

# CAA Environmental and Sustainability Panel – Meeting minutes

10:30 – 16:30 01 November 2023

## Attendees

Ruth Mallors-Ray (RMR)  
Anil Namdeo (AN) (*via Teams*)  
Charlotte Clark (CC)  
Chikage Miyoshi (CM)  
David Lee (DL)  
Mark Westwood (MW)  
Martin Hawley (MH)  
Chris Page (CP)  
Tomos Joyce (TJ)  
Nic Stevenson (NS)  
Abigail Grenfell (AG)  
Bronwyn Fraser (BF)  
Alison Harris

Panel Chair  
  
  
  
  
  
CAA, (Item 2)  
CAA, (Item 4)  
CAA  
CAA  
CAA, Secretariat  
CAA, Panel Support

## Apologies

Alistair Lewis (AL)

### 1. Welcome and Administration

1.1 The Minutes from the previous meeting were approved.

### 2. CAA Update on Environmental Sustainability Strategy, implementation and development and update on wider CAA Strategy Development

#### *Environment Act 2021*

2.1 The CAA's Office of the General Counsel (OGC) have developed a briefing to set out the CAA's responsibilities under the Environment Act 2021 (the Act), following a request from the Secretary of State for the CAA to have due regard to the Environmental Principles Policy statement contained within the Act when providing advice to the Department for Transport (DfT). AG noted that, while the CAA and DfT are still working to understand the implications of the Act and how it sits alongside the CAA's prioritisation principle set out in its Environmental Sustainability Strategy, the CAA expects to seek advice from the Panel around these new responsibilities.

2.2 The Panel noted their concerns at the impacts of the likely increase in environmental workload for the CAA, when there are already capacity constraints. The Panel advised the CAA to keep a broad, strategic focus on the implications of the Act given the likely high expectations it will have for action by the CAA.

#### *Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF)*

2.3 The Panel discussed the CAA's potential role in SAF. The Panel noted that fuel standards are owned by ASTM and Def-Stan, with SAF being technologically safe to use as a drop in fuel, so there is no obvious regulatory role for the CAA other than as an informed observer. The Panel advised that the CAA needs to be clear on its role in SAF standards as the regulatory responsibilities may not be widely understood.

2.4 AG noted that the CAA has a role in granting a permit to fly for the upcoming Virgin Atlantic 100% SAF transatlantic flight. NB post meeting the grant has been approved for this flight and the flight has been successfully completed.

#### *Refresh of the CAA Strategy*

2.5 The CAA sought the Panel's feedback on its proposed Strategy refresh, noting it is being refreshed to make it more concise, better focussed on where the CAA is as an organisation and easier to understand and engage with.

2.6 The Panel offered comments, advice and challenge on:

- Ensuring the annual strategic objectives match the stated ambition, and being clear on how the CAA will measure and qualify that ambition;
- Using clearer and more direct drafting;
- Moving from a tactical to more strategic approach, so the CAA Strategy has broad and engaging strategic objectives to cover five-year period, while being underpinned by an annual work programme that sets out how the CAA will achieve these objectives;
- The inclusion of a definition of the CAA's understanding of 'environmental sustainability', being clear that it is a holistic term that includes public health and biodiversity as well as the wider climate challenges.

### **3. Internal Panel work programme**

3.1 The Panel reviewed its internal work programme planning to ensure a balance between the five areas of its [2023-2025 work programme](#) were reflected. The Panel are encouraged to read the internal work plan on a regular basis as this is a live document and is regularly updated.

### **4. CAA Aviation Environmental Review**

4.1 The Panel discussed the CAA's proposed recommendations for the Aviation Environmental Review (AER), which is required to be published by the end of 2023. TJ noted that the 2023 recommendations are aligned with existing policies.

4.2 The Panel provided feedback, advice and challenge on:

- The existing stakeholder and regulatory landscape around air quality management, including being clear on the CAA's likely role as a convener of stakeholders, and the need for enforceable and oversight of air quality management plans;
- Recommendations around noise, including taking into account existing requirements on certain airports through the Noise Action Plans, the importance of a proportional approach given varying airport sizes and the importance of building databases to understand the noise levels of new airspace users.

4.3 A document has been prepared on the health of those who work at airports as they are exposed to high pollutants. It needs to be clear when looking at decibel levels how noise reduction has an impact on health. Larger airports have to have a five-year plan, but this would be difficult for smaller airports. For drones and AES, it was thought the noise contours may not work and eVTOL drones are not mentioned.

Management of airports is a good intention, but it might depend on the location and the different sizes. For smaller airports, a working plan may not be needed, but could be prepared should the Local Authority ask. The role of DEFRA was discussed and their focus on landside as well as airside.

4.4 The AER is due for publication next month. The three main areas of the report show the initial proposals, the seven policy elements and recommendations which align with those of EASA, ICAO, the European Commission and with government. It is less contentious this year, but it will push further next year to affect better change across the industry.

4.5 It was noted that the Hydrogen in Aviation is not an industry wide alliance, but an alliance of six companies (Rolls-Royce, Easyjet, Airbus, GKN Aerospace, Orsted and Bristol Airport)

- 4.6 It would be helpful to organise the information to show which items the CAA is responsible for, and which are not in their remit.
- 4.7 It was thought that overall, this is a good report and the language is suitable, especially on climate impact and climate affect.

## **5. Systems Thinking Challenge Piece**

- 5.1 The Panel continued its consideration from the September 2023 Panel meeting in developing a systems thinking framework to support the CAA's approach when considering environmental sustainability. The Panel considered the purpose and scope of the framework, including which environmental impacts should be captured as relevant to aviation and the different aviation 'journeys' that could be considered.
- 5.2 The aim is to help the CAA to show what they are not thinking about, to provide clarity and shows the various bodies they connect with and will act as guidance to help ExCo make decisions. The framework shows the aviation journey and how it all connects, showing the environmental consequences and impacts. There needs to be more on noise, which will be added.

## **6 Brainstorming Session on knowns/unknowns for CAA**

- 6.1 The Panel discussed development of a resource that helps the CAA understand what is widely accepted as known and unknown in aviation sustainability knowledge. The Panel discussed methodologies for establishing confidence in what is known and unknown, including the methodology used by the IPCC. While this piece of work by the Panel will not gather evidence, such examples are a good basis to start from in establishing areas where there is high confidence of knowledge and thoughts.
- 6.2 The Panel noted areas where they consider there are unknowns. For example, the impact of drones is generally considered as the impact of a single drone, but it is less clear what the environmental impact of multiple drones would be. This resource will not consider trade-offs between environmental impacts, but is intended to trigger the CAA to say 'but what about...' when faced with a sustainability issue.
- 6.3 AG noted that parts of the CAA appear to be mainly focussed on the development of RPAS, BVLOS and drones, but may benefit from support to recognise that other technologies (like hydrogen) are also imminent. It was noted that this piece of work will be caveated as the view of the Panel, and will be regularly reviewed.

## **8 AoB**

None.