	Total Movements	Air Transport Movements (passenger flights)
2019	23,043	11,569
2020	12,232	4,597
2021	14,077	5,468
2022	15,847	7,966

Request for stakeholder feedback on the initial design option

CDC is proposing to reinstate DSA's previous controlled airspace, procedures, Noise Preferential Routes and associated arrangements exactly as they were when the airport was last operational. CDC considers this the most practical and efficient starting point, offering a proven design that supported more than 17 years of safe and efficient operations. Reinstating this structure is also the quickest way to ensure the airport can operate safely and integrate seamlessly into the wider airspace network by 2027/28.

However, we want to understand whether stakeholders believe any refinements should be considered at this stage.

Your feedback is important in helping us assess whether improvements can be made to the previous design, including opportunities to:

- reduce impacts on other airspace users, such as by adjusting controlled airspace boundaries, classifications or route centrelines
- reduce noise impacts on local communities by considering alternative track positions where feasible
- reduce the scale of potential future change given NATS' emerging airspace designs for the wider region from 2030 onwards
- raise any other issues, suggestions or considerations you feel are relevant

We welcome all comments. Your views will help shape the next stage of the ACP before the design is refined and prepared for full public consultation.

How to provide feedback

This first round of engagement on the DSA ACP will run for four weeks, starting on **Wednesday 3 December 2025**, pausing for the Christmas period, and closing on **Wednesday 14 January 2026**.

Stage 1 Engagement

For Stage 1, we are inviting feedback stakeholders on our proposed design principles:

Do you agree with our proposed Design Principles as set out below?

1. The airspace change proposal must maintain a high standard of safety and should seek to enhance current levels of safety.
2. The airspace change proposal should not be inconsistent with relevant legislation, the CAA's airspace modernisation strategy or Secretary of State and CAA's policy and guidance.
3. The airspace change proposal should deliver the Government's key environmental objectives with respect to air navigation as set out in the Government's Air Navigation Guidance 2017.
4. The airspace change proposal should consider the impacts on air navigation service providers and other aviation stakeholders such as nearby airport operators.
5. The airspace change proposal should not modify DSA's previous NPRs unless required for safety or airspace integration purposes.

Stage 2 Engagement

For Stage 2, we are inviting feedback from stakeholders on the initial design option described in this document:

Are there any modifications to the airspace dimensions, airspace classifications or flight procedures described in the initial design option that you would like to suggest?

Please send your feedback to:

DSA@Doncaster.gov.uk

by Wednesday 14 January 2026.

Thank you

Next steps

After this engagement period closes, we will review all feedback received from representative stakeholders. Where appropriate, we may refine or further develop our non-mandatory design principles. Any additional principles adopted as a result of this engagement will be shared with stakeholders for information.

We will also review all comments on the initial design option. If the feedback indicates that change may be required, we may amend the initial design option or develop alternative design options for consideration.

The design option presented in this document, along with any modifications or additional options, will then be assessed through a Design Principle Evaluation. This evaluation measures how well each option meets the agreed design principles, identifying whether each principle is met, partially met or not met.

Following this, we will complete an Initial Options Appraisal, assessing the option(s) against the full set of metrics required under CAP1616, including safety, environmental, operational and economic considerations.

All of this work will form CDC's combined Stage 1 and Stage 2 submission to the CAA. We expect to submit this material in Q1 2026, after which the CAA will publish the documents on the Airspace Change Portal.

These steps will shape the proposal ahead of the full public consultation that will take place later in the CAP1616 process.