

CAA Environmental and Sustainability Panel Meeting Minutes

10:00 – 16:00 12 March 2025

Attendees

Ruth Mallors-Ray (RMR) - Panel Chair
Anil Namdeo (AN)
Brian Pearce (BP)
Charlotte Clark (CC)
Mark Westwood (MW) (via Teams)
Martin Hawley (MH)
Ralitsa Hiteva (RH)
Harry Armstrong (HA) - CAA, (Items 2 and 3)
Abigail Grenfell (AG) - CAA, (Item 3)
Robert Stallard (RS) - CAA, (Item 5)
Tomos Joyce (TJo) - CAA, (Item 6)
Tim Johnson (TJ) - CAA, (Item 7)
Christopher Keegan (CK) - CAA Report Writer
Lisa Norris (LN) - CAA, Secretariat
Alison Harris (AH) - CAA, Panel Support

Apologies

Alistair Lewis (AL)
David Lee (DL)

1. Chair's Welcome and Updates

- 1.1. Actions – the Panel ran through the actions.
- 1.2. Register of Interests:-
 - MH has bid for projects in the Airspace Modernisation Strategy Fund.
 - MW is on the CAA's Hydrogen Working Group and has been invited to join the Jet Zero Task and Finish Group on Zero Carbon Flight as part of his role with Cranfield University.
 - CC needs to update her biography on the CAA website to include a new institution.
- 1.3. Draft Minutes of interim meeting on 19 were approved.
- 1.4. Dashboard – the Panel ran through the items.
- 1.5. All panel members to check their biographies in the Work Programme and advise AH of any changes. **ACTION: Panel Members**

2. Overview of delivery of CAA Environmental Sustainability Strategy & Panel Impact Summary

- 2.1. HA set out the new way that the Sustainability Team is reporting on environmental sustainability issues across the CAA, through a series of dashboards on six reporting areas that are presented to the Sustainability Portfolio Board. This records the work the CAA is doing on sustainability and monitors progress to enable effective delivery. The dashboards cover both

the global and local impacts of aviation, as well as work on climate resilience.

2.2. The Panel discussed:-

- How it can be more involved in the Heathrow Price Control going forwards.
- On non-CO₂ the paper DL circulated set the tone on this topic and included contrails and emissions. The Panel will consider writing a paper to ExCo to provide a balanced view on the research and what contrails really are.
ACTION: HA to liaise with RMR and DL.
- Producing a separate dashboard on air quality would be helpful, especially as public health will have a greater impact in the future. It was accepted that CAA do not have a remit in this area, but the Panel could provide guidance on this topic.
- On Space, this should be separated to include environment, noise, space clutter and space waste. Whilst this is not a priority for the Panel, this could change in the future.
- The CAA have appointed a new strategy lead to coordinate the CAA's work on driving industry resilience, including climate resilience, who will start in the Summer. This is an area the Panel could provide guidance on. The Panel would welcome them to a meeting in the Autumn.

3. Climate Change Committee (CCC) 7th Carbon Budget (covering the period 2038-2042)

- 3.1. AG gave a brief overview of parts of the recent CCC report that relate to aviation. Key points were:
- By 2040, aviation will be the biggest emitter of greenhouse gases in the UK
 - The CCC sets out a balanced pathway to meet the UK's Net Zero 2050 target. The target is ambitious but the CCC considers that, if all the required actions are taken, it is achievable.
 - Carbon removals, Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) and demand management will be key to decarbonising aviation.
- 3.2. The Panel's view is that the ambitions on growth do not factor the increase of noise nor the impacts on air quality and on environmental matters. This is something the Panel could explore to build knowledge and could provide a workshop looking at what the future will look like if aircraft becomes quieter, or is able to fly higher. **ACTION: HA to liaise with CC**

4. Final discussion on Environmental Sustainability Panel Work Programme

This is the second Work Programme of the Panel. The Panel and the CAA agreed this should focus in more depth on specific projects, including those that are listed as the CAA's annual strategic objectives and other key Sustainability Team projects, with individual Panel members being more aligned to each project. It will also include providing advice to the CAA's Executive Committee (ExCo) on wider sustainability issues. These will be shared with Tim Johnson at the next meeting.

5. Airspace Modernisation Strategy 4th Objective

- 5.1. RS gave an overview of the strategy and the 4th objective on sustainability. This has had inputs from government organisations following the recent

announcement by the Prime Minister on airport expansion. He would like Panels' views on:

- how the 4th objective can be realistically applied to be as sustainable as possible whilst incorporating the ever evolving non CO₂ position.
- Guidance on how to identify environmental matters to enable the CAA to push the debate to the right level.
- RS would like to share this with stakeholders and other environmental groups. The publication needs to be adequate for military aviation as well as general aviation.

5.2. The Panel provided the following comments:-

- The Panel agreed that there is no easy answer to these challenges but It questioned what the CAA was trying to achieve through the 4th objective and what it intended to do with the data that is being collected. It noted that there are layers of complexity and different stakeholders wanted very different outcomes.
- There will need to be trade-offs between noise and carbon so it might be helpful to develop different scenarios to show these trade-offs clearly.
- Flights in the future could be improved from a sustainability perspective, but the AMS will not necessarily help the government's ambition on growth.
- It suggested that the CAA could use the 4th objective to drive awareness of aviation's impacts and to demonstrate the effects of those changes.
- RMR reiterated that there is opportunity with AMS with bring awareness of environmental impacts into aviation culture more generally.
- The Panel did not consider that the policy was developed enough for publication at this stage. RS noted that stakeholders are pushing for CAA views on this.

RS thanked the Panel for their guidance and will return at a future date.

6. Aviation Environmental Review (AER)

6.1. TJo reminded that Panel that a consultation on the future format of the AER was published last year. A roadmap on how we will take this forward will be published in August this year. This year's AER will be published in October and will have refreshed data, policies, strategy and regulations. It will highlight what has changed and provide an aggregate picture.

6.2. The Panel comment as follows:-

- the AER is part of the Panels' Work Programme. The Panel are happy to continue to provide guidance to ensure the review is formalised and targeted.
- ATM should form a part of this review.
The roadmap could show operational opportunities on where aviation can affect the environment.
- The CAA needs to be clear about its audience and to be cautious about being all things to all people.
- The quality of data and the sources used are really important. TJo advised that the data sources are public and industry groups.
- The public will be interested to know where the data and sources have come from, so this should be made clear.
- The CAA need to be confident that the data and figures provided are robust.
- RH offered to do a webinar on evidence building to help with the CAA's knowledge building. **ACTION: TJo to discuss with RH**

- The Panel suggested there could be useful insights from what the National Grid produces and the data it uses, such as information on decarbonised technologies which could add value to the review and to the community groups reading it.
- The Panel complemented the draft provided as an improvement to last years.

7. CAA Strategic Overview

TJ set out the key sustainability issues for the CAA in light of conversations with Ministers:

- The Prime Minister and Chancellor wrote to all regulators on Christmas Eve last year asking what each is doing to support the government's drive to grow the economy. The CAA's response set out several activities but noted that government holds many of the levers to affect change in this area. TJ will share the response with the Panel. **ACTION: TJ**
- The CAA supported government's recent announcement to expand Heathrow Airport and the CAA is developing a programme of work to enable this from a regulatory perspective.
- The government also recently made an announcement about regulatory reform and Civil Servants reform to support growth.
- The CAA's work on hydrogen continues, with continued financial support from government. We have recently expanded our hydrogen sandbox work with an additional 13 partnership projects.
- We anticipate that the changes to airspace design, through the setting up of the UK Airspace Design Service, will get confirmed. There is commitment from the DfT on airspace change by September this year.

8. AoB

None.