

CAA Environmental Sustainability Panel

Meeting Minutes

10:30 – 15:00 05 August 2024

Attendees

Ruth Mallors-Ray (RMR)	Panel Chair
Alistair Lewis (AL)	
Anil Namdeo (AN)	
Charlotte Clark (CC)	
Martin Hawley (MH)	
Tim Johnson (TJ)	CAA, (Item 2)
Tomos Joyce (ToJ)	CAA, (Item 7)
Harry Armstrong (HA)	CAA
Abigail Grenfell (AG)	CAA
Bronwyn Fraser (BF)	CAA, Secretariat
Alison Harris (AH)	CAA, Panel Support

Apologies

David Lee (DL)
Mark Westwood (MW)

1. Chair's Welcome and Update

1.1 Draft Minutes of last meeting on 1 May were approved without comment.

1.2 MH noted the work that is being undertaken to measure the environmental impact of flights and presenting this information to consumers, including that Google and other flight comparison sites are doing a lot of work on this, but that more finessing work is required to have an accurate and meaningful comparison of different flights. AL noted that care needs to be taken around the uncertainties of aggregate and extrapolated information when dealing with individual flights and translating that into meaningful information for an individual consumer. AG noted the work the CAA has been doing on providing information to consumers on the carbon impact of their flights, and that a summary of responses of the 2023 call for evidence has just been published alongside a consultation on proposed next steps.

2. CAA Strategic Overview

2.1 TJ set out the key sustainability issues for the CAA in light of early conversations with new Ministers:

- Sustainability is an area where the new Government seems to want to move forward quickly, and airspace modernisation and consumer protection are key areas of aviation.
- The CAA is considering how these priorities, policies and the upcoming spending review relate to the CAA's work, for example:
 - CAA policy priorities, including having clearer guidance around how to balance growth and sustainability;
 - Potential changes to legislative framework, including possibly moving to a more principles-based regime to allow more flexibility in our decision-making. The Panel noted that a principles-based regimes need to be managed carefully as it puts more onus on the regulator to have good decision-making processes, and that an effective

regime should ensure the regulator also has sufficient powers to take action where not met.

- Balancing stakeholder interests, especially around airspace change where there is contention around different stakeholder views despite the widely-accepted view that the current system is outdated and needs to change. The Panel noted that airspace modernisation needs some 'brave' decisions on whether aircraft noise should be shared across a wider area or concentrated in particular areas;
- Getting bids to DfT for the spending review to increase our capability and capacity in relation to innovation and low-carbon fuels. The Panel noted the CAA might be well-placed to make an objective assessment of the likelihood of getting hydrogen aircraft into service, including the likelihood of achieving the required energy needs. There could be a role for the CAA in undertaking its own analysis, or convening relevant stakeholders together, to develop an understanding and evidence base of the viability of hydrogen in terms of its full lifecycle (creation and storage, not just use in aircraft).

2.2 TJ noted that a new Director of the Consumers and Markets Group (CMG) will be joining the CAA in September and a new Director of the Safety and Airspace Regulation Group (SARG) has also recently been appointed.

3. Overview of delivery of CAA Environmental Sustainability Strategy

3.1 HA highlighted some key deliverables and work from the CAA:

- The CAA has recently published and updated Part 3 of the Airspace Modernisation Strategy (AMS). It contains some discussion on sustainability and the overarching environmental principle, however further work is required to embed this more strategically.
 - The Panel suggested drawing out how the AMS will actually improve flight efficiency and reduce emissions, noting that many of the new technologies in the AMS have been developed to increase capacity and reduce controller workload, not for sustainability reasons.
- The Jet Zero Council remains suspended following the election. Early indications are that it may be revived in the autumn, but probably in a different format.
- The Sustainability Team is doing an internal review of the CAA's sustainability programme to understand work that is underway, identify any gaps, and continue to embed sustainability across the organisation.
- The CAA is also undertaking a refresh of its Environmental Sustainability Strategy, including setting more focussed sustainability outcomes. The Panel made several comments and suggestions on the refresh, including:
 - Welcoming the redefining of outcomes, which should remove ambiguity and so provide greater focus on the projects that are needed to drive change.
 - This needs to be considered through using systems thinking followed by a theory of change approach to understand where the drivers are for change by the CAA. The Panel acknowledged this might be challenging but it would enable the CAA to engage with the complexities and better understand where it can make a difference.
 - The Panel can support the CAA to prioritise what it can do, but there needs to be a clearer link between the Board objectives and priorities and the work being undertaken by the organisation.

4. Strategic Panel Input – Innovation and Sustainability

- 4.1 RMR reminded the Panel of earlier discussions on how it could support the CAA in understanding the environmental impacts of new innovative systems, products and services. The CAA has suggested that the Panel could focus on a few case studies to unpack the relevant issues and complexities of sustainability in innovative technology.
- 4.2 The Panel noted the significantly changed context and focus for the CAA and the need to consider innovations differently, as in the past it has only dealt with the machines themselves but now the key questions in innovation are around the energy systems that go into new machines and supply chains. The CAA noted it aimed to build a cultural change around how the organisation thought about innovation holistically, and understanding what difference innovation will make to sustainability outcomes.
- 4.3 The Panel noted the challenges and limitations of a generic list of questions given each innovation will be different, but that higher-level questions (such as ‘who or what is affected by this innovation in terms of sustainability?’, ‘what considerations have you given to different environmental factors?’) could be useful for the CAA to drive innovators to consider.

5. Panel Mini Conference

5.1 The Panel will meet with the CAA Senior Leadership Team for a two hour ‘mini-conference’ in November. The following three topics were proposed for discussion:

- Latest science on climate and aviation
- The Jet Zero Strategy
- How the CAA can support, challenge and encourage the industry to reach its sustainability goals

RMR will discuss this proposal with Rob Bishton and Sir Stephen Hillier later this month, and return for further discussion at the August Panel interim meeting.

6. Community Information and Feedback Forum

6.1 AG gave an overview of the proposals to set up a new Community Information and Feedback Forum (CIFF). The Panel suggested:

- Whether the CAA had considered the implications of having an independent Chair;
- that there may be benefits from inviting other stakeholders to attend as observers (for example other government departments such as UKHSA and DEFRA); and
- being clear about the purpose of this forum and how to differentiate it from other similar groups.

7. Aviation Environmental Review

7.1 ToJ presented an update on the planned consultation on the future development of the AER, due for publication in September. This consultation will seek stakeholder views around building the level of granularity of the data and information provided in the AER. The draft consultation document will be circulated to the Panel for their comments.

8. AoB

Nil