

Airspace Strategy Board Minute – 28th February 2019

Attendees:	
Baroness Sugg – DfT Aviation Minister (Chair)	Karen Dee – AOA
Dan Micklethwaite – DfT	Roger Hopkinson – GA
Sarah Bishop – DfT	Keith Artus – SASIG
Caroline Low – DfT	Colin Flack – UKACC
Tony Poulter – DfT Non-Executive Director	Neil Robinson – Sustainable Aviation/MAG
Abigail Morris – DfT	Tim Johnson – Aviation Environment Federation
Ciaran Crosbie – NI Government	Charles Lloyd – Aviation Communities Forum
Air Vice-Marshal Gerry Mayhew CBE – MOD	John Stewart – HACAN
Robert Light – ICCAN	Klaus Goersch – British Airways
Sam Hartley – ICCAN	Phil Maher – Virgin Atlantic
Richard Moriarty – CAA	Fiona Carleton – Heathrow Airport
Andrew Farrimond – IPA	Neil Thompson – London Luton Airport
Juliet Kennedy – NATS	Andy Sinclair – London Gatwick Airport

Agenda item 1 – Introduction and terms of reference

Baroness Sugg introduced attendees and welcomed them to the second meeting of the Airspace Strategy Board (ASB).

Robert Light was formally welcomed to the Board in his new role of Head Commissioner of the Independent Commission on Civil Aviation Noise (ICCAN). Robert commented that he was delighted to be able to attend the ASB and that he looked forward to meeting a number of stakeholders in person in the near future. He highlighted that the recruitment process is going well, and that a major priority for ICCAN is deciding on its work-plan for the next 12 months.

Baroness Sugg highlighted that, since the last ASB meeting in October 2018, the Department for Transport (DfT) has released its Aviation Strategy green paper and the CAA its Airspace Modernisation Strategy (AMS).

Agenda item 2 – Aviation Strategy - Interaction between airspace and noise policies

Sarah Bishop (SB) highlighted the interaction between the airspace and noise policies set out in the Aviation Strategy green paper. She welcomed feedback on these policy areas and encouraged stakeholders to engage with the ongoing consultation process (which is open till 20 June 2019).

SB presented the slides which had been tabled at the meeting. These covered a number of topics that have been included in the green paper:

- **The airspace documents published in December 2018** – these included the Aviation Strategy green paper, the CAA’s AMS and AMS governance structure, and the NATS feasibility assessment and the CAA’s assurance of this.
- **The new partnership for sustainable growth** – covered areas such as future growth, air quality, managing noise, modernising airspace for the future, efficiency, community engagement and tackling climate change.

- **The objective for airspace modernisation** – highlighted the overall objective ‘To deliver quicker, quieter and cleaner journeys and more capacity for the benefit of those who use and are affected by UK airspace’, and the five parameters it is to be delivered in.
- **Interaction between our airspace and noise policies.**
- **Consultation on a stronger noise policy to ensure industry is incentivised to reduce noise or mitigate noise where reductions are not possible.**
- **The Government’s proposal for a package of new noise measures, as set out in the green paper** – this included a range of topics, such as guidance for housebuilding near to airports, new measures to ensure better noise outcomes from the way aircraft operate and new statutory enforcement powers for ICCAN or the CAA.
- **Airspace Change Masterplan** – DfT and the CAA have commissioned NATS to draw together a UK-wide airspace change masterplan for changes required between 2020 and 2024, starting with the south of England. NATS is setting up the Airspace Change Organising Group (ACOG) to deliver the masterplan.

SB invited questions and feedback from attendees on her presentation. Attendees noted the following points and asked the following questions as part of the discussion:

- **How the estimates on future growth have been calculated?** In response, DfT explained that NATS feasibility work has been based on individual airports own forecasts for growth.
- **Where the efficiency of departure routes will be ranked in the NATS design criteria?** NATS explained that a hierarchy of design criteria has not been set.
- **The Aviation Strategy green paper sets out a strategy to 2050, whilst the NATS feasibility work will go out to 2030. How will NATS capture forecasted growth beyond this date?** DfT explained that the department and NATS have discussed this in depth. It was decided that, as there is more certainty over airport growth plans up to 2030 but a greater deal of uncertainty beyond this date, it would be difficult to extend the feasibility work up to 2050 at this point. However, NATS will be looking to ensure that UK airspace will be future proofed and able to incorporate future changes through the process of modernisation.
- **When will the government release more information on the criteria for compelling airspace changes at airports?** DfT explained that this legislative proposal is currently out for consultation and that the department welcomes input from stakeholders.
- **The noise policies in the green paper are at different stages of development. At what stage would all proposals be defined in more depth?** DfT set out that there would be further detail contained in the policy proposals through the Aviation Strategy white paper, which is due to be released by the end of 2019.
- **Airspace modernisation will need to be assessed on an individual airport by airport basis, whilst taking into account what is appropriate, affordable and works for local communities.** DfT shared this view and said that it is important for the individual needs of airports to be taken into consideration. However, there will also need to be a level of consistency on aspects of modernisation at the national level.

Agenda item 3 – Community representative’s presentation (Charles Lloyd, John Stewart and Tim Johnson)

Charles Lloyd (CL) introduced the paper and set out his initial position that community support for airspace modernisation is conditional on benefits being delivered for communities, and not just for industry. He said that he is not currently convinced that communities will benefit from per flight noise benefits as these may be outweighed by the additional noise from new flights. CL said that the system will enable a series of win-lose outcomes, in the favour of the aviation industry.

The communities paper covered:

- **Issues in airspace modernisation.**
- **Proposals to address the issues in airspace modernisation** – this included: amending of the ASB Terms of Reference to include oversight of all airspace policies; that the CAA’s section 70 duties are amended so that it is required to secure both the efficient use of airspace as well as proportionate, fair and balanced reductions in noise and noise impacts over time.

In addition to this, CL requested that another working group be set up under the ASB to focus on the regulation and use of airspace. The following points were made in discussion:

- DfT agreed that issues relating to airspace should fall under the scope of the ASB, and that noise issues were also in scope where airspace is the issue creating noise impacts. DfT also agreed that the department and the CAA should take away the proposal regarding the additional working group and respond at a future date.
- A number of stakeholders commented that airspace modernisation should not be characterised in terms of industry vs communities, with consideration of communities at the heart of the airspace change process. It was also reflected that there are a number of other stakeholders such as General Aviation (GA), drone users and the MOD whose needs are all an important consideration as part of airspace modernisation.

Agenda item 4 – CAA Delivery update

Richard Moriarty (RM) provided an update on the formation of the Delivery Monitoring and Oversight group (DMO) and how this team will hold the Airspace Change Organising Group (ACOG) to account. Interviews for the head of the DMO role are currently underway and further posts will be advertised shortly.

RM set out the importance of ACOG and NERL engaging with community representatives and other external stakeholders. ACOG and NERL are currently developing a clear critical path to get from where we are today to where we want to be, and there are a lot of interdependencies being considered (for example, Heathrow’s proposed third runway).

The CAA is set to publish a call for evidence into Electronic Conspicuity shortly, and RM noted that it’s important to recognise that there will be trade-offs to consider to ensure that our airspace is shared more effectively.

The following questions were raised as part of the discussion:

- **In light of the delays to ACPs, is there an update regarding CAA resourcing and does the CAA have a plan in place to mitigate these resourcing challenges?** The CAA responded that

there are currently approximately 40 CAA staff working on airspace changes, and that this number will roughly double over the next 3-4 years. This rise reflects the huge growth in volume of ACPs, and charges will rise to fund this increase in resource. The Board felt that resourcing challenges are being felt all across the industry.

- **Is there a senior officer in the airspace modernisation governance structure responsible for driving noise reduction?** DfT said that this is in part, for ICCAN to consider, and that this is a good example of the type of issue it will look into in further detail over the next few months.

Agenda item 5 – NATS Delivery update

Juliet Kennedy from provided a delivery update from NATS. The update covered the following points:

- **South East Airspace Masterplan** – As part of the Masterplan, NATS is due to identify where airspace changes could be developed in southern England in light of forecast growth, airspace bottlenecks, new runways and other factors listed in the co-sponsor commission letter.
- **Mobilising ACOG** – ACOG funding has been approved and recruitment is ongoing.
- **Delivery update for FASI – North and FASI – South.**

The following question was raised in discussion:

- **Will the masterplan consider where noise and GA benefits will fall?** NATS agreed that a requirement of the masterplan commission was to look at areas where noise will be reduced and where airspace can be released back to GA and other users. The initial focus of the masterplan is on the south of England before moving to the north at a later date.

Agenda item 6 – DfT Communications update

DfT highlighted that effective communications are vitally important to the success of the airspace modernisation programme. Baroness Sugg had recently attended the Communication Directors Forum, where there was discussion regarding the national narrative for airspace modernisation.

Abigail Morris highlighted that there is a need to present a national narrative, led by the Government and supported by key stakeholders, to make the case for modernisation.

At a local level there is lot of regional information, and industry consultations and engagement are important in ensuring messages reach the public. Atlas Marketing, which has been working with the AOA and NATS, will also be creating a toolkit to help airports consult and communicate their localised message to communities.

The following question was raised in discussion:

Is there a plan for engaging with Members of Parliament? DfT highlighted that Baroness Sugg would be the focal point for such engagement. When the Aviation Strategy green paper was published a one-page note on airspace modernisation was sent out to MPs concurrently. This aimed to inform them of the airspace modernisation process and what would be delivered over the next few years. Baroness Sugg offered to meet with groups of MPs, in conjunction with local airports, if they so wished.

Agenda item 7 – AOB

As discussed at the previous Board, ASB meetings are held on a tri-yearly basis, and DfT will be in touch to arrange a date for the next Board in due course. This will likely be held in June.

Board members were encouraged to share proposals for agenda items for future meetings. Baroness Sugg noted that, as ICCAN will be fully operational by June, it may wish to provide an update on its priorities. She also noted that ACOG would be fully functioning by this point and so may also wish to provide a delivery update. The next Board may also be a good opportunity to discuss General Aviation issues related to airspace modernisation.