



# Department for Transport

## **Jet Zero Taskforce – Expert Group Extraordinary Non-Ministerial Meeting**

**11:30am – 13:00pm, Friday 7 November 2025**

### **Microsoft Teams**

#### **Attendees**

##### Chairs

- Holly Boyd-Boland, VP Corporate Development and Sustainability, Virgin Atlantic

##### Task and Finish Group Chairs

- Dr Mark Bentall, Chair of Contrail Impact Mitigation Task and Finish Group, Airbus
- David Debney, Chair of Hydrogen Task and Finish Group, Aerospace Technology Institute
- Steven Gillard, Chair of SAF Task and Finish Group, Boeing
- Carrie Harris, Chair of Greenhouse Gas Removals Task and Finish Group, British Airways

##### Members – in person

- Noaman Aladhami, Head of UK Operations, Alfanar
- Rod Campbell, Director of Business Development, 1PointFive
- Jonathon Counsell, Group Head of Sustainability, IAG
- Roger Gardner, Network Manager, UK Aerospace Research Consortium
- Clare Hennessey, Planning and Sustainability Director, Bristol Airport
- Paul Hinxman, ExxonMobil (deputising for Stuart Kirby, Commercial and Project Lead, ExxonMobil)
- Tim Johnson, Director, Aviation Environment Federation
- Tim Johnson, Director for Strategy, Policy and Communications, Civil Aviation Authority
- Duncan McCourt, Chief Executive Officer, Sustainable Aviation
- James McMicking, Chief Strategy Officer, ZeroAvia
- Lahiru Ranasinghe, Sustainability Director, easyJet
- Rosanna Turnham, Manager UK Government Affairs, bp
- Tim Alderslade, Chief Executive, Airlines UK



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- Sophie Lane, Chief Relationships Officer, Aerospace Technology Institute
- Matt Gorman, Director of Sustainability, Heathrow Airport
- Alan Newby, Director of Research and Technology, Rolls-Royce
- Neville Hargreaves, Independent Consultant (previously Vice President, Waste to Fuels, Velocys)

### Apologies

- Karen Dee, Chief Executive, Airports UK

### HMG Officials

- Joe Delafield, Deputy Director, Aviation Decarbonisation and Environment, Department for Transport
- Paul Griffiths, Deputy Director, Aerospace, Department for Business and Trade
- Sonia Krylova, Deputy Director, Department for Energy Security and Net Zero
- Claire Swadkin, Deputy Director, Low Carbon Fuels, Department for Transport
- Jet Zero Taskforce Secretariat

### **Actions**

- Holly Boyd-Boland to confirm agenda for the Annual Plenary via email with Expert Group members.
- Carrie Harris to share updated draft Greenhouse Gas Removals Task and Finish Group Report
- Expert Group members to provide feedback directly to chairs on reports.

### **Summary of Meeting Readout**

#### **1. Chairs Welcome**

Holly Boyd-Boland thanked attendees for joining and gave an overview of the agenda.

#### **2. Annual Plenary Approach and Preparations**

Joe Delafield provided a short update on the Annual Plenary, due to take place in December, noting that Ministerial delegation from DBT and DESNZ will be delegated to Chris McDonald MP. He noted the meeting is an opportunity for CEOs to have a strategic discussion about challenges facing the sector and asked members for views on the agenda. Members agreed that the majority of the meeting should focus on future strategic challenges, considering the global context.



### 3. Task and Finish Group Updates

#### Contrail Impact Mitigation (CIM) Task and Finish Group

Mark Bentall provided an overview of work undertaken to assess the UK's capability in contrail impact mitigation using a standard capability maturity model across five levels, which is set out in detail in the Task and Finish Group (TFG) report.

Three key recommendations were made:

- First, the establishment of permanent governance is essential to oversee and coordinate progress across stakeholders.
- Second, large-scale trials should be initiated at Level 2 of the maturity model, to build the evidence base required for Level 3 implementation.
- Third, the maturity model should be used to map stakeholder roles and interdependencies, guiding the UK's progression through the model.

Mark concluded by emphasising that the maturity model is a living framework and should be used to guide long-term strategic efforts.

Feedback and discussion points included:

- DESNZ officials noted they were supportive of progress on contrail mitigation. A question was raised about how the UK compares internationally. Mark Bentall explained that the EU is progressing through a research programme, but it has limited coordination across stakeholders for implementation. The EU currently lacks sufficient evidence to support systematic MRV deployment. A maturity model approach is preferred, emphasising the need for trials and data before scaling.
- International collaboration was highlighted as essential, especially for North Atlantic operations, which involve UK, US, Canadian, and Irish airspace management. Mark Bentall confirmed that NATS is planning a phased trial approach, starting with UK-led trials to build understanding and followed by international cooperation to scale efforts.
- The Expert Group discussed the impact of contrail avoidance on fuel burn, noting it is a divisive issue in the scientific community. Mark Bentall emphasised the need to compare contrail mitigation against probable fuel burn, not just the theoretical optimum.

#### Hydrogen Task and Finish Group

David Debney provided an update from the Hydrogen TFG, confirming that initial hydrogen-powered aircraft operations by 2030 are feasible, though limited to small aircraft. Achieving this will require early action on infrastructure, operational procedures, business models, and engagement with operators as fleets are planned for years ahead. The TFG has developed market scenarios showing larger hydrogen aircraft



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entering service in the 2040s, creating a gap before full-scale deployment. To bridge this, they identified early viable routes, including some public service obligation schemes, across Europe. To unlock full environmental and operational benefits, the sector must scale to larger aircraft using liquid hydrogen, which presents distinct challenges from gaseous hydrogen.

Key recommendations and outputs are:

- The group has developed roadmaps with “evolution points” outlining key requirements and flagged the long lead time for airport infrastructure, such as hydrogen liquefaction systems. Their analysis, including insights from the ATI-funded Liquid Hydrogen Gas Turbine (LH2GT) project, showed that equipping 20 European airports could deliver 80% of hydrogen’s sustainability benefits.
- The group also stressed the risk of coordination failure across Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs), regulators, infrastructure providers, and fuel suppliers, calling for a formal framework to align efforts.
- The group found that 90% of hydrogen demand to 2050 will come from SAF production, with direct aviation use growing post-2050, highlighting the need for cross-sector planning.

Feedback and discussion points included:

- A question was raised about whether the group had explored opportunities with the MoD. David Debney responded that this had not been covered within the TFG.
- The TFG was asked whether liquid hydrogen could be deployed in smaller aircraft earlier than currently assumed. David Debney explained that while this was discussed, the market scenario only includes a 50-seat retrofit aircraft as an interim step.
- It was suggested that a coordinated test programme across infrastructure and aircraft providers could help de-risk early deployment. David Debney agreed and noted that uncertainties would become clearer as technology evolves.
- A recent EU-funded hydrogen network in Norway was highlighted, supporting 15 aircraft and aiming to address the green premium for first movers. David Debney confirmed that Norwegian routes were included in the early network analysis and acknowledged the challenge of predicting customer behaviour.
- A question was raised about whether the TFG’s modelling distinguishes between retrofit and clean-sheet aircraft designs. David Debney confirmed that aircraft up to 48 seats were assumed to be retrofit, while anything larger was modelled as a clean-sheet design.

### Greenhouse Gas Removals (GGR) Task and Finish Group

Carrie Harris introduced the GGR TFG’s work by recognising government progress in creating a policy framework to stimulate carbon removals supply. The TFG had focused



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on how aviation can now drive demand and purchasing. Their work was structured around three key workstreams. The first quantified the UK's need and potential benefits from scaling removals, estimating aviation could require 23 million tonnes by 2050 - 60% of UK demand-worth £18 billion and supporting up to 100,000 jobs. The second explored how aviation could send strong market signals to support a robust removals sector. The third focused on policy ideas, including alignment with SAF and hydrogen strategies and the need for cross-sector coordination.

The group has identified four short-term policy ideas to stimulate aviation demand for removals, alongside exploring an advanced market signal (AMS) with Sustainable Aviation (SA). Two of the policy ideas focus on encouraging purchasing, while the others aim to build credibility and visibility. Carrie addressed recent discussions around the SAF mandate and GGR mechanisms, noting the Alan Whitehead Independent Review of GGRs' suggestions regarding GGRs and the SAF mandate. The TFG's ideas include safeguards to protect SAF investment. The GGRs group recognises the need to engage constructively on this topic with a balanced approach that supports both SAF and removals.

Feedback and discussion points included:

- The Expert Group agreed that GGRs should complement, not compete with SAF. Collaboration between SAF and GGR was seen as the most effective path forward. Carrie Harris explained that the report outlines potential benefits and risks, with a recommendation for further work next year rather than firm policy recommendations at this stage. She recognised the need for any future policy development to protect SAF investment. DESNZ reiterated its commitment to a least-cost pathway to meet carbon goals and clarified that the Alan Whitehead review is independent and that the government will formally respond in due course.
- The importance of matching demand and supply was highlighted as a recurring theme, and the government confirmed these points would be fed into work on Carbon Budget 7.
- A question was raised about the role of CORSIA in creating international demand for GGRs. Carrie Harris confirmed that CORSIA is covered in the report, particularly as a mechanism relevant to lower-cost nature-based removals, and noted that positive developments are expected soon.
- A question was raised about the use of the term "residual emissions" in the report. Carrie Harris clarified that the report refers to a significant volume of residual emissions and welcomed feedback if it appears misleading.

### SAF Task and Finish Group

Steve Gillard outlined the SAF TFG's approach, centred on maintaining policy stability - especially important as the UK nears financial closure on its first SAF production plant.



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The group's remit was not to investigate or interrogate the design of the SAF mandate for which there is wide support across stakeholders, but to focus on supporting first-of-a-kind projects and ensuring a stable policy environment. The group focused on two key areas. First, assessing matters relevant to the operation of the SAF mandate, which is still in its early stages of operation on which there have been some teething challenges raised by the sector. Suggestions included best practice guidance, monitoring compliance fees, and aligning SAF timelines with the UK ETS. Second, the group addressed financing SAF plants, stressing the need to move from policy to delivery.

Moving forward, the group recommends:

- Targeted support to SAF plants with a proposed pathfinder approach which would invite projects to apply for coordinated support from government and financial institutions, using existing tools like defence off-take agreements.
- To maintain trust, the group recommended greater transparency around SAF financing, ideally through industry-led solutions, though government intervention may be needed
- A SAF Delivery Council to unite government and financial stakeholders and support real project delivery. Additional recommendations included assigning account managers to individual projects, creating a capability guide to help navigate financing, and developing a SAF value chain action plan to address challenges.

Steve concluded by acknowledging the open dialogue with the GGR TFG and the nervousness around potential changes to the SAF mandate. He welcomed any updates in the GGR group's report that would reassure and protect investment confidence.

Feedback and discussion points included:

- Strong support for the Pathfinder project concept, with emphasis on selecting low-risk projects to ensure early success and urgency. Steve Gillard welcomed this and requested any feedback to be sent directly to the SAF group secretariat.
- Agreement on the importance of policy stability, particularly around the SAF mandate, to avoid spooking investors.
- Steve Gillard reiterated the need for the GGR report and its objectives to be complementary and not in competition to SAF and summarised views of the members of the the SAF group on how to achieve the right balance between ambition on GGRs and maintaining stability on SAF.
- Request for clarity on the positions of the Renewable Transport Fuels Association (RTFA) and Fuels Industry UK. Steve Gillard noted that both were nervous about opening discussions of the mandate due to the stage of the investment cycle the mandate is currently in.

#### **4. Jet Zero Taskforce Annual Report**



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Duncan McCourt (Sustainable Aviation) took members through the development of Section 3 of the Annual Report since September, which outlines the key challenges facing the aviation industry in its decarbonisation efforts. He noted that the key theme was while significant progress has been made, major challenges remain, particularly around the scale and speed of deploying new technologies. The draft report also identifies cross-cutting issues, including the availability of renewable electricity, access to capital, and the need for a supportive global policy environment.

Duncan reminded members of the discussions at the September meeting. He noted challenges will be mapped against the Jet Zero Taskforce objectives to guide future work. Holly Boyd-Boland first opened by proposing that Section 3 of the report should take a strategic, forward-looking approach, aligned with CEO plenary discussions, focusing on the key industry and policy challenges over the next 5-15 years. She emphasised the need to prioritise material issues. Following this, she then opened to the group to propose challenges and next steps.

Key challenges identified included:

- Availability of capital, which varies across market players, and
- Policy stability, both in the UK and globally, and the need for long term consistent policy frameworks
- Coordination failures across research and development using the impact contrail avoidance could have on airspace efficiencies and fuel burn as an example.

Some next steps proposed included:

- An assessment of the UK's global position on policy - are we leading, average, or lagging behind other countries-and how does this impact our competitiveness and potential to adopt useful international practices?
- Anchor strategic challenges to a shared framework and timeline: Identify the top challenge emerging from each of the four task and finish groups to maintain focus and coherence. This could be done in the form of a roadmap showing which are near-term, long-term or urgent.
- Suggested the group should more openly discuss CORSIA, given recent maritime developments and potential future changes-emphasising the need for a shared position across short, medium, and long-term horizons.

### **5. Next Steps, AOB and Closing Remarks**

Holly acknowledged the excellent work across the Task and Finish Group reports and the broad support they have received. She noted a few areas needing further alignment, particularly around the interplay between GGR and SAF recommendations, and flagged the challenge of resourcing and delivering proposed governance structures. Holly emphasised the importance of agreeing on the timing and phasing of key levers ahead of the CEO plenary and invited any final inputs or



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concerns to be shared via email. The meeting closed with thanks to all attendees and chairs for their contributions.