

CAA Environmental Sustainability Panel Meeting Minutes

10:30 – 16:00 14 May 2026

Attendees

Ruth Mallors-Ray (RMR) *Panel Chair*
Alastair Lewis (AL)
Martin Hawley (MH)
Anil Namdeo (AN)
Charlotte Clark (CC)
Brian Pearce (BP)
Ralitsa Hiteva (RH)

Apologies

David Lee (DL)
Mark Westwood (MW)

Trisha McAuley (TM)	CAA, Non-Executive Director
Crispin Orr (CO)	CAA, Non-Executive Director
Harry Armstrong (HA)	CAA, (Item 2)
Anirudh Vyas (AV)	CAA, (Item 3)
Tim Johnson (TJ)	CAA, (Item 4)
Ben Bouzon (BB)	CAA, (Item 5, 6)

1. Chair's Welcome and Updates

- Action log confirmed no actions to discuss.
- April 2026 interim Panel meeting minutes approved.

2. Environmental Sustainability Strategy Overview

- Recent updates on the delivery of the CAA's Environmental Sustainability Strategy included:
- The refreshed Environmental Sustainability Strategy will be published on 19th May, setting out three key outcomes and a long-term environmental vision, with programme flexibility retained due to ongoing industry developments.
- Additional funding has been secured for hydrogen, noise insulation, and Future of Flight initiatives, with further funding being sought for climate adaptation work.
- The Hydrogen Sandbox will relaunch, with results due in June pending DfT approval. Sandbox delivery challenges highlighted funding constraints and stakeholder engagement issues, with several projects unable to complete as planned.
- Panel feedback included:
- Members questioned the realism and economic viability of hydrogen aviation timelines, raising concerns around costs, public acceptance, regulation, safety, leaks, and the wider environmental benefits of hydrogen technology.
- Several members emphasised the importance of noise insulation and public health and encouraged the CAA to use its influence to drive greater industry action and accountability in these areas.

- Concerns were raised about challenges affecting airspace modernisation, particularly legacy NATS systems, and the risk of overstating environmental benefits from proposed airspace changes.

Climate Adaptation Strategy

- AV presented its developing Climate Adaptation Strategy, which aims to build a shared understanding of climate risks across UK aviation, assess how effectively airports and airlines are managing those risks, and define the CAA's role in supporting long-term sector resilience. The work is currently focused on climate risk identification, consumer impacts, and improving adaptation reporting, with particular attention on strengthening industry engagement, enhancing reporting quality, and developing a clearer risk framework linking climate threats to operational, safety and business consequences. The CAA highlighted the need for stronger evidence, better climate modelling, improved communication of climate risks, and a clearer articulation of the benefits of early adaptation investment for both industry and consumers.
- Panel feedback included:
- Members urged the CAA to take a firmer leadership role on climate adaptation, arguing that industry reporting and engagement should be driven more strongly by regulatory expectations rather than voluntary participation, and that messaging should more clearly convey the urgency and safety implications of climate risks.
- Several members highlighted the need to better link climate adaptation to consumer impacts, public health, environmental outcomes and industry accountability, while also improving communication of climate risks through clearer language, stress-testing scenarios, and stronger use of data and evidence.

3. CAA Strategic Overview

- TJ provided an update on key context and priorities for the CAA, including:
- the impact of the Iran crisis on aviation fuel markets
- SAF competitiveness and consumer confidence
- ongoing work on Heathrow expansion, where the CAA is developing economic analysis of regulatory models ahead of anticipated government consultation on the Airports National Policy Statement.
- the forthcoming Aviation Bill, which will strengthen government powers over airspace change and enhance the CAA's consumer enforcement and technical regulatory powers.
- Panel feedback included:
- Members noted that key environmental research appears to be informing policy too late, with questions raised over delays to publication and the role of evidence in decision-making.
- Several members questioned the viability of hydrogen in aviation, citing concerns around its scientific, technological and economic foundations, and suggested further independent evidence should be gathered to inform long-term policy decisions.
- Concerns were raised about the interaction between airspace modernisation and environmental objectives, particularly given existing NATS system constraints and uncertainty around how airspace changes will deliver environmental benefits.
- Members also sought further clarity on the CAA's approach through its economic regulation functions to certain costs for Heathrow's H8 price control.

4. Aviation Environmental Review (AER)

- BB presented the development of the Aviation Environmental Review (AER) 2026, which fulfils the CAA's statutory duty to report on environmental protection in UK aviation and provide recommendations for improvement. BB highlighted proposed enhancements to the AER, including new reporting on air quality concentrations, passenger carbon emissions, SAF usage, noise energy metrics, climate adaptation frameworks, and evidence-based recommendations. The CAA aims to improve the quality, transparency and accessibility of environmental data, while seeking Panel input on methodology, data sources, presentation approaches and potential areas of challenge.
- Panel feedback included:
- Members broadly welcomed the proposed enhancements but stressed the importance of clear messaging, robust and consistent methodologies, and ensuring the report is understandable and relevant to both the public and industry stakeholders.
- Several members highlighted opportunities to strengthen the analysis through additional datasets, including airline-level emissions, airport traffic data, PM2.5 monitoring, UK ETS coverage, and more detailed SAF and fuel-use reporting.
- Strong support was expressed for greater emphasis on public health impacts, particularly in relation to noise and air quality, with calls for more research and stronger recommendations linked to health outcomes.
- Members encouraged the CAA to ensure recommendations are focused, actionable and strategically aligned with a clear long-term vision for improving environmental performance across the aviation sector.

5. Environmental Metrics

- This section was cut short due to time constraints; however, the Panel asked for it to be expanded upon in the next meeting.
- In summary, the Sustainability Team have coordinated conversations across the CAA to understand how different areas are using environmental metrics for measuring the carbon impacts of flights, airspace and the network. The Panel noted that there was value in creating a coherent set of metrics across the CAA.

6. AOB & Closing

- No AoB from panel members
- Farewells to RMR as her final meeting as Panel Chair.