

# Blackbushe Aviation Guide to Farnborough CTR Transit

Cross the Farnborough CTR? Are you joking? I'd rather fly the long way around the world. Which of course you can, given enough time, money and enthusiasm. It's just a shame that you don't fly through the CTR. It's a lot quicker and easier.

So let's start with exactly what it is we're going to cross, or in ATC parlance, transit. The Farnborough CTR consists of Class D airspace, from surface to the base of the London Terminal Manoeuvring Area (TMA). Actually, there are 2 CTRs, the main one covering Farnborough Airport and an additional sliver to the east, but I've lumped them together. Farnborough also has a selection of Class D CTAs to the south and east but more on that later. All this airspace is depicted on the CAA VFR chart; please pull out your copy of Edition 46 and have a look. The definitive document describing Farnborough airspace is the Farnborough AIP entry.

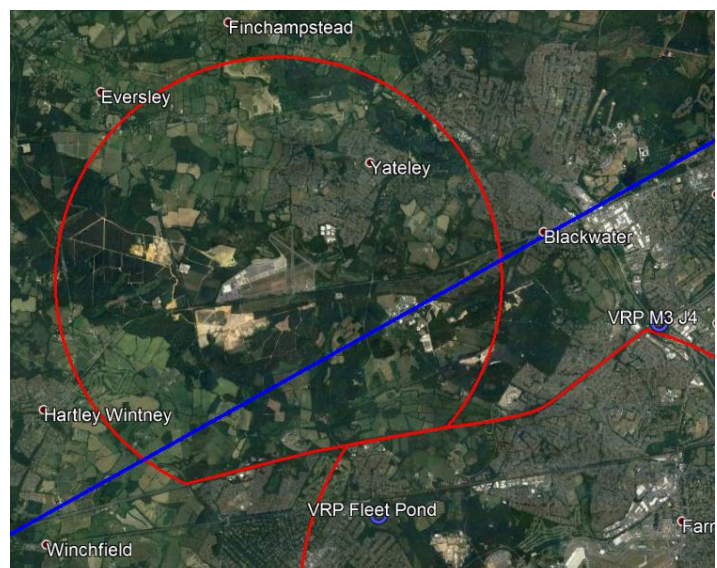


Farnborough CTRs and CTAs

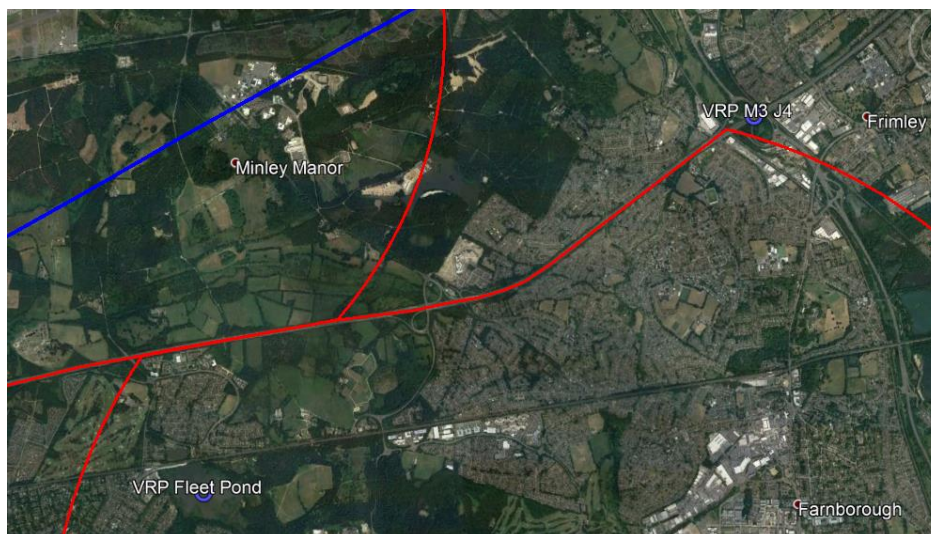
Our job is to depart Blackbushe and transit across the Farnborough CTR, heading south, in a safe, efficient and expeditious manner. To do that we must enter the CTR, for which we must have ATC clearance. It's not efficient to arrange all that after we're airborne. Much better to get the admin done before departure, so as part of your booking out, let the Tower know that you want a Farnborough CTR transit. The FISO can then ring Farnborough to obtain a clearance.

At some point before take-off, probably best after pre-take-off checks have been completed, the FISO will read the clearance to you and expect you to read it back accurately. Top tip, get your pen out when the FISO asks whether you're ready to copy clearance and before you reply. Note down what you're told and read it back accurately. If you missed a bit out or got something wrong the FISO will repeat the pertinent bit and ask you to read back.

Now you've got a clearance. The aim of this is to deconflict you from other Farnborough traffic so it's important to stick to the routing and altitudes. Typically, the clearance will be to hold at a VRP (M3 Junction 4) or near a VRP (to the northwest of Fleet Pond) at or below a particular altitude (typically 2000ft). You don't have to change to the Farnborough frequency before entering the Farnborough CTR because you already have a clearance. More importantly, you must have at least one radio on the Blackbushe frequency whilst within the Blackbushe ATZ. Help yourself by setting up the Farnborough



frequency before taking off so you're ready to change across once you've left the ATZ (normally Farnborough Zone on normally 133.440 MHz).



Tell the Blackbushe FISO you're changing to Farnborough as you leave the Blackbushe ATZ and then listen out on the Farnborough frequency before transmitting (anyone requesting a frequency change is at liberty to put £1 in the Blackbushe RT jar!). Remember you don't *have* to talk to Farnborough as long as you're complying with your clearance. When the opportunity presents itself, tell Farnborough you're on frequency, along with your transponder code. You will be cleared onwards in due course.

And what about the return journey? Call Farnborough in plenty of time, at least 10NM from the CTR boundary, and tell them what you'd like to do. This is probably best achieved by requesting a Basic Service and then telling the controller you'd like a CTR transit from south to north to recover to Blackbushe. You'll be given a VRP (Farnham Castle or Tongham depending on which runway Blackbushe is using) and maximum altitude. Read back to confirm you've copied the clearance and head to the VRP at a sensible altitude (see 'points' at the end of this article). You are not permitted to enter the Class D CTR until the clearance has been established so be ready to hold outside the CTR if you called late.

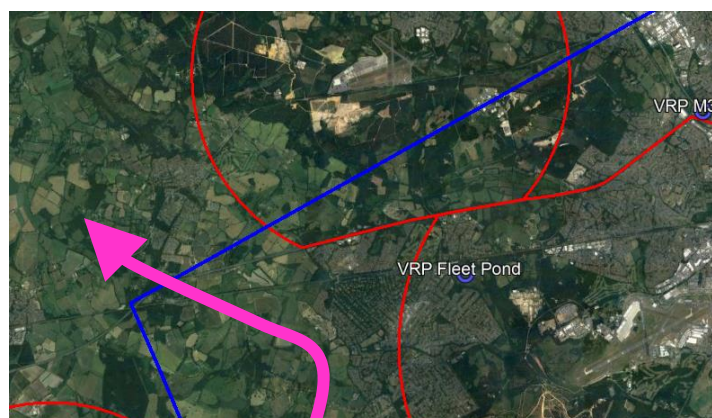


Joining the Blackbushe circuit from the east of Farnborough is relatively straight forward because there is room and time to call Blackbushe. The situation is somewhat different to the west of Farnborough, where a late frequency change can put you very close to the Blackbushe ATZ. You are not permitted to enter the ATZ until you have 'obtained sufficient information in order to enable you to conduct the flight safely within the ATZ'. This means you have to get the airfield information and any traffic information before entering the ATZ. It may be time for Plan B. You do have a Plan B, right? If you can't get hold of Blackbushe in time, a simple Plan B would be to turn left before the



M3 (also remaining clear of the Odiham ATZ) to leave the Farnborough CTR to the west of Hartley Whitney. You can then get all the RT out the way and join Blackbushe from the deadside, safely and efficiently.

In summary, the clearance and transit process is not difficult but it does require you to have a plan



Plan B?

that you can stick to. Listen to the clearance limits (position and altitude) and do not exceed them. The controller's job is to look after *all* the traffic in the CTRs and CTAs. If you're having problems just let them know in plain English, no points will be deducted for confessing that you're having a hard time. Remember that the Class G airspace to the south of Farnborough is now lower, typically down to 2500ft from 3500ft. You can still fly in the CTAs but you do need clearance to enter.

You may also wish to fly a trip with an Instructor from Blackbushe Aviation. We can go through all the ins and outs of the process and show you that there is nothing to fear from Class D.

Lastly, this guide does not cover the procedures covering the Blackbushe Local Flying Area (LFA). Please see the Blackbushe Aviation Guide to the Blackbushe LFA for further information.

Some points to consider.

Altitude – why not give yourself a couple of hundred feet room. For example, if the clearance is 'not above altitude 2000 feet', fly at 1800ft.

Cockpit noise – brief your passengers to be quiet whilst in the CTR, so you can hear what the controller's saying.

Fleet Pond VRP – the clearance is often to hold to the northwest of Fleet Pond. Be careful, you are not permitted to enter or re-enter the Blackbushe ATZ without talking to Blackbushe again. Be sure you remain south of the M3.

VRPs in general – have a shufti on google maps (before flight!) if you're not sure what to look for when identifying the VRPs.

References:

AIC Y 002/2020 Farnborough Airspace Change Proposal - Implementation 27 February 2020  
 UK AIP EGLK AD 2.22 Flight Procedures  
 Blackbushe Airport Rules & Procedures  
 CAP413 - Radiotelephony Manual