

## SASIG Aviation Bulletin: February 2026

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

- **2 February** - [Heathrow to receive £900 million business rates discount](#) which equals around one fifth of total £4.3bn fund.
- **4 February** - [Consultation to modernise Scotland's skies draws to a close](#). Over 2,500 responses have been received from the public and industry stakeholders.
- **13 February** - [Newquay to London Gatwick PSO route axed by Cornwall Council](#). Council confirmed that financial backing for the route has been withdrawn from its budget.
- **24 February** - [UK aviation officially breaks records with over 300m passenger journeys in 2025](#) making it the busiest ever year for UK aviation, says CAA.
- **25 February** – [The Irish government will make almost €45m in capital investment available to regional airports over the next five years](#), including €9m in 2026.

### Potential Actions for LAs

- The [Passenger Terminal Expo](#), is being held at Excel, London (17-19 March 2026). It has become a major industry gathering and worth a visit to see the latest industry technologies and developments – entrance is free.

### SASIG Activities

- **13 January** - SASIG submitted a response to the DfT's consultation on proposed changes to Air Navigation Directions and Guidance.)
- **25 February** - SASIG Members' meeting (online) with guest speaker, Tim Johnson, CAA
- **25 February** - The Secretariat will be responding to the NPPF and SDS consultations in line with the outline responses provided in relevant agenda item at the recent SASIG members' meeting.

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SASIG Library Additions

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**

We begin this month's Bulletin with a strategic milestone: the CAA has reported this month that 2025 broke official records as the busiest ever year for UK aviation with over 300 million passenger journeys recorded, overtaking the previous record of 297 million set before the pandemic.

Heathrow, with or without expansion, continues to dominate the aviation sector with the airport CEO, Thomas Woldbye saying that a third runway would cost only the equivalent of £15 per passenger over the course of more than a decade. Heathrow also revealed annual profits fell by more than a third, but it paid out dividends to shareholders for the first time in five years despite the earnings drop. The owners of the airport reported pre-tax profits of £575 million for 2025, down 37.3% from £917 million in 2024. However, it is to receive a £900 million business rates discount, which equates to one fifth of the total UK £4.3bn transition fund. Figures for other UK airports are not yet clear but questions have been asked in Parliament across February about business rates relief for airports so do take a look in our Parliamentary Questions section.

On 13 February, it was confirmed by Cornwall Council that financial backing for the Newquay to London Gatwick PSO route has been withdrawn from its budget. Skybus, which began operating the service on 23 November 2025, confirmed that flights to Gatwick will cease by 31 May 2026. The Chairman and Policy Director have been in talks with the Council to discuss how SASIG may be of assistance to them regarding this and other issues affecting the future viability of their airport.

This month the Irish government announced it will make almost €45m in capital investment available to its regional airports over the next five years, including €9m in 2026. More than €19m is available for allocation this year under the second Regional Airports Programme (RAP) 2026-2030 - the previous one ran from 2021-25 – and will support connectivity and balanced regional development while seeking to maximise the use of existing capacity across regional airports. The UK Government should be taking note of this intervention, because the previous RAP was well targeted and very successful and provides a model for supporting the most vulnerable smaller regional airports in the UK, especially as they are frequently the most socially and economically important.

Finally, thank you to everyone who attended this month's members' meeting. Our guest speaker was Tim Johnson, Director for Communications, Strategy and Policy who gave an interesting talk and presentation on the work of the regulator plus updates on airspace modernisation, AAM and ongoing work around noise and environment issues. Tim's presentation along with the agenda papers and other supporting documentation, can be seen in the members' area of our website.

Chris Cain  
Policy Director  
SASIG

## **Events, Meetings and Conferences**

### **SASIG Meetings**

(To note: resulting from the impact of the pandemic, SASIG meetings are still mostly being held virtually. It is therefore advised to always check with the Secretariat first before making any travel arrangements).

### **2025/26**

#### **Chairman's Advisory Group meeting (CAG):**

Date to be decided (Online-for CAG members only)

#### **SASIG Members' meeting:**

Date to be decided – will also be the AGM (Online)

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

**17-18 March 2026:** [Sustainable Skies World Summit](#), Farnborough Conference Centre

**17-19 March 2026:** [Passenger Terminal Expo](#), Excel, London

**17-20 May 2026:** [Routes Europe](#), Rimini, Italy

**2-4 June 2026:** [EBACE](#), Geneva, Switzerland

**6-7 June 2026:** [Manston International Air Show](#), Manston Airport, Ramsgate

**20-24 July 2026:** [Farnborough Air Show](#), Farnborough

**31 August - 4 September 2026:** [ACI Airport Experience Summit](#), Istanbul

### **Consultations Update: Recent and current:**

#### **Recent:**

#### **[CAP1616: UK airspace Change Process consultation](#)**

On 25 September, the CAA launched their UK Airspace change process consultation. This document (CAP1616) was a formal consultation setting out the CAA's proposals to modify the airspace change process. The consultation ran until 18 December 2025 and SASIG submitted a response.

#### **[UK ETS: Regional Aviation Connectivity](#)**

On 28 October 2025, the UK ETS Authority launched a [consultation](#) to assess the impacts on regional air connectivity following the removal of UK ETS free allocation (FA) from the aviation sector. This could have material impacts on many regional and smaller airports and for that reason.

The consultation sought views on whether intervention is needed to protect regional air connectivity specifically in light of the end of FA for aircraft operators, and if so, what form this should take. Details on this consultation and how to respond could be seen [here](#) and the full consultation document can also be seen [here](#).

The deadline for responses was 19 December 2025.

### **[CAA consultation: Policy framework for new types of Vertical-Take Off and Landing aircraft \(6 Nov 2025 – 29 Jan 2026\)](#)**

On 6 November 2025, the CAA launched [a consultation](#) seeking views from the public and VTOL industry stakeholders on their proposed legislative changes. The CAA is aiming to implement the regulatory framework and operational systems needed for commercial passenger flights by new types of vertical take-off and landing (VTOL) aircraft by the end of 2028. As such, it is in the process of identifying the regulatory changes needed to accommodate the safe use of these new types of VTOL aircraft in the UK, whilst supporting sector growth, innovation, decarbonisation and international alignment.

This consultation closed on 29 Jan 2026.

### **UK Airspace Design and Coordination Services (CAP3158 and CAP3159) – 17 November 2025 – 12 January 2026.**

On 17 November 2025 the CAA published:

- [Consultation on draft guidance for the UK Airspace Design and Coordination Services](#) (CAP 3158); and
- [Consultation on the requirements for the UK Airspace Coordination Service and associated guidance](#) (CAP 3159).

These services are central to the Government's approach to modernising UK airspace and will be provided by NATS (En Route) plc (NERL).

The CAA have updated their background document [Modernising the way we do airspace design \(CAP 3156\)](#), which supports these consultations, and they wanted responses by 12 January 2026.

### **Proposed changes to the Air Navigation Directions and Air Navigation Guidance (25 November – 20 January 2026)**

On 25 November, the DfT published a [consultation](#) on proposed changes to the Air Navigation Directions and Air Navigation Guidance. These two documents provide the framework and environmental guidance for the CAA on how to carry out its air navigation functions in line with Government policy.

These documents require updating to reflect the latest Government policies, priorities and climate obligations, and their revision is critical to the delivery of Airspace Modernisation. The proposed changes are intended to help futureproof UK skies in a sustainable manner, whilst supporting economic growth, including airport expansion.

The consultation and supporting documents may be seen [here](#) and the consultation ran until 20 January 2026.

### **[Transforming Business Rates](#)**

(25 November 2025 – 18 February 2026)

At Budget 2025, the Government published a Call for Evidence: Business Rates and Investment: Call for Evidence. This builds on the findings of the Transforming Business Rates: Discussion Paper and asks stakeholders for more detailed evidence on how the business rates system influences investment decisions – an important factor for airports to consider. The Government is interested in hearing from a wide range of stakeholders to support further policy development.

The Call for Evidence was open until 18 February 2026.

### **Ongoing:**

There are no aviation focused consultations of interest to SASIG at present, however, SASIG will be responding to MHCLG's consultations on changes to the National Policy Planning Framework (NPPF) and Spatial Development Strategies. Outlines of our proposed responses were provided as part of the agenda papers for the SASIG members' meeting on 25 February 2026.

### **Parliamentary and Government News**

#### **2 February: [Sustainable Aviation Fuel Bill](#) (House of Lords).**

Lord Kennedy of Southwark asked that the amendments for the Report stage be marshalled and considered in the following order:

Clauses 1 to 11, Schedule, Clauses 12 to 20, Title.

Motion agreed.

#### **10 February: [Sustainable Aviation Fuel Bill](#) (House of Lords)**

Report

*Scottish, Welsh and Northern Ireland legislative content granted. Relevant documents: 38th and 40th Reports from the Delegated Powers and Regulatory Reform Committee.*

## **Transport Questions: House of Commons:**

The House rose on 12 February for the February Recess and returned on 23 February 2026.

### **25 February: Electronic Travel Authorisation: Dual Nationals**

The Secretary of State for the Home Department was asked to make a statement on the impact of the UK's electronic travel authorisation rules on British citizens who are also dual nationals. See the debate [here](#).

## **Transport Questions: House of Lords**

The House rose on 12 February for the February Recess and returned on 23 February 2026.

### **25 February: Electronic Travel Authorisation: Dual Nationals**

The following Answer to an Urgent Question was given in the House of Commons on Wednesday 25 February – see [here](#).

## **Parliamentary Questions:**

The answers to these questions can be found in the online version of this Bulletin **here**.

**Q.1. Question (110093) asked by Richard Holden (Basildon & Billericay) on 2 February 2026: “To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what schemes and programmes her Department has in place to help support zero-emission in (a) shipping and (b) aviation”.**

A. Keir Mather on 10 February 2026: “The Government recognises the potential decarbonisation and growth benefits that new forms of zero-emission maritime vessels and aircraft could provide. The Maritime Decarbonisation Strategy, published in March 2025, sets out our policies and commitments to decarbonise the sector. We are already meeting these commitments through the expansion of the UK Emissions Trading Scheme to domestic maritime from July 2026, and we will consult on maritime fuel regulations later this year.

We have announced a further £448 million of funding of the UK SHORE programme, the biggest government investment ever in the UK's commercial maritime sector, which will unlock innovation and investment potential in UK technologies, ports and shipyards.

We will continue to work closely with maritime industry partners to help the sector unlock the investment it needs to transition to zero, and near-zero, emission fuels and technologies.

We have already made significant progress on aviation decarbonisation, with considerable support for sustainable aviation fuel (SAF), airspace modernisation and development of new technologies. Alongside other measures, zero emission flight has a role to play in decarbonising the sector. In January, we announced up to £43m of R&D funding for aviation decarbonisation, including confirming our continued support of the Civil Aviation Authority's (CAA) Hydrogen in Aviation Regulatory Challenge. This is informing the development of a regulatory framework for zero-emission hydrogen aircraft. Also, the Department for Transport (DfT) will publish shortly a report into the barriers and opportunities to commercialising hydrogen in aviation, completed by a Jet Zero Taskforce Task and Finish Group”.

**Q.2. Question (110162) asked by Alison Taylor (Paisley & Renfrewshire Nth) on 2 February 2026: “To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps she has taken to help ensure airports have the capital investment to transition to net zero carbon emissions (a) on their estate and (b) in airport operations”.**

A. Keir Mather on 10 February 2026: “Airport operators are primarily in the private sector and therefore responsible for their own capital investment decisions, including those affecting the decarbonisation of their estates and operations. However, we are working closely with the aviation sector to unblock key barriers to reaching net zero carbon emissions, including through the Jet Zero Taskforce”.

**Q.3. Question (110599) asked by Joe Robertson (Isle of Wight East) on 3 February 2026: “To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment her Department has made of the extent to which business rates relief and other fiscal support provided to Heathrow and Gatwick is available to regional airports; and what steps she is taking to ensure regional airports are not placed at a competitive disadvantage”.**

A. Keir Mather on 9 February 2026: “The UK aviation market operates predominantly in the private sector, however, this government recognises the crucial role regional airports play in supporting thousands of local jobs, connecting communities to global opportunities, and strengthening social and economic ties across the four nations. My department regularly engages with regional airports including through the Aviation Council, which includes a Regional Connectivity Working Group chaired by industry. At the Budget, the Government announced a £4.3bn business rates support package. This includes a redesigned transitional relief scheme worth £3.2 billion to provide more generous support for those paying higher tax rates (such as the new high-value multiplier), including airports”.

**Q.4. Question (111456) asked by Richard Holden (Basildon & Billericay) on 6 February 2026: “To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment her Department has made of the potential impact of airport surface access planning conditions and sustainability requirements on the level of car parking and drop-off charges paid by passengers”.**

A. Keir Mather on 16 February 2026: “Surface access strategies give airports the tools they need to stay connected, cut congestion and meet environmental targets. The Department has not undertaken a specific assessment of the potential impact of airport surface access planning conditions and sustainability requirements on the level of car parking and drop-off charges paid by passengers. We continue to engage with operators to ensure that, where airports do choose to charge, they do so in a way that is fair and transparent”.

**Q.5. Question (111448) asked by Richard Holden (Basildon & Billericay) on 6 February 2026: “To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether she intends to make changes to the existing Airports National Policy Statement in the context of the potential of a third runway at Heathrow; and what assessment she has made of the likelihood of securing planning consent for a third runway by 2029”.**

A. Keir Mather on 16 February 2026: “Government launched a review of the Airports National Policy Statement (ANPS) on 22 October, to reflect changes in legislation, policy and data. We will consult on any proposed amendments to the ANPS in summer 2026.

When the ANPS has been reviewed, and depending on the outcome of the review, it will be for scheme promoters to decide when to submit a Development Consent Order application for a third runway scheme, but the government's ambition is for a planning decision this parliament".

**Q.6. Question (110873) asked by Greg Smith (Mid Buckinghamshire) on 4 February 2026: "To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what support, including business rates relief, direct financial assistance, or other fiscal measures, is being offered to regional airports in England; and how this compares to the support provided to Heathrow and Gatwick".**

A. Keir Mather on 10 February 2026: "The UK aviation market operates predominantly in the private sector. It is not possible for the Government to quantify, and therefore keep a record of, support received by airport, given different airports are subject to different regulatory and policy measures and vary greatly in size.

The government recognises the crucial role regional airports play in supporting thousands of local jobs, connecting communities to global opportunities, and strengthening social and economic ties across the four nations. My department regularly engages with regional airports including through the Aviation Council, which includes a Regional Connectivity Working Group chaired by industry".

**Q.7. Question (110887) asked by Richard Holden (Basildon & Billericay) on 4 February 2026: "To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment has she made of requiring (a) regulatory and (b) policy frameworks to be in place before the Heathrow third runway project can proceed to its next phase".**

A. Keir Mather on 9 February 2026: "The Department for Transport has indicated that it will not be possible to answer this question within the usual time period. An answer is being prepared and will be provided as soon as it is available".

**Q.8. Question (111204) asked by Munira Wilson (Twickenham) on 5 February 2026: "To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps she is taking to promote community engagement on the new Air Navigation Guidance".**

A. Keir Mather on 9 February 2026: "The Department for Transport consulted on potential changes to the statutory guidance (The Air Navigation Guidance) it provides to the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA). This guidance is used by the CAA to inform its airspace change process. The consultation closed on 26 January 2026 and responses are now being reviewed.

The consultation was open to everyone and a number of groups representing local communities, as well as individuals and companies, responded. Engagement and consultation have always been part of the airspace change process. The proposals in the draft Guidance aim to retain and enhance the principle that anyone potentially affected by an airspace change should have the information they need and the ability to feed in their views before final decisions are taken. The sponsor for an Airspace Change will be responsible for ensuring this happens effectively as a key part of the airspace change process".

**Q.9. Question (111451) asked by Richard Holden (Basildon & Billericay) on 6 February 2026: “To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether her Department has conducted a comparative assessment of Air Passenger Duty rates in the UK with aviation passenger taxes and equivalent charges in other European countries; and whether such analysis is used to inform decisions on Air Passenger Duty policy”.**

A. Dan Tomlinson on 12 February 2026: “Air Passenger Duty (APD) applies to airlines, not individual passengers, and is the principal tax on the aviation sector. It is expected to raise £4.7 billion in 2025-26. The Government is clear that APD is an appropriate tax that ensures airlines make a fair contribution to the public finances, particularly given that tickets are VAT free and aviation fuel incurs no duty. Other countries also have different forms of aviation taxes”.

**Q.10. Question (111692) asked by Sir James Cleverly (Braintree) on 9 February 2026: “To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether granting of a planning permission for airport expansion, which has not yet been (a) started or (b) completed, would be deemed a material consideration in the business rates valuation of an airport by the Valuation Office Agency”.**

A. Dan Tomlinson on 17 February 2026: “The Valuation Office Agency would not deem granting of planning permission for the physical expansion of an airport, which has not yet been (a) started or (b) completed, a material consideration in their valuation of that airport”.

**Q.11. Question (110600) asked by Joe Robertson (Isle of Wight East) on 3 February 2026: “To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment her Department has made of the impact of Air Passenger Duty on domestic air routes and regional airport connectivity in the UK, compared with the approach taken by other European countries to supporting internal air connectivity”.**

A. Dan Tomlinson on 9 February 2026: “The Government is committed to the long-term future of the aviation sector in the UK and recognises the importance of maintaining a thriving and competitive aviation sector in the UK to deliver connectivity. In April 2023, reforms to APD took effect, aiming to bolster air connectivity within the UK. This included the introduction of a new band for domestic flights, initially set at half the rate for short-haul international flights. The domestic rate applies to all flights between airports in England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland (excluding private jets) and is currently set at £7 for economy passengers until April 2026. The Government is clear that APD is an appropriate tax that ensures airlines make a fair contribution to the public finances, particularly given that tickets are VAT free and aviation fuel incurs no duty. Other countries also have different forms of aviation taxes”.

**Q.12. Question (112226) asked by Richard Holden (Basildon & Billericay) on 10 February 2026: “To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 30 January 2026 to Question 107163, what information her Department holds on airport kerbside drop-off charges”.**

A. Keir Mather on 23 February 2026: “There is no requirement for airports or airport car park providers to provide details of drop-off charges to the Department. We regularly engage with airports on surface access strategies and drop-off charges form part of these wider discussions. Information about individual airports' car parking and drop-off charges is available on their respective public websites”.

## **National and Regional News**

**1<sup>st</sup> February** – 31 March will be the final day of UK long-haul operations for Aer Lingus following the closure of its base at Manchester Airport. Details [here](#).

**2<sup>nd</sup> February** - [Heathrow to receive £900 million business rates discount](#) which equals around one fifth of total £4.3bn fund.

**2<sup>nd</sup> February** - [Air Canada will launch a year-round service from Manchester Airport to Toronto in October](#). Currently the airline offers a seasonal service operating in the summer.

**3<sup>rd</sup> February** – [Gatwick preparing for expansion of its airline portfolio with seven new carriers](#), among them Jet2 which will establish a base at Gatwick from 26 March this year.

**4<sup>th</sup> February** - [GXO are to run Luton Airport's first consolidation centre](#) which will streamline efficiency to manage airside deliveries. The centre is part of an £11.5 million refurbishment programme which will create 150 employment opportunities at the airport.

**4<sup>th</sup> February** - [New fleet of 33 bespoke electric/low-emission Mercedes-Benz vans deployed to UK airports](#). They were commissioned by Swissport specifically for airside operations.

**5<sup>th</sup> February** - CAA publishes [CAP3112](#) a new framework establishing guidance for airlines on the standardisation of flight emissions information.

**5<sup>th</sup> February** – ACI Europe: [London Heathrow remained the busiest airport in Europe](#) with 84.48 million passengers, an increase of 0.7%.

**5<sup>th</sup> February** – [As part of an ongoing £120m investment programme at East Midlands airport](#), 2 new gatehouses have been built which are main access points onto cargo aprons.

**6<sup>th</sup> February** - Jet2.com and Jet2holidays celebrate one year of operations at Bournemouth Airport – see [here](#).

**6<sup>th</sup> February** – [Manston Airport near London is planning new flights and could reopen by 2029](#). It's reportedly in final discussions to reopen after a £750 million refurbishment.

**8<sup>th</sup> February** – [Wolverhampton Council carry out taxi/private hire vehicle enforcement operations](#) at Birmingham, Manchester and East Midlands Airports as part of ongoing cross-border licensing activity.

**8<sup>th</sup> February** - [Birmingham Airport is taking steps to bring back direct flights to New York](#), offering a major financial support package to airlines.

**9<sup>th</sup> February** - [Bristol and Cardiff Airports face each other in court](#) over the latter's government subsidy which Bristol Airport claims breaks competition rules.

**9<sup>th</sup> February** - [Newquay to London daily flights could face axe over cost](#). Air connectivity between Cornwall/London has been sustained via PSO arrangements for over a decade.

**10<sup>th</sup> February** – [Applications opened for Gatwick's apprenticeship programme](#) giving aspiring engineers the chance to launch their careers in an airport environment.

**10<sup>th</sup> February** – [Manston Airport reported to have finalised £750m deal to reopen](#) focusing on cargo and budget travel.

**11<sup>th</sup> February** - [Calls to 'support connectivity' as taxpayer-funded Newquay/London flights set to end](#). Cornwall Council's cabinet will decide on Friday 13<sup>th</sup> February.

**11<sup>th</sup> February** - [Heathrow has kicked off the new year with a shattering of its previous traffic record](#) but warns that it could lose its European crown without progress on expansion.

**11<sup>th</sup> February** - [Cargo growth up while aircraft movements are down at East Midlands Airport](#) meaning less impact on local communities.

**11<sup>th</sup> February** - [Sustainable Aviation Fuel Production](#): Protium delivers its first green hydrogen consignment pilot plant at London Oxford Airport.

**12<sup>th</sup> February** – [Swissport joins the Heathrow Reimagined coalition](#), backing calls for fundamental reform of Airport's regulatory model.

**12<sup>th</sup> February** - [CEO of Cornwall Chamber of Commerce urges caution of loss of airport's PSO](#). He says reducing London connectivity when Cornwall is competing for national and international investment would be an "act of self-harm".

**13<sup>th</sup> February** - [Heathrow increasing its Sustainable Aviation Fuel incentive scheme in 2026](#). Its target is 2% above Govt's 3.6% mandate and aims for 5.6% SAF uplift across the airport.

**13<sup>th</sup> February** - [The construction of a mass transit system between Bristol's city centre and airport could begin within 5 years](#), according to West of England Combined Authority.

**13<sup>th</sup> February** – [Stansted airport saw more than 1.89 million passengers pass through the terminal in January 2026](#), up 2 per cent on the same month last year.

**13<sup>th</sup> February** – This article asks: '[Why British Airways & Virgin Atlantic Are Pushing Back Against Heathrow Airport's Expansion Plans](#)'.

**13<sup>th</sup> February** - [Newquay to London Gatwick PSO route axed by Cornwall Council](#). Council confirmed that financial backing for the route has been withdrawn from its budget.

**14<sup>th</sup> February** - [Skybus has now confirmed the date its service between Cornwall Airport Newquay and London Gatwick Airport will end](#), which is on May 31, 2026.

**16<sup>th</sup> February** - [NATS assumes Air Traffic Control and engineering services At Birmingham Airport](#) following successful transition.

**16<sup>th</sup> February** – [Loganair to operate flights from East Midlands airport to Jersey from spring](#).

**16<sup>th</sup> February** - [Illegal parking near Bristol Airport](#): Parking Action Plan Agreement announced in collaboration with Nth Somerset Council and Avon and Somerset Police Force.

**17<sup>th</sup> February** - [End Of An Era](#): the UK has no Boeing 747 passenger flights in 2026.

**17<sup>th</sup> February** - [Ending PSO flights labelled a 'short-sighted decision'](#). Skybus, which currently operates the flights from Cornwall to London, has criticised Cornwall Council's decision.

**18<sup>th</sup> February** - [UK trial shows potential of hydrogen powered ground handling equipment](#). It was led by Exeter Airport in collaboration with Cranfield University, TUI, ULEMCo, Boeing and MULAG, and supported by CAA as part of the Hydrogen Challenge Sandbox programme.

**18<sup>th</sup> February** - People arriving at East Midlands Airport are now greeted with a warmer welcome after improvements were carried out. More details on this can be seen [here](#).

**18<sup>th</sup> February** - [Birmingham Airport is enjoying its busiest February half-term ever](#), with 10% increase in passenger numbers compared to same period last year. It has also now published its [Sustainability Strategy 2026-30](#).

**19<sup>th</sup> February** – [Airlines concerned the adding of a third runway at Heathrow](#) could add at least £60-£65 on average to ticket prices.

**19<sup>th</sup> February** – [Campaign groups issue open letter to Climate Change Committee](#) warning airport expansion, including Heathrow R3, cannot be made compatible with UK's climate commitments.

**20<sup>th</sup> February** – UK regional airlines Loganair celebrates 250,000 passengers on Liverpool – Isle of Man service – details [here](#).

**20<sup>th</sup> February** – [Read article](#) about Exeter Airport’s hydrogen ground handling trial, setting out next steps towards large scale adoption and future hydrogen aircraft operations.**21<sup>st</sup> February** – This item asks: ‘[What Is the Busiest Airport in Europe?](#)’ (Answer: Heathrow).

**23<sup>rd</sup> February** - Gatwick Airport anticipates busiest summer since 2019 with a record 62 airlines – more details are [here](#).

**23<sup>rd</sup> February** - Expansion plans at London Heathrow airport include the £1.3bn construction of two multi-storey carparks – more about this [here](#).

**24<sup>th</sup> February** – [Airhart Platform chosen as Heathrow Airport’s new digital backbone](#), helping the digital transformations towards AI and data driven operations.

**24<sup>th</sup> February** - [UK aviation officially breaks records with over 300m passenger journeys in 2025](#) making it the busiest ever year for UK aviation, says CAA.

**24<sup>th</sup> February** - [London City Airport has appointed Andy Cliffe as Chief Executive Officer](#), taking the reins from Alison FitzGerald, who is stepping down.

**25<sup>th</sup> February** - Belfast City Airport announce the appointment of Caroline Rowan as Head of Commercial Development – details [here](#).

**25<sup>th</sup> February** - [Heathrow has revealed annual profits fell by more than a third](#), but it paid out dividends to shareholders for the first time in five years despite the earnings drop.

**25<sup>th</sup> February** – [Jet2 said it expects to report profit in line with market expectations](#) as the firm said work towards its launch at London Gatwick airport has "progressed well".

**27<sup>th</sup> February** - [Bristol Airport awards £30m terminal extension project to contractor Farrans](#) as part of its plans to invest £400 million to transform the airport experience.

**27<sup>th</sup> February** – Heathrow’s Chief Executive said [Istanbul is set to surpass Heathrow Airport as Europe's busiest aviation hub either this year or next](#).

**27<sup>th</sup> February** - London City Airport has provided further details of how it plans to grow to 9 million passengers a year during visit from Aviation Minister – see [here](#) and [here](#).

## **Other Aviation Industry News**

**1<sup>st</sup> February** – This article is titled: ‘[British Airways’ Longest Nonstop Routes With The Airbus A380 In 2026](#)’.

**1<sup>st</sup> February** - [Sustainability driver](#): learn more about ACI’s Airport Carbon Accreditation programme. Also read: ‘[Sustainability in 2026: building airports for the future](#)’.

**2<sup>nd</sup> February** - AGS Airports, the operator of Aberdeen, Glasgow, and Southampton airports, has secured £745 million in a refinancing package from Allied Irish Banks (AIB). Details [here](#).

**3<sup>rd</sup> February** – [A new study](#) is exploring whether self-driving, zero-emission vehicles could improve connectivity between Kirkwall Harbour/Kirkwall Airport. Over 160,000 passengers use the airport annually.

**3<sup>rd</sup> February** – Glasgow and Aberdeen airports are increasing fees charged for drivers picking up and dropping people off at the airport. More details on the increases are [here](#).

**4<sup>th</sup> February** – [Agentic AI is redefining airport operations in 2026](#) moving from reactive tools to autonomous systems. AI is no longer an add-on but a fundamental operating layer of modern airports.

**4<sup>th</sup> February** - [Consultation to modernise Scotland’s skies draws to a close](#). Over 2,500 responses have been received from the public and industry stakeholders.

**4<sup>th</sup> February** – [Passenger numbers at Dublin Airport increased by 14% in January](#) compared to same month last year and it was also 10th consecutive month the airport recorded growth in passenger numbers.

**5<sup>th</sup> February** – [Europe’s airports saw extra 100 million passengers in 2025](#) reaching record of 2.6 billion travellers and returning to “normalised” growth patterns after pandemic.

**5<sup>th</sup> February** - [Warning of long airport queues under new EU border control system](#) as the rollout of a new biometric border system continues.

**5<sup>th</sup> February** - [High Court told that Kenny Jacobs and daa have reached an agreement to settle their dispute](#), under which he will "voluntarily step down" from his role as CE.

**6<sup>th</sup> February** – Read about [‘Why airports must learn to implement innovation, not just imagine it’](#).

**8<sup>th</sup> February** - [New 100ml rules at UK airports](#): regulations surrounding carriage of liquids on aircrafts have changed and there are two main alterations to the 100ml rule at UK airports.

**9<sup>th</sup> February** - UK’s first SAF mandate, EU hydrogen hub plans, electric planes in commercial trials and airports embracing AI-driven energy efficiency ensure 2025 was a defining year for sustainable aviation. Read about it [here](#).

**9<sup>th</sup> February** – ‘Five mistakes to avoid when opening a new airport’ – details [here](#).

**9<sup>th</sup> February** - Drone specialist Windracers has signed an MoU with Scotland’s Highlands and Islands Transport Partnership (HITRANS) to [accelerate the use of air cargo drone operations](#).

**9<sup>th</sup> February** - [Cork Airport announces series of upgrades for passengers](#) which include wi-fi, self-service check in and faster parking.

**10<sup>th</sup> February** - [Approval sought over legislation on ending Dublin airport passenger cap](#). When enacted, the Dublin Airport Passenger Capacity Bill will allow the transport minister to amend or revoke existing cap of 32 mpa and preclude any future cap being introduced.

**11<sup>th</sup> February** - [Ministers have been warned legislation to lift the Dublin Airport passenger cap is ‘likely’ to be challenged in the courts](#) which could hinder efforts to resolve the row. Meanwhile, some residents are not happy if the legislation goes ahead – see [here](#).

**11<sup>th</sup> February** – Read interesting article titled: [‘The structural pressures reshaping airport strategy: Revenue, decarbonisation and geopolitics’](#).

**11<sup>th</sup> February** - Airports and airlines call for immediate Schengen Entry/Exit System (EES) review ahead of peak summer months traffic. See IATA press release [here](#).

**11<sup>th</sup> February** - [Firm to open new low-cost parking site near Glasgow Airport](#).

**11<sup>th</sup> February** - [Donegal Airport is assessing legal advice](#) following the DfT’s decision to sign a new Donegal-Dublin PSO contract that removes midday flight rotation.

**12<sup>th</sup> February** - [EU top court’s adviser: passenger cap ‘may be taken into account’ on Dublin Airport slots](#) saying historical slots are not property rights but authorisation to use airport infrastructure and must have regard for capacity.

**12<sup>th</sup> February** – [Glasgow Airport welcoming back Eurowings with a new seasonal service to Hanover](#) which will launch June 29 and operate three times a week until 23 August.

**13<sup>th</sup> February** - [New DAA boss facing contentious issues](#) including the Dublin Airport passenger cap, rules on airport noise and the need for new infrastructure.

**13<sup>th</sup> February** - [UK airport group Manchester Airports Group \(MAG\)](#) will operate the new Grand Bahama International Airport (GBIA) when it is completed.

**14<sup>th</sup> February** – Read interesting article titled: '[A Day in the Life of an Aviation Student: Training, Challenges, and Career Preparation](#)'.

**15<sup>th</sup> February** - Private capital and network expansion are reshaping aviation infrastructure – read more on this [here](#).

**16<sup>th</sup> February** – This article asks: '[How much land and power would it take to decarbonise Dublin Airport?](#)'

**17<sup>th</sup> February** - [Construction begins on €15m upgrade to Shannon Airport terminal building](#) marking first airport-focused project as part of Shannon Airport Group's wider €40m investment programme for 2026.

**17<sup>th</sup> February** - [Scottish entrepreneur has praised government's intervention in saving Prestwick Airport](#) when it bought airport for £1 in 2013 but the airport's debts continue.

**18<sup>th</sup> February** - [Gordon Dewar to step down as CEO of Edinburgh Airport after 14 years](#). He's expected to leave his role towards the end of 2026 following the search for his successor.

**19<sup>th</sup> February** - [ACI EUROPE has rejected IATA's demand for a 22% reduction in AENA charges](#), defending planned increases to support a €13 billion investment programme.

**20<sup>th</sup> February** – [Aer Lingus says politicians must axe 32-million-a-year limit on passengers at Dublin Airport](#) before an autumn ruling by regulators that could hit summer 2027 travel.

**20<sup>th</sup> February** – Airline leaders discuss 'Realising the digital airside: From disconnected data to intelligent airport ecosystems' – see [here](#).

**21<sup>st</sup> February** – This article takes you inside [Cork Airport's €200m redevelopment and plans for Luas link and transatlantic flights](#).

**22<sup>nd</sup> February** – Interested in how airports deal with waste control? Then [read this](#).

**23<sup>rd</sup> February** - [Cork Airport set for one of its most significant network expansions in recent years](#) as Aer Lingus and Aer Lingus Regional unveil a strengthened summer 2026 schedule.

**24<sup>th</sup> February** - European aviation calls for continued EU funding. More on this story [here](#).

**25<sup>th</sup> February** - [Dublin Airport night flights can't be capped yet, says European Commission](#). Existing planning conditions attached to newest runway remain in place.

**25<sup>th</sup> February** – [The Irish government will make almost €45m in capital investment available to regional airports over the next five years](#), including €9m in 2026.

**25<sup>th</sup> February** - The Shannon Airport Group welcomed announcement that Shannon Airport will be included in Ireland's new Regional Airports Programme 2026-2030. Details are [here](#).

**26<sup>th</sup> February** - [Joby reveals Uber app booking for electric air taxi in Dubai later this year](#). The eVTOL service is planned to expand to markets including the UK.

**26<sup>th</sup> February** - [European aviation bodies urge EU Member States to support continued co funding for SESAR](#), (Single European Sky Air Traffic Management Research) programme.

**27<sup>th</sup> February** - [ACI EUROPE called on the EC and Member States](#) to consistently apply EU Noise Balanced Approach Regulation and avoid premature operating restrictions at airports.

**28<sup>th</sup> February** – This article asks: '[Is Shannon an international or a regional airport?](#)' as for the first time it has been included in the State's funding programme for regional airports.

## **SASIG Library Additions**

Agenda papers for the SASIG Members' meeting held on 25 February can be seen in the members' section of our website along with supporting documentation and a presentation given by guest speaker, Tim Johnson, Director of Communications, Strategy & Policy, CAA.