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UK Civil Aviation Authority

Minutes of the 590th Meeting held on 2nd April 2025, 11:00, Aviation House & Teams

Attendees:

Sir Stephen Hillier (Chair); Katherine Corich (Senior Independent Director); Jordan Giddings (Non-Executive Director); Anne Lambert (Non-Executive Director); Manny Lewis (Non-Executive Director); AVM Suraya Marshall (Ex-Officio 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)

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

David Silk (DfT – Director, Aviation) (Item IV); Graham French, Nic Stevenson (Item VI); Stuart Lindsey, Trevor Metson, Jon Round, Colin Scott (Item VII); Padhraic Kelleher (Item VIII); Matt Buffey, Reiner Krammer (Item IX); Alison Naylor, Lucy Robbins (Item XI); Tendai Mutambirwa (Item XII)

I. Welcomes, Apologies & Conflict of Interest Declarations

1. The Chair welcomed attendees to the Board and confirmed that no apologies had been received.
2. Trisha McAuley noted an interest as Chair, National Grid Electricity Transmission RIIO3 Independent Stakeholder Group. This was raised

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in the context of discussions relating to the power outage and subsequent disruption at Heathrow in March 2025.

3. No other conflicts of interest were declared.

II. Approved Minutes of Previous Meetings & Matters Arising

4. *Minutes* - The minutes of the February 2025 Board meeting were noted as having been approved out of committee.

III. Chair's Report (BRD-2025-021) By Sir Stephen Hillier

5. The Chair highlighted that the government's focus on growth and enabling regulation would need to be an enduring activity for the CAA.
6. The interconnectivity between a number of agenda items, and the recent disruption at Heathrow was also noted.

IV. Insights & Perspectives from DfT (Verbal Update) By David Silk

7. The Board was reminded that the 2023 ALB Review of the CAA had prompted the CAA to invite the DfT Director for Aviation to attend parts of two CAA Board meetings per year
8. The Board was advised that the CAA continued to work well with DfT and other parts of government, and was very much viewed as an effective regulator.
9. The Government's focus on growth and innovation was reiterated.
10. The Board welcomed the update from DfT, and recognised the importance of ensuring continued close links between it and the CAA.

V. CEO Report (BRD-2025-022) By Rob Bishton

11. The Board noted that there had been a significant amount of change in the 2024/25 financial year, but the CAA had performed well against its objectives. Looking to the 2025/26 financial year, it was confirmed that the CAA's business plan reflected the contents of Secretary of State's recent priorities letter which was sent to the CAA Board Chair on 31 March 2025. In particular, the organisation was continuing to be configured to support Heathrow expansion, airspace change and supporting growth and innovation.
12. Noting the recent announcement that the CAA would become the Market Surveillance Authority for RPAS, the Board queried the approach that would be taken in standing up this capability. It was suggested that AI could be utilised to support development of the MSA functions, rather than using traditional approaches. It was posited that AI may help to reduce costs for the CAA, and also support the Government's announcements on reducing the cost of compliance with regulations for industry.
ACTION: Giancarlo Buono to consider how AI, or alternative innovative solutions could be used in the establishment of the CAA's Market Surveillance Authority capabilities.
13. The Board was provided with an update on the CAA's response to the disruption at Heathrow on 21st March.

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14. The Board noted that Giancarlo Buono had now been nominated to discharge air navigation duties under s.66 of the Transport Act 2000.

VI. NATS Independent Review – Consolidated Industry Implementation Plan (BRD-2025-023) By Tim Johnson

15. The Board was advised that an interim report on the work to implement recommendations from the NATS system failure in August 2023 had been prepared, and this would need to be laid before Parliament by May 2025.

VII. Airspace – Changing the CAA’s Approach (BRD-2025-024) By Tim Johnson

16. *Airspace Modernisation Strategy* - The Board was presented with an update on the Airspace Modernisation Strategy.
17. *UKADS* – The Board noted that the Government had already announced the creation of the UK Airspace Design Service (UKADS), which had been the subject of a public consultation.

VIII. Safety Risk Appetite – Stage II (BRD-2025-025) By Giancarlo Buono

18. The Board was reminded that the accompanying paper was the second of three, as the CAA worked to articulate its safety risk appetite. The development of such a statement had been a recommendation in the ALB Review.

IX. Consumers & Markets Group Update (BRD-2025-026a & b) By Selina Chadha

19. *Economic Regulation & Capacity Expansion at Heathrow* – The Board was advised that the CAA’s method statement for H8 had now been published alongside a letter setting out a CAA review of regulatory models in the context of Heathrow expansion.
20. The Board welcomed the update, and requested that further ones be provided at each meeting.

X. People Committee Summary Report – 5th March 2025 Meeting (BRD-2025-027) By Manny Lewis

21. The Board was advised that the People Committee had used its last meeting to review the People Strategy which would be presented for approval. It was noted that the Committee had commended the work that had gone into preparing the strategy and endorsed it for Board approval.
22. The Board also noted the work of the STEM team and their success in winning a Change Maker award.

XI. CAA People Strategy 2025-28 (BRD-2025-028) By Lucy Robbins

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23. The Board noted that the new People Strategy had been developed with input from colleagues across the organisation. It had also been extensively reviewed by both ExCo and the People Committee.

24. A key aim of the Strategy was to help the CAA build an inclusive culture and support the development of talent and skills within the organisation. It was also noted that work was ongoing to further develop diversity & inclusion plans.

DECISION: The Board approved the CAA People Strategy 2025-28.

25. It was highlighted that the CAA had recently published its Pay Gap Report. This had indicated that the gender pay gap had increased. This was attributable to an increased use of market-related supplements in a specific part of the organisation.

26. In future, it was indicated that the Pay Gap Report would extend beyond gender and ethnicity, to include the disability pay gap.

27. The Board noted that a further discussion of the Pay Gap Report would take place at ExCo, ahead of one at the People Committee. It was envisaged that an update on progress in addressing pay gaps would be provided to the Board in the autumn.

ACTION: Lucy Robbins to provide an update to the Board on actions taken to review and address issues identified by the Pay Gap Report and present these in the autumn.

XII. SARG Report (BRD-2025-029) By Giancarlo Buono

28. The Board noted the updated top aviation safety risks.

29. The periodic review of the CAA's Regulatory Safety Management System (RSMS) was provided. The Board was content with the review of the current safety risk picture, and was assured that the RSMS was effective.

XIII. Audit & Risk Committee Summary Report – 25th March 2025 Meeting (BRD-2025-030) By Anne Lambert

30. The Board noted the summary report and was reminded that the Committee's next meeting would focus on reviewing and assuring the CAA's Annual Report & Accounts.

XIV. Draft May Board & Forward Agenda

31. The Board noted the draft agenda.

XV. Any Other Business

32. No other business was raised.