



Department  
for Transport

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From the Secretary of State  
**Rt. Hon Grant Shapps MP**

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31 August 2021

Dear Richard,

### **ROLE OF CAA - CIVIL AVIATION NOISE**

I am highly supportive of the UK having an appropriate aviation noise policy, that balances the impacts on residents and communities living in proximity to airports or under flight paths, with the benefits that a strong aviation sector brings to the economy and other environmental impacts. Community interests must be considered as part of both the airport planning and airspace change processes and in line with the legislative framework and Government policy.

I am also keen that Transport Ministers continue to have impartial advice on aviation noise alongside other relevant interests and impacts. The Independent Commission on Civil Aviation Noise (ICCAN) has carried out valuable work, but there is scope for the more effective continued delivery of functions assigned to ICCAN through different mechanisms. As such, I will shortly inform Parliament that I have decided to wind down ICCAN and that the Commissioners' appointments will come to an end on 30 September.

You will be aware that there remains considerable interest within Parliament, among members of the public and community groups and

industry on issues related to aircraft noise. Winding down ICCAN does not represent any weakening of the Government's aviation noise policy and Transport Ministers will need to have continued access to impartial advice on noise impacts.

In the context of the functions assigned to ICCAN, my team will work with ICCAN's secretariat to review ICCAN's current projects and make recommendations to me about which are to be continued, paused or cancelled. Once that exercise has been completed, I would welcome your view on those continuing ICCAN projects that the CAA can appropriately take on, together with the relevant ICCAN functions.

My officials have already held preliminary discussions with your team and I understand there is broad agreement that most technical, research and policy advisory functions to support Government can be taken on by the CAA. This includes taking on noise research and the function of developing and maintaining best practice guidance on issues related to operating restrictions, noise management including metrics, engagement and enforcement. In addition, I welcome the CAA's proposal to establish an Environment Panel to provide it with independent expert guidance on its environment-related roles, including carbon, air-quality and noise.

To be clear, I am not asking for the CAA to take over or subsume all the current responsibilities of ICCAN. I am aware that the CAA has existing statutory functions (e.g. safety, airspace change decision making) so full independence on noise issues akin to ICCAN is not possible. It follows that I will not therefore be asking the CAA to take on responsibility for supporting me with any advice on call-in decisions, as CAA is the original decision-maker on this. I will also not be asking you to take on responsibility for fostering improved relations and trust on local decisions on noise control. I would also like to make it clear that in asking you to undertake these additional activities, the Government is not asking CAA to change how noise is considered in your regulatory decision-making activities. As for any policy or stakeholder interest in airspace decision making, such changes would require a change to policy and/or legislation, which are both matters for Government.

I am asking you to continue discussions with my department in order to agree a proposition that can be approved by your Board this autumn in relation to ICCAN projects and functions to be taken on by the CAA. I would like the CAA to assume in its planning that full transfer of those projects and functions will be effective from and including 1 April 2022. I am keen to reassure you that the CAA will be properly resourced for any new responsibilities or assistance or advice it is to provide.

My officials will also work with your team to determine the long-term arrangements for these responsibilities, such as whether any formalisation of the CAA's functions need be made.

I am very grateful to you and your team for your assistance on this matter.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Grant Shapps', written in a cursive style.

**RT. HON GRANT SHAPPS MP**

**SECRETARY OF STATE FOR TRANSPORT**