

CAA Environmental and Sustainability Panel minutes

10:00 – 15:30 13 September 2022

Attendees

Ruth Mallors-Ray (RMR)	Panel Chair
Charlotte Clarke (CC)	
Martin Hawley (MH)	
David Lee (DL)	
Alistair Lewis (AL)	
Chikage Miyoshi (CM) (online)	
Anil Namdeo (AN)	
Mark Westwood (MW)	
Abigail Grenfell (AG)	CAA
Bronwyn Fraser (BF)	CAA, Panel Secretariat
Miranda King (MK)	CAA
Stu Lindsey (SL)	SL CAA (10:30-11:15)
Jenny Willott (JW)	CAA Consumer Panel Chair (1500-15:30)

1. Welcome

RMR welcomed the Panel to its third meeting, noting that the primary purpose of the meeting was for the Panel to develop its work programme.

The minutes of the meeting of 24 August 2022 were agreed.

2. Airspace Modernisation Strategy

SL introduced the work of the CAA's Airspace Modernisation Strategy (AMS) team and the AMS refresh work that is currently being undertaken. SL and the Panel discussed that:

- Given its long-term scope (to 2040), the AMS is not 'set in stone' and is intended to evolve. The AMS team are establishing the process that allows this. It was acknowledged that it was hard to predict the outcomes of a strategy that stretches to 2040.
- While experience suggests that noise is the primary issue that drives most of the conversations with community groups around airspace change, the CAA is bound to work within the statutory framework set by government (s.70 of the Transport Act 2000 states that the CAA must take account of environmental guidance. This includes the altitude-based priorities set out in the guidance, although noting that there is some scope at certain altitudes where and airspace change sponsor and the CAA may have discretion; e.g. *'...in the airspace at or above 4,000 feet to below 7,000 feet, the environmental priority should continue to be minimising the impact of aviation noise in a manner consistent with the*

government's overall policy on aviation noise, unless the CAA is satisfied that the evidence presented by the sponsor demonstrates this would disproportionately increase CO₂ emissions').

- While the CAA is required to comply with the overarching legislative remit it is given, there may still be airspace initiatives that do not fall directly within that remit and may be able to be built into the AMS. As part of the AMS refresh the CAA are integrating the CAA's [Environmental Sustainability Strategy](#) into the AMS, which may guide these sorts of initiatives that do not fall directly into the CAA's legislative remit.
- There are some questions around the legitimacy of the claimed environmental benefits from airspace design, particularly what a realistic and achievable improvement on CO₂ effects due to airspace redesign could be. This is potentially one of the areas where the Panel could add value to the conversation.
- The CAA has a working group dedicated to providing advice and guidance to the DfT on the potential trade-offs of environmental effects. SL noted that conversations around balancing noise and carbon emissions had been taking place since at least 2011 when Performance Based Navigation (PBN) implementations began to spread more widely, and while there will always be a degree of subjectiveness of what environmental impacts are acceptable, the AMS will leave the space for both policy and regulatory decisions to be made around trade-offs where there is scope to do so.
- Issues like air quality, habitat and biodiversity sit a level down from the AMS – but the AMS does drive large-scale projects (like the Future Airspace Strategy Implementation (FASI) proposals) which themselves have particular elements that need to be taken into account (including habitat). The AMS team is involved in these assessments (e.g. Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitat Regulations Assessment) and ensuring that ACOG and airspace change sponsors (NATS and large airports) are aware of their responsibilities. It was also noted that while noise is experienced directly by communities, and is often their primary concern, the perception of the negative impact of air pollution may be changing (due to a recent case where a fatal asthma attack was proven to have been induced by air quality).
- The tension between airspace improvements and capacity was raised, SL noting that while growth is a government priority, and more efficient aircraft and airspace structures will likely reduce noise and carbon on a per flight basis, but logically reductions in overall carbon may be lessened as flight numbers recover/increase.

The Panel agreed it would provide feedback to the AMS team on the draft AMS refresh.

3. Workshop to set the Panel's work programme

RMR set out the broad plan for the Panel's work programme, including that an initial 6-month plan would be agreed before a 12-month plan was developed in 2023.

Taking the Panel's 'top five' ideas developed for the 24 August meeting, the Panel created seven topics around which these ideas were themed:

1. Adaptation and resilience – macro impacts that affect the ability of aviation to be sustainable. Includes consideration of human-made led interventions (such as new aircraft), adaptations to reduce our environmental footprint, and adaptations to changes to the natural world (such as flying around storms).
2. Decision and policy making based on evidence – Decisions in aviation are influenced by data, information and research and lead to long term developments; consideration of evidence to inform policy, industrial and regulatory change need to balance short, long and medium term developments.

3. Electrification – implications on environmental performance. Energy transition and wider acoustic impacts of electric aircraft.
4. Fuel systems – considering the evidence around alternative fuel sources. Reviewing any process behind developing a fuel strategy, but not the fuel strategy itself.
5. Local pollution/non-obvious environmental impacts – aviation’s wider environmental impacts on health.
6. Trade-offs and risk – where the CAA want to consider its regulatory role where it has discretion in trade-offs, the Panel could complement it with its expertise to challenge the evidence to support any decisions/policies on trade-offs and any fragility of that evidence. Bringing clarity to the complexity of trade-offs, including explaining what is realistically achievable. Also highlighting uncertainties.
7. Whole life systems – considering a circular economy and the entire lifespan of an aircraft. Implications of design and manufacture and whether CAA could have an influence on this and if so, where.

The Panel agreed to use these topics of self-led work as the basis for producing seven think pieces for the CAA, which once created could be set against the matrix of the CAA’s roles set out in its [Environmental Sustainability Strategy](#). These think pieces will be developed for internal and CAA Board insights supporting understanding and capability development of the CAA regarding environmental sustainability. RMR agreed to produce a template to structure these think pieces.

Action: Panel to produce initial few paragraphs on allocated topics, to be brought back for discussion by all of Panel before being developed into think pieces.

Action: RMR to create a template for Panel think pieces.

Action: Seven insight documents to be produced as part of the Panel’s interim work plan by March 2023

The Panel also sought views from the CAA on specific pieces of work that the Panel could undertake in the next six months. These included:

- Inputting into the AMS refresh, including around the prioritisation topic
- Innovation – environmental impact of new technologies and assessment of the approach the CAA takes to new technologies (but not picking winners)
- Consumer environmental information provision and ANAS

The Panel recognised that there would always be a dynamic nature to the inputs required by the panel into the CAA. Where possible though, particularly on larger policy developments, a high level milestone schedule would help the panel to understand future work load requirements.

Action: AG and BF to provide update on timeline of tasks and expectations of Panel as standing agenda item (continuation of action 4 of 27 June 2022 meeting: AG and BF to provide a milestone plan of the CAA sustainability team’s work programme.)

The Panel discussed that its role is to support the CAA in developing its approach to these consultations and strategies. The Panel was clear that its role is not to direct what the CAA’s strategy or policy should be, but to bring its insights to challenge the underlying evidence and approach taken by the CAA in coming to a decision that is taken within its remit.

The Panel also agreed that its work programme should be well-rounded and balanced, and should not focus only on tasks relating to carbon.

The Panel summarised its work programme for the next six months to cover:

- Producing seven think pieces for the CAA by March 2023, on the above topics;
- Specific work as led by the CAA on ANAS, consumer environmental information provision and AMS
- Being responsive to requests from the CAA, such as for input to assist in attendance at committees
- Developing a work programme for a 12 to 18 month timeframe to begin in April 2023

The Panel agreed that transparency and collaboration would underpin its outputs, and all views provided would represent the Panel’s position as a whole (and not individual Panel members). Work of the panel may be executed by small sub groups with work being endorsed by the Panel before sharing with CAA or other stakeholders.

In order to build shared knowledge and awareness of the diverse experience on the Panel, the Panel also agreed that each meeting would include a standing agenda item for one Panel member to share their expertise and experience with the rest of the Panel.

4. Introduction to the CAA Consumer Panel

JW introduced the [CAA Consumer Panel](#), including highlighting areas where the two panels may be able to work together. RMR noted the subtle differences between the two panels, including that the Environmental Sustainability Panel was recently established and had been set up in the context of a new CAA team. MW asked for JW’s experience in the best way to feed back into the CAA on innovation. JW noted that this is an iterative process, that involves building good relationships with relevant CAA colleagues behind the scenes and reiterating the Panel’s feedback at a senior and working level. MH noted that there are no tools to measure the impacts of greenwashing, and how the Consumer Panel approached the issue. JW noted that some aspects are unknown, and until consumer attitudes change it might be challenging to get airlines to take meaningful steps.

The Panels agreed to share respective draft work programmes with each other.

5. Summary of upcoming meetings and AoB

Nil.

Actions log		
1	Panel to produce initial few paragraphs on allocated topics, to be brought back for discussion by all of Panel before being developed into think pieces.	Panel
2	RMR to create a template for Panel think pieces.	RMR
3	Seven think pieces/insight documents to be produced as part of the Panel’s interim work plan by March 2023	Panel
4	AG and BF to provide update on timeline of CAA Environmental Sustainability team tasks and expectations of Panel as standing agenda item (continuation of action 4 of 27 June 2022 meeting: AG and BF to	AG, BF

	provide a milestone plan of the CAA sustainability team's work programme.)	
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