

CAA Environmental and Sustainability Panel minutes

10:00 – 16:00 19 January 2023

Attendees

Ruth Mallors-Ray (RMR)	Panel Chair
Charlotte Clarke (CC) (online)	
Martin Hawley (MH)	
David Lee (DL)	
Alistair Lewis (AL)	
Anil Namdeo (AN)	
Chika Miyoshi (CM)	
Abigail Grenfell (AG)	CAA
Bronwyn Fraser (BF)	CAA, Panel Secretariat
Barbara Perata-Smith (BPS)	CAA (Item 5)
Nathan Lambrinos (NL)	CAA (Item 5)
Lizzy Morgan	CAA (Item 6)
Rob Stallard	CAA (Item 6)
Anirudh Vyas	CAA (Item 6)
CAA Consumer Panel	(Item 7)

Apologies

Mark Westwood (MW)

1. Welcome

RMR welcomed the Panel to its sixth meeting.

2. Update on implementation of Panel work programme

The Panel reviewed the status of the eight strategic think pieces it is producing as part of its [Interim Work Programme](#), noting that they have now been connected with CAA colleagues who may be able to provide input and direction on the work. The Panel agreed that it would have the templates of each think piece drafted for engagement with CAA colleagues by the end of February.

Action: Panel to have completed think piece templates and sent to identified CAA contacts by end of February.

3. Review of Panel Terms of Reference (ToR)

The Panel conducted its six-month review of its [ToR](#). Discussion included consideration of:

- How the Panel can bring more regular strategic challenge to the CAA as part of its operation;
- Adding 'critique' to the Panel's key activity of giving advice and recommendations on the CAA's research (paragraph 3);
- Including recognition that the Panel is 'a Panel of independent experts' (paragraph 13);
- Amending 'the Panel Chair has an ability to speak with authority and to question and challenge the CAA if appropriate' to clarify that the role of the Chair is to 'represent the Panel and question and challenge the CAA' (paragraph 13); and
- Agreeing that the Panel is comfortable with remaining internally-focused for now, as becoming an external voice of the CAA on environmental sustainability may challenge perceptions of the independence of the CAA.

Action: BF to seek input from Tim Johnson (Director, CAA Strategy and Policy) and Nic Stevenson (Head of Strategy) on the Panel's ToR for any further comments from the CAA's perspective by end of February.

4. CAA update on Strategy implementation and development

AG provided an update on the CAA's implementation of its [Environmental Sustainability Strategy](#).

This included:

- The CAA's work as part of the Jet Zero Council (JZC): the Panel discussed that the JZC work had potential to open up possibilities for the CAA with regards to regulatory reform beyond safety regulation, and flagged it as a future area where the Panel may be able to advise. MH noted the optimism about the potential of tech solutions, but also the gap in discussions about the risks of these solutions coming to fruition. RMR noted that the CAA could undertake some communications work about how it is proactively trying to understand this new technology, and that it could potentially undertake a piece of research (with the Panel's support) with a cost/benefit analysis of the environmental sustainability implications of these new technologies, to understand the economic implications for the sector.
- The [Airspace Modernisation Strategy](#) (AMS): noting that Part I of the AMS refresh work was due to be published imminently, the Panel discussed that the strategic objective of the work needed to be clear, and that going forward they were able to offer significant advice and challenge to the CAA on this piece of work. The CAA AMS team will attend a Panel meeting in the near future to discuss this work in greater detail.
- The [consumer environmental information call for evidence](#): noting this had been published recently, the CAA noted it will be seeking Panel input in helping it analyse certain elements of the responses received.

The Panel noted that it would benefit from a 'dashboard'-style tool to assist it with understanding the CAA's work programme and deliverables.

5. Review of CAA Environmental Sustainability Strategy – prioritisation principle

BPS and NL presented an update on the progress of the CAA’s strategy and a detailed overview of the prioritisation principle, which will be consulted on later in 2023.

BPS and NL noted that the CAA has legal duties which guide its decisions, including guiding what to prioritise in particular circumstances (for example, the [Altitude Based Priorities in the Air Navigation Guidance](#)). They clarified that the prioritisation principle was intended to be a policy position to be considered after relevant legislation had been taken into account and where there were no explicit targets or guidelines set by the government or in legislation to drive down the effects of emissions, noise or other local impacts.

On the rationale behind the prioritisation principle, the Panel noted that it was applied qualitatively on a case-by-case basis, and there was a danger it could be applied quantitatively. The Panel advised that the CAA needed to consider carefully how the prioritisation principle would be applied practically, especially in the context of the legislative landscape.

The Panel raised questions around:

- how the CAA would account for trade offs in the use of the prioritisation principle;
- whether the environmental impacts listed in the prioritisation principle were intended to be considered concurrently or sequentially;
- whether generational factors should be considered in the use of the prioritisation principle, for example where prioritising biodiversity would benefit the future consumer but prioritising tranquil spaces would benefit the immediate consumer; and
- whether equity, diversity and inclusion should be included in the CAA’s Environmental Sustainability Strategy.

The Panel considered that carbon should remain the first priority in the prioritisation principle, but that the narrative around it should include some indication that the prioritisation principle would not try to improve on non-CO2 impacts at the expense of CO2 impacts.

BPS, NL and the Panel agreed that this topic merited further discussion and it would be re-scheduled for a future Panel meeting.

6. Developments in supersonic technology

The CAA Innovation team discussed their understanding of the potential environmental sustainability implications of supersonic flight, to tease out if the team had identified the full range of impacts in their consideration of supersonic flight as a trend.

The Panel offered inputs and guidance on relevant research from their areas of expertise, including around the impact of different emissions on the stratosphere, the scale of potential impact of noise on communities and current international debate on standards around noise and emissions. The Panel noted particularly that research into supersonic was first carried out at the time of Concorde developments. The research concluded at that time, that high volume supersonic travel would have a very serious and long-lasting impact on the stratosphere. Panel members offered to send papers on this research for the CAA to include in its consideration. It was also noted that the Panel felt that new research in this area was much needed as the work had not been the focus of any significant refresh since its early findings.

Action: Panel members to forward links and papers on supersonic flight and climate impacts for distribution into the CAA.

7. Joint session with the CAA Consumer Panel

The Panel held a joint session with the [CAA's Consumer Panel](#), to introduce the work, role and remit of each panel and explore opportunities where the CAA could benefit from input from both panels.

The panels discussed the many overlaps in terms of size, their 'critical friend' roles and ways of working. RMR also set out how, unlike the Consumer Panel, the Environmental Sustainability Panel intended to remain internally focussed and would not be carrying out any external-facing work at present.

The Consumer Panel set out its 18-month work programme covering three strands - the Consumer Survey, driving better outcomes for consumers and building frameworks, and new innovations. RMR discussed the Environmental Sustainability Panel's short-term work programme, which runs up to March 2023 and focuses on supporting the delivery of the CAA's Environmental Sustainability Strategy, and noted that the Panel are looking ahead to a longer-term programme that will include collaboration between both panels. The panels noted that the fast pace and extent of change in the industry since the pandemic towards 'greener flying' put additional pressure on the environmental agenda.

The panels discussed possible touchpoints and interactions between the two panels' work programmes, including the provision of environmental information to consumers, the impact of airspace modernisation on consumers, offsetting and air pollution around airports.

It was agreed that some flexibility should be maintained so that future work could be arranged on an interactive basis, as topics came up. The Secretariats agreed to discuss future ways of working between the panels as part of their regular updates with the panel Chairs.

8. Consideration of Panel longer-term work programme

The Panel discussed its longer-term work programme, in the context of producing a two-year work programme. The Panel discussed how to balance flexibility in the context of uncertainty and fast-moving developments in environmental sustainability with adding tangible value to the CAA.

The Panel noted that, when seeking input from the Panel, the CAA needed to be clear on the questions it was asking the Panel, including why it needed that particular knowledge and how it would impact on the CAA's work. The CAA agreed to consider more strategically how it presented information to the Panel to ensure the best engagement.

The Panel discussed the possibility of producing environmental principles that could guide the CAA's decision making, similar to the consumer principles produced by the CAA's Consumer Panel. The Panel agreed that this could be challenging given how new the environmental sustainability work was to the CAA and given considerations of the environmental sustainability literacy levels of the CAA. AL suggested that the Panel needed to first develop and embed itself as an advisory body, but also that the CAA needed to be clear on its ambitions to regulate environmental sustainability when it may not necessarily be the regulator in that space.

The Panel concluded that there could be two main themes to its longer-term work programme:

- A suite of papers offering strategic guidance to the CAA's decision-making; and
- Advising directly on CAA matters, as they arise, where there is an environmental sustainability angle.

Action: RMR to draft first iteration of Panel longer-term work programme for discussion at March Panel meeting.

9. AoB

RMR reported back on her recent regular meeting with Sir Stephen Hillier (CAA Chair) and Richard Moriarty (CEO), noting especially that there is a commitment to keeping communication between CAA senior leadership and the Panel open through the personnel changes.

Actions log		
1	Panel to have completed think piece templates and sent to identified CAA contacts by end of February.	Panel
2	BF to seek input from Tim Johnson and Nic Stevenson on the Panel's ToR for any further comments from the CAA's perspective by end of February.	BF
3	Panel members to forward links and papers on supersonic flight and climate impacts for distribution into the CAA.	Panel
4	RMR to draft first iteration of Panel longer-term work programme for discussion at March Panel meeting.	RMR