



Meeting of the eVTOL Safety Leadership Group (eVSLG)
14 12 2023 13:30-15:30 GMT
MINUTES

In attendance:

Rick Newson	Civil Aviation Authority
Simon Meakins	Bristow Helicopters
Chris Booth	Civil Aviation Authority
Phil Young	Chirp
Tim Fauchon	British Helicopter Association
Rupert Dent	Chirp
Ollie Dismore	European Helicopter Association
Mike O'Donoghue	GASCO
Eric Samson	Vertical Aerospace
Bryan Willows	Bristow Helicopters
Wg Cdr Ian Fortune	Military Aviation Authority
Giancarlo Silvestri	Skyports
Jason Thomas	Joby
Steve Forward	Chirp
Steve Hazlehurst	HeliOffshore
Brian Davey	Joby
Christos Panoutsakopoulos	Civil Aviation Authority
Tim Rolfe	HeliOffshore
Will Fanshawe	Flexjet
Edward Fitzpatrick	Civil Aviation Authority
Marilyn G Pearson	CAE
Vicki Murdie	Innovate UK UKRI
Chris Tomlinson	Civil Aviation Authority
Zach Reeder	Joby
Tulki Jenkins	Civil Aviation Authority
Andrew Strachan	Lilium
Colin Russell	Flexjet
Juliana Carolina Kiraly Thomaz Rodrigues	EVE Air Mobility
James Gillian	Volocopter
Michael Pryce	Civil Aviation Authority

TABLE OF ACTIONS

Section	Deadline	Action	Responsible
RPAS and VTOL integration/overlap/alignment with aeroplane/air taxis	2024	To discuss topic again at a future meeting	Chairs and Secretariat
Risk Sub-Group	Next meeting	Provide an update to the group on Systems Theoretic Process Analysis funding	Secretariat
AOB	Next meeting	Invite Darius Mikulenas to present an update on CAA policymaking for eVTOL at the next meeting.	Secretariat
AOB	-	Volunteers are sought to host future meetings	-

Introductions, Updates and Matters Arising

Introductions were made by all members reflecting the attendance of some new and different representatives.

Members were reminded of the antitrust and competition commitment for participants of the meeting. No objections or comments were raised.

The minutes of the last meeting were approved for publication on the CAA website.

UK Government and Regulatory updates

Rick Newson updated members on key initiatives and recent workshops in the UK that may have some synergies with eVSLG or may require input from members in due course.

Topical updates were given by Vicki Murdie of UK Research and Innovation, who had been responsible for the recent Future of Flight conference held at the Museum of Science and Industry, Manchester. She said that the conference had been a success, particularly praising the Detect and Avoid presentation given by Andrew Berry and Ed Fitzpatrick of the UK CAA.

Vicki advised the group that there will likely be a report on Future Flight Challenge lessons learned, now that the FFC is drawing to a conclusion. The exact way in which these findings will be presented is still subject to discussion.

The publication of the Future of Flight Action Plan by the Department for Transport has been slightly delayed due to a change in Aviation Minister; however, it is expected to be published in the first quarter of 2023.

UPDATE: the Future of Flight Action Plan was published on 18 March 2024.

Emerging Risks

Emerging risks were discussed at length focussing on recent fires at Luton Airport and Stavanger, and off-aerodrome landings.

Stavanger and Luton Airport fires

Rick Newson kicked off the session by talking about the Stavanger and Luton Airport fires.

Marilyn Pearson said that in the United States, in response to battery fire risk, HAI will be creating vertiport design guidance, as heliports are not regulated in the USA. There are discussions ongoing on this. Giancarlo Silvestri responded that here in the UK, industry is working closely with the CAA's vertiport specialist Jeremy Hartley on a vertiport design working group. All members very pleased on the progress the group is making, founded on a collaborative basis.

James Gillian asked whether storage of the aircraft and batteries will also be considered as part of the drafting of vertiport oversight and guidance materials, whilst Marilyn Pearson asked how the UK is going to respond to the EASA guidance on vertiport design. Tulki Jenkins (vertiport specialist, CAA) responded to these contributions, saying that considerations will be made, and

gave an example of how processes will be put in place in vertiport design, such as eVTOLs will be stored in the opposite side of an airport to other flight operations.

Colin Russell made the argument that we should not see battery fires as an eVTOL specific emerging risk rather this is a risk that all of aviation needs to consider. It was agreed that the focus should be on getting to initial operations first and that the EVSLG should concentrate on other emerging issues for now.

Off-aerodrome landings

There was a short discussion about rotor craft off airfield landings, given that there is a topical theme of such accidents occurring. Particular points of risk relate to night flying, poor lack of suitable lighting and SOPs.

To more closely examine the root causes of such accidents, the CAA are conducting a 'deep dive' into accident data in conjunction with the EVSLG's sister leadership group, the Onshore Helicopter Safety Leadership Group.

CHIRP AAM reporting

Given that a key aim of the EVSLG is to encourage sharing of qualitative and quantitative safety data, Chirp were invited to present to the group the work they do as a host and assessor of aviation safety performance data. Steve Forward of CHIRP presented alongside Rupert Dent, with the latter focussing on the work of the drone group.

Rick Newson asked an open question to members about what they considered to be the overlap with drone safety data. Some scepticism regarding the utility of making strong comparisons with drone safety data was expressed by Joby Aviation; reason being that drones are non-passenger carrying and so the risk picture is significantly different.

Other members expressed a wish to start small with the extent of data sharing, but starting small acts as a basis on which ambition can be built in the future.

Vertical Aerospace presentation

Vertical Aerospace kindly gave the EVSLG an in-depth presentation on the causes of their recent accident at Cotswolds Airport (Kemble). The presentation was given by Eric Samson, their SVP Engineering, Flight & Test. The co-chairs of the EVSLG, Rick Newson and Simon Meakins sincerely thanked the Vertical team for their candour, and reiterated that a prime advantage of the EVSLG is the open and honest dialogue between stakeholders it enables.

Due to the sensitivities around the accident, no further details about the presentation or the discussion can be given within these minutes.

RPAS and VTOL integration/overlap/alignment with aeroplane/air taxis

Only a short amount of time was available to discuss this issue on this occasion, and it was agreed to discuss this further at a future date. Members were of the view that this is an

important issue for the sector, and the complications that arise from it have led to challenges for the CAA as a regulator. These issues are now being addressed by the CAA.

ACTION: to discuss topic again at a future meeting.

Risk Sub-Group

A Systems Theoretic Process Analysis is the key output of the EVSLG's Risk Sub-Group, which was set up in mid-2023 to examine the key hazards and risks facing Advanced Air Mobility in a more structured, in-depth fashion.

Colin Russell is chair of the sub-group and gave an update on the work of the group. He outlined that we have successfully neared completion of phase 1 of the exercise, to examine key hazards facing current helicopter operations on British Grand Prix weekend from Battersea Heliport to Silverstone. Phase two is set to look at the deltas between existing operations and eVTOL operations. The main issue befalling the group is that most of the work conducted thus far has been on a pro bono basis, which means it lacks the resources to be undertaken comprehensively. Funding is therefore being sought to ensure that the task can be conducted to a professional, academic standard. We look to be able to make an update on this question by the next meeting.

ACTION: Secretariat to provide an update to the group on funding at the next meeting.

AOB

Mike O'Donoghue asked how the CAA were progressing with their work on eVTOL pilot licencing and training. The CAA staff with responsibility for this area of policymaking were not able to make this meeting to give a comprehensive answer, but Secretariat promised to ask Kirsten Riensema and/or Darius Mikulenas to give an update at the next meeting.

ACTION: invite Darius Mikulenas to present an update on CAA policymaking for eVTOL at the next meeting.

It was agreed in a previous meeting that in-person meetings are preferable as they are seen as more conducive to productive discussion.

ACTION: Volunteers are sought to host future meetings.

Next meeting date: 26th April 2024