

Airspace Strategy Board Minute – 9th March 2021

Attendees:	
David Silk, Director of Airports, Infrastructure & Commercial Interventions (DfT)	Fiona Smith, Head of Communications, AGS Airports
Ian Elston, Deputy Director for Airspace, Modernisation and Noise (DfT)	Richard Knight, Chief Operating Officer, Newcastle International Airport
Holly Greig, Deputy Director for Aviation Climate Change (DfT)	Andrew Farrimond; Project Director, Infrastructure and Projects Authority
Luke Harrison; Assistant Private Secretary (DfT)	Robert Light; Head Commissioner, Independent Commission on Civil Aviation Noise
Martin Rolfe; CEO, NATS	Sam Hartley; Secretariat, Independent Commission on Civil Aviation Noise
Dave Curtis; Head of future ATM and Policy, NATS	Tim Johnson; Director, Aviation Environment Federation
Richard Moriarty; CEO, CAA	Roger Hopkinson, GA Advocate
Tim Johnson, Policy Director, CAA	Paul Beckford; Chair, Heathrow Association for the Control of Aircraft Noise, ANEG Representative
Sir Timo Anderson; Chairman, Airspace Change Organising Group	Charles Lloyd; Aviation Communities Forum
Mark Swan; Head of ACOG, Airspace Change Organising Group	Neil Robinson; Chair, Sustainable Aviation
Cheryl Monk; Head of Communications, Airspace Change Organising Group	Bernie Rooney, Director, Gateways and EU Relations, Northern Ireland Department for Infrastructure
Group Captain Nick Robson, Head of Defence Airspace and Traffic Management, MOD	Seamus O'Hare, Head of Airports & Seaports Policy and Strategy, Northern Ireland Department for Infrastructure
Karen Dee; Chief Executive, Airport Operators Association	John Karseras; Head of Aviation, Welsh Government
Sean Doyle, CEO, British Airways	Gary Cox; Head of Aviation, Transport Scotland
Chris Gadsden, Head of Regulation, easyJet Tim Alderslate AUK	Colin Flack OBE; Chair, UK Airport Consultative Committees
Dave Lees, CEO, Bristol Airport	Keith Artus; Chairman, Strategic Aviation Special Interest Group
Kathryn Leahy, Director of Operations, Heathrow Airport,	

Agenda Item 1: Introduction from Aviation Minister

Minister Courts (MC) introduced attendees and welcomed them to the fourth meeting of the Airspace Strategy Board (ASB).

Minister Courts acknowledges the unprecedented impacts on the sector including Airspace Modernisation Programme due to the current times. He apologised for the long period since the last board and looks forward to the resumption of regular meetings.

Minister Courts gave an update on the Governments' vaccine role out, and talked about the progress that had been made on airspace modernisation over the last year. He reassured the Governments' commitment to the remobilisation of the sector and Airspace Modernisation Programme. Minister Courts announced that his Department (DfT) and Her Majesty's Treasury have agreed a funding support package for the programme. A package of the value of £5.5 million until FY 21/22. DfT, CAA and ACOG will be discussing possible routes of access to the funding over the coming days and a formal announcement will be released in the coming weeks.

Agenda Item 2: Joint DfT & CAA update on:**Agenda Item 3: Current Status of AMS Initiatives****Agenda Item 4: CAA Listening Sessions and Review of the AMS**

Richard Moriarty (RM) Welcomed the Ministers announcement of the funding package highlighting the importance of this opportunity to update and modernise the airspace.

RM presented a Dashboard set of slides to the Board; providing a progress update of each of the 15 initiatives of the Airspace Modernisation Strategy (AMS).

RM provided a brief overview of the initiatives:

- Some initiatives marked green have made healthy progress such as Free Route and Queue Management
- There are initiatives marked amber where there has been good progress but with great challenges such as Electric Conspicuity (EC) and Airspace Classification Review
- Initiatives marked as red highlight minimal or no progress made. FASI-S and FASI-N initiatives are red due to the requirement of funding.

Following a formal funding announcement **RM** hopes the programme can be revitalised.

RM welcomed feedback for the Dashboard and proposed for it to be circulated at subsequent meetings. Minister Courts asked the Board for feedback; the board thought the dashboard was a useful tool and it was agreed that the dashboard will be presented at subsequent meetings.

RM provided an update on the AMS review, he said the AMS review will consider different contexts such as coronavirus, sector recovery, environmentally and sustainability and equitable sharing of all airspace with users.

RM thanked those stakeholders in the room who had taken the time to engage with the AMS review process and encouraged further engagement from all stakeholders. Committed to publishing the AMS review by the end of 2021.

Ian Elston (IE) provided a brief update of the DfT progress with the programme. His update covered the following points:

- DfT and CAA asked ACOG to produce a paper last year reevaluating the need for Airspace Modernisation considering the impact of COVID-19. ACOG published a paper with 10 recommendations DfT and the CAA have accepted 3 recommendations and will publish the responses to remaining 7 shortly.
- ACOG will develop the Masterplan that brings Airports and NATS together and considers the needs of all the airports. ACOG will continue to engage with different groups including community groups during the process of developing the Masterplan.
- Individual airport changes will be required to go through the CAP1616 process involving extensive consultation with all interested parties such as other Airspace Users, Other Airports that maybe impacted and Community Groups.

MC invited questions from around the room, several points were raised:

- **Charles Lloyd (CL)** on behalf of community groups recognised that airspace modernisation can offer benefits in some circumstances and said that, where there were benefits, communities wanted them to be delivered promptly. He voiced the concerns of community groups regarding the increase of flight capacity and concentrated noise paths that

programme would deliver and said that community groups do not have confidence in the policy and regulatory frameworks through which the use of new capacity will be authorised.

- **CL** said those concerns had been compounded by NATS' iteration one master plan which proposed a third more capacity, with traffic on many routes increasing by more than 50%, substantial increases in total emissions if additional capacity was used and modest, if any, noise benefits, which were unsubstantiated and contingent on uncertain technology. He argued that such an unbalanced set of outcomes was unacceptable and that the programme's underpinning policies and regulatory arrangements needed to be revised urgently to ensure they delivered balanced benefits to all stakeholders
- Charles Lloyd, Tim Johnson (Aviation Environment Federation) and Andrew Lambourne sent a letter to MC on the 8th January (*letter was circulated to the board members along with MC response*). The Letter highlighted community groups specific concerns with the current programme.
- **CL** highlighted two specific points from the letter in the meeting. Firstly, the process in which airspace changes will be approved or rejected by the CAA which does not currently allow the CAA to set conditions which would ensure balanced outcomes are actually delivered or give it powers to ensure asserted benefits are actually achieved. Secondly the real-life impacts of more traffic including on health and house values, which had not so far been thoroughly addressed by the programme sponsors.
- **CL** requested for a forum where solutions can be proposed, and their specific issues can be heard.

MC set out that we are still dealing with the starting point of airspace modernisation and therefore working at a strategic level.

He thanked Charles for his letter and the community groups engagements, he reassures him of the commitment to work and engage with all community groups through the entirety of the process.

MC said regarding noise policy the department will be looking at a medium to long term strategy framework over the course of the year; A recovery to the aviation sector including reviewing policy and considering Aviation 2050 to be published by the end of 2021. He also said a lot will come through the planning process/CAP1616 and that's where parties are able to get into the detail of the impacts of an individual airspace change proposal.

- **Roger Hopkinson (RH)** expressed the importance of the detail in the policy and the need for correct sequencing so as not to reduce the potential deliverable benefits.
- **Tim Johnson (Aviation Environment Federation) (TJ)**
TJ queried how we will ensure that final policy is being fully considered by ACOG given that they are working simultaneously to the development of the final policy.

MC thanked members for their engagement and invited them to feel free to consult with policy officials, CAA and himself throughout the process.

Agenda Item 5: ACOG Update

Sir Timo Anderson (STA) was formally welcomed to the Board by the Minister to his first meeting since appointment of his new role of; Chairman, Airspace Change Organising Group (ACOG)

STA thanked the Minister, colleagues in the DfT and CAA for their strong efforts in gaining funding.

Sir Timo Anderson's update covered the following points:

- Provided an overview who ACOG are and what their role is in delivering the FASI-S and FASI-N alongside an update of ACOG's progress over the past twelve months.
- ACOG will be publishing their annual progress report following the funding announcement in the next few weeks capturing detail.
- ACOG Masterplan iteration 2 to be published in Q4 2021.
- ACOG to publish an update on DfT and CAA response to remobilisation paper.
- Over the past twelve months ACOG have been working on establishing a benefits framework including focus on the environmental benefits.
- In the last year ACOG have also engaged with airports, other airspace users and community groups STA expressed thanks to the various parties for the continued feedback and communication.
- The 2 predominant risks to the FASI programme were funding and remobilising, which will should soon be over however there remains uncertainty around the pace of recovery.
- The Masterplan in development will be a high-level strategy, and will not lead policy but will seek to align as policy is developed.

STA opened floor for feedback

Tim Alderslate (TA) thanked the DfT, ACOG and the CAA on behalf of Airlines UK on the work done to secure funding from HMT.

TA emphasised that Airspace modernisation remains a strategic priority for the UK Airlines sector in COVID-19 recovery and looking forward to growth for the sector and economic growth for the UK

He Highlighted the UK Aviation sector's commitment to NetZero 2050, the one-year anniversary of the sector's commitment and the crucial role Airspace Modernisation plays in achieving NetZero2050.

Robert Light (RL) RL offered the opportunity to work with STA and ACOG to help develop quality and clarity information to support quality engagement to reduce the misunderstanding of the programme outcomes and opposition. He also emphasised the importance of engaging with regular people and not just experts, and therefore engagement should be easily understandable to be meaningful.

Roger Hopkinson (RH):

RH raised the point that some wider stakeholders are currently not considered in consultation e.g. Pilots, Guild of Air Traffic Control Officers etc, he suggests that there may be a missed opportunity for diversifying of opinion within engagement.

Agenda Item 6: DfT Update on Decarbonisation

Holy Greig (HG) presented slides on DfT update on Decarbonisation covering the following points:

- Significant work has taken place on efficiencies from the sector, but due to the increase in demand challenges have also increased.
- International aviation emissions in the UK projected to be the second largest contributor second to agriculture by 2050.
- Currently the sector is facing number of external challenges: economic, complexity of issue, COVID-19 and time.
- Airspace modernisation is one of the many shorter-term levers the sector to tackle decarbonisation.

- There medium-term solutions such as sustainable aviation fuel, forward thinking to kick-starting the UK industry but also for the UK to show global leadership regarding sustainable aviation fuels and investing in new technologies.
- Jet Zero Council chaired by the transport secretary and the business secretary was formed as the UK's flagship approach to aviation decarbonisation. That brings together industry and Government to combine their ambitions regarding aviation decarbonisation and UK advantage.
- The COP26 meeting will be held in the UK.
- Net Zero consultation to be published in the next few months.

Neil Robinson (NR) Manchester Airport Group (MAG) remain committed to Airspace Modernisation. **NR** thanked **MC** for the funding package and stresses the importance of the funding.

NR recognised the importance of airspace operational efficiencies. He raised if there was merit in having a more formal relationship with Jet Zero council and this ASB. Raised the option of producing a paper to report into Jet Zero.

MC highlighted that Jet Zero is a tight delivery group to focus on technical development but welcomed the idea of reporting into Jet Zero council and will carry this suggestion forward.

Tim Johnson (TJ) (AEF) in response to HG DfT Decarbonisation presentation raised the following points:

- AEF are looking forward to the spring Net Zero consultation being published in spring.
- How can this group keep track of thinking about co2 emission reduction, future polices, rerouting and changes in capacity.
- How does this group learn from emerging policy? When ACOG role mobilise plans, how do we ensure it is done in a compatible way with reducing co2 policy and not producing numerous negative impacts on other policies.

MC thanked **TJ** for his points raised, he suggested Deep-Dive sessions could take place for targeted problem areas as an opportunity to feed-in to wider Aviation Decarbonisation.

Robert Light (RL) reaffirms ICCANS commitment to decarbonisation but raised concerns that it may be at the cost of increasing noise. **RL** states that it would be a powerful message from the UK to commit to decarbonisation alongside reduction of noise; showing the UK's combined approach on two of the biggest impacts of the aviation sector.

Agenda Item 7: AOB

CL highlighted concerns around Airspace Modernisation regulatory framework enabling the use of the increase of capacity due to the programme. He proposed a sit-down with the CAA and DfT to work through current issues.

CL highlighted concerns around Airspace Modernisation policy and regulatory framework enabling the use of the increase of capacity due to the programme. He proposed a process, integrated into the rest of the programme, to work through current issues. **MC** suggested a workshop with the DfT and the CAA to discuss policy and regulatory frameworks associated to the programme. **TJ (CAA)** welcomed the idea of workshops and committed to meeting with **CL** to help ensure there was a common understanding of the current framework and prospects

MC suggested **CL** a workshop with the DfT and the CAA to discuss regulatory frameworks associated to the programme.

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Paul Beckford (PB)

Stated the concern of many of his community group members concerns regarding the health impacts, both mental and physical impacts of noise when considering airspace changes.

TJ (CAA) assured that health impacts are evaluated through WebTAG in the CAP1616 process.

MC mentioned the return of regular ASB meetings stating DfT will be in touch to arrange a date for the next Board in due course. He encouraged board members to continue to engage both in formal meetings and offline. He thanked members for their time and hopes the ASB has provided assurance of the government's commitment.