

THE CAA ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY PANEL TERMS OF REFERENCE

INTRODUCTION

1. The CAA Environmental Sustainability Panel (the Panel) is a specialist, non-statutory body providing scientific, technical and strategic expertise and insight to the CAA. The Panel was established to support and challenge the CAA in the delivery and evolution of the CAA's Environmental Sustainability Strategy, which includes supporting the aviation industry as it addresses aviation's environmental impact. The Panel also provides advice and expertise in relation to environmental sustainability to other projects across the CAA's regulatory and advisory functions. The Panel covers a broad range of environmental areas but does not present itself as representative of all environmental themes.

ROLE OF THE PANEL

2. The Panel's role is to act as a 'critical friend', bringing to bear knowledge and insight to build greater understanding across the CAA of aviation's environmental impact. The Panel works with the CAA where it has identified embedding environmental sustainability as a priority, sharing relevant scientific, technical and strategic expertise in environmental impacts and effects. This may include (but is not limited to) emissions, noise, air quality and biodiversity, and will reach across relevant areas of CAA work such as airspace modernisation, innovation, economic regulation, consumer information and environmental reporting. The Panel will support the CAA in its endeavours to be informed to best support the sector as it reduces its environmental impacts.
3. The focus of the Panel's work shall be on those activities that fall within the CAA's statutory remit and areas of reasonable influence, as well as areas identified, by the organisation, as priority areas via its own Environmental Sustainability Strategy.
4. The key activities of the Panel fall under two areas:
 - **Being reactive, by**
 - **supporting and challenging the delivery and future evolution of the CAA's Environmental Sustainability Strategy:** supporting the CAA to develop and deliver a robust and informed strategic focus on how it will improve environmental performance within its roles as set out in its Environmental Sustainability Strategy;
 - **providing expert scientific, technical and strategic advice in response to requests from the CAA:** providing credible research and evidence that may be considered by the organisation in its decision making on specific areas of its work. This also includes offering guidance to support CAA work to achieve its intended sustainability outcomes, as defined by the CAA.
 - **Being proactive, by:**
 - **helping the CAA to embed sustainability as a cross-organisational theme:** contributing to a knowledge delivery programme that builds and strengthens the CAA's collective knowledge, skills and understanding of sustainability impacts and issues; and
 - **providing wider strategic input** based on the Panel's own broad experience and expertise of sustainability developments in both the aviation industry and more widely, supporting the CAA to identify where it may have an emerging role. The Panel will also bring attention to issues and areas of best practice that are evolving across environmental sustainability.
5. The Panel will not:
 - campaign publicly or deal with individual complaints from the public;

- represent or correspond directly with air travellers, industry or community groups unless requested to do so by the CAA;
 - be involved in or comment on local issues affecting individuals, such as noise from flight paths.
6. The Panel does not have any decision-making responsibilities or accountability role. The CAA retains all responsibility for how it is informed and takes the Panel's advice into account in its decision making.
 7. The Panel will work in a constructive and collegiate way, both with the CAA and with each other. Alongside developing a productive working relationship, the CAA recognises the need for the Panel Chair to represent the Panel to question and constructively challenge the CAA if appropriate, including by regularly meeting with the CAA Board and Chief Executive Officer.
 8. The work programme of the Panel will be agreed by both the Panel and the CAA. The Panel will work closely with the CAA to ensure its forward work programme is aligned with the CAA's strategic ambition for the Panel to have the maximum impact. The CAA will lead on identifying the key areas in the wider CAA work programme where the Panel could add most value.

STRUCTURE

9. The Panel will consist of the Chair and at least six other members.
10. The Panel has no statutory basis, and its governance falls within the corporate structure of the CAA.
11. The Panel will meet at least six times a year and as required on an ad hoc basis. No deputies are allowed. The quorum for meetings shall be five members (including the Chair). Members' attendance through telephone or video link is permissible for the purposes of determining a quorum if agreed in advance. Members should not miss more than two meetings per year without reasonable cause and sufficient notice to the CAA.
12. Members should be available for consultation by the CAA on specific issues. Additional work may be required between meetings, which can be carried out by email.
13. The Panel will determine its own rules of procedure.
14. The CAA's rules on ethics shall apply, and financial arrangements applicable to the Panel shall be handled under the CAA's standing processes.
15. The Panel will be supported by a dedicated Secretariat and Engagement function based within the CAA's Communications, Strategy and Policy Group.

TRANSPARENCY OF PANEL MEMBERS'S INTERESTS

16. The Chair and Members must be free from conflicts of interests which could have an adverse impact on how they deliver advice to the CAA. A conflict management process is in place, and conflicts will be recorded as part of this process.
17. Members must declare at each meeting any interests which could influence their advice. The Chair will decide whether a member must recuse themselves from all or part of the meeting. The Chair must discuss any interests with the CAA to decide if they should recuse themselves from all or part of a meeting.
18. The Chair and Members must declare their membership of the Panel in any bids for CAA grants or contracts. The CAA reserves the right to exclude that bid from its processes, following discussion with the relevant Member.

19. The Chair and Members are required to work towards the objectives of the Panel and not promote their own interests or those of any group or organisation for which they work, or of which they are members. Panel members are not to be direct employees of entities regulated by the CAA, nor have had or currently play an active advocacy role for local issues such as environmental noise around airports. No employee of the CAA may be Chair or a Member of the Panel

OUTPUTS AND PUBLICATIONS

20. The Panel will produce an Annual Report for the CAA Board, detailing the work it has carried out in the year and its key achievements.
21. Minutes from Panel meetings, and any other relevant documents, will be made available in a timely manner.
22. The Panel will publish the following on the CAA website:
 - its Annual Report;
 - its forward Work Programme;
 - minutes of Panel meetings; and
 - any other relevant documents to be agreed with the CAA.

APPOINTMENT TERMS

23. The Chair and Members shall be recruited through a process of open competition and encompass a broad range of relevant expertise and experience.
24. Appointments will be for a term of up to three years which may be renewed for a maximum of one further term of up to three years.
25. Appointment of the Chair will be made by the CAA. The Chair may be appointed from existing Panel Members.
26. Appointment of Panel Members will be made by the CAA with advice from the Chair of the Panel.
27. Appointments will be remunerated on a PAYE basis for a maximum of 20 days per year. General daily expenses (such as lunch) are included in the daily rate. Members may claim reasonable travel expenses.

INFORMATION PROVISION AND CONFIDENTIALITY

28. It is in the interest of both the CAA and the Panel for the CAA to make available to the Panel relevant, timely, and up to date information of relevance to sustainability interests. The Panel will respect the status on which all information is provided by the CAA and maintain the confidentiality of all information supplied by the CAA on that basis.
29. However, the CAA is subject to some legal constraints in relation to the disclosure of information it gathers in the course of its work. It is permitted to disclose information about businesses and individuals where this will facilitate the exercise of its statutory functions, and this would include putting material before the Panel so that it may carry out its role in helping the CAA make better-informed regulatory decisions. There may be exceptional cases where the CAA, having applied the relevant legal tests, considers that disclosure cannot be made, or redactions need to be applied. This would be where the CAA considers that disclosure would be contrary to the public interest or would cause significant harm to the individual or business concerned. The CAA will therefore provide the Panel with information relating to individual airlines and airport operators where the Panel reasonably requires it to fulfil its role of helping the CAA to carry out its regulatory duties.



- 30.** The CAA may on occasion opt not to disclose information or to redact it where disclosure would be contrary to the public interest or might harm the interests of the business or individual concerned. Panel members will agree to respect and understand the need for confidentiality. They will not disclose any information about a business or individual which is provided to them while acting as a Panel member without the consent of the CAA and then only for purposes related to fulfilling their role as Panel member.

THE CAA'S DUTIES

- 31.** The CAA will:
- Be open and transparent with the Panel as the CAA's priorities and work programme evolve in order that the Panel can meaningfully identify and review its priorities and plan its work.
 - Provide the Panel with sufficient notice of the issues that it will require advice from the Panel on.
 - Engage the Panel at early stages of regulatory thinking on areas within its work programme
 - Consider representations made to it by the Panel and provide responses to such representations.
 - Provide the Panel with prompt access to all information which the Panel reasonably requires to fulfil its duties. Where the CAA feels unable to respond to a request for advice it shall provide a reasoned explanation.
 - Give sufficient prior notice of significant new issues relating to sustainability that the CAA is putting in the public domain.

REVIEW OF THESE TERMS OF REFERENCE

- 32.** The CAA and the Panel will review these terms of reference annually or as required.

Last updated March 2025.