

PUBLICATION VERSION



UK Civil Aviation Authority

Minutes of the 589th Meeting held on 26th February 2025, 11:00, Westferry House & Teams

Attendees:

Sir Stephen Hillier (Chair); Katherine Corich (Senior Independent Director); Professor Jordan Giddings (Non-Executive Director) (items I-VIII); Anne Lambert (Non-Executive Director) (items IX-XIV); Manny Lewis (Non-Executive Director); Trisha McAuley (Non-Executive Director)

Rob Bishton (Chief Executive); Giancarlo Buono (Group Director, Safety & Airspace Regulation); Selina Chadha (Group Director, Consumers & Markets); Tracey Martin (Chief Financial & Operations Officer)

Jonathan Spence (General Counsel & Company Secretary)

Present:

Tim Johnson (Director, Communications, Strategy & Policy, and Chief of Staff); Dave King (Independent Safety Advisor); Nick Lew (Boardroom Apprentice); Ben Sargeaunt (Skyline Board Chair)

Briar Mulholland (Head of Office of Chair & CEO, and Deputy Chief of Staff); Graeme Paterson (Corporate Governance & Secretariat Lead)

Mtinawa Banda (Item VI); Ben Alcott, Germaine Faulkner, Rob Foskett, Jenna Matthews (Item VIII); Mukarram Chaudhry, Alex Hutchinson, Nimalan Mangalakumar, Ella Payne, Nic Stevenson, Louise Stone (Item IX); Tendai Mutambirwa, Paul Sall, Jame Shipp (Item XI)

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I. Welcomes, Apologies & Conflict of Interest Declarations

1. The Board welcomed Professor Jordan Giddings and Trisha McAuley to their first meeting as CAA Non-Executive Directors. The Board also welcomed Skyline Board Chair, Ben Sargeaunt to the meeting.
2. Apologies had been received from AVM Marshall.
3. New interests were declared by the Chair, and Manny Lewis. These would be recorded in the Register of Interests.
4. No conflicts of interest were declared in respect of the matters tabled for discussion.

II. Approved Minutes of Previous Meetings & Matters Arising

5. *Minutes* - The minutes of the January 2025 Board meeting were noted, having been approved out of committee.
6. *Actions* – The Board endorsed the proposal to close five actions, and noted the remaining three which would be addressed over the next few months.

III. Chair's Report (BRD-2025-011) By Sir Stephen Hillier

7. Noting the forthcoming discussion on the CAA's 25/26 Budget and Delivery Plan, the Board was advised of further discussions with DfT and across Government on the CAA committing to significantly greater impetus on growth, innovation and airspace change.
8. The Board noted that these activities were not new to the CAA and had already attracted significant additional resource over the last five years or so, but the increased Government focus required the CAA to respond and make further commitments, including in relation to output timescales.
9. Notwithstanding the greater focus on these activities, the Chair reminded the Board that the CAA's core responsibilities on safety, security and consumers remained a constant.

IV. Board Effectiveness Review (BRD-2025-020) By Sir Stephen Hillier

10. The Board was reminded that a previous Board Effectiveness Review had been undertaken involving a range of stakeholders towards the end of 2024. The review being presented now only included findings from Board Members.
11. Noting responses to questions on the quality of papers, the Board suggested that more be done to understand specific areas of concern.
12. The Board also noted that with the increase in non-executive directors, there would be increased opportunities to engage with the wider organisation.
13. The Board noted the review's results and endorsed the recommendations as set out in the accompanying paper. It was highlighted that work to commission an externally-facilitated Board Effectiveness Review would commence later in 2025.

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V. CEO Report (BRD-2025-012) By Rob Bishton

14. *Approval* – The Board was asked to approve amendments to the CAAPS Trust Deed. Changes to the deed were a matter reserved for the Board. If the changes were endorsed, the Board was also asked to delegate authority to sign the deed to the CEO and General Counsel.

DECISION: The Board approved the amendments to the Trust Deed, and delegated authority for signing the document to the CEO and General Counsel.

15. *External Matters* – The Board was provided with an update on recent accidents involving commercial aircraft in the US. The tragic loss of life in these accidents was recognised by the Board. It was noted that the safety performance of the UK system remained strong.
16. The Board discussed the Government's ambitions for growth and innovation, and how the CAA might equip itself to best support this initiative.
17. It was highlighted that aspects of the legislative framework in which the CAA operated could sometimes slow down changes. There was ongoing dialogue with Government regarding this issue.
18. In respect of innovation and new technologies, the Board noted the desire for pace from various stakeholders, particularly around decision making. A separate discussion on safety risk appetites and decision making was scheduled to take place under agenda item 10.
19. The desire for pace also created challenges in how the CAA might resource itself to support industry and Government, particularly in instances where skills were not widely available. The Board was advised that the CAA would take appropriate steps to prioritise resources and activity where needed.
20. The Board reiterated the need to ensure that the CAA's safety accountabilities remained front and centre as it supported the Government's focus, and that this priority should be actively promoted within the organisation.
21. The Board also requested that it be kept informed on progress in taking these activities forward.

VI. Health & Safety Annual Report (BRD-2025-013) By Tracey Martin

22. The Board was reminded of its responsibility in respect of health and safety of CAA colleagues. It was advised that the CAA had effective policies and procedures in place that would bring risks within the Board's risk appetite by the end of the current financial year.
23. A query was raised in respect of the risk on driving for business, and the use of mobile phones. It was confirmed that the CAA's policies were consistent with the law, with the use of handheld phones whilst driving being prohibited. The CAA's policies also prohibited use of hands-free equipment to dial in to meetings whilst driving.
24. Work would take place over the coming year to ensure that managers and colleagues were more aware of their full health and safety responsibilities.

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25. The Board noted the increase in work-related stress levels. It was recognised that it could be complex to separate work and non-work-related stress absences. However, more would be done to understand the reasons for work-related stress, and to better support managers in identifying sources of stress.
26. It was highlighted that there was a cadre of individuals who had not completed the mandatory health and safety checklist. It was proposed that the data be reviewed to ensure that members of CAA advisory panels were removed. This would then give a clearer indication of where targeted interventions were required.
27. The Board noted the work that had been undertaken in the reporting period. However, recognising that the current policies were aimed to bring risks within risk appetite before the end of the financial year, the Board requested that an update on this be provided at the April meeting.

ACTION: Tracey Martin to provide an update at the April meeting on the progress to bring health and safety risks within the Board's risk appetite.

VII. People Committee Summary Report (BRD-2025-014) By Manny Lewis

28. The Board was updated on the Committee's recent discussions regarding change management, and the need to ensure a standardised process was followed.
29. The Board noted the report.

VIII. CX&M Programme Update (BRD-2025-015) By Ben Alcott

30. The Board was provided with a demonstration of the prototype licensing system for Air Traffic Services (ATS) and walked through the Student Air Traffic Controller licence application journey. This had been developed following user research and GDS best practice and utilised the Design System and Design Standards established by the Strategy & Approach workstream of the CX&M Programme, based on GOV.UK digital services. The Design System would ensure consistency across all future CAA digital services. The licensing system had also been demonstrated to industry groups with positive feedback.
31. Once the ATS service was live in October 2025, the next focus of the CX&M programme would be professional flight crew licensing. This, and ATS, formed a part of the commitments on growth that were included in the CAA's response to the Prime Minister's letter to regulators. At this point it is not possible to make licences fully digital, as the current UK regulations required licence holders to sign and receive a physical document. However, required regulatory changes have been submitted to DfT for inclusion in future statutory instruments.
32. It was confirmed that security and data integrity would be central to the development of the licensing system. This would apply to data already held by the CAA, and where it obtained data from third parties, such as approved training organisations.

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33. Work to monitor efficiencies and benefits from the development of the licensing system was underway. It was suggested, that, if possible, attempts be made to measure efficiencies created in industry, by entities using the new platform.
34. The Board welcomed the progress made with the CX&M Programme to date and noted the challenges that could arise from significant digital projects. The Board indicated that updates on this activity, which was being welcomed by stakeholder, should be prominent in the annual report and accounts, and at the CAA's Annual Address.

IX. 25/26 Scheme of Charges Consultation Response (BRD-2025-016a) and 25/26 Budget & Delivery Plan (BRD-2025-016b) By Tracey Martin

35. *Scheme of Charges Consultation Response* – The Board was reminded that the CAA had originally consulted on an 8.9% overall price increase. Following analysis of responses, the CAA was now seeking to implement an average price increase of 8.5%.
36. Proposals to increase RPAS charges had elicited a significant volume of consultation responses. Based on these responses, the CAA had undertaken a further review of proposed charges, and had recommended some minor modifications which reduced the overall impact on some customers. The CAA recognised that the RPAS sector was price sensitive.
37. The Board also noted consultation responses asking for greater transparency and clarity on how charges were spent. It was confirmed that the CAA was working to address requests for transparency, by demonstrating the value that the CAA was providing to industry through investments in its systems and services.
38. In discussion, the Board recognised the work that had gone into the preparation of the Scheme of Charges, and the analysis of responses. The Board confirmed that it was assured that the process in arriving at the Scheme of Charges proposals had been undertaken in the right way, that there was no adverse impact on safety, and that the conditions set by HM Treasury had been met.
39. The Board was satisfied that the CAA had addressed and responded to feedback from consultation responses, particularly from those in the RPAS sector. The Board challenged the CAA to ensure that its value proposition was clear to charge payers, and that the annual report and accounts and forthcoming Annual Address promote this.

DECISION: The Board endorsed the Scheme of Charges proposals, including the 8.5% price increase. The next steps would involve submission of a letter to the Secretary of State and final formal approval of the charges from HM Treasury.

40. *Budget & Delivery Plan* – Approval from the Board was sought on the CAA's budget and underlying delivery plan for FY2025/26. Both had been developed based on the CAA's understanding of Government priorities and where appropriate, available grant funding. It was, however, possible that priorities and funding could be subject to change.

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41. In discussion, the Board was supportive of the budget and delivery plan, noting that they were consistent with the CAA's current understanding of priorities and grant funding. In approving the budget and plan, it was requested that an update be provided at June's meeting to ensure that the plans remained consistent with Government priorities.

DECISION: The Board approved the FY2025/26 budget and delivery plan. An update and cross-check on these would be provided at the June Board meeting.

X. Safety Risk Appetites – Stage I (BRD-2025-017) By Tim Johnson

XI. SARG Report (BRD-2025-018) By Giancarlo Buono

42. The top safety risks would be updated in April.
43. The Board was provided with an overview of the CAA's review of the 2024 air display season, during which all safety performance targets had been met. The Board noted that there had been increased and more structured engagements with the air display community.
44. The Board thanked the team for the update and was assured that the annual reviews and stakeholder engagement was contributory in constantly improving safety at air displays.

XII. CMG Report (BRD-2025-019) By Selina Chadha

XIII. Draft April Board & Forward Agenda

45. The Board noted the draft agenda.

XIV. Any Other Business

46. *CAA Annual Address* – The Chair highlighted the importance of the CAA's Annual Address as an opportunity to engage directly with stakeholders, and requested that NEDs make every effort to attend.
47. No other business was raised.