

CAA Environmental and Sustainability Panel Meeting Minutes

10:30 – 15:30 06 November 2024

Attendees

Ruth Mallors-Ray (RMR) - Panel Chair
Alastair Lewis (AL)
Charlotte Clark (CC)
David Lee (DL)
Mark Westwood (MW)
Martin Hawley (MH)
Harry Armstrong (HA) - CAA, (Items 2, 5 and 6)
Tim Johnson (TJ) - CAA, (Item 3)
Nic Stevenson - CAA, (Item 4)
Darren Rhodes (DR) - CAA, Items 6 and 8)
Christopher Keegan - CAA,
Abigail Grenfell (AG) – CAA
Lisa Norris (LN) - CAA, Secretariat
Alison Harris - CAA, Panel Support

Apologies

Anil Namdeo (AN)

1. Chair's Welcome and Updates

- 1.1. Register of Interests – none.
- 1.2. Draft Minutes of last meeting on 17 September were approved without comment.

2. Overview of delivery of CAA Environmental Sustainability Strategy

- 2.1. HA provided an overview of the key deliverables: -
 - Aviation Environment Review: we are consulting on proposals for future publications.
 - The Panel commented on the CAA's focus on hydrogen: -
 - It is important for the CAA to be engaged with the industry on hydrogen propulsion but questioned whether it should focus on this as the target of hydrogen aircraft flying in 2034 is ambitious and the technology is still at very low Technology Readiness Levels (TRL).
 - The CAA noted that the technology is so new that many of the current standards are not suitable, and new standards will need to be developed. This cannot be left until after the technology has been developed therefore CAA's involvement at these early TRL levels is critical to inform a standard development and helps to build the CAA's capability in this area.
 - The CAA's existing hydrogen sandbox projects will be delivered in February/March 2025. These are funded through the Regulators Pioneer Fund.
 - DSIT has set up a new Government Innovation Office which may be a useful body to help the CAA in its hydrogen challenge work.

3. CAA Strategic Overview

- 3.1. TJ set out the key sustainability issues for the CAA in light of recent conversations with the new Aviation Minister and developments in the CAA Board: -
- The Government's 5 Missions are the key Ministerial focus. Within this, the department's priorities are focussed on Rail, and the SoS is also taking a particular interest in consumer issues.
 - The focus so far has been on the budget and next year's longer-term spending review.
 - There is still no news on the future of the Jet Zero Council. The Panel noted that several other Councils have already been restarted.
 - The CAA and DfT are consulting on the development of the UK Airspace Design Service to coordinate airspace change proposals. The proposal will be run by NATS and there will be a consultation on the economic regulation of this service.
- 3.2. There are some changes in the CAA's Executive Committee: Selina Chadha has started as Director of the Consumer and Markets Group (CMG). Giancarlo Buono has been appointed as Director of Safety and Airspace Regulation Group (SARG). He will join in the New Year.
- 3.3. There will be new NEDS appointed next year to the Board. TJ confirmed their induction will include sustainability elements.
- 3.4. Aviation industry resilience is becoming much more of an issue as demand grows, with more delays and cancellations likely as airspace (here and in Europe) with some airports becoming more congested as weather patterns change. The CAA will be taking a leading role in managing the industry's management of this. The Panel noted that there had been similar problems in the past, which led to the development of the Single European Sky, and that the increase in delay will lead to greater fuel burn with more CO2 emissions. The Panel also noted that the IPCC has added a definition of resilience to its glossary.
- 3.5. The CAA is also looking at having better coordination with the EU, particularly on how growth is managed. The Panel suggested collaborating with other independent bodies, such as the CCC on approaches for balancing potential growth in air transport with carbon budgets, and other Government environmental objectives.
- 3.6. The Panel suggested an increased emphasis on evaluating how growth may impact at a local level as well as on national targets associated with net zero.

4. CAA Annual Strategic Objectives (ASOs) 2025/2026

NS gave an update on the revision of the CAA's Strategic Objectives.

5. Development of next Panel work programme

- 5.1. The Panel discussed its next two-year work programme from March 2025. HA noted that feedback from colleagues on their experience of coming to the Panel has been hugely positive. The Panel suggested: -
- The work programme should reflect topics where the Panel have already provided advice and challenge the CAA to show the effect of that input.
 - Supporting the CAA's delivery of their environmental sustainability strategy is mis-phrased as the CAA owns the strategy, the Panel assists and guides.

- The work programme should build on the Panel's role as assisting the CAA through education on the relevant science. The Panel can provide guidance at the outset and then build on topics further to allow for far richer discussions and advice.
 - The Panel would like to see environmental sustainability as a separate mandatory training module for CAA staff to do once a year. This will be investigated at the CAA as to feasibility.
- 5.2. This item will return to the Panel meeting in January 2025 for further discussion. To inform this discussion, Panel members were asked to consider topics that they would like to see included in the work programme. **ACTION: Panel Members**

6. Airspace Modernisation Strategy 4th objective – an over-arching environmental principal

- 6.1. HA gave an overview of the current position: -
- A second workshop has been held with NATS, ACOG and DfT colleagues to discuss how to develop proposals for incorporating the environmental objective into the AMS.
 - A draft statement has been prepared regarding carbon budgets and new technologies on what to deliver and develop.
 - The CAA wants to ensure that this is meaningful and to record improvements for the environment accurately.
- 6.2. The Panel are keen to support this topic and can provide advice on noise, air pollution and climatic issues. The Panel encourage the CAA to be bold as this is the first opportunity to modernise UK's airspace for many years and if environmental improvements are not built into the AMS now, a significant opportunity will be missed.
- 6.3. The Panel noted that there will be a shift in where public annoyance and health impacts occur as the noise footprint changes, especially as drones and other forms of urban air mobility become more prevalent.

7. Panel Mini Conference on the 28 November 2024

- 7.1. The Panel discussed the plan for its conference with the CAA Senior Leadership Team.

8. Overview of the CAA involvement with ICAO and CAEP on environmental issues

- 8.1. DR gave an outline of his role currently in the Airspace Modernisation Team in Communications, Strategy & Policy Group (CSP) at the CAA. His role is commissioned by the DfT to provide technical advice. He gave an overview of ICAO and the Committee for Aviation Environmental Protection (CAEP).

9. AoB

- 9.1. DL provided an overview of the recent ICAO symposium on non-CO2 impacts.
- 9.2. AL noted a growing trend of "privacy ICAO reporting" in the USA where companies are allowed to keep travel emissions associated with individual private flights obscured in open databases.