

Airspace and Noise Engagement Group – 03 December 2021

Attendees:	
Ian Elston- DfT (Chair)	Sam White-CAA
Tim May- DfT	Darren Rhodes-CAA
Ian Greene- DfT	Briar Mulholland- CAA
Matt Million- DfT	Nic Stevenson- CAA
Gary Marshall- DfT	
Amal Said- DfT	
Sharon Boyle- DfT (Secretary)	
Chris Carter- BA	
Neil Robinson-MAG	
Richard Norman- LHR	
Andy Jefferson-Sustainable Aviation	
Paula Street UKACC	
Colin Flack- Chair of the UKACC	
Benjamin Fenech- UKHSA	
Joseph Duggan - DLUHC	
Paul Beckford – Community Groups	
David Courtenay – Northern Irish Government	
Chris Cain – SASIG	
Jeremy Pine- SASIG	
Jane Johnston- NATS	
Ben Hodgson-AICES	Apologies:
Charles Lloyd- Community Groups	Vicki Hughes-ANS
Martin Peachey- Community Groups	Steve Richardson-Virgin Atlantic
Tim Johnson - AEF	Mari Williams – Welsh Government
Keith Bushell-Airbus	Andy Kershaw- BA
Athanasios Synodinos-Airbus	Meera Sharma- DfT
Kay Jones- CAA	Rhian Thomas – DEFRA

Agenda item 1: Introductions and minutes of last meeting and matters arising

Ian Elston (IE) chaired the meeting. Introductions were made and apologies from those not in attendance were acknowledged. IE introduced the new joiners and those standing in for people who are unable to attend.

IE noted that an agenda and papers were shared prior to the meeting and the group confirmed they had received them.

Tim May (TM) then proceeded to list actions arising from the previous meeting and progress on these. All actions were either completed or would be covered in December's meeting.

- Action for DfT- IG and CL to meet offline to discuss the consultation decisions DfT. **Closed**

- Action for DfT- DfT and CAA to discuss potential CAA rating of airport environmental performance CAA. **This is being considered in the context of CAA taking on ICCAN functions.**
- Action for DfT-discussions on CAA's ratings of specific aircraft and whether aircraft are being flown as quietly as possible to take place in ANMAC meeting, ensure airlines are present for this. **ANMAC meeting to be arranged. DfT**
- Action for DfT- to ask CAA to look at fleet changes due to COVID-19. ANEG members completed. **CAA has published CAP2128**
- Action for ANEG members-attendees to suggest areas for discussion in focus groups in writing to DfT. **Completed**
- Action for DfT-to send out agendas and meeting invites for Focus Groups in due course . **Ongoing**
- Action for CAA- to look into Paul Beckford's comment about restructuring a research programme to investigate noise and disturbance in more detail CAA. DfT noted that this would be included in a future survey of noise attitudes, to be taken on by the CAA following ICCAN's closure.
- Action for DfT- to set up a separate call to discuss CAA papers in latter half of August, with understanding that we may not be able to find a suitable date for everyone. **This was on request only and there was no demand for this.**
- Action for DfT- to send out link to SoNA report when it comes out. **DfT completed**
- Action for SASIG & ACOG- CC and MR to catch up outside of ANEG SASIG/ACOG. **Completed**

Agenda item 2: DFT Policy Updates

IE began by summarising the recent changes in traffic regulations. The Traffic Light system, introduced in July 2020, was later replaced by a red list only categorisation. By the end of October, there were no countries on the red list. In November, Grant Shapps announced that no new countries would be added to the register but the red list would remain. A new Covid-19 variant, Omicron, has now been discovered and the red list has been re-introduced. IE stated that it will take time for this variant to be understood and for any impacts on the airline industry to be made clear. IE then summarised DfT's policy updates.

IE provided updates on the following areas:

Airspace Modernisation

- **Airspace Modernisation Strategy Refresh**-The CAA is currently reviewing the AMS, with a revised publication due in 2022.
- **Masterplan Iteration 2 & Assess & Accept Criteria**-DfT and the CAA are currently reviewing the first draft of Iteration 2 of ACOG's Masterplan. Once approved, Iteration 2 will be published in Q1 2022.

- **ATMUA SIs** - Two ATMUA related SIs were laid in draft in Parliament on 15 November and will be scheduled for debate in both Houses before becoming law.
- **NATS En Route plc (NERL) Licence Extension** - Following consultation in July, DfT published the formal notice confirming the Secretary of State's decision to extend NERL's licence notice period from 10 years to 15 years. The changes took effect on 25 October 2021.
- **Electronic Conspicuity** - On 26 October, DfT and the CAA announced it would convene a task force to work with the manufacturing industry, to develop and publish EC specifications to enable interoperability and safety between airspace users.

Aviation Strategic Framework

- The government is currently developing a strategic framework for the aviation sector, focused on the next ten years. This framework will explore key issues such as recovery, regional connectivity, skills, consumer issues, airspace and new forms of aircraft. We will also consider the climate change and noise, as well as the critical role that aviation plays in maintaining the UK's global impact.

Decarbonisation

- The Jet Zero Consultation, setting out our vision for the aviation sector to reach net zero by 2050, closed on 8 September. We received over 1,300 responses which we are working to analyse to inform our final Jet Zero Strategy. We expect to publish this in early 2022. The next meeting of the Jet Zero Council will be held on 6 December which will be an opportunity to reflect on COP26 and the next steps on the Council's two areas of priority: Sustainable Aviation Fuel and Zero-Emission Flight.

IE asked attendees for any questions on DfT's policy updates.

Martin Peachey (MP) asked about the review of noise policies. He stated that communities were concerned by what he described as a 'policy vacuum' and whether there would be an attempt to fill gaps with evidence based data. IE responded that the approach was likely to be more strategic. There followed a short discussion on the number of responses to the Night Flights consultation. IE explained that when the response is published, a detailed breakdown of the answers will be provided.

Charles Lloyd (CL) raised questions about the Aviation Strategic Framework and Airspace Modernisation

- Will views be sought on the Aviation Strategic Framework proposals? IE responded that whilst there will be no formal consultation, community opinions will be sought.
- Point 4 on Airspace Modernisation slide-CL queried the use of the word 'mitigate', asking whether 'reduce' would be better.
- CL asked that noise issues be properly considered within the Aviation Strategic Framework.

Agenda item 3: Night Flights

Gary Marshall (GM) explained that 530 responses have been received to Part 2 of the Night Flights consultation. Part 1 of the consultation, which closed in March, had generated 950 responses. The Part 2 responses revealed quite polarised opinions, with community groups calling for fewer night flights, whilst industry emphasised their importance, both to their business models and the wider UK economy. Preparation is underway for a discussion group on Night Flights to be held on 14 December.

GM welcomed questions from ANEG members.

Paula Street(PS) was pleased to hear about the upcoming focus groups, stating that further discussion on night flights was crucial as this is a key concern of communities. UKACC cannot either support or oppose night flights, but **PS** said that she thought a balanced approach should be taken. She asked that points raised by GATCOM in Part 2 of the consultation could form the basis of areas to be explored.**GM** said that he needed to go back and check GATCOM's response.

Paul Beckford (PB) asked if there was a timeframe for the publication of the responses to Part 2 of the consultation. **PB** said that one possible reason for continuing to roll over the regime was that not enough evidence had been gathered. He asked if it would be possible for further discussion on this matter, as it may lead to a more informed policy. **GM** stated that we will consult again in 2023 for the next regime (post October 2025) and a summary of Pt 2 responses would feature within that consultation material. On **PB's** point about evidence, **GM** said that this will be covered in the NF discussion group on 14 December, when DfT's research project is discussed.

Agenda item 4: Policy focus groups

TM shared the slides for this agenda item and explained that the first two meetings will be held on 14 December 2021 and 13 January 2022. The dates for the Feb-March meetings are provisional and will be sent out shortly. The purpose of these meetings is to take forward proposals from Aviation 2050 and to consider developments post Covid-19 and Brexit.**TM** outlined the content to be covered and explained that papers will be sent out in advance, explaining the scope of the discussion. He hoped that by sharing detail ahead of the focus groups, DfT could determine whether we are covering the correct issues.

- **14 December-Night Flights:** this will draw out key points from the consultation and focus on night noise objectives
- **13 January-Overall noise policy:** to consider what a noise limitation/reduction policy means in practice and how it would be measured.
- **1 February-Regulation and enforcement:** to consider the adequacy of enforcement mechanisms.
- **22 February-Air Quality:** to discuss how to take forward the proposals in the Aviation 2050 paper. **TM** commented that a wider group than the usual ANEG membership may need to be invited.
- **17 March-Health Impacts:** to assess current evidence and set out the process for how evidence can inform policy.

CL stated that he was keen to have a discussion on a compensation feature. The legislative framework for noise(Section 70) could be covered. He further commented that an examination of industry's externalities would be useful.**CL** also added that he would like the focus groups to form an ongoing process.**TM** responded that compensation could be discussed but that further and more detailed examination of this matter would probably be needed. DfT economists may be able to pick up on externalities. Finally, **TM** noted that break out groups in these meetings may allow for more detailed discussion of issues.

PS asked whether DfT will involve representation from Environmental Health Officers or from those involved in ongoing projects at Imperial/King's College.**TM** said that the membership for the health interest focus group will be widened. The name of Gary Fuller from King's College was suggested by members as a potential invitee. **Andy Jefferson (AJ)** said that in 2018, ICCAN did work on the effectiveness of intervention, and wondered whether this could be covered in the health focus group, or elsewhere. He

also said that there are differing views on what constitutes an effective intervention, i.e. not just insulation. **Athanasios Synodinos (AS)** agreed that this was an important topic.

Agenda item 5: ICCAN Transition to CAA(joint DfT/CAA item)

IG introduced this item by saying that this was the first ANEG since the announcement in September 2021 that ICCAN was being wound down. He noted that there had been criticism of this move from community groups. He went on to summarise the reasons for the creation of ICCAN. ICCAN was set up to provide independent advice to the Government on civil aviation noise and to help improve relations and trust around noise decisions. Its aims included setting best practice guidance. ICCAN was required to be reviewed within 18-24 months of its creation in November 2018, in common with all public bodies. The review began in January 2021 and showed ICCAN's achievements as well as areas where it was less successful. The CAA will now consider noise matters alongside air quality and decarbonisation. Work on complaints and other work streams are ongoing. These will be moved to the CAA, stopped or otherwise.

Briar Mulholland (BM) and **Nic Stevenson (NS)** of the CAA then presented their slides.

BM explained that the CAA will take on ICCAN's technical roles from 1 April 2022 and also publish best practice guidance. The CAA also wants to examine how noise fits in with sustainability issues. In order to do so, it is creating an Environmental Sustainability Panel of experts who will offer constructive advice and can strengthen the CAA's regulatory functions. The Panel members won't be direct employees of the CAA. **BM** noted the challenge of building trust and credibility and stated that the CAA would want to focus on the areas where it can make most progress.

NS said that it was hoped this panel would deliver the maximum cross environment benefit. This offered an opportunity to bolster and enhance existing work and also build in a central coordinating function.

IE invited questions from participants. **PS** stated that UKACC has just sent a letter to the CAA, offering its views on ICCAN's closure. She expressed concern that it had been wound down so quickly and stressed the independent nature of ICCAN, and hoped that the CAA will continue to demonstrate that. She also stated how important transparency of information was. **PS** went on to state that a system for publishing service standards at airports had shown that when results are shared on a yearly basis, airports are motivated to demonstrate continual improvement. For example, in 2016/7, four airports were reported to be very poor in terms of accessibility standards, but by 2019/20, none were. She felt that it would be useful if a similar standard could be applied to environmental matters. She concluded by saying that she was pleased that the panel would be set up on a 12 monthly basis.

IG stated that it is key that the CAA is perceived as having independence. **BM** stated that the CAA was looking to develop transparency on noise and other environmental concerns.

NS thanked **PS** for the letter from the UKACC, though noted that he had not had time to read it in full. He agreed that the perception of the CAA and its actions are crucial, and that these can be addressed by strong performance standards and providing an open door for consultation. **Tim Johnson (TJ)** asked what would happen to the elements of ICCAN work not being transferred. **IG** stated that ICCAN's role was to produce best practice guidance to support improvements, rather than directly hold industry to account, and that function has transferred to the CAA.

CL described the decision to close ICCAN as a shocking and poorly conceived one, that has eroded trust. He stated that much needs to be done if the new set of arrangements is to work. He expressed doubt that the CAA could discharge the noise role in a way that the community can trust. He hoped that the environmental

panel would not be constrained by the CAA's duties. He asked that the panel be given a budget that would allow it to operate properly and called for it to have as wide a representation as possible.

IG stated that he recognised work needed to be done on trust, but did not agree with **CL's** assertion that the CAA could not function independently. **PB** commented that airlines need to be incentivised to make changes and that communicating recent developments would be a challenge.

Andy Jefferson stated that he hoped to have a catch up with **BM** and **NS** early in 2022.

MP said that he agreed with what **PS, CL and PB** had said and added that communications needed to be handled well so that confidence among communities could be enhanced. He hoped that more effort would be made to find ways to reduce noise impacts.

IG acknowledged both **PB and MP's** points about noise reduction and said that the upcoming focus groups could look at how such matters are addressed. **IE** said that this was a piece of work that we need to engage with ANEG members on. He added that the next ANEG will take place after all five focus groups have been concluded, so most likely after mid-March 2022. **Keith Bushell (KB)** said that he was retiring on 4 March, and that one of his colleagues would attend future ANEGs in his stead.

Agenda item 6: Break

Agenda Item 7: Community and Industry Updates

AJ introduced his update by explaining the work of Sustainable Aviation(SA). This was set up in 2005 and is a coalition of 36 members from UK Aviation. He said that commitment around sustainable aviation continues to grow. He shared a short video showcasing recent developments. He then talked through his slides highlighting:

- **Sustainable Aviation Decarbonisation Roadmap:** this was published in July 2021. **AJ** added that work on carbon removal from fuels was picking up pace.
- **Noise Performance Trends:** pre-pandemic there was an increase in activity but a decrease in noise in the contour areas. Areas outside contour areas did not reflect the same result. During the pandemic, noise complaints have dropped, and those received during recovery are lower so far. He also noted that complaints are being received from residents in places from which complaints were not formerly received.
- **Noise Road Map:** this will be updated in 2022. Operational outputs and noise research groups will be addressed.
- **Further steps 2022:** this will include work on landing gear and speed brake deployment, and optimised departure noise.

A question was posted in the meeting chat function for the attention of Keith or Airbus colleagues : 'the video showed a blended wing prototype with fans on top - can they comment if that is a realistic contender (and if yes what timeline would apply), as his understanding is that would bring a step change reduction in noise footprint'. In response, **KB** said that this was still being evaluated. The next milestone is 2023, with a demonstration in 2026 and entry into service in 2035. Regarding Flight Zero, the technical window for hydrogen is 5200 nautical miles. The technical opportunities for hydrogen are higher than expected, and it has been able to revolutionise short to medium flights.

PS thanked **AJ** for his presentation, asking how its message be more widely disseminated. UKACC would like to help in making sure information about SA projects are more widely heard.

AJ said that this was a good point, and that this was the first time that a video had been used to pull SA's message together. He commented that the video is available on the SA website. He also acknowledged that communicating their message was challenging, as being seen to shout too loudly about it could be seen as 'green washing'.

PS asked if **SA** is looking at noise preferential routes and how this may impact on communities. Are people more troubled by noise because they are WFH, or is it because airspace is being used in a different way?

Jane Johnson(JJ) stated that more direct routes have been granted because of the reduction of traffic, as this helps with efficiency and fuel burn. **KB** commented that as airlines are beginning to fly again, they are using quieter aircraft.

MP asked two questions:

- is industry confident that Net Zero technical solutions can be upscaled for 2050?
- can research be reported to fill in gaps on the information.

AJ responded that although technical problems and policy barriers are still to be overcome, solutions can be upscaled. One challenge is the industry working with the government on clean energy strategy.

KB commented that another particular challenge is other countries lagging behind the UK(though Germany and France have been proactive in developing solutions).Further investment is necessary to ensure development continues.

CL made three points:

- he described an aviation 'feeding frenzy' i.e. airports expanding, with an impact on the climate and noise levels. He stated that the policy planning guidance is not fit for purpose. Furthermore, he said that development tends to exceed that outlined in Making Best Use policies. He stated that where Stansted was concerned, there appeared to be no need to provide a clear reason for the need for expansion.
- **CL** felt that the Airspace Modernisation programme could have serious consequences. He stated that although this programme is 3 years old, DfT & ACOG have not been able to demonstrate its aggregate benefit to the community.
- **CL** said that he discerned a lack of interest in the aviation noise issue. He stated that no progress had been made on noise policy since 2018, and that ministers were not wanting to engage on the issues.
- **CL** hoped the focus groups would be taken seriously, they should not be 'single point' focus groups, and the discussion must be an on-going one. He reminded that the government has regulatory responsibility, as well as industry advocacy responsibilities.

IE said that he will use the focus groups to respond to **CL's** comment. **IE** then invited other queries.

AJ asked whether frustration about Airspace Modernisation centred around changes to routing, or to changes en-route.

CL said that low level changes to individual airports had created a fear of concentrated flight paths being introduced. He queried whether there would be real noise reduction.

MP said that there was an opportunity for 'win' with the introduction of PBN, as this represented a more efficient use of airspace. With careful use of dispersion, and alternative routing to provide respite, this seems to be the best compromise between operators and local communities.

JJ said that the benefit of PBN was the introduction of alternative routes, as this will provide respite for some communities. She also said that this is what industry is working towards.

Agenda item 8: CAA publications since last meeting

Sam White (SW) spoke about CAP2128. This is the report on a study to understand the impact of Covid-19 on aircraft operations at Gatwick, Heathrow and Stansted.

- first Edition published March 2021, covering operations from 1 January 2019 to 31 October 2020.
- second Edition published in October 2021 to include aircraft operations up to 30 June 2021.
- next update expected early next year, to include aircraft operations up to 31 December 2021.

Aircraft movements and noise quota usage

- dramatic reduction in movements and the daily noise quota, but with some increase at the point the travel corridor system was introduced in July 2020.
- reduction in daily aircraft movements, and also a reduction in decibels in noise exposure.
- wide bodied aircraft are generally noisier, however a reduction in noise has been noted since March 2020 when 747400s were retired.
- narrow bodied fleet- a slight reduction in noise has also been noted here, as older and noisier aircraft have been removed.

Aircraft age

- **Heathrow**-wide bodied 747-400s over 20 years old have been removed. There has been a gradual trend of increase in aircraft age over time. There are also more, newer, A320 neos flown.
- **Stansted**-wide bodied aircraft fly longer routes and are mostly made up of freight. There has been a reduction in the distance flown by narrow bodied planes.
- The results show a significant reduction in the numbers of movements and associated noise quota usage at all three airports in the months following the introduction of lockdown restrictions in March 2020.
- Despite the opening of travel corridors during July 2020, aircraft movements during August and September 2020 were significantly lower compared to the same months in 2019 and remained at exceptionally low levels through to the first half of 2021.

Kay Jones (KJ) spoke about CAP2257, the Aircraft Noise and Health Effects Aim report. This provides the public and aviation industry with an update on recent noise and health developments. This:

- covers published research and from March-September 2021.
- includes findings from Internoise and ICBEN.
- next report due end March 2022.

KJ explained the latest research on aircraft noise and annoyance, aircraft noise & cardiovascular disease and aircraft noise and sleep disturbance. **TM** commented that the research on the latter is ongoing and that this will be discussed further on 14 December at the Night Flights focus group.

MP asked **KJ** whether any more longitudinal studies were forthcoming, referring to SoNA and the Schiphol Airport studies as examples of this kind. He asked whether they are helpful, and further commented that people are as concerned about the frequency of noise events as 16-18 hour long events.

KJ confirmed that more longitudinal studies would be done. **IG** said that the working group set up by ICCAN had not reached any conclusions about the most appropriate type of study. However, it was more likely that repeated cross-sectional studies may be used in future. The CAA will continue to lead on this.

There was a brief discussion on non-acoustic factors, which are estimated to account for up to one third of the variance observed in annoyance reactions. **Ben Fenech (BF)** will begin work on developing a new ISO Technical Specification (TS) on non-acoustic factors in January 2020.

Agenda item 9: Land use planning (SASIG item)

Chris Cain (CC) presented the land use planning item on behalf of SASIG. He explained that amongst SASIG's membership of 37 local authorities, some of whom are share or freehold owners of airports, noise from aircraft has traditionally been the single most important strategic issue arising from their interaction with the aviation sector.

The forum for such engagement is usually the land use planning process or environmental health which are often conjoined departmentally or in terms of Committee structure in most local authorities.

The scope of their interest aircraft noise typically covers:

- Aviation noise policy and legislation
- Noise in the Local Development Plan process
- Noise in DCOs/planning applications and planning agreements
- Airspace Modernisation

CC stated that policy often encourages reactive approaches rather than careful/consistent long term planning, based on clear ground rules, shared objectives, transparency, collaborative working and mediation of disputes. He suggested the following:

- bringing together extant noise policy into one place (the Aviation Framework?) and identifying how and when those aspects will be reviewed.
- ensuring noise is given equal weight in policy development and airport growth and change management processes as safety, capacity, operational optimization and CO2 considerations.
- formalising noise as a component of the aerodrome safeguarding process
- defining 'night noise' contours - airports (+ 3m) or with sensitive receptors near/under flight paths.
- publishing noise contours for all commercial airports and reflect them in constraints planning underpinning Development Plans.
- finding a proper replacement for PPG24
- recognising noise impact as a key design criterion in airspace modernisation, both in ACOG's Strategy (SASIG has held discussions with ACOG re design principles) and in the specific Airspace Change process (CAP 1616)
- commissioning research on international comparisons, benchmark airport noise planning, reduction, mitigation and compensation performance
- inviting bids to Noise Improvement Fund – airports, LAs, communities, partnerships
- National Aviation Noise Awards – the NANAs

TM said that he shared the ambition outlined by **CC** in the first point to bring together extant noise policy in one place. He said it was helpful to have SASIG's vision set out so clearly. **TM** pointed out that this a matter that DfT need to discuss further with DLUHC.

PS welcomed **CC's** idea of National Aviation Noise Awards. She also said that at ANEG in March 2019, UKACC raised the issue of bringing together extant noise policy in one place. She further commented that this issue may benefit from a focus group of its own.

CL thanked **CC** for SASIG's presentation and said he would be keen to engage further with them on this matter. **CL** said that although DfT have often stated that noise is controlled through the local planning process, Luton recently changed their limits rather than enforce them. He concluded, therefore, that the system is broken.

MP highlighted the point about disaggregation of land use and airport planning. LAs and local residents need long term evidence of routes. Land use planning and air space planning should be interlinked.

Joseph Duggan (JD) DLUHC said that there was much in the presentation to unpack and that he wanted to explore these points with SASIG in the future. JD acknowledged what CC had said on PPG24, and pointed to recently published updated guidance on aviation noise, and suggested a discussion on what we may need to bring back into the NPPF. **CC** said he would be happy to engage with DLUHC.

Agenda item 10: Noise mapping and action plans

As there was no time to discuss this item, participants were invited to submit questions on the written update.

Agenda item 11: AOB

TM reminded attendees that the Night Flight focus group is on 14 December and looked forward to seeing everyone there.

IE said that DfT will issue a proposed date for the next ANEG meeting before Christmas. This is likely to be April/May 2022.

ACTION – DfT to send out a selection of dates for next meeting

IE wished all attendees a good Christmas and thanked them for their participation

Summary of actions

ACTION – DfT to send out a selection of dates for next meeting