

SASIG Aviation Bulletin: January 2024

SASIG's Aviation news and policy bulletin aims to provide its members and associate members, with a comprehensive overview of what has been happening in Parliament and Whitehall as well as in the sector itself in the preceding month.

Monthly Highlights

- **13 January** - Fund manager BlackRock is buying Global Infrastructure Partners who own both Edinburgh and Gatwick airports, in a \$12.5 billion deal. More details [are here](#).
- **19 January** - CAA launch [consultation](#) on proposals for existing aerodromes that wish to accommodate VTOL aircraft.
- **30 January** - [Gatwick MP urges HM Treasury to introduce arrivals duty free in Great Britain](#).

Potential Actions for LAs

- None

SASIG Activities

- SASIG members' meeting: Tuesday: 19 March 2024 (virtual)

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For local authorities in England and Wales who are not members of SASIG but would like access to the Bulletin, please contact us at the address below to inquire about Membership and being added to the circulation list.

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Editorial

The Christmas recess in Parliament ate into January and there were no aviation related debates in the Commons in January. The only Lords exchange was on Regulations relating to GA.

The main consultation to highlight is the one launched by DfT about slots at slot-controlled airports. This is material to a range of interests and is worth reviewing alongside the research documentation published concurrently.

There are 12 PQs and the usual industry and other news headlines to peruse.

Chris Cain
Policy Director
SASIG

Events, Meetings and Conferences

SASIG Meetings

(To note: due to the impact of the pandemic on travel behaviour and the severe constraints on Council budgets, most of these meetings will continue to be held virtually, with the possible exception of the AGM and meetings involving Whitehall Departments. It is advisable, therefore, to always check with the Secretariat first before making any travel arrangements).

SASIG members' meeting: Tuesday: 19 March 2024 (virtual)

SASIG Members' AGM: Thursday: 27 June 2024 (At LGA, London – tbc)

External Conferences: (please note: some date changes may always be possible).

29 February 2024: [Aviation and Aerospace Conference 2024](#), (Health & Safety) London Heathrow Marriott

22-24 April 2024: [Routes Europe 2024](#): Aarhus, Denmark

13-15 June 2024: [AeroExpo UK](#): Sywell Aerodrome, UK

2-4 July 2024: [LGA Conference and Exhibition 2024](#), Harrogate

22-26 July 2024: [Farnborough International Air Show](#): Farnborough Airport

8-10 October 2024: [World Aviation Festival](#): Amsterdam, Netherlands

Consultations Update:

20 November 2023: 2024-25 CAA Schemes of Charges Publication:

The CAA's statutory charges FY24/25 consultation was and explains their proposals for revisions to the existing CAA Charges Schemes, due to take effect from 1 April 2024. They are welcoming comment on all aspects of the proposals, including the structure and the level of the charges. Please use the [CAA Statutory Charge FY24/25 Consultation online submission form](#).

Following the consultation period, the CAA will publish a response document reflecting the consultation feedback received from industry and the Secretary of State for Transport.

This consultation closed on 15 January 2024.

22 November 2023: Review of UK UAS Regulations:

The CAA launched a consultation on proposals to make it easier for drone users to fly safely and meet regulatory requirements. More details are [here](#) and [here](#). The [consultation document](#) is here.

The consultation closed on 10 January 2024.

4 December 2023: Airport Slots:

The DfT launched a consultation seeking views on the proposals for reform that will apply to slot allocation at Level 3 slot coordinated airports.

Level 3 airports in the UK are:

London Heathrow; London Gatwick; London City; London Stansted; London Luton; Manchester; Birmingham; Bristol.

More details and access to relevant documentation, may be seen [here](#) and [here](#).

Published alongside this consultation are the [Slot allocation at Heathrow: runway expansion research](#) and the [Slot allocation at an expanded Heathrow: alternative mechanism experiment](#) reports.

The consultation closes on 8th March 2024.

19th January 2024: Vertiport Design Proposal for Existing Aerodromes

The CAA launched a consultation on proposals for existing aerodromes that wish to accommodate VTOL aircraft. Because they anticipate that the initial eVTOL flights will take place from existing infrastructure, this consultation only applies to existing aerodromes and not bespoke vertiports. Further details may be seen [here](#).

This consultation closes on 15th March 2024.

Parliamentary and Government News

30 January - [Gatwick MP urges HM Treasury to introduce arrivals duty free in Great Britain](#).

Transport Questions: House of Commons:

The House returned on 8 January following the Christmas Recess.

There were no Transport Questions in the House of Commons this month.

Transport Questions: House of Lords

The House returned on 10 January following the Christmas Recess.

30 January – General Aviation (Persons on Board, Flight Information and Civil Penalties) Regulations 2024

Lord Gascoigne asked that the Grand Committee consider the General Aviation (Persons on Board, Flight Information and Civil Penalties) Regulations 2024. The debate is [here](#).

Parliamentary Questions:

Q.1. Question (7994) asked by Julian Knight (Solihull) on 5 January 2024: “To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of the proposals for a third runway at Heathrow Airport for the West Midlands region”.

A. Anthony Browne on 12 January 2024 “No recent assessment has been made of the merits of a third runway at Heathrow Airport for the regions. Heathrow expansion remains a private sector project and it is for the scheme promoter to decide when it submits a development consent order as part of the statutory planning process”.

Q.2. Question (7799) asked by Gregory Campbell (East Londonderry) on 5 January 2024: “To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make an assessment of the potential impact of rules on duty-free shopping on demand for flights (a) to and (b) from EU destinations at airports in (i) Northern Ireland and (ii) the rest of the UK”.

A. Nigel Huddleston on 10 January 2024: “The Government remains committed to supporting the travel and tourism industries. As part of our support for the aviation industry, the Government regularly reviews flight data and considers it as part of policy making. From 1st January 2021, British passengers travelling to EU countries have been able to take advantage of duty-free shopping, bringing our approach to the EU in line with the rest of the world. Inbound personal allowances were also substantially increased. The Government keeps all taxes under review as part of the tax policy making cycle and Budget process”.

Q.3. Question (9954) asked by Scott Benton (Blackpool South) on 16 January 2024: “To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what capital funding his Department is making available to support the development of infrastructure at regional airports”.

A. Anthony Browne on 23 January 2024: “Most airport operators are either in the commercial private sector or are public/private partnerships which operate commercially. As such, it is for airport owners to develop and fund proposals on the future development of airports. Airports may consider engaging with local authorities who are best placed to consider local transport priorities using the funding courses at their disposal.”

Q.4. Question (9953) asked by Scott Benton (Blackpool South) on 16 January 2024: “To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what support he is providing to regional airports for the costs of installing infrastructure to allow a transition to green fuel sources”.

A. Anthony Browne on 23 January 2024: “As a predominately private sector investment in infrastructure is a matter for individual airports. The Government is however supporting R&D activity to enable the sector to prepare for the adoption of new zero emission aviation fuels such as hydrogen. As part of the Tees-Valley Transport Hydrogen Hub DfT is supporting the establishment of re-fuelling stations at Teesside International Airport which can be used by hydrogen airside vehicles.

In October 2023 DfT launched a Transport Research and Innovation Grant competition.

Through this we are offering funding for up to 10 projects which can facilitate the development of infrastructure for zero emission airport operations and the handling of zero emission aircraft. The competition has closed and applications are currently being assessed.

In addition, the Jet Zero Council has a dedicated sub-group on Zero Emission Flight Infrastructure. This group convenes representatives of government, industry and academia with an interest in developing zero emission flight in the UK”.

Q.5. Question (HL1646) asked by Lord Jackson of Peterborough on 16 January 2024: “To ask His Majesty's Government what consideration, if any, they have given to introducing a temporary suspension of Air Passenger Duty to support the competitive position of UK airports”.

A. Baroness Vere of Norbiton on 25 January 2024: “As with all taxes, the Government keeps Air Passenger Duty (APD) under review and any changes are announced by the Chancellor at fiscal events. APD applies to airlines and is the principal tax on the aviation sector since tickets are VAT free and aviation fuel incurs no duty. It is expected to raise £3.8 billion in 2023-24 and the primary objective of the tax is to ensure that airlines make a fair contribution to the public finances. From April 2023, the Government has reduced the rate of APD on domestic flights in order to support UK-wide connectivity. The new domestic rate applies to all flights between airports in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland (excluding private jets) and is set at £6.50 for economy passengers, benefitting more than 10 million passengers in 2023-24”.

Q.6. Question (HL1645) asked by Lord Jackson of Peterborough on 16 January 2024: “To ask His Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the Manchester Airports Group regarding its ambition to develop new long-haul airline routes from Stansted airport as a means of driving growth in the region”.

A. Lord Davies of Gower on 29 January 2024: “Ministers and officials regularly meet with Manchester Airports Group (MAG) to discuss a range of issues. Where opportunities for new commercial flights exist, airports and other stakeholders can work together to establish the case for commercial flights and work with airline partners to create new connections for their communities”.

Q.7. Question (HL1644) asked by Lord Jackson of Peterborough on 16 January 2024: “To ask His Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with (1) train operating companies, and (2) other stakeholders, on improving rail services to Stansted airport”.

A. Lord Davies of Gower on 30 January 2024: “Officials meet regularly with the owners of Stansted Airport, Manchester Airport Group, and attend the annual Stansted Airport Surface Access Forum, along with other stakeholders. Officials also engage regularly with Greater Anglia and CrossCountry about Stansted Airport services. As a result, off-peak and weekend Stansted Express services doubled from December 2023 to give a 15-minute frequency to London. The aspiration for full hourly CrossCountry services from Birmingham to Stansted Airport should be met when resources allow”.

Q.8. Question (10404) asked by Gregory Campbell (East Londonderry) on 18 January 2024: “To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he has made an assessment of the implications for his policies of the decision by BA to increase the minimum connection time at Heathrow Airport to 75 minutes”.

A. Anthony Browne on 23 January 2024: “The Government continues to work with ground handlers, airlines and airports to ensure they are doing all they can to minimise disruption

for passengers. The aviation industry operates in the private sector therefore it is the responsibility of the sector to determine their operational plans”.

Q.9. Question (11307) asked by Henry Smith (Crawley) on 24 January 2024: “To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if his Department will review the position of sustainable aviation fuel within the waste hierarchy”.

A. Robbie Moore on 31 January 2024: “The best environmental outcome for waste that cannot be either prevented or prepared for reuse is for material to be recycled. However, we know that that is not always possible. Where waste cannot be reused or recycled, the Government supports maximising the value of residual waste through recovering energy, including supplying electricity or heat, or through use as a fuel.

The process of converting waste into fuels is an energy recovery operation for the purposes of the waste hierarchy. We do not consider it the role of the waste hierarchy to determine the priority of recovery processes through which residual waste should be managed. There is nothing preventing the production of fuel from residual waste if this is determined to be the best overall value for money and environmental outcome for non-recyclable wastes. We therefore have no plans to change the position of sustainable aviation fuel within the waste hierarchy”.

Q.10. Question (10858) asked by Louise Haigh (Sheffield Heeley) on 22 January 2024: “To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what progress his Department has made towards its aim of having at least five sustainable aviation fuel plants in production by 2025”.

A. Anthony Browne on 25 January 2024: “Government and industry have a shared ambition to see at least five sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) plants under construction by 2025. There are currently two commercial-scale SAF plants operational or under construction in the UK, Phillips66 and Kew. We are supporting the development of the industry by driving demand through a SAF mandate which will be introduced in 2025, requiring at least 10% of jet fuel to be from sustainable sources by 2030. Government has awarded 13 potential SAF projects a share of £135m through the Advanced Fuels Fund (AFF), to support them to reach commercial scale. Government has also committed to consult on a revenue certainty mechanism to further support the industry”.

Q.11. Question (10857) asked by Louise Haigh (Sheffield Heeley) on 22 January 2024: “To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to his Department's press release entitled New measures to support sustainable aviation fuel industry, published 4 September 2023, how many commercial sustainable aviation fuel plants are under construction”.

A. Anthony Browne on 25 January 2024: “There are currently two commercial-scale sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) plants operational or under construction in the UK. The Government’s Advanced Fuels Fund has allocated £135m across 13 projects to support private investment in UK SAF projects by overcoming perceived technological and construction risks and will support our industry shared aim to have at least five commercial SAF plants under construction in the UK by 2025”.

Q.12. Question (10856) asked by Louise Haigh (Sheffield Heeley) on 22 January 2024: “To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when his Department plans to publish a formal

response to the Pathway to net zero aviation: Developing the UK sustainable aviation fuel mandate consultation”.

A. Anthony Browne on 25 January 2024: “Following the close of the consultation in September 2023, the department has made significant progress in updating the evidence base and finalising the design of the Mandate. I can confirm that the government response will be published in spring 2024”.

National and Regional News

1st January - DHL Express has committed £16 million over three years to introduce 100 electric ground service vehicles at East Midlands Airport - [see here](#) for more details.

2nd January - [European Cargo is elevating Bournemouth Airport into a key freight hub.](#)

2nd January - [Jet 2 prepare for Liverpool John Lennon Airport launch](#) in three months' time.

3rd January - [Bournemouth Airport expects to handle over one million passengers in 2024.](#)

To cater for this, airport owners RCA are investing over £5m in new facilities, equipment, staff and training.

4th January - [London Southend announces new route to Milan, Italy.](#) From March 25, it will offer a six-times weekly Aeroitalia flights to Milan Bergamo.

4th January - [Demolition commences following Luton Airport car park fire last year.](#) Many of the cars are still in there and work is expected to take around 16 weeks.

5th January - [East Midlands Airport announced an investment programme of more than £120m](#) to improve all aspects of the passenger experience over the next five years.

6th January - [Bristol and Liverpool are set to be axed from the Lufthansa network.](#) This will be a blow to the two UK airports and the connectivity options.

8th January - [Gatwick is first international airport to open a dedicated electric vehicle charging station.](#) It has 30 high-power and low-power EV chargers available via contactless payment.

8th January - [Almost 200 Liverpool John Lennon Airport jobs will be available at a recruitment day this Thursday.](#) Airport believes this will be its busiest summer for five years.

9th January - See [details here](#) of how South African-based Superseed Digital Agency has been awarded the contract to redesign and rebuild the website for Cornwall Airport.

9th January - [See here](#) for details on new routes taking off from Stansted this year.

10th January - Manchester Airports Group has started hunt for partners to deliver a £550m capital programme of airfield works at its airports. [See here](#) for more details.

11th January - [Stansted boss predicts another bumper year](#) for aviation after 2023 rebound. And [East Midlands Airport are on track towards a return to pre-pandemic levels](#) of more than 4m by the end of March. [Heathrow has also exceeded pre-pandemic traffic levels.](#)

11th January - [Progress on new Heathrow Airport rail link stalls](#) as it must be assessed as 'value for money'.

12th January - Local firms urged to sign up for regional procurement event at East Midlands Airport later this month. More details [are here](#).

12th January - [Manchester Airport's terminal 2 awarded as one of the most beautiful in the whole world](#) by Prix Versailles which is an important International Architecture Award.

13th January - [London Luton Airport handles 16.2m passengers in 2023.](#) It was also the year in which the airport celebrated its 85th anniversary.

14th January - East Midlands Airport December 2023 performance - [details here](#).

15th January – Read article: [‘If expansion can’t happen, should London build a new airport?’](#)

15th January – ‘Ministers meetings with Heathrow Airport: FOI release’ – [read here](#).

15th January – There’s just under one week left to respond to London Gatwick’s consultation on minor changes to its Northern Runway proposal. [See here](#) for details.

15th January – [MP says night flights are having a ‘catastrophic impact’ on people](#). She wants Heathrow banned from take-off and landings at night.

16th January – [Mayor wants Doncaster Sheffield Airport re-opened as soon as ‘humanly possible’](#). It was shut last November by its owners who said it was not making enough profit.

16th January – [Deal to sell Heathrow stake to French and Saudi Arabian buyers sparks bigger share offer](#). 60% set to be sold after remaining shareholders gain 'tag along rights'.

18th January – [Nantes becomes Ryanair’s 20th destination from Bournemouth Airport](#). They start twice-weekly from 1 June.

19th January – [Leeds Bradford Airport celebrates sustainability milestones](#). It has achieved a score of 95% from The Global Real Estate Sustainability Benchmark.

19th January – [London Luton achieves new customer experience milestone](#). It has achieved Level 2 of ACI World’s globally recognised accreditation programme.

20th January – [UK airports poised to miss deadline to end liquid searches](#). They’re struggling to meet a June deadline to switch over to next-generation scanners.

23rd January – [New town with 4,500 homes could be built near East Midlands Airport](#). Council has earmarked 781 acres of farmland to south west of airport for new settlement.

23rd January – [London Southend Airport in debt uncertainty](#) as lender Carlyle demands urgent repayment of £200m loan earlier than expected.

24th January – [Liverpool John Lennon Airport upgrades database with latest software](#) aimed at providing more flexibility.

24th January – Business leaders want end to ‘political point scoring’ after South Yorkshire’s mayor accused Government of rejecting a request to reallocate £30m of funding to reopen Doncaster Sheffield Airport. Details [here](#).

24th January – See [here](#), a news story about a forthcoming spot check inspection of Border Force’s operational response to general aviation flights at London City Airport.

25th January – [Plymouth Airport \(which was closed in 2011\) legal action set to begin](#). The Council believes the airport’s owners are in breach of its legal covenants.

26th January – Read [article titled](#): ‘Revealed: the cheapest airport lounges in the UK that can save you money’.

27th January – [Farnborough Airport expansion: Greta Thunberg joins protestors](#). The airport has submitted plans to move from a cap of 50,000 to 70,000 flights per year.

29th January – [London Luton Airport launches 2024 Greener Future Fund](#). The Fund will invite organisations looking to support biodiversity and tackle carbon reduction.

29th January – [Bristol Airport welcomed record 9.8 million passengers in 2023](#). The airport also says it recovered faster from the pandemic than any other major UK airport.

30th January – [Gatwick MP urges HM Treasury to introduce arrivals duty free in Great Britain](#).

31st January – Article titled: ‘Small But Mighty: Which Are The Main Aircraft Types Serving London City Airport?’ can be read [here](#).

Other Aviation Industry News

1st January – Read article titled: [‘The move to streamline airport security with Face Recognition technology’](#).

3rd January - [Aberdeen International Airport raises Express Drop-off fees for internal taxis to £5](#). The previous fee was £2.

3rd January - [Old terminal at Cork Airport to be demolished](#) as part of future long-term plans which will accommodate more aircraft.

4th January - [Amsterdam Schiphol declares ‘limited reduction’ in 2024 capacity](#). It says it’s trying to “relieve pressure” during peak times after controversial plans to significantly cut the number of flights allowed from the airport were scrapped.

5th January – Read article titled: [‘Shifting megatrends see rapid evolution of aviation industry, says SITA’](#). Much of it focuses on AI trends within the industry.

5th January – See article: [‘Poop-powered planes: Could jet fuel made from sewage take off?’](#)

5th January - [2023 was busiest year on record at Ireland West Airport in Knock, Co Mayo](#). Passenger numbers increases by 13% to 818,000 for first time in airport's history.

6th January - [AeroCloud new report](#) reveals 92% of airport leaders deem upgrading legacy technologies and systems, as well as attracting new airlines as key commercial priorities.

8th January - Ryanair to launch flights from Derry to Birmingham this summer – details [here](#).

10th January – [This article](#) is about the growth and development of ACI’s Airport Carbon Accreditation programme being one of the sustainable aviation highlights of 2023.

10th January - [Energy firm ScottishPower announce it’s teamed up with hydrogen aircraft pioneer ZeroAvia](#) to explore the potential development of green hydrogen supply services and infrastructure at a number of UK airports.

12th January – [Warning potential freeze on private business jets at Dublin Airport](#) due to growing pressure on passenger cap “will greatly hinder” foreign direct investment in Ireland.

12th January – [Here is a closer look](#) at some of the aviation sustainability stories making headlines across globe in the final quarter of last year.

13th January - Fund manager BlackRock is buying Global Infrastructure Partners who own both Edinburgh and Gatwick airports, in a \$12.5 billion deal. More details [are here](#).

13th January – [Ryanair has called on German Government to lower air transport taxes and reduce airport fees](#). They believe that they are too high.

14th January - [Ryanair has launched three new routes from Edinburgh](#) – one in Morocco and two in France. [It’s also launched its 20th destination from Bournemouth – to Brittany](#).

15th January - [Shannon Airport passenger numbers reach highest level in 14 years](#). Almost 2 million people passed through last year, an increase of 29% on 2022 numbers.

16th January – [National Business Aviation Association raises alarm over potential ban on GA flights at Dublin](#).

17th January – Read: [‘Will 2024 be boom or bust for global airport construction activities?’](#)

17th January - [The self-flying plane that could change travel forever](#). Behind the scenes at the firm that has made an electric robot air taxi that takes off vertically - with no pilot.

18th January - [Aer Lingus looks to stall Ryanair plans for €40m hangar at Dublin Airport](#). They wish to appeal against last month's decision by Fingal CC to grant planning permission.

19th January - [Aer Lingus to end Dublin-Gatwick service from April](#). This follows a review of ‘route performance’. No other routes will be terminated following this review.

19th January – An article titled: ‘Reducing aircraft noise: One decibel at a time’ [is here](#).

20th January - Mansfield Council to allow taxis to tow luggage trailers for airport runs and carry ‘run-flat’ tyre. Details [here](#).

22nd January – Read article titled: [‘Three steps to net zero’](#).

23rd January - [ZeroAvia and Verne partner](#) to explore cryo-compressed hydrogen for airports and aircraft.

24th January – [Irish tourism officials to warn Ministers on costs and ask for airport cap to be lifted](#). They say restrictions are hitting their businesses hard.

24th January – [New figures show almost 35 million passengers travelled through Dublin and Cork Airport last year](#).

25th January – See article titled: ‘Decarbonising Aviation Promises Sky-High Rewards’ [here](#).

25th January – [Dublin Airport handles 31.9m passengers in 2023](#) – near the 32m cap.

26th January – Download [here](#): ‘Airport Trend Report 2024: Current Challenges and Trends’.

26th January - [Swiss study finds blended-wing aircraft less noisy](#). These aircraft feature a fuselage that merges into its wings to create less air resistance and lower fuel consumption.

26th January - [KLM will stop operating passenger flights at Schiphol Airport during overnight hours from the end of March](#).

27th January - Ryanair seals Italy SAF supply deal. More details [here](#).

29th January – An interesting article titled: ‘Why we need to look again at a new international airport for Wales and the south-west of England’ can be [read here](#).

29th January - Businesses in the West of Ireland call for greater use of regional airports before a passenger cap in Dublin is increased. See [here](#) for details.

30th January – New report says technology transformation is a 2024 priority – see [here](#).

31st January - [Junior minister submits objection to Dublin Airport expansion plans](#). It’s among 380 submissions to Fingal Council objecting to expansion plans for airport.

SASIG Library Additions

There were no Library additions this month.