

CAA Environmental and Sustainability Panel Meeting Minutes

10:30 – 15:30 17 September 2024

Attendees

Ruth Mallors-Ray (RMR) *Panel Chair*
Alistair Lewis (AL)
Anil Namdeo (AN)
Charlotte Clark (CC)
Mark Westwood (MW)
Martin Hawley (MH)
Harry Armstrong (HA)
Rob Stallard (RS)
Christopher Keegan
Tim Johnson (TJ)
Abigail Grenfell (AG)
Lisa Norris (LN)
Bronwyn Fraser (BF)
Alison Harris

Apologies

David Lee (DL)

CAA, (Item 2, 3 and 4)
CAA, (Item 4)
CAA, Item 5)
CAA, (Item 8)
CAA
CAA
CAA, Secretariat
CAA, Panel Support

1. Chair's Welcome and Update

RMR welcomed Lisa Norris who will cover BF's maternity leave.

Previous Minutes

The Minutes of the 5 and 21 August were approved.

Register of Interests

MW has joined a hydrogen industry working group (set up by the CAA) as part of his role at Cranfield. This is not a conflict.

CC is working on research by Heathrow Airport and evaluating school insulation schemes and the impact of aviation noise on children's health.

Review of Panel Dashboard

No 4 'Supporting growth of the CAA's collective knowledge, understanding and awareness of environmental sustainability' this is amber but will change to green after the mini conference in November.

The Panel discussed recent developments in sustainability knowledge, in relation to:

- There are several different interpretations of climate science and modelling which the CAA could benefit from having a better understanding of the uncertainties of them. The CAA could then ascertain whether they are on the right track to reducing the impacts on climate.
- AL noted that most of the discussion currently is around mitigating actions (i.e. discussions in the USA around geoengineering methane which is seen as a plausible mitigation strategy).

ACTION: The Panel to be vigilant about emergency research, new modelling in climate science, shifts in thinking etc and share with the CAA.

The Panel also discussed growth and sustainability in relation to the CAA's risk around industry and the government failing to meet environmental targets, including:

- Interpretations of growth and sustainability, including in relation to GDP and productivity, remaining carbon budget, and being aware of not conflating industry and national growth;
- The role of CAA in influencing the conversation around what growth means in a sustainability context by developing positions to put forward, and the Panel's role in reviewing the CAA's articulation of these positions and providing evidence (where available).

ACTION: all Panel members shifts in thinking on CO₂

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

2.1 The Panel agreed that the items listed in the Summary were clear and gave a more specific outcome focus.

2.2 There are four outcomes: emissions (climate related), two on local public and environmental health (which will need the Panel's support), resilience and adaptation.

2.3 There was a discussion on the future funding of hydrogen as the indication from the DfT is that they will not be giving the CAA the amount of funding requested or provided previously. RMR suggested that the CAA be bold whilst being clear that the CAA are only able to do what the funding enables, but not go wider. HA noted that the CAA will want to frame this positively as the CAA has ambitions to do more on hydrogen, but were not funded to achieve that.

2.4 It was asked whether the Hydrogen Council has been suspended, similar to the Jet Zero Council? It has gone very quiet but the way forward is not clear. **ACTION: RMR will find out**

2.5 The CAA's work on Future of Flight, which includes environmental noise on birds and wildlife, has not progressed as the CAA are struggling to get engagement.

2.6 The AER consultation is ready for publication. The Panel were thanked for their contribution.

2.7 HA noted that there is a new dedicated corporate sustainability SME. The Panel thought being involved in the corporate sustainability work of the CAA's Sustainability Strategy was not relevant to their areas of expertise and/or priorities.

3. Legal scope for CAA to integrate environmental sustainability

The Panel discussed:

- The role of the Panel in providing evidence to support a proposal by CAA for a general environmental duty; and
- The balance between ease of setting general goals that risk judicial review -v- the work involved in setting more specific goals upfront that mitigate later challenge. The Panel recommended considering getting support for how to structure and embed targets within institutional reality; and the value of having interim targets.

4. Airspace Modernisation – overarching environmental 4th principle

The Panel discussed:

- The need for data and evidence to understand the implications of the overarching 4th principle on the AMS, and the role of the CAA in leading on developing a transparent and credible evidence base (which may include commissioning research).
- That there are questions around the sustainability impacts of airspace modernisation where there is no clear evidence, such as around the optimal distribution of noise.
- The interface and lines between technical and political decisions around airspace modernisation and its use, including the use of any additional capacity that is created and whether this is an objective or a consequence of airspace modernisation.
- That growth and sustainability are not binary questions (as in, it is not one or the other), and that the CAA could lead on developing a systems view of the issues.

5. Panel Knowledge Delivery Programme

The Panel agreed to review the deliverables of the programme at each meeting and that the mini conference will be an opportunity to deliver some elements of it. AL space – he could write article

ACTION: AL to follow up with the scientific community

6. Strategic Panel input – innovation and sustainability

The Panel considered an initial list of key issues in innovation developed by MW and agreed that MW would expand upon it with a list of evidence gaps for each topic. The Panel considered how the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) could apply to the CAA's work and to then build most relevant SDG's upon the key areas of innovation. **ACTION: MW**

7. Panel Mini Conference on 28 November 2024

The Panel agreed to:

- For agenda item 2 on current issues in aviation sustainability, each Panel member will develop a 'For Your Radar' paper (supported by the CAA), on a topic/issue they consider to be of strategic importance for the CAA to know, focussing on a clear message for the CAA;
- To enable the Panel to target areas of specific CAA interest, these papers will be given to the mini-conference attendees as part of the pre-reading pack (as well as forming part of general knowledge delivery to the wider CAA), who will be asked to vote on the top two or three areas they would like to explore in more depth at the mini-conference.
- Agenda item 3 will be focussed on decarbonisation generally (not just the Jet Zero Strategy).
ACTION: AG to create an overview of the Jet Zero Council working groups and their links to the different environmental sustainability impacts they are intended to mitigate.

8. CAA Strategic Overview

TJ discussed the following:-

Missions of New Government

It is still early days for the new government. The areas of interest are: being consumer focused; Air Space Modernisation; Ministerial approval for Single Design Entity for airspace and the SAF mandate.

Planning Decisions

The government are looking at the trade-off between economic growth and sustainability and how to balance those. There have been some planning decisions for Gatwick and Luton. The Chancellor has said that she is open to support the third runway at Heathrow, but no clear view has been given. RMR advised that the Panel have today discussed the growth in aviation with more flights and the jobs growth can create and suggested moving away from a binary view of aviation, but to consider how the demand and increased capacity will impact the environment.

Funding

The government are looking at the funding and grants programme for next year. They have indicated that funding will reduce and the CAA will continue to push hard for funding on hydrogen.

Resilience

TJ will be keen to see how the CAA can use their powers to support resilience in aviation and to plan for a sustainability dimension. RMR advised that the Panel would be happy to support this and to provide evidence.

9. Bi-annual discussion with CAA Chair, Sir Stephen Hillier

SSH discussed the following:-

Meeting with Secretary of State

SSH advised that he and Rob Bishton met with the Secretary of State that morning. The new Aviation Minister was previously the Shadow Aviation Minister and this has helped with continuity with him already being very knowledgeable. This is a very mission led government with one of their missions being to have a SAF mandate of 20% by 2030. The government's mission is also to consider consumers' environmental and sustainable needs.

CAA's Powers

SSH raised with the Secretary of State the possibility of the CAA seeking further powers in relation to environment. The challenge is that the CAA needs to be clear on how to use our current powers (and that they are used to the maximum) before being able to put a proposal forward to the government for more.

Environmental Matters

The CAA will sponsor a new team to promote electric power and is optimistic that this is feasible due to how much airspace has changed. Electric planes, although cheaper to run, are very expensive to buy. This will change in the future, as has happened with electric cars. He would like aviation to continue to be for everyone, and not just for the wealthy.

The recent strike by Boeing was raised as this is an environmental issue. The strikes meant that new plans could not be built and so older planes were used, which are not good for the environment.

10. Aviation Noise Attitude Survey (ANAS) update

AE asked the Panel's feedback and input on best practice peer review for ANAS. The Panel discussed:-

- The importance of providing clarity over the aims of the project through clear Terms of Reference so reviews are clear on the scope (especially around separating the methodology from the results).
- Being clear on what aspects of the project exactly each reviewer is being asked to look at and that they can have different reviewers for different parts.
- Provide considerations around funding between reviewers (balancing between paying but not paying too much).

11. AoB

None.