

CAA Environmental Sustainability Panel

Meeting Minutes

10:30 – 16:00 06 March 2024

Attendees

Ruth Mallors-Ray (RMR)	Panel Chair
Alistair Lewis (AL)	
Anil Namdeo (AN)	
Charlotte Clarke (CC)	
Mark Westwood (MW)	
David Lee (DL)	
Martin Hawley (MH)	
Rob Bishton (RB)	CAA
Tim Johnson (TJo)	CAA
Nic Stevenson (NS)	CAA
Abigail Grenfell (AG)	CAA
Bronwyn Fraser (BF)	CAA, Secretariat
Barbara Perata-Smith (BPS)	CAA
Tomos Joyce (TJ)	CAA

1. Welcome and Administration

1.1 The minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

2. CAA Update on Environmental Sustainability Strategy implementation and development, and update on wider CAA strategy development

2.1 The CAA and Panel discussed:

- What parts of the Jet Zero Strategy (JZS) the CAA may be able to affect with its Environmental Sustainability Strategy - TJo noted that there are few items in the JZS that the CAA has absolute power to see all the way through.
- The CAA's publication of its [wider business strategy](#), with the mission statement of 'protecting people, enabling aerospace'. This incorporates protecting people from the impacts of aviation and enabling aerospace to become more sustainable.
- Noise is coming into greater focus with airspace modernisation. There is significant mistrust between different groups which is often exacerbated by a lack of clarity around certain areas of government policy, including the trade-offs between environmental impacts and growth, and compensation for those impacted by aviation's activities. TJo noted the ambition to reduce the impacts of aviation; the CAA has been pushing government for some time for clear prioritisation between different factors.
- The Panel also discussed the CAA's role as the holder of quality information, which can ensure that airspace modernisation activities are driven by evidence. The CAA does and could hold data and information to be able to evidence and model aviation transformation across a wide range of issues, including environmental matters.
- As this is an election year, there is an opportunity for the CAA to embrace its roles laid out in the CAA's Environmental Sustainability Strategy - beyond the regulate role the strategy talks to the CAA's roles as leader, influencer and observer. The Panel noted that in many environmental

areas there are legal standards and guidelines (such as the WHO guidelines on noise), the latter of which are more aspirational, but that there is value in discussing both together in order to understand and drive conversations around change. Note was made of organisations being steered to consider aviation environmental impacts against the WHO guidelines, as even though they are aspirational they are more holistic and ambitious in approach than current legal standards and can be a driver for change.

2.2 TJo noted that the Environmental Sustainability Strategy remains a regular part of CAA Board/ExCo discussions. There is no lack of ambition, but more needs to be done to better embed the strategy into the CAA. The Panel encouraged the CAA to consider more deeply which areas it will prioritise to deliver well on in the short term, and which will be addressed later.

3. CAA CEO Rob Bishton

3.1 The Panel and Rob Bishton discussed:

- The opportunities for the CAA to lead on influencing research programmes that can answer questions the whole aviation industry needs to know, such as by requesting membership of the Department for Transport's Transport Research and Innovation Board (TRIB).
- The Aviation Environmental Review and the possibility for the CAA to undertake health impact assessments as part of it in order to set out the impact of aviation on people.
- Recent developments in strategic knowledge, including:
 - Significant changes around the willingness of coroners to name pollution sources and the implications for responsible authorities. For example, the Department for Transport, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and Department of Health and Social Care are being sued by the family of Ella Kissi-Debrah for their potential role in her death due to air pollution.
 - Recent developments in SAF production and whether there is an opportunity for the CAA to lead and be a trusted organisation on information around the full lifecycle (and actual sustainability credentials) of a product. RB noted that the recent 100% Trans-Atlantic SAF flight highlighted the sensitivity of the SAF composition.
 - The EU Emissions Trading Scheme has been revised to introduce non-CO2 verification and monitoring, which will be implemented by January 2025. It is not clear how the UK will mirror this.

4. Panel work programme

4.1 The Panel discussed its [work programme](#), including:

- The CAA has been developing its work on consumer environmental information over many years, and that the role of the Environmental Sustainability and Consumer Panels is to support the CAA on this work (rather than leading on any joint project between the two Panels);
- The Panel and the CAA will consider how best to deliver the systems thinking strategic piece to the CAA.

5. Aviation Environmental Review (AER)

5.1 The Panel provided input on the possible strategic directions the AER could take in future, as well as the technical areas it could report on as it evolves, noting that what the CAA puts into the report will drive a wider discussion. The CAA has the opportunity to be seen as the trusted voice for this information.

5.2 On the strategic direction, the Panel discussed:

- There are many statistics available from a range of agencies – the CAA has an opportunity to collate these to provide clarity over the UK data situation around aviation's environmental performance. While the AER 2023 is a statement of the current state of play of aviation environmental sustainability in the UK, the CAA could use the AER to clarify the likely future trajectory of aviation's environmental performance. This could include signalling awareness that aviation's proportional contribution to overall UK environmental impacts is not static.

- The CAA could report objectively on the state of environmental impacts against targets set by Government, such as through the Jet Zero Strategy (JZS). For example, the JZS projects that there will be at least 10% SAF blended in the UK jet fuel mix by 2030; the AER could report the percentage of SAF blended in the UK jet fuel mix on an ongoing basis so that progress against this target can be measured. Reporting in this manner will allow the risks of missed delivery of any targets to be highlighted in a factual way for the whole sector to understand, without any specific commentary required from the CAA.

5.3 On the future reporting areas, the Panel discussed:

- The section on noise should be developed further as a priority area, including making more mention of public health policy and implications.
- The section on Air Quality is titled 'Local Air Quality' but only reports on national figures. A focus on local air quality would be more useful to communities.
- Benchmarking of best practices by the aviation industry in reducing its environmental impacts.
- Recognising that the development of the AER is an evolution, the CAA could create a roadmap of areas of environmental reporting the CAA will focus on at different stages – for example, taking a decision to focus on noise in the short term and biodiversity in the longer term.

5.4 Action: Panel to review AER 2023 and identify possible gaps in information or areas that could be enriched.

5.5 Action: Panel to share and reference data sets that are widely available on environmental matters and broader aviation issues, to support creation of a directory of data sets.

6. Refresh of CAA Environmental Sustainability Strategy

6.1 The Panel reviewed the most recent work on the refresh of the CAA's Environmental Sustainability Strategy.

6.2 On the CAA's intentions to use the refreshed strategy as a tool to define key terms, the Panel advised:

- Terminology should aim to ensure that the sector is not set up to fail on a systems level in achieving sustainability objectives. For example, by using terms like 'lower emissions' rather than 'sustainable' the terminology can be clearer than if sustainability credentials are a comparator to what exists today, rather than an absolute (and unachievable) term.
- 'Net zero' is used in both a social dimension and scientific sense, and so should not be used as a standalone term. The CAA can use its leading and communicating roles to support understanding that this is now social language to explain a whole system, rather than a particular technology. The panel also noted, that scientifically, nothing is ever net zero.
- There should be clarity on the difference between environmental impacts and environmental effects, and this terminology should be used consistently.
- The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change is the most scientifically valid source of definitions.
- The CAA could aim to building consistent and credible terminology by including a glossary of terms at the front of every CAA document.

6.3 On bringing out scientific aspects of the refreshed strategy, the Panel discussed:

- Areas around where uncertainties exist in the aviation system could be drawn out further.
- The refreshed strategy could be clearer on the strategic aims of each the CAA's seven areas of its Environmental Sustainability Strategy.

6.4 The Panel advised that there would be value in the CAA Environmental Strategy having an overarching strategic imperative from which the CAA's work programmes can flow.

7. AoB

Nil