

Airspace Strategy Board Minutes – 16th May 2022

| Attendees: | |
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| Robert Courts MP, Minister for Aviation, Maritime and Security | Richard Knight, Chief Operating Officer, Newcastle International Airport |
| Ian Elston, Deputy Director for Airspace, Noise & Resilience, DfT | Roger Hopkinson, Chairman, General & Business Aviation Strategic Forum |
| David Silk, Director, Airports, Infrastructure & Commercial Interventions, Department for Transport | Paul Beckford, Chair, Heathrow Association for the Control of Aircraft Noise |
| Martin Rolfe, CEO, NATS | Andrew Lambourne, Luton and District Association for the Control of Aircraft Noise |
| Juliet Kennedy, Operations Director, NATS | Neil Robinson, Chair, Sustainable Aviation |
| Tim Johnson, Policy Director, CAA | Adele Campbell, Department for Infrastructure (Northern Ireland) |
| Stuart Lindsey, Head of Airspace Modernisation, CAA | Gary Cox, Head of Aviation, Transport Scotland |
| Sir Timo Anderson, Chairman, Airspace Change Organising Group | Paula Street, Lead Officer, UK Airport Consultative Committees |
| Chery Monk, Head of Communications, Airspace Change Organising Group | Chris Gadsden, Head of Regulation, easyJet |
| Commander Simon Lippitt, Head of Airspace Policy and Strategy, Ministry of Defence | Captain Simon Scholey, Head of Flight Technical, British Airways |
| Karen Dee, Chief Executive, Airport Operators Association | Jonathan Moody, Head of Aviation, Ports and Logistics, Welsh Government |
| Andrew Sinclair, Head of Noise and Airspace Strategy, London Gatwick | Tim Johnson, Director, Aviation Environment Federation |
| Kathryn Leahy, Director of Operations, Heathrow Airport | Keith Artus, Chairman, Strategic Aviation Special Interest Group |
| Nicole Prior, London Luton Airport, Airspace and Noise Performance Manager | Graham Brown, CEO, Association of Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems UK |

Agenda Item 1: Opening remarks from Robert Courts MP, Minister for Aviation, Maritime and Security

Minister Courts (MC) welcomed attendees to the first Airspace Strategy Board (ASB) of the year. MC was mindful the Board meeting had been delayed but explained this was due to the Government's priority response to the war in Ukraine.

MC began by highlighting the progress made on international travel since the last board.

On Friday 18 March, the UK became the first major economy in the world to remove all COVID-19 related travel rules for anyone entering the UK.

MC explained that to ensure the protection of public health, the government would maintain a range of contingency measures in reserve, which would enable it to take swift and proportionate action against any future harmful variants of COVID-19 entering the UK, should the need arise.

MC emphasised that in future, the government's default approach would be to use the least stringent measures, if appropriate, to minimise the impact on travel as far as possible and the contingency measures would only be implemented in extreme circumstances.

MC then took the opportunity to thank those involved in sector recovery. MC was conscious that the last few years have been incredibly challenging for the aviation industry and was pleased to see passenger numbers rise over Easter.

MC explained that the return of passenger numbers highlighted that airspace modernisation is as important as ever, and thanked board members for their continued support.

MC then addressed areas of progress since the last board meeting, in November 2021.

Firstly, ACOG delivered the second iteration of the Masterplan, which the CAA accepted into the Airspace Modernisation Strategy (AMS) at the beginning of this year. MC celebrated this significant piece of work and thanked those who were involved in its delivery.

MC then moved onto funding. DfT have secured further funding for the programme, bringing the total provided to £9.2m. MC stated this would enable sponsors to complete Stage 2 of the airspace change process as part of the Government's continued commitment to supporting recovery in the aviation sector as we emerge from the pandemic, and to net zero decarbonisation.

On Jet Zero progress, MC noted that the Jet Zero consultation closed in September last year and received 1300 responses. This was followed by a short and limited technical consultation followed from March to April 2022. DfT is considering responses to both consultations in the development of the final Jet Zero Strategy, which we aim to publish later this year.

MC then spoke of progress in Electronic Conspicuity, a key priority for both MC and the Secretary of State. The EC rebate scheme has now been extended until 31 March 2023, and the Taskforce continue to work with the manufacturing industry to develop specifications to enable interoperability and safety between airspace users.

On the AMS, MC highlighted that the CAA's AMS consultation, ran from January – April this year, and hoped all members had the opportunity to contribute to this important piece of work. Stuart Lindsey (SL) would be providing an update on this later in the meeting.

MC moved onto progress on Free Route Airspace, with NATS successfully rolling out the first deployment over Scotland. MC celebrated this milestone achievement will enable airlines to fly their own routes, taking into account factors such as weather and windspeed, and cutting down on track miles to reduce carbon emissions.

Finally, MC covered the ASB review survey, which officials shared with members earlier this year. MC noted that we would be hearing about this from Ian Elston (IE) later in the meeting but expressed his gratitude to all who took the time to respond. MC emphasised the importance to him of the Board functioning effectively for all stakeholders and stated we could only make sure this happens by hearing from members. MC encouraged members to let him know how to make the board as effective as possible.

MC then ran through the items on the meeting agenda. First, Ian Elston leading DfT's update and discussing the ASB review.

Next, the board would hear from SL and Tim Johnson (TJ CAA) at the CAA who would provide an update on the AMS consultation and the CAA's new environmental panel.

Following this, the board would hear from Sir Timo Anderson (TA) on ACOG's plan for delivering Iteration 3 of the Airspace Masterplan and on ACOG's Community Advisory Panel.

And finally, Board Members would have the opportunity to raise any other business at the end of the session.

Agenda Item 2: DfT update

IE provided an update on the DfT's recent ASB Review,

IE acknowledged the DfT's commitment to carrying out a review of the board and thanked members for engaging in the recent review. He explained that we received a diverse set of responses as expected from the varying range of members of the board. Firstly, he stated that most responses received from members were positive and that officials were able to identify some areas of commonality.

IE set out the four main themes identified by officials from the recent ASB review:

ASB Sub-groups: IE explained that numerous members have requested for several Sub-groups to sit below the ASB and to be formally integrated within the AMS. IE reassured members that DfT have noted this point and will continue to work with the CAA as how we could consider this in light of the AMS revision. IE welcomed members to provide their thoughts any further ideas they have around this item.

Size and Representation of the Board: IE noted that a number of individual and organisation members raised the views that the existing membership of the board is too large and believed the board should be representative, while several members have also requested more seats for representation of their respective organisations. IE responded that DfT will continue to review the membership of the board and noted that DfT have recently made adjustment to the membership by adding a drones representative and the review of the General Aviation and added that the DfT will make a further review and determine whether further work is required.

Risks and Milestones: IE highlighted there was a significant appetite from members to discuss the risks and milestones at the ASB, he invited members to discuss the level of risks and milestones they would want to see in upcoming meetings, noting the different levels of risks shared between the co-sponsors, ACOG, Airports and other entities.

Strategic Aspects and Structure of the Board: IE acknowledged that the strategic aspects and structure of the board was raised in a number of responses, he explained that DfT will require some time to consider this and following CAAs AMS refresh, the DfT and CAA will work to understand the best suited mechanism and structure for the board.

IE opened the floor to responses following his update on ASB review.

MC agreed with the request to include risks and milestones to the agenda of the board and invited members to provide any feedback on the identified key the areas highlighted by IE and welcomed any commercially sensitive discussions offline.

Keith Artus (KA) requested more succinct progress of the components of the airspace modernisation programme, he suggested potentially a concise way to show the status of all the components within the programme including a highlight of the individual progress of each airport in relation to the airspace modernisation programme.

Roger Hopkinson (RH) highlighted the benefit in receiving more clarity on the sector-to-sector benefits of the programme also noting that balancing benefits is a key element to the programme. RH also echoed KD previous comment on producing a risk register for the board.

MC thanked KA for his points and acknowledged his points and stated that we will consider all points raised and handed over to Andrew Lambourne (AL) for his question.

AL raised number of points raise previously by community groups to be addressed.

AL raised that community groups are still to see a technical risk regarding intersections and the vertical dispersal of aircraft which could cause problems when airspace is shared between different airports.

Secondly AL noted community groups have raised their concern that the Airspace Modernisation Programme is going to rely on substantial consultations with the public particularly in areas where there are intersections between airports. He asked for some consideration as to how that will be facilitated and also welcomed the idea of generating a risk register.

MC thanked AL for his points and advised that TJ CAA and IE will address some of his points in their imminent updates.

Karen Dee (KD) suggested that it would be good to reiterate and refresh members understanding of the purpose of the board and recognise how best can board members can support the DfT to make the board more purposeful to the overall programme. She also suggested that the board could be used to identify and discuss risks to the overall especially including any potential learning opportunities.

MC thanked KD for her suggestions for the ASB review and confirmed DfT officials will continue to review the ASB in light of the revised AMS and will update the board in due course.

IE updated on Electronic Conspicuity, he announced that the first phase of the DfT Surveillance Standards Task Force's work has now been completed. IE confirmed that first phase proposed that UK adopt the existing global standards for EC; requiring Manned Aircraft users to have devices that operate at 1090MHz, and unmanned aircraft users 978MHz to be mandated in only specific areas for safety reasons and will remain voluntary elsewhere.

IE also noted that the second phase of work has also commenced and will set out the recommended approach including operations, information needs, interoperability assessments and identifying what new requirements may be needed including any potential regulatory changes. IE added that the third and final stage of work will include defining the regulatory standards to successfully implement the EC standard. IE noted that DfT will continue to keep the board updated.

IE Thanked ACOG for Iteration 2 of the Masterplan, he highlighted that the Masterplan clearly describes the interaction between the different sponsors and intersections between ACPs and consultations.

IE acknowledged that DfT received numerous requests for further information demonstrating how carbon emission reductions are being proposed to be achieved, how conflicts between airspace users will be resolved and what the realistic opportunities of new tech will be.

IE formally commissioned ACOG to provide a paper on technology in the airspace change programme, to address the concerns that can be shared with the board and published.

IE finally updated on the formal closure of the ICCAN and the functions that were set to move to the CAA, officially moved to the CAA on the 1st May.

MC thanked IE for his update and questions from the board.

TA expressed ACOG's support for the Technology paper and looked forward to IE specifying what outcomes the DfT want the Technology paper to achieve, along with further clarification on the scope, depth and timelines, to help ensure the paper will hit its intended mark.

IE Thanked TA for his questions and agreed that the DfT and ACOG will work with the CAA to decide the scope and depth required for the paper and following this they will agree on a timeline.

MC Thanked TA and stated he looked forward to seeing the technology paper being presented to the board and published.

Agenda Item 3: CAA Update

SL provided an overview of the AMS Dashboard risk ratings. There were four AMS initiatives rated red, SL explained the majority were related to satellite navigation and that CAA are working closely with DfT on what role the AMS will play on the deliverables of this area. SL was pleased that there were a number of initiatives rated green, including Direct Route Airspace and Queue Management.

Three initiatives had been rated amber firstly; the Advanced Flexible Use of Airspace which SL explained the technology behind this is still to be delivered, and the two relating to the FASI Programme. SL acknowledged the hard work of ACOG and the airport sponsors on progress so far, and noted the amber rating reflected the programme was still being worked through.

SL then provided an update following the CAA's recent AMS consultation, highlighting that materials had been largely produced from the output from stakeholder meetings over the year long period of pre-engagement. He explained that the draft refreshed AMS was separated into objectives and delivery plan documents, and that the move to alignment with the ICAO Global Air Navigation Plan was favourable among stakeholders, acknowledging the particular difficulties for GA of doing things differently in UK causes issues.

SL stated the consultation had received over 100 responses, with many of these being from organisations that represented broader stakeholder groups. He noted that the US civil aviation regulator, Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), responded to the consultation supportively, and wanted to work together on some elements.

SL noted some of the key themes emerging from the consultant responses were funding, leadership and governance, and the need for the AMS to keep pace with developing technology keeping pace, which he agreed with.

SL described receiving some negative comments from the GA community, that weren't originally reflected in pre-engagement, concerning their view that the refreshed AMS would lead to more controlled airspace. SL confirmed this was not the case and that CAA will follow with more engagement.

SL said the consultation also allowed for text comments, and CAA are in the process of reviewing 250 pages of them which cover a range of views and levels of detail. He assured that the CAA want to work through these responses properly, which could mean that finalising the strategy may take longer than expected, currently Autumn 2022. SL outlined the next steps including further engagement, redrafting the AMS, and needing to put to Ministers at DfT for formal clearance.

KD flagged concerns over potential delays and the need for reassurance that the hard work currently going into delivery by airport sponsors would not be undone or derailed by revisions in the new AMS.

SL confirmed that CAA are being very careful not undermine current work or put it at risk, assuring that most additional work in the refreshed AMS relates to new and emerging airspace users rather than FASI. He explained CAA are still hoping for Autumn 22 although this may difficult, but there are no intentions for big structural changes.

Andy Sinclair (AS) thanked SL and the team at CAA for involving all stakeholders for a long period. He asked how the Airspace Change Masterplan and AMS would relate to each other, and how things like feedback on trade off decisions will be put to ACOG's Masterplan Iteration 3.

SL stated that the refreshed AMS should be published before Iteration 3 is finalised, and assured that CAA will always try to advise stakeholders of any significant changes in advance, and will be keeping ACOG in the loop as the refreshed AMS progresses.

TJ CAA spoke about CAA's work on sustainability. He confirmed CAA intend to publish their new environmental sustainability strategy at CAA later in May, which will recognise the vital connectivity role aviation plays alongside the challenge of mitigating the impact of climate change.

TJ CAA noted CAA have been thinking about how, as regulator, they support that agenda, with key early areas of focus including their work to support the Jet Zero group, particularly on regulation, co-sponsoring airspace modernisation, reporting on the sustainability performance of industry, including noise, and looking at the climate impact of their own corporate activities.

TJ CAA explained that CAA is in the process of recruiting additional resource to take forward environmental and sustainability work.

He confirmed CAA would be on additional noise functions, and that some of the key areas of focus highlighted included reporting on noise, preparatory work for the Aviation Noise Attitude Survey, and thinking about advice to Government on policy choices available concerning environmental factors.

TJ CAA spoke about CAA's new Sustainability Panel, which has been modelled on their current Consumer Panel and will act as a 'critical friend'. He explained the panel would not have wide ranging remit to comment on all matters, but would help CAA and provide access to broader range of expertise. CAA are currently recruiting a chair and six panel members, expecting to make an announcement in June or July.

Richard Knight (RK), noted work in the wider Northumbria area with NHS regarding the use of drones to transport blood, and asked whether the AMS considers offsetting carbon emissions in other areas, or just within the aviation sector.

TJ CAA noted that cross-modal considerations are important, and that CAA are well aware of the area of drones that can provide services with environmental benefits. He added that in terms of enabling new technology, CAA already have a role and are looking into this, noting airspace as integration importance, and will need to consider how benefits across sectors are measured, rather than aviation as a silo.

IE added that DfT officials are also looking at the concept and environment benefits of drones, for example by replacing HGVs to reduce carbon emissions. MC noted the importance of these points and his interest in this area of work.

AS asked for further clarity on possible new policy approaches, stating that sponsors need a stable policy background and that changing policies that impact how trade off decisions made would cause difficulties progressing their programme.

TJ CAA set out that there is a clear policy on airspace changes and noise and carbon at altitudes, noting that a stable policy environment is helpful but as in practise with large scale programmes there is always potential need for changes in policy or processes. He assured that the impact on the programme would be a consideration in any decision on policy changes.

MC confirmed he had noted these points.

KA asked how will resource be shared among the scope of sustainability work, and how CAA would ensure there is enough resource for noise related work.

TJ CAA confirmed CAA had worked with DfT to agree resourcing and were confident they have a dedicated team in place to deliver against the noise related programme.

KA raised that ICCAN's role was not as large as envisioned by local authorities and that not all Local Authorities (LA's) have in house noise expert. He asked if there were plans to expand CAA's role to provide this service to LA's?

TJ CAA confirmed that the team were not scoped to this, but that the CAA does have an environmental consultancy team to help stakeholders with noise analysis already.

He added that ICCAN had previously developed a toolkit, which CAA will utilise, reviewing how sponsors have used the tools and techniques ICCAN advised on.

IE also raised that the toolkit could be updated overtime with best practise and continue as live and developing document.

Agenda Item 4: ACOG update

TA updated the ASB on what ACOG has delivered since the last board meeting:

- Iteration 2 was submitted, assessed and accepted.
- Further funding for airports.
- Remobilised airspace change sponsors continuing to progress through the CAP1616 process.

TA highlighted that ACOG's annual report 2021/22 was published on 13 February and is available on the website. It covers the year ahead and the major risks that may affect the programme overall.

TA stated that looking ahead, constituent airports will continue to progress their ACPs and Iteration 3 of the Masterplan will be drafted. He outlined the key requirements of Iteration 3 which are:

- A detailed overview of all ACPs that may be required to deliver the objectives of airspace modernisation;
- A closer focus on the design options to determine the interdependencies and conflicts;
- Reporting on the cumulative impacts of interdependent ACPs and associated trade-offs;
- Enhanced public engagement.

TA noted that ACOG is required to engage with relevant stakeholders to ensure that the content of Iteration 2 and content developed for Iteration 3 is understood. ACOG will conduct a public engagement exercise before Iteration 3 is submitted which will include the coordinated approach for interdependent ACPs.

TA confirmed ACOG will establish a Community Advisory Panel to help shape the public engagement exercise. First meeting will be held on 6 June.

For the benefit of Board colleagues, TA reflected on the areas of supporting work ACOG is working on in the background, including on some technical aspects.

Continuous Climb Operations (CCO) - Currently, there is an inefficient and outdated system of aircraft 'levelling-off' during climb and descent as they transition between altimeter reference pressure settings. In some cases, CCO can help minimise this by enabling aircraft to climb directly to cruising flight level quickly and therefore help realise the AMS' aims and objectives, such as reducing environmental impacts and increasing capacity.

Standard Instrument Departures (SIDs) - SIDs to an altitude referenced to a local altimeter pressure setting are a key blocker to CCO and lead to increased congestion in lower airspace. More detailed analysis will need to take place to determine which ones have minimal interacting traffic and could be modified easily and quickly, but there are early indications that there are benefits to be had. More complex and congested airspace, such as that in the South East of England will require a more detailed look at options and safety cases, but there appear to be

opportunities even there. ACOG will continue to explore and evaluate options and promulgate good practice.

Chris Gadsen (CG) asked how significant it was that some airports had missed their gateways, and what the timelines to develop SIDs are.

TA responded that it whilst it was unfortunate some airports failed their gateways, he was not concerned about the direct knock-on impact on the Programme. He stated his understanding was that the failures were mainly related to misinterpretation of some aspects of the CAP1616 process by the sponsors, but he hoped that the submissions would be reworked in relatively short timescales. TA noted that ACOG do not have a role in assuring individual airport ACP submissions ahead of CAA gateways. In terms of implementing CCO he said that those with relatively simple airspace could potentially do this quite easily and quickly (about 6-12 months). However, for more congested areas of airspace (e.g. the London TMA) this would take longer and would need to form part of more complex airport ACPs

KA asked if it had been confirmed Stansted passed stage 2 of the airspace change process.

TA confirmed both Luton and Stansted airports had passed stage 2.

Paula Street (PS) was glad learning from failed gateways is being shared. PS confirmed UKACCs had been invited to the Community Advisory Panel and would respond. On CCO, PS noted there had been no mention of noise preferential routes. PS asked if anything would be included in the next iteration of the Masterplan on this.

TA confirmed SIDs will not be looked at in isolation and will need to go through the relevant processes.

Agenda Item 5: AOB

MC then opened the floor to any other business; no items were raised. MC thanked members for attending and for their input. MC encouraged board members to get in touch with him and other officials to discuss the items raised today. MC confirmed the next meeting is expected to take place in the Autumn.