

GENERAL AND BUSINESS AVIATION STRATEGIC FORUM

Tuesday 11 May 2020 10:30-12:30
Via Zoom conference call

In attendance:

Roger Hopkinson (RH)	General Aviation Alliance, GAA (Chair)
Marc Bailey (MB)	British Business & General Aviation Association, BBGA
Martin Robinson (MR)	Aircraft Owners & Pilots Association, AOPA
David Harding (DH)	Deputy Director, Aviation Safety Policy, DfT
Phil Dunnington (PD)	Government's General Aviation Advocate
Elena Barcan (EB)	Policy Lead, Policy, Skills and Stakeholders, DfT
Rob Bishton (RB)	Director, Safety & Airspace Regulation Group, CAA
Jon Round (JR)	Head, Airspace, Aerodromes and ATM, CAA
Rachel Gardner-Poole (RGP)	Head, GA Unit, CAA
Glenn Bradley (GB)	Interim Head, Flight Operations, CAA
Laurence Baxter (LB)	GA Policy Officer, CAA (Secretary)

Apologies:

Richard Moriarty, Chief Executive, CAA

1. Introduction and apologies

There were no introductions. Richard Moriarty had to give his apologies due to another commitment.

2. Minutes from the last meeting

[Paper 2: Minutes 4 Feb meeting]

The minutes from the last meeting held on 4 February 2020 were adopted with no amendments. Secretary is authorised to publish them on the CAA website.

3. Review of actions and matters arising

[Paper 3: Actions Log 2020]

Action 95: *MR/RH/MB to liaise with Home Office regarding technology of General Aviation Report (GAR) submissions*: DH discussed the GAR issue with the Home Office and other departments but there was no concrete way forward at this time (due to CV-19 issues). DH is to take forward this but the Forum agreed to close this item for now. **Action: close item for now and DH to report back when progress is made.**

Action 109: *3-5 main GA priorities for the Airspace Modernisation Strategy (AMS)*: The Chair received parallel letters from CAA and the Secretary of State in response to his submission about AMS lower airspace. Developments during CV-19 in relation to UAS and delivery drones underscore the need for lower airspace modernisation to reflect multiple types of users. The Forum agreed to a tripartite meeting with DfT/CAA/RH. **Action: follow up meeting to be organised on lower airspace between DfT/CAA/RH**

Action 112: *Lead communications to community regarding dangers of switching off transponders near controlled airspace*: Agreement for MR/RH to discuss at the next General Aviation Partnership meeting. This was done at the GAP meeting held on 10 March. **Item closed.**

Action 113: *MB/MR to present agenda item at next meeting on pilot training*: MR on the agenda to present at this Forum meeting. **See Agenda item 6 below: item closed.**

Action 114: *MB/MR to present an item on the broader skills agenda at a future meeting*: no progress due to no discussions at APPG. No trailblazer activity during lockdown. Aim to progress this item at the next Forum meeting (7 July). **Action: on agenda for 7 July GBASF.**

Action 115: *DfT to share with the Forum the GA Advocate's programme of activities*: Phil Dunnington is on the agenda to discuss at this Forum meeting. **See Agenda item 5(e) below.**

Action 116: *DH to discuss with Chair about paper to Secretary-of-State and report back*: **DH will discuss with the Chair and update at the next meeting.**

Action 117: *RGP to share with other GBASF members how CAA GAU funding from DfT will be spent*: RGP presented at March GAP meeting. **Item closed.**

Action 118: *Chair to set up Secretary-of-State/Aviation Minister GBASF briefing*: RH met Aviation Minister Kelly - to pick up when circumstances more appropriate following current CV-19 situation. **Action: update next meeting.**

4. Airspace

[Paper 4: CAA Letter to RH 28 April 2020]

a) Overview

- The Chair thanked the CAA for its letter of 28 April in response to his submission on the AMS, as discussed above in relation to Action item 109.
- JR summarised recent AMS activity, key components of which were rationalising and simplifying airspace structures, implementing the EASA Part-ATS regulations which reflect ICAO rules, and the work to transition to a radar-based Flight Information Services model. In relation to airspace classification, this has taken up much CAA time with Executive Committee and Board presentations expected in June.

b) Electronic Conspicuity policy

- This has two aspects (1) CAA own work including mandate for ADSB-Out by 2024, to go to Board in June; and (2) DfT funding on relatively affordable EC platform for all users.
- A concern was raised about the potential interference of GPS signals by the 5G network, as well as concerns about the non-certified use of GPS with EC and impact on GNSS approaches.

Action item 119: JR to brief at next meeting on interference of GPS signals in relation to EC and GNSS approaches

c) Air Traffic Services (ATS) provision during CV-19 crisis

- A workshop was hosted by the CAA on the response to the CV-19 crisis from a safety regulation perspective, which RH/MR attended. It was recognised that ATS availability will be limited due to staff shortages, and members were advised to promulgate to the community the importance of additional pre-flight preparation including:
 - pre-filing of flight plans for Special VFR clearance requests;
 - self-briefing on which aerodromes have ATS functions still open; and
 - self-briefing on the status of controlled airspace: which has been temporarily degraded to Class G and (more importantly) which previously degraded airspace has reverted to controlled status.

Action item 120: RGP to email workshop slides on ATS provision during CV-19
[post-meeting note: this was undertaken and closed on the same day]

5. DfT Update

a) DfT GA Programme

- DH provided an update on the five pillars of the DfT's General Aviation Programme as introduced in previous meetings. Despite CV-19, there has been progress in each area, though work has been subject to a prioritisation exercise within the Department.

b) Airfield Development Fund & Airfield Advisory Team

- Moving forward with changes to application process to ensure no aerodrome gets an unfair advantage, Phase 1 business support early summer, looking to take forward
- Airfield Advisory Team (AAT): this is an advisory (not regulatory) team established by the DfT to provide support for the Fund. The aim is to work with CAA to identify issues such as planning and operational matters. Forum members underscored the need for clear communication to the community about the AAT's roles and responsibilities as distinct from regulation and safety oversight.

c) Skills research

- DH summarised that grant funding on skills has been progressed. The Aviation Ambassadors as presented in a previous meeting have been utilised to the extent possible. The delivery plan for various events such as the Aviation Awards is subject to renewal due to CV-19 and will be presented at the next Forum meeting.

d) GA Safety Review

- A draft of this report was published by the CAA on 25 Feb for public consultation which closed on 25 April. The Safety Review team led by Tony Rapson is now reviewing responses and will report its findings to the DfT. The paper argued that Class G airspace is an acceptable level of risk and the Forum discussed the role of CAA as a risk-based regulator to ensure that GA interests are best served in the lower airspace, especially in relation to GNSS approaches.

e) GA Advocate's Programme of Activities (Phil Dunnington)

- The Forum agreed that given the current circumstances, PD's planned presentation on his Programme of Activities be deferred to a later meeting, and instead PD gave a broad overview of the issues and implications arising from the lockdown.

Action item 115: GA advocate to present his Programme of Activities at a later Forum meeting

- The Forum discussed the return to flying plan following the Government's recent post-lockdown guidance. Forum members explored its implications on the industry including flight crew training businesses, aerodromes, and operators, all stemming from the practicalities of practising social distancing in a GA aircraft. It was emphasised that the entire aviation sector, and more broadly other transport modes, are also experiencing many comparable problems.
- In relation to enacting the Government's advice from an aviation safety perspective, the CAA is holding a series of conference calls with community representatives (including some Forum members).
- DH explained that the controlled recovery plan for aviation will be determined by the Government's wider CV-19 response strategy. In the meantime, the DfT will be looking to other transport modes and sectors for guidance.

6. Strategic Discussion: Pilot Training

- MR led a discussion on GA pilot training issues. He emphasised the need to develop a joined-up approach on how GA could continue to service the commercial aviation sectors, noting that flight crew training businesses (both Declared Training Organisations and Approved Training Organisations) straddle both PPL and ATPL licensing and related ratings.
- The market was stressed even before the CV-19 situation, and now is under significant challenge. Professional pilot training is often linked to the economic cycle, and now large numbers of pilots are in the job market. MR described how many Approved Training Organisations are finishing existing contracts and many students are seeking refunds.
- MR agreed to form a task force to further investigate pilot training with a view to reporting back to the Forum. A progress report will be provided at the next meeting.

Action item 121: MR to form a task force to further investigate pilot training issues and provide a progress report at the next meeting

7. General Aviation Unit Update

- RGP briefly updated the Forum on recent activities.
- The GAU has published several general exemptions on flight crew licensing revalidations, medical certificates and privileges, and is responding to feedback regarding improved communications.
- External queries into the GAU have increased, and since the lockdown started have been six times the normal seasonal volume. The department has aimed to respond to these queries within the CAA Service Standard and this has been met.

- Community engagement: most roadshows and industry events have been cancelled, but prior to the lockdown, the GAU had undertaken series of roadshows on Flight Crew Licensing and Airworthiness Part-M Light.
- GA programme: although GAU experienced delays at the beginning of the lockdown, some projects are progressing including STEM work, sub-600kg, and ab initio training in Permit-to-Fly aircraft.

8. Aviation Services update

- MB gave a short update on developments, focusing on restart/recovery debates and the need to consider aviation services skills and apprenticeships at the appropriate time given the current circumstances. It was suggested that further work is undertaken through the DfT General Aviation Programme especially in relation to skills, and DH suggested a separate meeting with MB to progress this.

Action item 122: DH & MB to discuss aviation services and how the DfT GA Programme can help.

9. Any Other Business

RB concluded the meeting by reemphasising that the current CV-19 situation has affected the whole range of aviation, with many organisations facing challenges. He also reiterated that CAA and DfT are aiming to facilitate a safe recovery further to broader CV-19 response decisions which are being made by central Government.

Upcoming meetings

Tuesday 7 July 2020 10.30-12.30 via Zoom conference call

Tuesday 6 October 2020 10.30-12.30 CAA Westferry House, London

Tuesday 2 February 2021 10.30-12.30 CAA Westferry House, London