



# Strategic Aviation Special Interest Group (SASIG)

Agenda

Wednesday, 17 June 2026  
10.00 am – 1.00 pm

Online via Zoom

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81467874328>

Meeting ID: 814 6787 4328

Join instructions

[https://us02web.zoom.us/join/81467874328?signature=BWPsq6TV8dVMdB\\_OcwXLlgR7qtQPBI4p5nTROc0WqQmo](https://us02web.zoom.us/join/81467874328?signature=BWPsq6TV8dVMdB_OcwXLlgR7qtQPBI4p5nTROc0WqQmo)

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There will be a meeting of the Strategic Aviation Special Interest Group (SASIG) at **10.00 am on Wednesday, 17 June 2026** Online via Zoom.

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**Apologies:**

Please notify [secretariat@sasig.org.uk](mailto:secretariat@sasig.org.uk)

**Attendance:**

Your attendance, whether it be in person or virtual, will be noted by the clerk at the meeting.

**LGA Contact:**

[Fatima.deabreu@local.gov.uk](mailto:Fatima.deabreu@local.gov.uk)

## Agenda

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### Strategic Aviation Special Interest Group (SASIG)

Wednesday, 17 June 2026

10.00 am – 1.00 pm

Online via Zoom

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Item	Page	Time
<b>PART 1: INTRODUCTION, MINUTES AND GUEST SPEAKER</b>		
1. Chairman's welcome, new attendees and apologies from the floor		10.00
2. Review / actions from previous CAG/SASIG meetings:	1 - 2	10.05
a) Review/actions from previous full SASIG meeting 25 February 2026	3 - 12	
b) Review and actions from previous CAG meeting 26 May 2026	13 - 18	
Summary of actions from latest CAG / SASIG	19 - 20	
3. Guest speaker: Nyree Millar-Bell (CAA) inc: Obstacle Limitation Surfaces: a new framework	21 - 22	10.15
<b>PART 2: ADMINISTRATIVE AND POLICY UPDATES</b>		
4. Review and approval of SASIG annual report to LGA:		11.00
a) Full version (for LGA website)	23 - 30	
b) Shortened version (for LGA Board meeting)	31 - 36	
5. SASIG Administration & Finances: updates from Chairman/Policy Director:	37 - 38	11.05

	a)	End of year financial position inc: subscription invoices and payments		
	b)	Proposed budget 2026-27		
	c)	Planned meetings with members		
	d)	Update on membership recruitment/sponsors		
	e)	Affiliate/Associate Members and collaborations		
<b>6.</b>		<b>Policy Developments/Key Issues since last meeting:</b>	<b>39 - 48</b>	<b>11.20</b>
	a)	Summary of recent external meetings held, planned and invitations received		
	b)	Summary of HOC debate on LHR 3rd runway (14.5.26)		
	c)	Recent, current and forthcoming consultations and research reports		
	d)	Brief round-up of other important developments since last SASIG meeting		
 <b>PART 3: SUBSTANTIVE AGENDA ITEMS</b>				
<b>7.</b>		<b>Civil Aviation Bill and its implications for LAs</b>	<b>49 - 60</b>	<b>11.40</b>
<b>8.</b>		<b>Passenger/Air Cargo Demand Outlook - Implications for UK airports</b>	<b>61 - 66</b>	<b>11.55</b>
<b>9.</b>		<b>CAA Aviation Consumer Survey</b>	<b>67 - 68</b>	<b>12.15</b>
<b>10.</b>		<b>Proposed research on economic/social value of airports and how these can be maximized - scope/purpose and potential collaborations</b>	<b>69 - 74</b>	<b>12.30</b>
 <b>PART 4: MEETING CLOSURE</b>				
<b>11.</b>		<b>AOB</b>	<b>75 - 76</b>	<b>12.50</b>
<b>12.</b>		<b>Future dates in 2025 for SASIG/CAG and any</b>	<b>77 - 78</b>	<b>12.55</b>

**additional meetings plus plans for future speakers,  
workshops and webinars**

**Meeting Close**

13.00

**Annex A: (papers sent via separate email)**

**See below, list of supporting documents for Items 3,  
6 and 9**

Item 3(a): DfT Aerodrome Safeguarding Circular: update  
and next steps

Item 3(b): CAA New ICAO OLS

Item 3(c): New ICAO Approach to Safeguarding  
Obstacle Limitation Surfaces (OLS) and its Implications  
for UK airports and Local Authorities.

Item 3(d): Guidance for Obstacle Management

Item 3(e): CAA Managing Changes

Item 6(a): ANEG Minutes – 25 February 2026

Item 6(b): CAA UK Airports Noise Insulation Schemes  
Review (ANEG)

Item 6(c): Sustainable Aviation Presentation (ANEG)

Item 6(d): AEF Presentation (ANEG)

Item 6(e): SASIG response to Wind Turbine consultation

Item 9(a): CAA ACS report

**Date of Next Meeting:** To be confirmed





**SASIG Meeting: 17 June 2026  
Item 2**

**Item 2: Review and actions from previous CAG/SASIG meetings:**

- (a) Review and actions from previous full SASIG meeting of 25 February 2026**
- (b) Review and actions from previous Chairman's Advisory Group (CAG) meeting of 26 May 2026.**

**Recommendation: that members note the minutes from these meetings (see attached)**



**SASIG Meeting: 17 June 2026  
Item 2(a)**

**Item 2(a): Minutes of last Strategic Aviation SIG meeting (SASIG)**

**Strategic Aviation SIG (SASIG)**

25 February 2026

Online via Zoom

**Attendance**

An attendance list is attached as **Appendix A**

Minute		Decisions
SASIG	1	<p><b>Item 1. Chairman's welcome, new attendees and apologies from the floor</b></p> <p>Keith Artus (KA) Chairman welcomed regular and new colleagues to the meeting. The Secretariat provided a list of apologies which included Jackie Cheetham (Honorary Vice President, SASIG) and Michael Thornton (HSPG).</p> <p>A record of attendance is at <b><u>Appendix A</u></b>.</p>
SASIG	2	<p><b>Item 2. Review and actions from previous CAG/SASIG meetings:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>a. Review and actions from previous full SASIG meeting: 15 October 2025</b></li> <li><b>b. Review and actions from previous CAG meeting: 20 January 2026</b></li> </ul> <p>Members noted the Summary of Actions arising from both the previous SASIG and CAG meetings.</p> <p>Chris Cain (CC) SASIG Policy Director, provided a brief update regarding a planned meeting with officials from the Department for Transport in anticipation that this would lead to engagement with Kier Mather MP, the UK's Parliamentary Under-Secretary for Transport with responsibility for aviation. A letter that had been sent to him was included within the agenda papers and his response was awaited. A briefing had also been sent to Kemi Badenoch, Leader of the Opposition.</p> <p>Further updates were provided on other issues including concern around air freight policy or lack thereof and also engagement with the LGA and its officers about the possibility of a meeting with the relevant transport policy committee at the LGA.</p>



		<p><b>Members' comments and questions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Members welcomed the updates.</li> </ul> <p><b>Decisions:</b> By consensus, the Strategic Aviation SIG:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Approved</b> the minutes of the SASIG meeting held on <b>15 October 2025</b> as a correct record.</li> <li><b>Approved</b> the minutes of the CAG meeting held on <b>20 January 2026</b> as a correct record.</li> </ol>
<p><b>SASIG</b></p>	<p><b>3</b></p>	<p><b>Item 3. Guest speaker: Tim Johnson, Director of Communications, Strategy and Policy, CAA</b></p> <p>The Chairman introduced Tim Johnson (TJ), who provided a presentation (which would be made available to members after the meeting) giving a brief outline of his background and how important the relationship is between local authorities, UK aviation/airports and the CAA.</p> <p>TJ referred to the role of CAA in ensuring that the core regulatory framework set by Government was achieved and noted key responsibilities including overseeing the safety of 130 UK aerodromes - many of which were owned by local authorities. He stated that there had been 302 million UK air passengers last year and further growth was predicted for this year.</p> <p>TJ spoke about economic growth, airspace modernisation and sustainability targets and agreed that regional airports were facing significant challenges. He also gave members examples of how the CAA currently engage with the local authority sector.</p> <p>The Chairman thanked the speaker for an interesting presentation and invited comments from members, a selection of which is shown below:</p> <p><b>Members' comments and questions (responses shown in italics):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Q. Could we have some clarification on the status of the UK Airspace Design Service (UKADS)?</b> <i>A. Being finalised now with the aim to be in place by the summer. The initial focus would be on London airspace redesign.</i></li> <li><b>Q. Could you give an update on details of work being done concerning noise issues and carbon management?</b> <i>A. Current policy is for mitigating noise between 4-7000 ft by way of prioritising minimising the effects of carbon. There would be a consultation before Christmas for noise levels up to 4,000 ft. After that, the regulator would be looking at carbon issues.</i></li> <li><b>Q. Airspace change process and planning impacts: how do you see that interface in the future?</b></li> </ul>



		<p><i>A. Can be a tricky area. Much of the focus right now is on Heathrow expansion and its effects on environmental issues through the planning process.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Q. With regard to excessive noise around Heathrow and designated airports, how would the CAA manage specific noise objectives given the large population in that particular area and also balance this against the need for growth?</b> <i>A. A couple of studies were coming out about this (including night noise) and aircraft are getting quieter over time. There would be no easy answers though.</i></li> <li>• <b>Q. Is there a justifiable reason why Government cannot fine/charge airlines for noisy aircraft?</b> <i>A. This would be a question mainly for local authority planners, airports and airlines.</i></li> <li>• <b>Q. Can you give an update on when the Night Noise report will be released?</b> <i>A. The document is close to being finalised there is no actual date for publication yet. Aware that there is much external interest in this.</i></li> </ul> <p>The SASIG Policy Director raised concerns about the interface between the CAA and local authority planners when making decisions about, for example, Advanced Air Mobility and noise contours. It would be helpful all round for more discussion between SASIG, the LGA and CAA.</p> <p>The Chairman added that there was a need for legally-defined Noise Action Plans (NAPs) and in the case of drones, there was a lack of direction policy-wise for local authorities from Government. There was also concern that LAs were not fully-resourced to enable all of the necessary regulations to be enforced.</p> <p>The Chairman thanked TJ for a very useful overview of the work of CAA and for his time and presentation.</p> <p><b>Decisions:</b> By consensus, the Strategic Aviation SIG:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Noted</b> the presentation.</li> <li>2. <b>Requested</b> that the presentation be circulated.</li> </ol> <p><b>Actions:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Secretariat to place the presentation in the members’ area of the SASIG website.</b></li> </ol>
<p><b>SASIG</b></p>	<p><b>4</b></p>	<p><b>Item 4. SASIG Administration &amp; Finances - updates from Chairman/Policy Director:</b></p> <p><b>a) Financial position:</b> The Chairman briefly updated members on SASIG’s current financial</p>



		<p>situation which remains positive overall with many of this year’s subscription payments having been received. It was noted that it remains a difficult time financially for many local authorities.</p> <p><b>b) Membership/sponsors:</b> The Policy Director said that work continues, as always, looking into all enquiries about joining the Group and exploring ways to identify other possible new members.</p> <p><b>c) CAA Finances:</b> The Policy Director gave an outline of the CAA’s current budget with some going towards identifying projects to support aviation sustainability and a large amount from DfT going towards drones, AAM, etc. This could be an opportunity for local authorities to look into acquiring some funding for various aviation projects of their own and he would be happy to speak to anyone who might have interest in this area.</p> <p><b>Members’ comments and questions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Members welcomed the updates.</li> </ul> <p><b>Decisions:</b> By consensus, the Strategic Aviation SIG:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Noted</b> the updates on SASIG’s financial position and current membership.</li> </ol>
<p>SASIG</p>	<p>5</p>	<p><b>Item 5. Summary of recent external meetings held, planned and invitations received</b></p> <p>This item was taken as largely read - members received a general summary of recent meetings held/others planned, including the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recent attendance at a meeting of the Airspace and Noise Engagement Group (ANEG) with an interesting presentation by Charles Lloyd (AEF) regarding airspace modernisation;</li> <li>• CC was due to attend an ANEG meeting directly following today’s SASIG meeting;</li> <li>• CAA Environmental Information Forum (CAA EIF) in November;</li> <li>• Copy of letter sent in February to Aviation Minister, Keith Mather.</li> </ul> <p>All of these meetings helping to demonstrate that SASIG is well-connected within the industry and to many DfT and CAA forums in particular.</p> <p><b>Members’ comments and questions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Members welcomed the summary of recent/forthcoming meetings.</li> </ul> <p><b>Decisions:</b> By consensus, the Strategic Aviation SIG:</p>

		1. <b>Noted</b> the updates on meetings held, planned and invitations received.
SASIG	6	<p><b>Item 6. Major Policy Developments/Key Issues since last meeting:</b></p> <p>The Chairman invited the Policy Director to update colleagues on major policy developments and key issues since the last meeting.</p> <p>Members noted verbal and documented updates which included (but not restricted to) the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Details of recent, current and forthcoming consultations/inquiries of interest, including UK ETS (regional air connectivity) and Business Rates and those to which we have submitted a response.</li> <li>• An update on the review of ANPS and the Heathrow expansion and its implication for the rest of the UK plus the need for SASIG to submit input by the end of March.</li> <li>• A review of the Government response to EAC airport expansion and the recommended SASIG position.</li> <li>• Developments around the airspace change process: CAP1616.</li> </ul> <p><b>Members' comments and questions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Members welcomed the updates.</li> </ul> <p><b>Decisions:</b> By consensus, the Strategic Aviation SIG:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Noted</b> the updates on major policy developments and key issues since the last meeting.</li> </ol>
SASIG	7	<p><b>Item 7. NPPF and SDS Consultations: Papers Setting out Implications for Airports - Secretariat Commentary and Recommendations:</b></p> <p>a) <b>National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)</b> b) <b>Spatial Development Strategies</b></p> <p>The Policy Director provided an outline regarding the revision of the <b>National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)</b>. <b>It does not contain aviation-specific policies (although it does refer to issues such as 'grey belt' areas and safeguarding) but</b> focuses mainly on additional housing and its impact on local development processes, conflict with local airport development and the impact on the relevant local authorities. Members noted the document raised the importance of consistency with the National Policy Statement and enquired as to how the issue of how conflicting priorities could be resolved.</p> <p>CC proposed submission of a SASIG response but colleagues were also</p>



		<p>welcome to provide their own submissions of course.</p> <p>This item was taken as read but CC outlined issues around aviation infrastructures and the government’s Spatial Development Strategy document which members had received within the agenda papers. Members were invited to submit any comments to the Secretariat <b>by 4 March</b> for incorporation into a SASIG response, if they so wished.</p> <p><b>Members’ comments and questions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Members commented again on Heathrow’s expansion and raised concerns about infringement on “green belt’ land and whether ‘grey belt’ land could be utilised.</li> <li>• Members referred to concerns around spatial development strategies and agreed to submit comments for inclusion in the group response.</li> <li>• Members spoke about alternative fuel technologies with some scepticism around the industry’s confidence in investing in these.</li> </ul> <p>CC referred to concerns regarding the air freight industry such as local roads being choked with freight lorries making their way to the airports and also the number of distribution centres in one area. He invited colleagues to contact him directly should they wish to discuss further on a one-to-one basis.</p> <p><b>Decisions:</b> By consensus, the Strategic Aviation SIG:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Noted the discussion and <b>agreed</b> that Secretariat should submit a response to the government’s Spatial Development Strategy document by the agreed deadline.</li> </ol>
<p><b>SASIG</b></p>	<p><b>8</b></p>	<p><b>Item 8. Updates from Policy Director on ITC report and discussion on new aviation technologies</b></p> <p>CC provided a brief summary on the recently-published ITC report and spoke about a webinar being held on 3 March to discuss the report and its implications and which he recommended members should attend if possible. Members commented about what types of technological innovations were coming forward that would help with various areas of the aviation sector including SAF and how to integrate existing technology into new technology.</p> <p>Discussion followed which included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comments on a lack of coordination with a proactive approach to implement policies needed.</li> <li>• Discussion around sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) and ways in which the industry needed to become less fragmented in order encourage</li> </ul>



		<p>confidence in investing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Difficulties in producing enough SAF to be able to meet government targets.</li> <li>• Comments on the lack of government intervention for taking up opportunities for using viable existing locations for manufacturing and as a result, all infrastructure costs were significant.</li> <li>• He compared progress in Europe to that in the UK.</li> </ul> <p>CC once again, recommended that colleagues consider attending the webinar on 3 March via registration on the ICT’s website. The report, which he co-authored, was downloadable from their site and / or could be viewed online.</p> <p><b>Members’ comments and questions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Members welcomed the update.</li> </ul> <p><b>Decisions:</b> By consensus, the Strategic Aviation SIG:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Noted</b> the update provided on the ITC report and the discussion on new aviation technologies.</li> </ol>
<p>SASIG</p>	<p>9</p>	<p><b>Item 9. Discussion on the need for an Air Freight strategy</b></p> <p>This item was mainly taken as read but the Policy Director still provided a brief update on the need for an Air Freight strategy as 20% of our total air freight is being lost.</p> <p>Members noted key points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Government has asked the CAA to look into distribution rules;</li> <li>• DHL were keen to get more slots at Heathrow and therefore wanted the traffic distribution rules scrapped;</li> <li>• Heathrow was keen on belly hold freight but not freighters;</li> <li>• The value to Heathrow of passengers was far greater than freight;</li> <li>• There were strategies for road and rail but no plans for an Air Freight Strategy despite it being critical to the UK economy.</li> </ul> <p><b>Members’ comments and questions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Members agreed that issues around freight were significant and that work to press Government for implementation of an air freight strategy should continue.</li> </ul> <p><b>Decisions:</b> By consensus, the Strategic Aviation SIG:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Agreed the recommendation</b> that SASIG write to the Secretary of State for Transport pressing for a dedicated Air Freight Strategy to be produced as part of the forthcoming Freight Plan and developed</li> </ol>



		in parallel with the Airports National Policy Statement review.
<b>SASIG</b>	<b>10</b>	<p><b>Item 10. Future dates in 2026 for SASIG/CAG and any additional meetings</b></p> <p>The date of the next meeting would be circulated to members in due course.</p> <p>Any information on planned webinars would also be circulated to members.</p>
<b>SASIG</b>	<b>11</b>	<p><b>Item 11. AOB</b></p> <p>There was no other business.</p>
		<p><b>Close of meeting</b></p> <p>The meeting ended at 12.00 pm.</p>

**Appendix A****Attendance**

<b>Position / Role</b>	<b>Councillor / Officer</b>	<b>Authority / Organisation</b>
Chairman & Hon. President	Keith Artus	
Member	Cllr Phil Geisler	London Borough of Richmond Upon Thames
Member	Cllr Glyn Jones	Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council
Member	Cllr Sean Beatty	Spelthorne Borough Council
Member	Cllr Dexter Smith	Slough Borough Council
Member	Cllr John Evans	Uttlesford District Council
Member	Cllr Puja Bedi	Slough Borough Council
Member	Paul Donovan	Hertfordshire County Council
Member	Kay Mead	East Herts District Council
Member	Nathan Coe	Cornwall Council
Member	Steve Braund	HSPG
Member	Surinderpal Suri	London Borough of Ealing
Policy Director, SASIG	Chris Cain	Northpoint Aviation Services
SASIG Secretariat	Lesley Smith	Northpoint Aviation Services

**Apologies**

<b><u>Position/ Role</u></b>	<b><u>Councillor</u></b>	<b><u>Authority</u></b>
Member	Jackie Cheetham	Honorary Vice President (SASIG)
Member	Michael Thornton	HSPG

**Also present**

<b><u>Name</u></b>	<b><u>Role</u></b>
Fatima de Abreu	LGA Member Services Assistant





**SASIG Meeting: 17 June 2026**  
**Item 2(b):**

**Item 2(b): MINUTES OF THE CHAIRMAN'S ADVISORY GROUP (CAG)**  
**MEETING: Tuesday: 26 May 2026**

**Date:** Tuesday: 26 May 2026

**Time:** 15:00 – 17:00 hrs

**Venue:** Online (via Zoom)

**Attendees:**

Keith Artus	Chairman & Honorary President, SASIG
Zhanine Smith	Essex County Council
Chris Cain	Policy Director, SASIG
Lesley Smith	Policy Executive, SASIG

**Apologies Received:**

Jamie Macrae	Honorary Vice President, SASIG
Jackie Cheetham	Honorary Vice President, SASIG
Cllr Lee Scott	Essex County Council
Christian Foster	Doncaster Council

(NB: invite and agenda papers also extended to Pat Hayes, Slough BC).

**Item 2: Review and Actions from previous CAG/SASIG meetings:**

**a) Minutes of previous CAG meeting: 20 January 2026:**

The following actions (in bold italics) were recorded as still outstanding:

- **Efforts continuing with regard to securing a meeting with the Aviation Minister.**  
***Action:*** Policy Director to draw up a list of specific SASIG concerns and also speak with Martin Hau, DfT. Then to discuss further with SASIG Chairman.

There were no other outstanding actions and the minutes of the CAG meeting of 20 January 2026 were approved.

**(b) Review and actions from previous SASIG full meeting: 25 February 2026**

The following actions (in bold italics) were recorded as still outstanding:

- **SASIG to write to Transport Secretary pressing for a dedicated Air Freight Strategy.**

***Action:*** Outstanding. Policy Director to draft letter on behalf of SASIG Chairman.

There were no other outstanding actions and the minutes of the SASIG meeting of 25 February 2026 were approved.

### **Item 3: SASIG Administration and Finances**

**(a): End of year financial position inc: subscription invoices/payments:**

The Policy Director gave a summary of the end of year financial position (2025-26). A majority of invoices that have been issued have been paid including two outstanding invoices from the previous year. The Chairman and Policy Director would liaise outside of this meeting regarding any other invoicing that needs to be finalised.

**(b): Proposed budget for 2026-27:**

A proposed budget for 2026-27 will be put before members at the SASIG June AGM.

**(c): Planned meetings with members:**

The Policy Director outlined meetings he has already held with a few authorities within SASIG and has others planned in the near future.

(To note: an approach has also been made to Amazon for a site visit at their Darlington premises following the recent drone trials there. Post meeting: they cannot facilitate this in June but are happy to meet with SASIG later in the year).

**(d): Update on membership recruitment and sponsors:**

There are currently three companies actively keen on sponsoring the Group and the Policy Director will continue his communication with them. He is also in contact with a former member from a non-member council, who is now retired but keen to provide voluntary support for the Group particularly around environmental and noise issues. Investigations will continue into other possible members/sponsors and an update will be provided at the SASIG June AGM.

**(e): Affiliate/Associate Members and Collaborations:**

A spreadsheet had been produced listing all the categories of SASIG membership and collaboration. It was decided to provide a short summary using this, for members at the SASIG June AGM.

***Action:*** Secretariat to provide a short summary for SASIG June AGM.

**(f): Mailchimp analytics:**

The Group was provided with two spreadsheets – one for Q3 and the other for Q4 – giving an outline showing the number of recipients, ‘opens’ and ‘clicks’, etc. A more detailed outline has been provided to the SASIG Chairman. The Secretariat has also been working on a revamped version of the monthly Bulletin in order to appeal more to members and this is due to begin next month (June). The Chairman will be sent a draft version first before it is issued.

***Action:*** Policy Director/Debbie Airey to send draft version of June Bulletin to SASIG Chairman.

### **Item 4: Review and approval of SASIG annual report to LGA**

The Group reviewed both versions of this year's report (a 'Full' version for the LGA website and a 'Short' version for the LGA Board) including how our aims, operations and outputs contribute to the LGA's Business Plan. The SASIG Chairman was keen to see a list of SASIG achievements included therefore they will be amended before submission to LGA which has to be by 1 June 2026. Members will then see these included in the agenda papers of the SASIG meeting/AGM to be held on 17 June 2026.

The Group was updated by the Chairman and the Policy Director on their recent liaison with Kamal Panchal at the LGA.

It was also resolved to write to the Inclusive Growth Committee of the LGA (which SASIG now sits under) about the recent Civil Aviation Bill and why aviation issues such as safeguarding and AAM which are fast becoming so important to local authorities, should merit part of their attention. This will also form part of an item in the SASIG June meeting.

***Action: Policy Director to review/amend LGA report before submission to LGA by 1 June 2026.***

***Action: Policy Director to draft letter to go from Chairman to Inclusive Growth Committee at the LGA.***

## **Item 5: Policy Developments since previous CAG meeting:**

### **(a): Summary of external meetings held and planned/invitations received:**

The Group reviewed and noted a list of meetings held since the previous CAG meeting in January of this year to which SASIG was invited. These included:

**24 February: Airspace Modernisation Stakeholder Group** – the SASIG Chairman usually attends, but on this occasion he was deputized by the Policy Director. CAA and DfT provided updates on their current work regimes and there was a discussion on current and recent consultations on the ANG/AND, the UKADS guidance and CAP1616.

**25 February: Airspace & Noise Engagement Group (ANEG)** meeting attended by the Policy Director. The Group were provided with notes and presentations from CAA, DfT and AEF and these will be made available to members at the SASIG June AGM.

**4 March:** The Chairman along with the SASIG Policy Director met with **Amanda Lane, Airports Policy team lead at DfT.**

**28 April:** SASIG Policy Director **attended Jet 2's parliamentary reception: 'More than just a holiday'** in the Thames Pavilion, Palace of Westminster.

**30 April:** Policy Director attended the **Combined Aerodrome Safeguarding Team (CAST)** webinar: 'Overview of the New Obstacle Limitation Surfaces' which provided an overview of the new OLS framework due to come into effect in November 2030.

To note: it is still intended to try and have a webinar in the autumn in conjunction with the LGA likely to concentrate on the revised ANPS and also airports and economic development.

***Action: Chairman/Policy Director to discuss further outside of this meeting.***

**(b): Recent and forthcoming consultations and research reports:**

The Group were provided with a list of current Government consultations including the Permitted development rights for onshore wind turbines in England (18 March – 10 June 2026); Draft advice on 1991 Traffic Distribution Rules (CAP3250) (14 May – 26 June 2026) and the UK Emissions Trading Scheme – treatment of Sustainable Aviation Fuel (23 March – 15 June 2026). With regard to the latter, it was resolved to send a note to Richard Holden MP and also the Aviation Minister. The Group was also provided with a list of recent, relevant research reports.

***Action: Policy Director to draft a letter on behalf of the SASIG Chairman regarding UK ETS concerns.***

**(c): Brief Round-up of other important developments since previous CAG meeting:**

The Group were briefed on some other important developments since the last CAG meeting including SASIG's joint submission in January to the CAA on TDRs at Heathrow and Gatwick, an overview on the Scottish government consultation (February) seeking views and evidence on the implementation of Airport Departure Tax and the recent cessation (February) of the PSO air service between London and Cornwall. SASIG has already reached out to its member Cornwall Council with offers of support if and where needed. Other information provided was on CAA's 2025 data released in March showing an increase of 2% on passenger figures from the year before; the CAA's dedicated web page (May) setting out information on the update ICAO Obstacle Limitation Surfaces framework and also information on the recent drone trials (May) held at the Amazon premises in Darlington. SASIG is actively seeking the opportunity to attend a site visit there.

**(d): Summary of Heathrow Third Runway debate: House of Commons 14 May 2026:**

This item was largely taken as read but with concerns raised and discussed by the Group, (including air freight/military use/ANPS, etc) it was considered important enough to have as an item within the agenda of the SASIG June AGM.

***Action: to be included as an item at SASIG June AGM.***

**Item 6: Discussion of implications of recent local council elections for SASIG and planned work in relation to prospective local government reorganisation**

This item was mainly for information and therefore taken as read. Everyone was now aware of the results from the elections held earlier this month and there was some discussion around how some of the proposed local government reorganization would affect some SASIG members.

**Item 7: Obstacle Limitation Surfaces: a new framework**

This item has already been discussed earlier (under Item 5) and the Group was informed that our guest speaker at the next members' meeting in June, would be Nyree

Millar-Bell, Obstacle and Safeguarding Policy Specialist at Airspace, Air Traffic Management & Aerodromes at the CAA who would be speaking on the subject.

### **Item 8: Discussion of Passenger Demand and Air Cargo outlook**

The Group was informed that the DfT were likely to introduce a new set of forecasts along with the revised ANPS in June. It was also agreed that a systems strategy around the country was needed. The carbon budget was important along with new technology such as SAF but it was apparent there was insufficient funding to facilitate necessary research and development.

### **Item 9: Research on economic and social value of airports and how these can be maximized**

This item was mainly for information and taken as read. Zhanine Smith informed the Group that she had also done some similar work and was interested in how the recent Industry Strategy correlated to aviation, in particular airports and regional connectivity. Skills and training were also important – some airports such as Stansted, have their own training colleges – and it was also important to consider what local authorities can do that is relevant to airport growth.

### **Item 10: Arrangements for full SASIG meeting/AGM on Wednesday: 17 June 2026 (Virtual via Zoom)**

**(a) Agenda:** The Group noted the draft agenda provided and this would be decided post-CAG.

**(b) Guest speaker:** This will be Nyree Millar-Bell, Obstacle and Safeguarding Policy Specialist at Airspace, Air Traffic Management & Aerodromes at the CAA,

**(c) Nominations for Chairman and Vice Chairmen:** it was decided that in light of the recent council elections and ongoing uncertainty about portfolio holders, these will be held over until the autumn SASIG meeting – date to be decided.

### **Item 11: Future dates in 2026 for SASIG/CAG and any additional meetings**

These would be decided post-meeting by the Chairman and the Policy Director.

### **Item 12: A.O.B.**

There was no AOB and the Chairman thanked the Group and closed the meeting.



### Summary of actions from CAG meeting: 26 May 2026

No.	Action	Responsible person(s)	Progress to date (Outstanding actions in bold)
1	Chairman/Policy Director to seek to secure a meeting with Aviation Minister to follow-up on key issues after the meeting they had with his officials.	Chairman/Policy Director	<b>Action: PD to develop list of specific SASIG concerns; approach Martin Hau at DfT first and then discuss next steps with Chairman</b>
2	Develop an Air Freight Issues Note to brief cross-party leadership on the pending capacity crisis and its implications: Use for meeting with Keir Mather but also approach Richard Holden (Cons. MP) plus relevant Reform spokesman to discuss and seek support following Chairman's talks with Kemi Badenoch.	Chairman/Policy Director	<b>Action: PD to draft letter(s) on behalf of Chairman.</b>
3	Approach Amazon (Darlington) for a site visit in June re: drone trials	Secretariat	Actioned: Amazon contact emailed on 27 May. Can't see us in June but happy to see us later in the year.
4	SASIG categories spreadsheet: a short summary to be provided to members at autumn meeting.	Secretariat	<b>To be actioned.</b>
5	New format SASIG Bulletin: draft to be sent to Chairman for approval before issuance.	PD/D.Airey	<b>To be actioned.</b>
6	LGA Report: include list of achievements. (Final version must be submitted to LGA by 1 June).	PD/Secretariat	Actioned.
7	Letter to go from Chairman to LGA's Inclusive Growth Committee seeking opportunity for SASIG to present on key aviation issues of interest to wider LGA family.	Chairman/Policy Director	<b>Action: PD to draft letter(s) on behalf of Chairman. Also to include in June SASIG meeting.</b>
8	Investigate possibility of autumn webinar in conjunction with LGA, focusing on ANPS and/or economic development of airports.	Chairman/Policy Director	<b>To be actioned.</b>
9	UK Emissions Trading Scheme consultation: Chairman to write to selected MPs re: concerns around SAF production in UK.	Chairman/Policy Director	<b>Action: PD to draft letter(s) on behalf of Chairman.</b>
10	Heathrow expansion: SASIG concerns (relationship to regional airports/financing/military) to be highlighted at June members' meeting	Policy Director	<b>Action: PD to provide Chairman with note covering these issues and to include in agenda in June SASIG meeting.</b>
11.	Nominations for SASIG Chairman/Vice Chairmen: due to recent local council elections, this should now be actioned at autumn meeting to allow time for new council appointments. Secretariat to investigate Chair/Vice Chair requirements.	Secretariat	<b>To be actioned.</b>

Continued.....

## Summary of actions from SASIG meeting: 25 February 2026

No.	Action	Responsible person(s)	Progress to date (Outstanding actions in bold)
1.	Tim Johnson (CAA) presentation given at this meeting, to be made available to members.	Secretariat	Actioned: is in members' area on website.
2.	SASIG to write to the Secretary of State for Transport pressing for a dedicated Air Freight Strategy to be produced as part of the forthcoming Freight Plan and developed in parallel with the ANPS review.	Chairman/Policy Director	<b>To be actioned: PD to draft letter(s) on behalf of Chairman.</b>



**SASIG Meeting: 17 June 2026**  
**Item 3**

### **Item 3: Guest speaker: Nyree Millar-Bell, CAA**

We are very pleased to welcome Nyree Millar-Bell, Obstacle and Safeguarding Policy Specialist at Airspace, Air Traffic Management & Aerodromes at the CAA. Nyree is in an excellent position to talk to members about the New ICAO OLS surfaces which are applicable from 21 November 2030 as she is the CAA lead in this area which recognises the important role local authorities have in the safeguarding process. To give members a bit of a background before Nyree's presentation, below is a short summary of:

#### **Obstacle Limitation Surfaces: a new framework**

Obstacle Limitation Surfaces (OLS) are critical three-dimensional surfaces around aerodromes that ensure safe aircraft operations by limiting obstacles in the vicinity of runways and taxiways. In August 2025, ICAO adopted Amendment 18 to Annex 14, introducing a new, modernised OLS framework, representing the most significant change to aerodrome safeguarding in decades. These changes affect all UK aerodromes, safeguarding authorities, developers, and organisations involved in airspace protection, obstacle assessment and planning. The new framework replaces the long-standing traditional OLS with a performance-based, operations-driven model, reflecting advances in aircraft performance, navigation, and procedure design.

#### **What the New OLS Means for UK Aerodromes:**

Aerodromes will need to:

- Update safeguarding maps and digital airspace models
- Understand differences in protected volumes (some areas expand, others reduce)
- Assess impacts on development proposals and planning safeguarding processes
- Coordinate with local planning authorities
- Review existing obstacles and update obstacle databases
- Implement new ADG-based surface modelling
- Plan for transition ahead of 2030 applicability

The new OLS may reduce safeguarding burdens in some cases (less protected airspace), while expanding them in others.

#### **Events, Workshops and Webinars:**

To support industry readiness ahead of the 21 November 2030 applicability date for the new OLS, the CAA are delivering a series of workshops throughout the year. The

workshops are intended to support understanding of the new OLS framework, including its implementation. They will also provide an opportunity to explore key considerations, share learning, and discuss common challenges and approaches.

These sessions are designed for aerodrome operators, safeguarding teams, planners, ANSPs, developers, and other stakeholders involved in obstacle management. The first session was held on 3 June in Manchester, and the remaining two confirmed Workshops are:

- **17 July 2026 – Gatwick (*SASIG Policy Director is registered to attend*)**
- 8 October 2026 – Glasgow

Details on how to register for these are shown below in italics:

*Please register your interest using the following*

*link: <https://outlook.office.com/book/NewOLSWorkshopRegistration@caa.onmicrosoft.com/?ismsaljsauthenabed>*

*[You can see registration instructions at this link, which provide step by step guidance on how to complete the booking.](#)*

*Once you have selected an event, the CAA will be in touch to confirm your space and provide full venue details. A detailed agenda will be circulated in due course.*

The CAA also hosted a New OLS webinar on 30 April 2026 which provided an overview of the new framework ahead of the in-person workshops. The SASIG Policy Director attended and can update members.

### **Supporting documents/webpage:**

In addition, attached to this item are a number of documents SASIG members may find helpful or interesting, relating to Obstacle Limitation Surfaces. These are:

**Item 3(a): DfT Aerodrome Safeguarding Circular: update and next steps**

**Item 3(b): CAA New ICAO OLS**

**Item 3(c): New ICAO Approach to Safeguarding Obstacle Limitation Surfaces (OLS) and its Implications for UK airports and Local Authorities.**

**Item 3(d): Guidance for Obstacle Management**

**Item 3(e): CAA Managing Changes**

All of the above documents are now in the members' area on the website.

And finally, the CAA has published a new [dedicated webpage](#) setting out information on the updated ICAO [Obstacle Limitation Surfaces \(OLS\) framework](#). The page provides an overview of what is changing, why ICAO has introduced the new approach, and what this means for aerodromes, planners and other stakeholders. The webpage will act as the central hub for new OLS material, including webinar recordings, workshop information, guidance updates and future events as they become available.



**SASIG Meeting: 17 June 2026  
Item 4(a)**

**Item 4: Review and approval of SASIG annual report to LGA.**

**(a) Full version (for LGA website) – see below**

This report was submitted to LGA on **1 June 2025** following approval by the Chairman's Advisory Group (CAG) held on 26 May 2026.

**Recommendation: Members are asked to note the report**



## **Strategic Aviation Special Interest Group (SASIG) Annual Report to LGA Leadership Board**

<b>SIG Name:</b>	Strategic Aviation Special Interest Group (SASIG)
<b>Lead Member:</b>	Keith Artus (Chairman)
<b>Lead Officer:</b>	SASIG Secretariat c/o Northpoint Aviation Services

<b>Email:</b>	secretariat@sasig.org.uk
<b>Address:</b>	SASIG Secretariat, c/o Northpoint Aviation London & South East Office, 4, Beacon Avenue, Kings Hill, West Malling, Kent, ME19 4QL
<b>Telephone:</b>	01732 220256
<b>Website:</b>	<a href="http://www.sasig.org.uk">www.sasig.org.uk</a>



**Advancing sustainable aviation policy on behalf of local communities.**

### **Membership: 01/04/2025 - 31/03/2026**

Cornwall Council	London Borough of Hounslow
Crawley Borough Council	London Borough of Richmond upon Thames
City of Doncaster Council	Reigate & Banstead Borough Council
East Hertfordshire District Council	Rushmoor Borough Council
Essex County Council	Southend-on-Sea City Council
Fareham Borough Council	Slough Borough Council
Hertfordshire County Council	Spelthorne Borough Council
Isles of Scilly Council	Uttlesford District Council
London Borough of Hillingdon	London Borough of Wandsworth

#### **Affiliated**

London Borough of Merton  
Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council  
Sheffield Metropolitan Borough Council  
Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council

SASIG represents approximately 10 million people which equates to 15% of the population in the LGA's combined area. Airports covered by Member Authorities handled 75% of air passengers in England in 2019 and 65% in the UK overall.

## Aims

### **SASIG's objectives are:**

- to promote the need for long-term, sustainable aviation policies that lead to a reduction in the environmental impact of aviation whilst securing appropriate social and economic benefits;
- to increase understanding of the local and global impacts of aviation on the environment and communities;
- to identify and promote the changes needed to move towards sustainable aviation practices within the industry and Government; and
- to work with other organisations and the Government on the formulation of policy advice.

### **SASIG Policy Principles**

- i. To give the people of the UK the social and business opportunities to travel from their nearest airport where feasible.
- ii. To capture, not stifle, the social and economic benefits of aviation using robust and objective evidence.
- iii. To direct aviation growth to locations where it will assist sustainable economic regeneration.
- iv. To minimise adverse impacts – social, economic and environmental – by protecting people and non-transferable habitats.
- v. To ensure that the air transport sector rather than local communities pays the full costs of the impact of all air journeys.
- vi. To offer the aviation industry tough but realistic parameters based upon associated impacts around which to secure growth.
- vii. To ensure that good quality surface access links are provided to airports, particularly public transport links that create integrated transport hubs.
- viii. To promote better point to point air services from regional airports, with sensitive control over all impacts.
- ix. To work with Government and other bodies to ensure that noise impacts as a result of airport growth, airspace changes and flight path changes on local communities are minimised and mitigated.
- x. To support the coordination and integration of the full spectrum of national policies on issues relating to aviation. This must accord with international and regional policy-making and implementation.
- xi. To promote investigation of the impacts of the air freight industry, supporting the development of air freight infrastructure where it is the most appropriate mode.
- xii. To encourage Governments and the aviation industry to make greater efforts to reduce aviation's impacts on climate change.
- xiii. To instigate and design, in collaboration with external partners, innovative policies and methodologies for identifying, measuring and addressing effectively the noise, health, social infrastructure and wider strategic planning impacts of airport development.

### **SASIG strongly supports the Government's work towards a national aviation policy that:**

- Is based on the need to control the impacts rather than the aviation activity.
- Has considered in detail all options for providing capacity to meet forecast demand, and for providing for other, lower levels of demand.
- Embraces the concept of integrated transport provision.

- Audits the parameters that should be used in any forecasts of future demand.
- Adopts an assessment process for aviation developments that explicitly includes all associated costs.
- Sets effective environmental limits for the aviation industry to meet, taking the appropriate form – regulation, charges, taxes, etc.
- Considers and mitigates against the impact of greenhouse gas emissions.
- Develops the economic analysis of aviation, and in particular improves valuation of the net impact – benefits and disbenefits.
- Coordinates with other transport policies and with other associated national policies, such as climate change, and energy policies.

## **Key Activities / Outcomes of work undertaken.**

### **Key Achievements 2025–26**

SASIG's standing as the authoritative local authority voice on civil aviation policy was further cemented this year through consistent, high-level engagement across Government and its key agencies. The Group maintained its seat at the table on the DfT's Airspace Modernisation Stakeholder Engagement Group, ensuring that the interests of member councils remained visible and influential in shaping one of the most consequential long-term infrastructure programmes facing UK aviation. Attendance at all three meetings of the DfT's Airspace and Noise Engagement Group (ANEG) and active participation in the CAA's Environmental Policy Forum and Combined Aerodrome Safeguarding Team (CAST) reflected SASIG's determination to be present wherever policy affecting local communities is being formed. The Policy Director's place on the Future of Flight Government Liaison Group, and the briefing and advice provided to the LGA's own representative on that body, ensured that member authority perspectives were fed directly into Government thinking on emerging aviation technologies.

A highlight of the year was the successful completion and presentation to Government of the joint SASIG-CAA -ITC study, written by SASIG's Policy Director on the future policy challenges associated with emergent aviation technologies over the next 30 years. This substantive piece of research, co-sponsored by SASIG, directly positions member authorities as forward-thinking contributors to national aviation strategy rather than passive respondents to it. Alongside this, the SASIG Drone Bureau – established in 2024 with LGA support – continued to grow in profile, offering members practical, expert-informed guidance on Advanced Air Mobility at a time when the regulatory and planning landscape for drone operations is still being defined. Together, these initiatives represent meaningful contributions to evidence-led policy and demonstrate SASIG's capacity to help shape, not merely comment on, the direction of UK aviation.

In terms of membership, governance and value, SASIG continued to demonstrate the durability of its model. With subscriptions held at 2015–16 levels for a tenth consecutive year, the Group offers exceptional value while maintaining the financial discipline introduced under revised protocols in 2023. The breadth of SASIG's reach – representing approximately 10 million people and councils whose airports serve 75% of air passengers in England – reinforces the weight that Government and regulators attach to its representations. The monthly Bulletin, bilateral engagement with individual member councils and a programme of guest speakers at membership meetings which included the CAA's Director for Communications, Policy and Strategy – collectively ensured that members remained well-informed, well-connected and well-served throughout the year.

### **National Representation**

With now nearly 30 years history as an LGA Special Interest Group, SASIG is recognised and respected by the likes of DfT, DEFRA, MHCLG and other Government Departments - as well as key regulators and agencies (the CAA, Environment Agency, Border Force, UKRI etc) for its relevant and valued experience, knowledge, collaborative approach to engagement and consultation. It remains a sounding board through which Whitehall, regulators, the industry and other stakeholders can understand local authority views on generic policy and other issues related to the aviation sector in the UK. The Group's resultant involvement in nationally important policy

forums, programme of guest speakers and access to key decision-makers and policy influencers, allows it to engage productively with a full range of stakeholders on aviation policy.

#### **Engagement with Whitehall Departments, CAA, CAST, ANEG and Aviation Minister**

- SASIG continues to be recognised as an important ‘strategic stakeholder’ by DfT with its views actively sought on issues relevant to local authority interest in airports. Among the topics SASIG discussed with departmental officials within the period of this report were long-term passenger demand, airport capacity, the need for a UK air freight strategy, new technology, airspace modernisation, economic benefits and planning issues relating to airport expansion and the sector’s continuing post-pandemic recovery.
- SASIG Chairman continues to represent local authorities on the board of the DfT’s Airspace Modernisation Stakeholder Engagement Group although the SASIG Policy Director deputised for him at the latest meeting held in June 2025.
- SASIG is a long-standing member of the DfT’s Airspace & Noise Engagement Group (ANEG). Three meetings were held in this period and SASIG attended all of them.
- SASIG’s profile in Advanced Air Mobility has continued to rise offering valuable experience and knowledge to members in the form of their own Drone Bureau, established in 2024 with full support from LGA.
- The Policy Director also sits on the Future of Flight Government Liaison Group and has offered industry briefing and policy advice to the LGA’s representative on the FFLG.
- The Policy Director is a member of CAAs Environment Information Forum and also attended a CAA webinar looking at proposed changes to the Air Navigation Directions and Air Navigation Guidance, held in January and attended a CAA engagement session regarding the UK Airspace Design Service in July 2025.
- SASIG regularly attends the CAA’s Combined Aerodrome Safeguarding Team (CAST) which was formed in January 2021 to co-ordinate future work and good practice. There was only one meeting in this period which was in August 2025.
- The CAA continues to seek SASIG’s views on other areas of its work programme including noise impacts. A CAA Noise Action Plan meeting which SASIG attended, was held in June.
- SASIG also sits on the CAA’s Environmental Policy Forum and attended meetings in July and November 2025.
- SASIG meets regularly with relevant officials from different Whitehall departments to make representations and promote co-operation with Government officials. The Chairman/Policy Director have approached the current Aviation Minister for a meeting.

#### **Engagement with Other Stakeholders**

- SASIG’s Secretariat continues to liaise with other prominent industry stakeholder groups including AOA, RABA, LEP Network, COSLA, BEIS, Key Cities, Aviation Environment Federation, National Planning Inspectorate and HSPG to name but a few. SASIG maintains links with other industry stakeholders including Connected Places Catapult, Oxford University, University of Surrey and with Innovate UK and their Future Flight Programme.
- SASIG completed its work alongside Regional & Business Airports Group (RABA) and the Independent Transport Commission (ITC) on a study looking at future policy challenges likely to be associated with emergent aviation technologies over the next 30 years. This report has been presented to government transport officials.

#### **Conferences and Public Fora**

As a result of changed work patterns arising from the pandemic, meetings (including our own members’ meetings) are often – though not always - on a virtual basis. SASIG has, this past year, received many invites to events organised by, amongst others, colleagues at DfT, CAA and HSPG.

#### **SASIG Bulletin**

This is a core service emailed monthly by the SASIG Secretariat to members. It contains: editorial; an events diary; ‘Monthly Highlights’ section; Parliamentary Q & As on aviation matters; news articles from the month covering Parliamentary News, Government News, Regional News, National and Other Industry News and European News and updates to the SASIG website (publications/ industry documents, etc). It provides a valuable resource, allowing Local Authorities to remain well-informed and take an active role in the aviation debate.

**Appendices:**

- **SASIG Mission Statement**
- **SASIG Terms of Reference**
- **Annual Membership Subscriptions**
- **SASIG Meetings Held**

**SASIG Mission Statement**

SASIG proactively contributes to ensure that UK aviation policy is implemented in a manner that reconciles economic, social and environmental issues. Advancing sustainable aviation policy on behalf of local communities.

**SASIG Terms of Reference**

1. The Strategic Aviation Special Interest Group (SASIG) shall provide the forum within the Local Government Association (LGA) for all local authorities to discuss strategic aviation policies and major aviation issues and advancing sustainable aviation policy on behalf of local communities.

2. SASIG will contribute to the work of the LGA in responding to Government and the European Commission on all aviation issues that have a strategic planning, transportation, land use, economic or environmental health dimension. SASIG, where appropriate, will work through and in conjunction with the LGA. SASIG will make representations direct to Government and elsewhere arising directly from the SIG's special interest. SASIG shall not act in a way that conflicts with or undermines LGA policy as a whole or damages the interests of member authorities.

3. SASIG will develop its role and pursue its objectives in accordance with an annual work programme, which will be kept under review so as to ensure consistency with LGA policy and meet with the aspirations of a wider membership.

4. SASIG will operate under the following constitution:

(i) Each authority in membership is entitled to designate one Member and/or one officer to attend each meeting of the Strategic Aviation Special Interest Group.

(ii) Whilst the Strategic Aviation Special Interest Group will seek to work by amicable agreement amongst the authorities, the formal position is that only one person from each member authority is entitled to vote.

(iii) There is no objection to additional Members and officers attending meetings to observe and speak with the permission of the Chairman.

(iv) A Chair's Advisory Group and a Technical Officers Group, with representatives drawn from around airport locations on the Strategic Aviation Special Interest Group, will be maintained to assist in taking initiatives forward but with no specific executive powers unless so authorised or at times when urgency dictates that responses must be made between meetings.

(v) A Chair and up to three Vice Chairs will be elected annually to ensure a broad geographical spread of interest.

(vi) The role of Honorary President and Vice Presidents may be filled by an appropriate person(s).

(vii) The Strategic Aviation Special Interest Group shall submit an annual report to the LGA and shall table other reports for LGA meetings as and when necessary.

(viii) The Strategic Aviation Special Interest Group shall set an annual subscription rate for membership based on an assessment of its likely annual expenditure on staff, consultants, printing/publicity and other costs. These costs will be apportioned between member authorities on a formula to be agreed.

(ix) Authorities joining SASIG in any quarter of the financial year shall pay the relevant proportion of the annual subscription.

(x) Authorities shall be advised of the forthcoming subscriptions each autumn for their approval. The absence of a response to the contrary indicates approval.

(xi) Authorities resigning from SASIG shall give notice in writing prior to the end of the financial year.

### **Annual Membership Subscriptions**

SASIG keeps its working methods and subscriptions under continuous review with the aim of keeping the subscription for its members at the lowest practical level. One effect is the current subscriptions remain unchanged since 2015/16. From April 2023 the Group's finances began to be managed under new financial protocols agreed with the membership, which placed governance relating to the approval, monitoring, direction and accounting for the collection and expenditure of SASIGs budget with the Chairman and the Chairman's Advisory Group (CAG).

### **SASIG Membership Meetings**

#### **Dates held – 25 June and 15 October 2025 and 25 February 2026 (all virtual)**

SASIG held 3 meetings across this period (all virtual) for the full membership including councillors, officers and invited guests. Members have been regularly updated on SASIG's work including its own LA Impact Study originating as a result of the pandemic and also a report on the challenges facing the aviation sector and what new technologies can contribute to dealing with them. This report (published 17 November 2025) was co-sponsored by SASIG in conjunction with the CAA and led by the Independent Transport Commission (ITC). Other areas of discussion included the modernisation of UK airspace, noise action plans, airport expansion and future airport capacity. Agendas at these meetings also placed a focus on SASIG's interest in the various consultations related to these issues. Other items covered at the member meetings included discussions on the reform of the NPPF, the airport National Policy Statement and the need for an Air Freight Strategy. The Groups' profile, funding and membership continue to be other regular topics.

Guest speaker at the June 2025 meeting was James Arnott, Commercial Director at Plowman Craven who gave a presentation: 'Adopting Drone Technology in Local Government'. Due to a full agenda, there was no room for a guest speaker at the October 2025 meeting, but the February 2026 meeting saw our guest speaker being Tim Johnson, Director for Communications, Policy and Strategy at the CAA. Tim gave an interesting talk on local authorities' relationship to UK aviation and the CAA. All our guests' presentations may be seen in the members' area on the website.

### **SASIG Members' Issue Specific Workshops**

SASIG regularly considers whether to hold issue specific workshops reflecting key areas of policy likely to be of interest to members and actively encourages representatives and colleagues from within the aviation industry (such as DfT, CAA, AOA, AEF, DEFRA and HSPG along with non-members), to participate alongside our member authorities. These workshops used to form part of the main meeting but with meetings continuing to be held virtually, the decision was taken to hold any such workshops separately in the future. In addition to these meetings the Chairman and Policy Director regularly schedule bilateral meetings with Member Authorities to understand the specific issues which are of most concern to them.

### **SASIG Chairman's Advisory Group (CAG)**

#### **Dates held – 5 June and 18 September 2025 and 20 January 2026**

The SASIG Chairman's Advisory Group (CAG) meets approximately 3-4 weeks prior to formal SASIG meetings, with additional meetings called to discuss specific topics as required. CAG has supported the Group with consideration of overarching issues, and review/comment on agenda papers for full SASIG meetings, including formal responses to consultations.



**SASIG Meeting: 17 June 2026  
Item 4(b)**

**Item 4: Review and approval of SASIG annual report for submission to the LGA (continued...)**

**(b) Shortened version (for LGA Board meeting) – see below**

This report was submitted to LGA on **1 June 2025** following approval by the Chairman's Advisory Group (CAG) held on 26 May 2026.

**Recommendation: Members are asked to note the report**



## Special Interest Group annual report to LGA Board

<b>SIG Name</b>	Strategic Aviation Special Interest Group (SASIG)
<b>Lead Member</b>	Keith Artus (Chairman)
<b>Lead Officer</b>	SASIG Secretariat c/o Northpoint Aviation Services

<b>Email</b>	<a href="mailto:secretariat@sasig.org.uk">secretariat@sasig.org.uk</a>
<b>Address</b>	SASIG Secretariat, c/o Northpoint Aviation London & South East Office, 4, Beacon Avenue, Kings Hill, West Malling, Kent, ME19 4QL
<b>Telephone</b>	01732 220256
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.sasig.org.uk">www.sasig.org.uk</a>

### Advancing sustainable aviation policy on behalf of local communities.

<b>Membership: 01/04/2025 - 31/03/2026</b>	
Cornwall Council	London Borough of Hounslow
Crawley Borough Council	London Borough of Richmond upon Thames
City of Doncaster Council	Reigate & Banstead Borough Council
East Hertfordshire District Council	Rushmoor Borough Council
Essex County Council	Southend-on-Sea City Council
Fareham Borough Council	Slough Borough Council
Hertfordshire County Council	Spelthorne Borough Council
Isles of Scilly Council	Uttlesford District Council
London Borough of Hillingdon	London Borough Wandsworth
<b>Affiliated</b>	
London Borough of Merton	
Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council	
Sheffield Metropolitan Borough Council	
Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council	
SASIG represents approximately 10 million people which equates to 15% of the population in the LGA's combined area. Airports covered by Member Authorities handled 75% of air passengers in England in 2019 and 65% in the UK overall.	
<b>Aims: SASIG's Core Objectives are:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to promote the need for long-term, sustainable aviation policies that lead to a reduction in the environmental impact of aviation whilst securing appropriate social and economic benefits.</li> <li>• to increase understanding of the local and global impacts of aviation on the environment and communities;</li> <li>• to identify and promote the changes needed to move towards sustainable aviation practices within the industry and Government; and</li> <li>• to work with other organisations and the Government on the formulation of policy advice.</li> </ul>	
<b>SASIG Policy Principles</b>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. To give the people of the UK the social and business opportunities to travel from their nearest airport where feasible.</li> <li>ii. To capture, not stifle, the social and economic benefits of aviation using robust and objective evidence.</li> <li>iii. To direct aviation growth to locations where it will assist sustainable economic regeneration.</li> <li>iv. To minimise adverse impacts – social, economic and environmental – by protecting people and non-transferable habitats.</li> <li>v. To ensure that the air transport sector rather than local communities pays the full costs of the impact of all air journeys.</li> <li>vi. To offer the aviation industry tough but realistic parameters based upon associated impacts around which to secure growth.</li> <li>vii. To ensure that good quality surface access links are provided to airports, particularly public transport links that create integrated transport hubs.</li> </ol>	

- |       |   |
|-------|---|
| viii. | To promote better point to point air services from regional airports, with sensitive control over all impacts.  |
| ix.   | To work with Government and other bodies to ensure that noise impacts arising from airport growth, airspace changes and flight path changes on local communities are minimised and mitigated.   |
| x.    | To support the coordination and integration of the full spectrum of national policies on issues relating to aviation. This must accord with international and regional policy making and implementation.  |
| xi.   | To promote investigation of the impacts of the air freight industry, supporting the development of air freight infrastructure where it is the most appropriate mode.  |
| xii.  | To encourage Governments and the aviation industry to make greater efforts to reduce aviation's impacts on climate change.  |
| xiii. | To instigate and design, in collaboration with external partners, innovative policies and methodologies for identifying, measuring and addressing effectively the noise, health, social infrastructure and wider strategic planning impacts of airport development. |

### **Annual Membership Subscriptions**

SASIG keeps its working methods and subscriptions under continuous review with the aim of keeping the subscription for its members at the lowest practical level. One effect is the current subscriptions remain unchanged since 2015/16. From April 2023 the Group's finances began to be managed under new financial protocols agreed with the membership, which placed governance relating to the approval, monitoring, direction and accounting for the collection and expenditure of SASIGs budget with the Chairman and the Chairman's Advisory Group (CAG).

### **SASIG strongly supports Government's work towards a national aviation policy that:**

- Is based on the need to control the impacts rather than the aviation activity.
- Has considered in detail all options for providing capacity to meet forecast demand, and for providing for other, lower levels of demand.
- Embraces the concept of integrated transport provision.
- Audits the parameters that should be used in any forecasts of future demand.
- Adopts an assessment process for aviation developments that explicitly includes all associated costs.
- Sets effective environmental limits for the aviation industry to meet, taking the appropriate form – regulation, charges, taxes, etc.
- Considers and mitigates against the impact of greenhouse gas emissions.
- Develops the economic analysis of aviation, and in particular improves valuation of the net impact – benefits and disbenefits.
- Coordinates with other transport policies and with other associated national policies, such as climate change, and energy policies.

### **Key Activities / Outcomes of work undertaken**

#### **Achievements 2025–26**

SASIG's influence on aviation policy was advanced on multiple fronts during 2025–26. The Group maintained active representation on the DfT's Airspace Modernisation Stakeholder Engagement Group, attended all three meetings of the Airspace and Noise Engagement Group (ANEG) and participated in the CAA's Environmental Policy Forum and Combined Aerodrome Safeguarding Team – ensuring member authority perspectives were embedded in the forums shaping UK airspace policy. The Policy Director's seat on the Future of Flight Government Liaison Group and the briefing provided to the LGA's own representative on that body further extended SASIG's reach into emerging aviation technology policy. The completion and presentation to Government of the joint SASIG–RABA–ITC study on long-term challenges associated with emergent aviation technologies marked a significant contribution to evidence-led national strategy, positioning member authorities as active participants in shaping – rather than simply responding to – the UK's aviation future.

Member value and governance were also consolidated. Subscriptions held at 2015–16 levels for a tenth successive year underline SASIG's commitment to cost discipline, while the financial governance reforms introduced in 2023 continue to strengthen accountability. The growing SASIG Drone Bureau – established with LGA support – provided members with timely expertise on Advanced Air Mobility. The monthly Bulletin, targeted bilateral engagement with member councils, and high-quality guest speakers – including the CAA's Director for Communications, Policy and Strategy at the February 2026 meeting – ensured that SASIG's 21 member authorities remained well-informed and well-connected throughout the year.

#### **National Representation**

With now nearly 30 years in existence as an LGA Special Interest Group, SASIG is recognised and respected

by the likes of DfT, DEFRA, MHCLG and other Government Departments - as well as key regulators and agencies (the CAA, Environment Agency, Border Force, UKRI etc) for its relevant and valued experience, knowledge, collaborative approach to engagement and consultation. It remains a sounding board through which Whitehall regulators, the industry and other stakeholders can understand local authority views on generic policy and other issues related to the aviation sector in the UK. The Group's resultant involvement in nationally important policy forums, programme of guest speakers and access to key decision-makers and policy influencers, allows it to engage productively with a full range of stakeholders on aviation policy debates.

#### **Engagement with Whitehall Departments, CAA, CAST, ANEG and Aviation Minister**

- SASIG continues to be recognised as an important 'strategic stakeholder' by DfT with its views actively sought on issues relevant to local authority interest in airports. Among the topics SASIG discussed with departmental officials within the period of this report were long-term passenger demand, airport capacity, the need for a UK air freight strategy, new technology, airspace modernisation, economic benefits and planning issues relating to airport expansion and the sector's continuing post-pandemic recovery.
- SASIG Chairman continues to represent local authorities on the board of the DfT's Airspace Modernisation Stakeholder Engagement Group although the SASIG Policy Director deputised for him at the latest meeting held in June 2025.
- SASIG is a long-standing member of the DfT's Airspace & Noise Engagement Group (ANEG). Three meetings were held in this period and SASIG attended all of them.
- SASIG's profile in Advanced Air Mobility has continued to rise by offering valuable experience and expertise to members in the form of their own Drone Bureau, established in 2024 with support from LGA.
- The Policy Director also sits on the Future of Flight Government Liaison Group and has offered industry briefing and policy advice to the LGA's representative on the FFLG.
- The Policy Director is a member of CAA's Environment Information Forum and attended a CAA webinar looking at proposed changes to the Air Navigation Directions and Air Navigation Guidance, held in January. He also attended a CAA engagement event on the UK Airspace Design Service in July 2025.
- SASIG regularly attends the CAA's Combined Aerodrome Safeguarding Team (CAST) which was formed in January 2021 to co-ordinate future work and good practice. There was only one meeting in this period which was in August 2025.
- The CAA continues to seek SASIG's views on other areas of its work programme including noise impacts. A CAA Noise Action Plan meeting which SASIG attended, was held in June.
- SASIG sits on the CAA's Environmental Policy Forum; we attended meetings in July and November 2025.
- SASIG meets regularly with relevant officials from different Whitehall departments to make representations and promote co-operation with Government officials. The Chairman/Policy Director have approached the latest Aviation Minister for a meeting in the near future.

#### **Engagement with Other Stakeholders**

- SASIG's Secretariat continues to liaise with other prominent industry stakeholder groups including AOA, RABA, LEP Network, COSLA, BEIS, Key Cities, Aviation Environment Federation, National Planning Inspectorate and HSPG to name but a few. SASIG maintains links with other industry stakeholders including Connected Places Catapult, Oxford University, University of Surrey and with Innovate UK and their Future Flight Programme.
- SASIG completed its work alongside Regional & Business Airports Group (RABA) and the Independent Transport Commission (ITC) on a study looking at future policy challenges likely to be associated with emergent aviation technologies over the next 30 years. This report has been presented to government transport officials.

#### **Conferences and Public Fora**

As a result of changed work patterns arising from the pandemic, meetings (including our own members' meetings) are often – though not always - on a virtual basis. SASIG has, this past year, received many invites to events organised by, amongst others, colleagues at DfT, CAA and HSPG.

#### **SASIG Bulletin**

This is a core service emailed monthly by the SASIG Secretariat to members. It contains: editorial; an events diary; 'Monthly Highlights' section; Parliamentary Q & As on aviation matters; news articles from the month covering Parliamentary News, Government News, Regional News, National and Other Industry News and European News and updates to the SASIG website (publications/ industry documents, etc). It provides a valuable resource, allowing Local Authorities to remain informed and take an active role in the aviation debate.





SASIG Meeting: 17 June 2026  
Item 5

**Item 5: SASIG Administration and Finances: update from Chairman and Policy Director:**

**a) SASIG: End of year financial position inc: subscription invoices and payments.**

The Policy Director will provide the latest details at the meeting to be followed thereafter with a formal statement of account when all transactions have been completed.

**b) SASIG Proposed budget for 2026-27**

The table below sets out the proposed budget for SASIG for 2026-27. It is in two parts: the first is a core budget which relies upon member subscriptions – increased this year for the first time in 10 years by 3%; the second and extended budget that would be possible if prospective sponsorship and new members come to fruition.

SASIG Proposed Budget 2026/27			
<b>Core Budget</b>		<b>Possible Extended Budget</b>	
<u>Income</u>		<u>Income</u>	
Projected 2025/26 Balance BF	720	Sponsorship Possible	3,000
Subscriptions Chargeable	37,190	New Member Potential	1,350
Vat Reclaim	7,438	VAT Reclaim	870
Sponsorship Likely	2,000		
VAT Reclaim	500		
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>47,848</b>	<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>3,148</b>
<u>Expenditure</u>		<u>Expenditure</u>	
Secretariat Fees	-36,000	Research Fees	-5,000
VAT	-7,200	VAT	-1,000
Expenses	-1,250		
VAT	-250		
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>-44,700</b>	<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>-6,000</b>
<b>Core EoY Balance</b>	<b>3,148</b>	<b>Extended EoY Balance</b>	<b>-2,852</b>

**Recommendation:** That members approve the two-part budget and the Secretariat keep them updated on progress with attracting sponsorship and new members.

### **c) Planned meetings with Members**

At CAG the possibility of arranging a webinar during the consultation on the Aviation National Policy Statement (ANPS) was discussed and agreed. This is likely to take place in September. The aim will be to invite guest speakers from DfT, CAA, TfL and other interested stakeholders to the event, which will also be open to non-members.

Workshops on Aviation Noise and Maximising the Economic Benefits of Airports are also under consideration.

Finally, the Chairman and Policy Director have been looking into organising a programme of bilateral meetings with current members to develop a better understanding of the aviation issues they are facing and how SASIG can tailor its support to assist them. It was decided to wait until after the results of the local elections, held last month, to ensure that the relevant person in each authority is in place before they reach out. However, if any member would like a one-to-one meeting with the Chairman and/or the Policy Director over a particular issue or concern, please do feel free to contact either of them via the Secretariat and they would be pleased to assist.

### **d) Update on membership recruitment and sponsors**

With the local elections now complete and results in, the Secretariat will begin in earnest looking at which non-member authorities to prioritise for contact/meetings, etc. with regard to possible membership of SASIG. There are two promising prospects.

As ever, this area of work is ongoing and can be quite lengthy as councils remain financially constricted in many areas of their budgets.

The Policy Director has had engagement with at least three companies that have expressed an interest in sponsoring SASIG in some form and can update Members.

### **e) Affiliate/Associate Members and Collaborations**

We are delighted to announce that Castle Donington, East Leake, Long Whatton, Diseworth and Kegworth Parish Councils, have now all joined us as affiliate members and invoices to all have been sent out with payments received. We are interested in having other Parish or Town Councils as Affiliates.

**Recommendation: that members note the content of this update**



**SASIG Meeting: 17 June 2026**  
**Item 6**

## **Item 6: Policy Developments since previous CAG meeting**

**Recommendations: that members note content of the update and comments are invited**

### **(a) Summary of recent external meetings held, planned and invitations received**

Below is a short summary of some of the meetings that SASIG – in particular, the Chairman and Policy Director - have attended since the previous SASIG meeting held on 25 February 2026:

#### **February:**

**25<sup>th</sup>: Airspace & Noise Engagement Group (ANEG)** meeting which included updates from DfT/CAA on their noise research, the night flight regime from Oct 28, Heathrow expansion and airspace modernisation. MHCLG also gave updates on consultations regarding the house buying and selling reform (next steps) and the National Planning Policy Framework. The Policy Director attended and can update members. The next meeting (online) is scheduled for 25 June - SASIG will be attending.

**Attached to this item are the following from this ANEG meeting:**

- **Item 6(a):** Draft ANEG minutes
- **Item 6(b):** DfT/CAA noise insulation schemes review
- **Item 6(c):** Sustainable Aviation presentation
- **Item 6(d):** AEF: community involvement in airspace modernization

#### **March:**

**4<sup>th</sup>:** SASIG Chairman along with the **Policy Director met with Amanda Lane, Airports Policy team lead, Airspace, Airports, Resilience & Connectivity Division at DfT** and will be able to update members on their discussion.

#### **April:**

**17<sup>th</sup>:** The Chairman and Policy Director had an online meeting with **Darryl Abelscroft, Technical Strategy Portfolio Manager, Future Safety & Innovation, CAA** to discuss his work around LAs and drones/eVTOLs plus key issues in these areas that SASIG are interested in.

**28<sup>th</sup>:** SASIG Policy Director was invited to and attended Jet2's parliamentary reception, '**More than just a holiday**' in the Thames Pavilion, Palace of Westminster.

**30<sup>th</sup>:** SASIG was invited to attend a **Combined Aerodrome Safeguarding Team (CAST) webinar:** ‘Overview of the New Obstacle Limitation Surfaces (OLS)’ which provided an overview of the new OLS framework due to come into effect in November 2030.

### **Forthcoming meetings:**

**Thursday: 25 June:** The next ANEG meeting is scheduled and SASIG will attend.

**Friday: 17 July:** SASIG will attend the CAA’s OLS (Obstacle Limitation Surfaces) workshop in Gatwick (there is also one in Scotland on 8 October) intended to support understanding of the new OLS framework, including its implementation. **This has been covered under Item 3.**

*Finally, following a letter sent from the SASIG Chairman to the Aviation Minister, Keir Mather, in February 2026, it remains a priority to arrange a meeting with him at some point in the future. This was discussed at the recent Chairman’s Advisory Group meeting.*

## **(b) Summary of HOC debate on LHR 3<sup>rd</sup> runway (14.5.26)**

### **Executive Summary**

The [adjournment debate](#), secured by Sarah Olney (LD, Richmond Park), focused on the Government’s support for a third runway at Heathrow. Liberal Democrat and some Conservative local MPs raised strong concerns about costs, environment, noise, health, and local impacts. The Labour Government Aviation Minister (Keir Mather) defended the principle of expansion on economic and connectivity grounds, subject to the four tests (growth, noise, air quality, climate) via an ongoing Airports National Policy Statement (ANPS) review, with public consultation planned for summer 2026 and parliamentary scrutiny.

Expansion is framed as privately financed, with an ambition for an operational third runway by 2035. Local MPs (directly affected constituencies) emphasised harms, while the Government and some speakers stressed national hub benefits.

### **Key Issues Raised Against Expansion**

#### **Economic viability**

- *Costs doubled; £49 billion construction + £100 billion carbon abatement + £15 billion surface access. Heathrow’s £15bn+ debt raises taxpayer bailout risks (Sarah Olney, Munira Wilson).*
- *Weak or negative NPV (£3.3bn to -£2.2bn, potentially worse excluding transfer passengers who contribute little to UK economy) (Olney).*
- *Lack of independent Government economic analysis; reliance on Heathrow’s internal figures (Olney).*
- *Outbound tourism exports more money than inbound (New Economics Foundation reference).*
- *Public sector burdens on infrastructure despite “private finance” claims (Danny Beales, Uxbridge & South Ruislip).*

#### **Environmental & Climate Change**

- *Nearly 300,000 extra flights annually; 8–9 MtCO<sub>2</sub> extra emissions per year. Heathrow already UK's largest carbon source; expansion would push airport emissions to ~20 Mt vs. CCC's 23 Mt aviation pathway for 2050 (Olney, Wilson).*
- *Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) not a silver bullet — CCC predicts only 17% by 2040 vs. higher Government/EU targets; international supply risks (China, US trade) (Olney, Wilson).*
- *Failure to show compliance with air quality limits.*

### **Noise, Health & Social Impacts**

- *~325,000 more people “significantly affected” by noise; up to 2.2 million impacted by 2050 (Olney, Wilson).*
- *Existing higher rates of stroke (24%), heart disease (21%), cardiovascular disease (14%) near Heathrow. WHO 45 dB health threshold concerns (Olney).*
- *Night flights and respite periods; demand for no increase in night flights and a 6.5-hour ban (Olney).*
- *Mental/physical health, sleep, work-from-home disruption.*

### **Surface Access & Delivery Risks**

- *Extra pressure on roads (M25), Elizabeth line, and local networks (Beales, Dr Ben Spencer – Runnymede & Weybridge).*
- *Historical infrastructure delivery failures (e.g., HS2 reference by Wilson).*

### **Scrutiny & Process**

- *Calls for full transparency, independent data, proper ANPS scrutiny (debate + vote), and publication of noise studies (Wilson, Olney).*

### **Key Issues Raised in Favour / Government Position**

#### **Economic Growth & Jobs**

- *Aviation contributes £23 billion to GDP and 240,000 jobs. Expansion supports apprenticeships, business, and regional growth (Keir Mather).*
- *Support from businesses, chambers of commerce, Federation of Small Businesses, and trade unions.*

#### **Capacity & Hub Role**

- *Heathrow at >95% capacity for decades; only UK hub airport. 73% of long-haul flights and 72% of international air freight by value (Mather).*
- *Unlocking capacity for international connectivity and freight crucial for UK competitiveness.*

#### **Four Tests & Mitigations**

- *Must pass economic growth, noise, air quality, and climate tests. ANPS review updating for latest data/policy; mitigations on noise (envelope, alternation, night ban), air quality, surface access mode share targets, and carbon (Mather).*

- *Privately financed; CAA to protect consumers on fares.* Surface access improvements (including potential rail links) part of promoter obligations.
- Opportunities for better rail access (western/southern links) beyond pure mitigation (Peter Swallow, Bracknell).

### **Process**

- Draft amended ANPS for consultation (summer 2026); parliamentary scrutiny (21 sitting days + Select Committee). DCO process with independent examination follows (Mather).

### **Local vs. National Perspectives**

**Directly impacted local MPs (mostly opposed):** Sarah Olney (Richmond Park), Munira Wilson (Twickenham), Danny Beales (Uxbridge & South Ruislip), Dr Ben Spencer (Runnymede & Weybridge), Lincoln Jopp (Spelthorne). These speakers focused on immediate noise, health, traffic, and quality-of-life harms to constituents, plus scepticism on financing and benefits.

**Broader/national view (supportive or balanced):** Minister Keir Mather (emphasising strategic national interest) and Peter Swallow (Bracknell – Labour, pressing for rail improvements while engaging positively on surface access).

### **Observations on Regional Connectivity, Hub Access, Air Cargo & Hub Role**

- **Hub Role:** Repeatedly highlighted as critical — Heathrow is the UK's only hub, enabling long-haul connectivity that regional airports cannot replicate. Capacity constraints are harming this role.
- **Air Cargo:** 72% of UK international air freight value passes through Heathrow; expansion seen as vital for supply chains.
- **Regional Connectivity & Surface Access:** Significant discussion on improving public transport mode share, rail links (western and southern), and mitigating M25/road impacts. Seen as both a challenge and opportunity to upgrade infrastructure for surrounding areas and broader south-east access (Swallow, Spencer, Minister). Minister committed to engagement and ANPS consideration of these issues.
- *Overall, the debate revealed a clear local-national tension, with the Government maintaining momentum via the ANPS route while acknowledging the need for robust mitigations and scrutiny.*

### **(c) Recent, current and forthcoming consultations and research reports**

#### **Current consultations:**

#### **Permitted development rights for onshore wind turbines in England (18 March – 10 June 2026)**

*18 March:* The government published a consultation seeking views on several proposals for permitted development rights (PDRs) for onshore wind in England. They were not proposing change existing domestic PDRs that apply to households or introduce a

new PDR for repowering or community energy projects but were seeking further views/feedback on changes that could support these types of development.

They were also consulting on a new PDR that would allow small-scale, non-domestic wind turbines to be installed without the need for a planning application, subject to a set of conditions and limitations, to support small-scale onshore wind deployment. By providing planning flexibilities for low-impact, small-scale installations, the proposed PDR aims to support a range of non-domestic settings including businesses, farms, and public sector organisations to reduce their bills, become more energy independent and decarbonise their operations. The consultation focused on the types of sites a PDR should apply to, proposed limitations/conditions to control impacts, and also the role of local planning authorities.

The consultation ran until 10 June 2026 and SASIG responded. **See Item 6(e).**

### **UK Emissions Trading Scheme: Treatment of sustainable aviation fuel**

**(23 March 2026 – 15 June 2026)**

In *June 2023*, the UK ETS Authority made a commitment to develop, then consult on, proposals regarding the claiming of emissions reductions from sustainable aviation fuels (SAF) by aircraft operators under the UK ETS. The Authority then sought views on options for the future treatment of SAF in the UK ETS. The aim is to ensure that SAF is accounted for appropriately in the UK ETS, taking into account interaction with the UK government's SAF Mandate which came into effect on 1 January 2025. It also considered potential operational changes to how SAF use under the UK ETS is regulated.

This consultation was published on 23 March and ran until 15 June 2026.

### **Draft advice on 1991 Traffic Distribution Rules (CAP3250)**

**(14 May 2026 – 26 June 2026)**

On 14 May, the CAA published a [consultation](#) on its draft advice to the Secretary of State in relation to the Traffic Distribution Rules 1991 – they advise that the SoS should revoke these rules. Under the TDRs, whole plane cargo services, or general or business aviation services, cannot be operated at Heathrow or Gatwick airports during periods of peak congestion without permission from the airport operator. The CAA is inviting responses by 26 June 2026 and plans to provide their final advice this summer.

### **Research Reports:**

Below is a list of recent aviation related research reports that members may be interested in taking a look at. Across these publications, several dominant research directions emerge which are:

- Decarbonization & Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF)
- AI & digital aviation systems
- Advanced Air Mobility (drones, eVTOLs)
- Air traffic data & surveillance improvements
- Safety (radiation, tracking, risk modelling)
- Economic resilience & airline profitability

**“Global Outlook for Air Transport (Dec 2025)” – IATA Sustainability & Economics**

This is a comprehensive macro-level analysis of airline economics, demand, and risks covering traffic growth, profitability, fuel costs, and global trends. It is widely used by airlines and regulators.

**“The State of Aviation 2025” – McKinsey & Company**

This is a strategic industry analysis combining economics, geopolitics, and airline strategy. It examines how airlines adapt fleets, schedules, and business models and is useful for high-level decision-making insights

**“Future of Flight Scenarios” – on behalf of UK Government (2025)**

This explores how uncrewed aircraft systems (UAS) and advanced air mobility (AAM) sectors might develop in the future.

**‘Destination 2050 (February 2025) - A Route to Net Zero European Aviation’**

This is an EU-supported industry + research roadmap with the goal to achieve net-zero aviation emissions by 2050. It integrates research priorities such as:

- SAF scaling
- air traffic optimisation
- new propulsion technologies

**(d) Brief round-up of other important developments since previous SASIG meeting**

Below is a round-up of some of the other more important developments/key issues since the last SASIG meeting in February:

**February:**

The Irish government announced it would 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 take 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.

**March:**

**17<sup>th</sup>:** Doncaster Sheffield Airport reached a significant milestone in its reopening strategy following publication of [Airspace Change Proposal documents](#) by the CAA. SASIG continues to be very supportive of Doncaster, one of our member authorities, with regard to the re-opening of its airport.

Also on this day, the Government’s [first annual report of the Jet Zero Taskforce 2025](#) was published. The taskforce was established in 2024 and brings together Government

and leaders from across the aviation and aerospace sectors, academia and NGOs to identify and remove barriers to aviation decarbonisation on the pathway to net zero.

**20<sup>th</sup>:** The [CAA released its 2025 data](#): 302 million passengers passed through UK airports last year - more than 825,000 a day, on average and an increase of 2% from the year prior. Also on this day, the [Royal Mail and Loganair launched the UK's first electric mail flights](#).

**27<sup>th</sup>:** In Northern Ireland, a new Aviation Policy consultation was launched by the NI Economy Minister in recognition of the importance of air connectivity to the Irish economy. The [consultation](#) ran until 22 May 2026.

**31<sup>st</sup>:** The CAA released information relating to Heathrow price control review H8. See the summary document (CAP3232) [here](#). More details and access to supporting documents can be seen [here](#) or go to the link: [H8 initial proposals and associated documents](#).

### **April:**

**1<sup>st</sup>:** Skybus announced it would end its daily service between Gatwick and Newquay nearly two months earlier than planned citing soaring fuel costs and reduced passenger numbers. The SASIG Chairman and Policy Director have had talks with our member authority Cornwall and airport representatives to offer support.

**2<sup>nd</sup>:** [‘Better Connected: a strategy for integrated transport’ was published](#). It outlines the Government’s long-term transport strategy.

**10<sup>th</sup>:** The EU’s new Entry/Exit System was fully launched and things did not get off to a great start. There were reports of huge queues and passengers missing flights throughout Europe after being unable to get through the system in enough time to make their flights and usually through no fault of their own.

**20<sup>th</sup>:** The CAA announced its draft decision on the regulatory treatment of early costs incurred by potential promoters of expansion at Heathrow airport. The draft decision, which is now subject to statutory consultation, confirms the CAA’s intention to allow Heathrow Airport Ltd to recover efficient early costs incurred during 2025 and 2026, up to a cap of £320 million (2024 prices). Early costs include planning and design costs which are needed to develop a credible expansion scheme at Heathrow, including preparation of material to support a future DCO application.

The decision would also allow Heathrow West Ltd to recover up to £4.3 million of early costs it had incurred up to 25 November 2025, when the Government announced Heathrow Airport Ltd’s proposals as its preferred scheme to expand capacity at Heathrow. As well as the cost cap, the CAA’s proposals outline strong consumer protections including the appointment of an independent technical expert to provide ongoing monitoring and assurance; requirements for the transparent reporting of costs; reopener mechanisms should there be a future change of circumstances, and a further efficiency review of these costs.

Following consideration of responses to this consultation, this summer the CAA will publish its final decision on early costs recovery and a statutory notice on the necessary modifications to Heathrow Airport Ltd's Licence. See below for access to the main document, steer report and others:

- [CAP3238 Draft Decision on the regulatory treatment of early costs of capacity expansion at Heathrow airport, April 2026](#)
- [Capacity expansion: Information relating to our work on Heathrow capacity expansion](#)

**23<sup>rd</sup>:** The CAA published [consultation reply document \(CAP3240\)](#) providing a summary of comments received and the CAA's response to the results of a consultation (7th November 2025 – 29 January 2026) on the policies needed to accommodate the safe use of new types of VTOL (Vertical Take-Off and Landing) aircraft. This consultation was to support the Government's objective to see piloted eVTOL operations in the UK from 2028 and it proposed to use existing aviation regulatory frameworks where possible, only introducing bespoke requirements where technical or operational characteristics mean that existing requirements cannot be applied.

Overall, the proposals in the consultation received strong levels of support. Across all questions, 85% of responses were positive and 7% were negative. Many respondents considered the CAA's proposals effective, proportionate and safety-enabling. Comments that disagreed with the proposals mostly requested further clarification or detail on how proposals would work in practice. Some respondents raised concerns about the international compatibility of the proposals.

The consultation reply document also sets out the following positions the CAA intend to take forward:

- **Definitions and Thresholds:** To classify new types of VTOL aircraft as Powered-Lift or Non-Conventional Helicopters, and to treat these aircraft as Complex Motor Powered Aircraft (CMPA) by default.
- **Initial Airworthiness:** To include new VTOL aircraft in the scope of existing initial airworthiness requirements.
- **Continuing Airworthiness:** To include new VTOL aircraft in the scope of existing continuing airworthiness requirements, and to determine any specific requirements needed for new VTOL aircraft maintenance.
- **Pilot Licensing:** To deliver a pilot licensing pathway to enable commercial and private pilot licence holders to fly new types of VTOL aircraft.
- **Flight Operations:** To apply existing flight operations regulatory requirements for aeroplanes and helicopters, or a combination of both, to new types of VTOL aircraft, as is appropriate to the specific type of aircraft.
- **Aerodromes:** To apply regulatory requirements for aerodromes - currently under review - to aerodromes accommodating new types of VTOL.

Further consultation will be required to gain feedback on policy detail and proposed changes to legislative text. When these consultations have concluded, the CAA will provide their final opinion and instructions to the DfT who will consider whether to progress with the proposals in a statutory instrument.

(To note: this consultation reply document can also be seen in the SASIG Library.)

Also published this month was **CAP3237**, the [UK Main National Aviation Safety Plan](#) (NASP) 2026-2029. This is directly linked to the Global Aviation Safety Plan (GASP) and Regional Aviation Safety Plan (EUR RASP) published by the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) and which complements the UK State Safety Programme. It contains Operational Key Risk Areas as well as Organisational Challenges and related Safety Enhancement Initiatives that the CAA will implement over the next 3 years.

Further details and access to the document can be seen [here](#) and the document can also be seen in the SASIG Library.

***May:***

**2<sup>nd</sup>:** The CAA published a new dedicated webpage setting out information on the updated ICAO [Obstacle Limitation Surfaces \(OLS\) framework](#). The page provides an overview of what is changing, why ICAO has introduced the new approach, and what this means for aerodromes, planners and other stakeholders.

Throughout the month, fallout from the Iran war continues with threats that many airlines across Europe and beyond, face possible shortages of jet fuel due to continuing blockades through the Straits of Hormuz.

This month Amazon began conducting drone parcel delivery flights out of its Darlington fulfilment centre in County Durham, with the northern town becoming the first location in the UK from which the retailer has launched Prime Air services using the MK30, Amazon's most advanced drone yet. The MK30 has received CAA approval to conduct operations. Packages weighing less than 5lb (2.2kg) and containing everyday items such as beauty products, bin liners and cables are now being delivered within a 7.5 mile (12km) radius of Amazon's fulfilment centre. More details can be seen [here](#) and [here](#). SASIG has approached Amazon for site visit at Darlington who have said that they will be happy to facilitate this later in the summer.

**14<sup>th</sup>:** the Government published its Civil Aviation Bill and a debate was held in the House of Commons on the 3<sup>rd</sup> runway at Heathrow. **Both of these will be covered in Item 7.**

**28<sup>th</sup>:** The CAA published their [Airspace Modernisation progress report for 2025 \(CAP3215\)](#) which provides their assessment of progress towards completion of each element. The CAA provide a Co-sponsors update on actions taken in 2025, followed by strategic risks and mitigations. Please note this report refers to progress made under the refreshed AMS published in June 2024. See the report itself [here](#).

***June:***

[Recent research](#) identified the UK airports most likely to benefit from new or restored connections to Heathrow, when additional airport capacity is delivered by a 3rd runway. The analysis highlights Belfast International, Cornwall Airport Newquay, Leeds Bradford Airport, Liverpool John Lennon and Teesside International Airport as the strongest candidates. More details are in the report: '[Heathrow expansion benefits](#)'.





SASIG Meeting: 17 June 2026  
Item 7

## Item 7: Civil Aviation Bill (14 May 2026)

**Recommendation:** that members note content of the item and invited to ask any questions they may have

### SASIG BRIEFING NOTE

## Civil Aviation (Consumer Protection and Regulatory Reform) Bill [HL] *Bill introduced on 14 May 2026*

### Executive Summary

The Civil Aviation (Consumer Protection and Regulatory Reform) Bill [HL], introduced on 14 May 2026 following the King's Speech 2026,<sup>1</sup> is an enabling Bill of unusually broad scope. While its consumer protection clauses (Part 1) and slot reform provisions (clause 7) have attracted most public commentary, for the local authorities that comprise SASIG — around fifty councils in or adjacent to airports of every category, collectively representing some fourteen million residents<sup>2</sup> — the Bill's most consequential features lie elsewhere. They are:

- (a) the **unprecedented delegation of substantive rule-making power to the Civil Aviation Authority** under new sections 61A–61J of the Civil Aviation Act 1982 (clause 8), covering the entire field of the Air Navigation Order and the assimilated single European sky and EASA regulations, with no requirement for parliamentary approval of CAA rules and only a generic duty to consult “such other persons as the CAA thinks appropriate”;<sup>3</sup>
- (b) the **extension of the CAA's airspace change implementation power** (clause 4), which now permits the CAA to direct implementation of approved proposals and of the findings of airspace design reviews, with no statutory consultation right for the planning authorities whose residents will live under altered flight paths;<sup>4</sup>
- (c) the **absence of any statutory duty on the face of the Bill to consult local authorities, to assess noise, air quality, public health or safeguarding impacts, or to provide for the cost of local authority engagement** in the new regime; and

<sup>1</sup>Civil Aviation (Consumer Protection and Regulatory Reform) Bill [HL], HL Bill 1 (as introduced, 14 May 2026); The King's Speech 2026, GOV.UK.

<sup>2</sup>SASIG describes itself as a forum within the Local Government Association for all local authorities to discuss strategic aviation policies; member authorities collectively represent populations of around 14 million. See SASIG Annual Reports to the LGA Board, 2024 and 2025.

<sup>3</sup>Bill, clause 8, inserting new sections 61A–61J Civil Aviation Act 1982; consultation duty in new section 61B(1)(b).

<sup>4</sup>Bill, clause 4, amending sections 2, 3 and 8 of the Air Traffic Management and Unmanned Aircraft Act 2021.

(d) a **widened criminal offence-creating power** (clause 9) extending to “any other person or any property”, with implications for ground-level third parties.<sup>5</sup>

The Bill’s most welcome feature, from a SASIG perspective, is that consumer protection regulations creating offences or civil penalties under clause 1 are made by affirmative procedure. Its central deficiency is that none of these positive procedural safeguards has been extended to the CAA rule-making regime in clause 8, which will become the principal vehicle for aviation regulation in the United Kingdom. Recommendations for MP intervention are set out in Section 4.

## 1. Introduction and Purpose

This Note (a) summarises the purpose and provisions of the Bill from a local authority perspective, (b) scrutinises it for the regulatory, financial, political and environmental impacts it could have on the local authorities that comprise SASIG, (c) examines the transfer of delegated powers to the CAA and the implications of that transfer for SASIG’s longstanding concerns about regulatory engagement, and (d) makes specific recommendations for parliamentary intervention. The Bill’s long title states that it makes provision for the protection of purchasers and users of air transport and airport services; about airspace change, air traffic and air navigation services and airport slots and schedules; to confer rule-making power on the Civil Aviation Authority; about aviation offences; and for connected purposes.<sup>6</sup> References are footnoted throughout and consolidated in the *Annex*.

## 2. Summary of Key Provisions

### 2.1 Part 1 — Consumer Protection (clauses 1–3 and Schedule 1)

Clause 1 confers a wide power on the Secretary of State to regulate by SI the rights of passengers and users of air transport and airport services, and the duties and liabilities of air transport service providers and airport operators.<sup>7</sup> The definition of “airport services” expressly includes facilities for car parking.<sup>8</sup> Particular topics include refused boarding, delay and cancellation, death or injury, baggage and cargo, price transparency, disability and reduced mobility, and information-provision duties. The enforcement toolkit includes mandatory ADR scheme membership, CAA/CMA/constable powers of entry and seizure, financial penalties and summary criminal offences; instruments creating offences or penalties are subject to the affirmative procedure.<sup>9</sup>

Clause 2 and Schedule 1 amend the Digital Markets, Competition and Consumers Act 2024 and Schedule 5 to the Consumer Rights Act 2015 to make the CAA a “direct enforcement authority” alongside the CMA, with notification protocols between the two regulators. A new Schedule 16A lists the enactments directly enforceable by the CAA in respect of breaches relating to air transport and airport services.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Bill, clause 9(2)–(3), amending section 61 Civil Aviation Act 1982.

<sup>6</sup>Bill, long title, HL Bill 1 (as introduced).

<sup>7</sup>Bill, clause 1(1)–(2).

<sup>8</sup>Bill, clause 1(8); “airport” and “airport operator” definitions imported from section 82(1) Airports Act 1986.

<sup>9</sup>Bill, clause 1(3)(a)–(f); affirmative procedure in clause 1(6).

<sup>10</sup>Bill, Schedule 1, paragraph 41, inserting new Schedule 16A into the Digital Markets, Competition and Consumers Act 2024.

## 2.2 Part 2 — Regulatory Reform (clauses 4–9 and Schedule 2)

**Airspace change (clause 4):** the CAA’s power to direct airspace change activity under the Air Traffic Management and Unmanned Aircraft Act 2021 is extended from progressing proposals to directing implementation of approved proposals, and to implementation of the findings of airspace design reviews. “Airspace design” is for the first time defined to mean “the structures of airspace and the routes and flight procedures within it”.<sup>11</sup>

**Air traffic services licences (clause 5 and Schedule 2):** the Transport Act 2000 licence modification, appeal, enforcement and information procedures are amended to introduce consultation rights for “persons specified under section 73(1)(b)” (a new class of those who pay for air traffic and air navigation services).

**Charges (clause 6):** section 73(1)(b) Transport Act 2000 is replaced so that the persons who pay charges for air traffic and air navigation services are no longer limited to aircraft operators, owners and aerodrome managers. They become “the persons (or descriptions of persons)” that the Secretary of State specifies; differential charging by class is permitted; and a person is liable if the services are available for their use or benefit, whether or not actually used.<sup>12</sup>

**Slots and schedules (clause 7):** a new section 34A Airports Act 1986 confers a power to regulate slot allocation and schedule co-ordination, including the designation of airports without statutory threshold, rules for new entrants, transfer/exchange/withdrawal of slots, use-it-or-lose-it thresholds, responses to discriminatory behaviour by overseas airports and a power to restate or replace Council Regulation (EEC) 95/93 and the Airports Slot Allocation Regulations 2006. Affirmative resolution applies, save for purely temporary use-it-or-lose-it modifications.<sup>13</sup>

**CAA rules (clause 8):** new sections 61A–61J Civil Aviation Act 1982 confer on the CAA a power to make rules (“CAA rules”) covering provision that could be made under an Air Navigation Order (other than section 61 compliance provisions and section 108 extra-territorial extensions) or that was contained in or could have been made under the framework, service provision, airspace and EASA Basic Regulations. Two procedures are created — a standard procedure (consultation plus website notice) and a fast-track procedure (website notice only) for urgent safety responses, “sufficiently minor” provision or restatements. A 21-day minimum notice applies generally, but is disapplied for urgent safety rules. The Secretary of State must issue (with CAA agreement) a priorities and objectives document and may give non-form-specific directions.

**Offences (clause 9):** the offence-creating power in section 61 Civil Aviation Act 1982 is widened so that offences can be created for breach of any provision relating to civil aviation made by or under any enactment, and the harm scope is extended from aircraft and persons in aircraft to “any other person or any property”.

## 2.3 Part 3 — General (clauses 10–13)

Clause 10 contains a Henry VIII power to make consequential provision. Clause 11 extends the Act to England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland (with a Northern Ireland carve-out from clause 7(4)(b) and (7)). Clauses 12–13 provide for staged commencement and the short title.

<sup>11</sup>New section 2(1)(ca) and (e) ATMUA 2021; definition inserted into section 8(1) ATMUA 2021 by Bill clause 4(4).

<sup>12</sup>New section 75(7) Transport Act 2000, substituted by Bill clause 6(3)(c).

<sup>13</sup>Bill, clause 7, inserting new section 34A Airports Act 1986; clause 7(7) repeals section 12 ATMUA 2021.

### 3. Scrutiny: Impact on SASIG Members

#### 3.1 Delegated powers transferred to the CAA — the central SASIG concern

The Bill represents the largest single transfer of substantive aviation rule-making authority to the CAA since the Authority's creation in 1972. The procedural safeguards on CAA rules are limited to: consultation with the Secretary of State and "such other persons as the CAA thinks appropriate"; a website notice of intention; a 21-day notice (disapplied for urgent safety cases); a Secretary of State priorities document (requiring CAA agreement); and directions that cannot dictate the content of rules. There is no requirement for parliamentary approval. The new Henry VIII power in section 61J then permits the Secretary of State to amend or repeal Acts of Parliament — including those preceded by detailed parliamentary scrutiny — in consequence of CAA rules.<sup>14</sup>

For SASIG this transfer is acutely problematic for three reasons.

**First**, the CAA's record on engagement with local authorities is uneven. Its primary statutory duties under section 4 Civil Aviation Act 1982 are to maintain a high standard of safety, to secure that British airlines' interests are not unreasonably prejudiced and to encourage efficient operations — duties whose centre of gravity is industry- rather than community-facing.<sup>15</sup> In SASIG's recurring experience, the CAA engages local authorities only where it has been specifically asked to do so or where a local authority has raised an issue. Airspace change processes (CAP1616), the Future Flight regulatory work-streams, AAM/UAS rule development, drone corridor design, vertiport siting, and aerodrome safeguarding consultations have historically suffered from this gap. The Bill institutionalises that gap: by moving substantive rule-making to the CAA without a statutory duty to consult representative local authority bodies, the result will be that the future regulatory regime for advanced air mobility, urban airspace and drone operations is built around the operator, not the affected community.

**Second**, the fast-track procedure in new section 61C is unusually wide. The CAA itself decides whether a proposed rule is "sufficiently minor" to bypass the consultation requirement, and the test for restatement is permissive: it allows changes for the purposes of "resolving ambiguities", "removing doubts or anomalies" or "facilitating improvements in the clarity or accessibility of the law (including by omitting anything which is legally unnecessary)". The cumulative effect of these limbs is that the boundary between restatement and substantive amendment is for the CAA to determine.<sup>16</sup>

**Third**, the scope of CAA rules captures provisions made by or under an Air Navigation Order, and the entire substantive subject matter of the SES and EASA Basic Regulations. Among the matters historically dealt with in the ANO and the EASA framework are rules on aerodromes (including aerodrome safeguarding), operating rules and licensing thresholds, rules on aerial work, rules on noise certification, rules on operations affecting overflowed communities, and (increasingly) rules on UAS and AAM operations. All of these matters bear directly on the planning, environmental health, public health and highways functions of SASIG members.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>New section 61J Civil Aviation Act 1982 (Bill clause 8(2)); affirmative procedure where the regulations amend an Act.

<sup>15</sup>Civil Aviation Act 1982, section 4 (general objectives of the CAA).

<sup>16</sup>New section 61C(1) and (3) Civil Aviation Act 1982 (Bill clause 8(2)).

<sup>17</sup>New section 61A(1)–(3) Civil Aviation Act 1982 (Bill clause 8(2)).

### 3.2 Additional regulatory burdens, costs and liabilities

**(a) Airport-owning and PSO route-funding authorities.** A material proportion of SASIG members are themselves owners of airports (whether directly or via joint ventures — for example the local authority shareholders of Manchester Airports Group) or are funders of public service obligation air services. To the extent regulations made under clause 1 impose new duties on airport operators, ADR scheme membership costs, price transparency requirements (including for council-owned or council-influenced airport car parks), or new disability and PRM duties, the financial impact is borne by the authority either as shareholder or as service-purchaser. None of these impacts is mitigated on the face of the Bill.

**(b) Charges for air traffic and air navigation services.** New section 75(7) Transport Act 2000, as substituted by clause 6(3)(c), permits the Secretary of State to specify as charge-payers persons for whom services are “available for their use or benefit, and it is immaterial whether or not the services are actually used or could be used by, or actually benefit or could benefit, them”. This wording could in principle catch local authorities that fund lifeline routes, vertiport operators owned or operated by local authorities, or future AAM operators within the authority’s area. SASIG members involved in surface access funding, AAM enablement or PSO route procurement should treat this clause as a potential source of unbudgeted future cost.

**(c) Inspection, entry and compelled-information powers (clause 1).** Regulations under clause 1(3)(b) may give the CAA, the CMA or a constable powers of entry, seizure and compelled answers, and powers to compel persons present on the premises to provide documents. Where a council operates the airport, or has officers physically on airport land in the discharge of trading standards, environmental health or planning enforcement functions, the interaction between these powers and the council’s own statutory functions will need to be worked out in secondary legislation. The Bill is silent on the point.

**(d) Direct enforcement overlap with Trading Standards.** Schedule 1 makes the CAA a direct enforcement authority for an extended list of aviation-related consumer enactments under new Schedule 16A to the Digital Markets, Competition and Consumers Act 2024. Local authorities currently exercise consumer protection enforcement under Schedule 5 to the Consumer Rights Act 2015 through Trading Standards, sometimes in respect of aviation-related conduct (e.g. mis-selling of travel-related products by businesses based in their area). The Bill makes no express provision for co-ordination between CAA and Trading Standards, leaving this to a secondary regulation-making power in new section 179A(2) of the 2024 Act.<sup>18</sup>

**(e) Liability and political exposure from airspace change directions.** Clause 4’s extension of the CAA’s directions power from “progressing” to “implementing” approved airspace changes and airspace design reviews will be highly visible in affected communities. Local authority members and officers are routinely the first port of call for residents adversely affected by altered flight paths, increased night noise or changed approach geometry. The Bill does not create any new duty on the CAA, ATS providers or airspace change sponsors to consult or engage the planning authority before implementation — only the existing CAP1616 process, which is a guidance instrument and not on the face of any statute, governs that engagement.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>18</sup>Bill, Schedule 1, paragraph 6, inserting new section 179A Digital Markets, Competition and Consumers Act 2024.

<sup>19</sup>CAP1616 (Airspace Change), Civil Aviation Authority; not made under statutory power.

### 3.3 Failure to consult and engage with local authorities

The Bill contains no provision requiring the CAA to consult representative bodies of local authorities before making rules under section 61A, or before agreeing the Secretary of State's priorities and objectives document under section 61F. Section 61B(1)(b) gives the CAA an unguided discretion to consult "such other persons as the CAA thinks appropriate", and section 61F(6)(b) places the decisive consent on the CAA, not on Parliament. The corresponding provisions in clause 1 (consumer protection) and new section 34A (slot regulation) are equally silent on local authority engagement, save in respect of CMA co-ordination.

Specific gaps deserving emphasis include:

- **Airspace change and design reviews (clause 4):** no statutory consultation right for the local planning authority whose residents will be exposed to altered noise, vibration or visual impact.
- **AAM, vertiports and drone corridors (clause 8):** the future rule-base will be made by the CAA. There is no requirement for engagement with the planning, public health or highways authority responsible for the ground-level infrastructure to which AAM operations connect.
- **Aerodrome safeguarding (clause 8):** rules with safeguarding implications can be made by CAA rules, and amended through fast-track restatements, without statutory engagement with the planning authority on which safeguarding consultation responsibilities depend.
- **Noise and emissions (clauses 4, 8 and Schedule 2):** section 78 of the Civil Aviation Act 1982 (noise abatement at designated airports) is not amended, but rule-making power over operations and procedures that materially affect noise distribution sits with the CAA.

### 3.4 Environmental, noise and public health considerations

The Bill's only environmental anchor is in new section 61F(2)(c), which permits — but does not require — the Secretary of State's priorities and objectives document to contain guidance on how the CAA "should interpret and apply the environmental principles when exercising its rule-making functions". "Environmental principles" is defined by reference to section 17(5) Environment Act 2021, which captures integration, prevention, rectification at source, polluter pays and precaution.<sup>20</sup> There is no equivalent duty in respect of noise (the principal local public health vector from aviation), local air quality at and around airports, climate or local biodiversity, and no duty to publish a public health impact assessment.

This is significant because the rule-making subject matter expressly captured in section 61A(3) — the SES and EASA Basic Regulations — includes provisions on flexible use of airspace, terminal procedures, navigation performance and operational restrictions, all of which have material noise and air quality consequences for communities under approach and departure routes. Local authorities have statutory duties under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 (statutory nuisance), the Environment Act 1995 (local air quality management) and the Health and Care Act 2022 (population health), and

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<sup>20</sup>New section 61F(8) Civil Aviation Act 1982 (Bill clause 8(2)); Environment Act 2021, section 17(5).

bear the cost of investigating noise complaints, monitoring air quality and supporting affected residents. None of these costs is recognised on the face of the Bill.<sup>21</sup>

### 3.5 Economic benefits and political exposure

There are potential economic benefits to SASIG members. A modernised airspace, particularly if the CAA's new implementation directions power is used to clear long-stalled programmes, can reduce noise and emissions over residential areas by enabling more direct routings, continuous descent operations and performance-based navigation. Where SASIG members host airports critical to regional economies, faster and clearer regulatory decision-making could support investment, jobs and surface access funding. The expansion of consumer protection enforcement to the CAA may also reduce the volume of constituent complaints local authority members currently receive on flight cancellation and refund issues.

These benefits are, however, contingent on the way secondary legislation and CAA rules are drafted. Without the proportionality, consultation and impact-assessment safeguards recommended below, the political exposure of members in airport-adjacent constituencies is likely to grow: implementation directions and CAA rules will be made with limited public visibility, but their consequences will be experienced locally.

### 3.6 Devolved and national considerations

Civil aviation is reserved to the UK Parliament under the Scotland Act 1998 and the Government of Wales Act 2006, and is similarly outside the Northern Ireland Assembly's competence.<sup>22</sup> The Bill extends to England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland save in respect of clause 7(4)(b) and (7). For SASIG members in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland the practical consequence is that decisions on noise, airspace, AAM and aerodrome regulation made under the new powers will be made centrally, with no statutory devolved consultation rights, and applied locally. The Bill contains no equivalent of a Highlands and Islands carve-out and no statutory duty to consider connectivity to remote communities.

### 3.7 Positive provisions

In fairness, the Bill carries several features that SASIG members can reasonably welcome:

- **Affirmative procedure for consumer offences and penalties (clause 1(6)).** Where regulations create criminal offences or civil financial penalties, the parent SI is subject to affirmative resolution in both Houses.
- **Defined "airspace design" (clause 4(4)).** The first statutory definition of "airspace design" places the concept on the face of primary legislation and may, over time, provide a hook for parliamentary scrutiny of CAA-led design work.
- **CMA notification protocols (Schedule 1).** The introduction of structured notification between the CAA and the CMA on direct enforcement steps reduces (if it does not eliminate) the risk of duplicate enforcement.
- **Annual CAA reporting (new section 61I).** The CAA is required to prepare an annual report on the exercise of its rule-making functions, send it to the Secretary of State, and the Secretary of State must lay it before Parliament — providing at least an ex post window into CAA rule-making practice.

<sup>21</sup>Environmental Protection Act 1990, Part III; Environment Act 1995, Part IV; Health and Care Act 2022, provisions relating to local authority public health functions.

<sup>22</sup>Scotland Act 1998, Schedule 5, Head E1; Government of Wales Act 2006, Schedule 7A.

#### 4. SASIG Recommendations for MP Interventions

The recommendations below are framed for SASIG members to put to constituency MPs and to members of the Bill committees in both Houses. Each is set out with a clear **what** and **why** so that MPs can use them directly in correspondence and amendments. Numbering is for ease of reference; the recommendations are not in priority order, although R1, R2, R4 and R5 are the most significant from a SASIG perspective.

- **S1. Statutory consultation duty on CAA rules.** Amend new section 61B(1)(b) Civil Aviation Act 1982 so that the CAA must consult, in addition to the Secretary of State and any other persons it thinks appropriate, (i) the Local Government Association and its Strategic Aviation Special Interest Group, and (ii) representative bodies of affected communities, where the proposed rules could materially affect local authority planning, environmental health, public health, highways or safeguarding functions.

*Why: the current formulation gives the CAA an unguided discretion and provides no minimum participation guarantee for the authorities that bear the local consequences of CAA rule-making.*

- **S2. Parliamentary oversight of CAA rules.** Amend new section 61D Civil Aviation Act 1982 so that CAA rule-making instruments are laid before Parliament and subject to the negative resolution procedure, save in genuine safety emergencies.

*Why: the Bill currently allows substantive primary-legislation-equivalent rules to be made by the CAA on consultation alone, with no parliamentary safeguard, on subject-matter that includes large parts of the SES and EASA regimes.*

- **S3. Confine and define the fast-track procedure.** Amend new section 61C(1)(b) to define “sufficiently minor”, or remove that limb and confine fast-track use to urgent safety responses and pure restatements that introduce no substantive change.

*Why: without a definition the CAA is the sole judge of what is minor; combined with the disapplication of the 21-day notice for urgent safety rules, fast-track has a wide potential field.*

- **S4. Statutory consultation of planning authorities on airspace change implementation.** Insert a new sub-section into section 2 Air Traffic Management and Unmanned Aircraft Act 2021 requiring the CAA, before giving a direction under section 2(1)(ca) or (e), to consult the local planning authorities whose area is materially affected and to publish a summary of how their representations have been addressed.

*Why: implementation directions crystallise noise, air quality and amenity impacts on identifiable communities; planning authorities should not be informed only via CAP1616, which is non-statutory guidance.*

- **S5. Public health and noise impact assessment.** Insert a new clause requiring that regulations made under clauses 1 or 7, and CAA rules made under section 61A which materially affect aircraft operations over residential areas, be accompanied by an impact assessment addressing (i) aircraft noise (including night noise), (ii) local air quality and (iii) population health effects on affected communities.

*Why: the Bill's only environmental hook is the optional environmental-principles guidance in section 61F(2)(c); there is no duty in respect of noise or population health, which are the principal local vectors of aviation impact.*

- **S6. Express provision for AAM, vertiports and drone operations.** Insert into clause 8 (or a new clause) a requirement that any CAA rules concerning unmanned aircraft systems, advanced air mobility operations, vertiport siting or operating standards, or drone corridors must be preceded by consultation with the LGA and with the planning, public health and highways authorities whose areas are affected.

*Why: AAM is the most significant area of upcoming aviation regulation; without a tailored consultation duty, the rule-base will be built around operators with no statutory voice for affected communities.*
- **S7. Safeguarding consultation.** Insert into new section 61A a requirement that, before making CAA rules with consequences for aerodrome safeguarding, the CAA must consult planning authorities on which safeguarding consultation responsibilities currently fall under the relevant Town and Country Planning safeguarding directions.

*Why: aerodrome safeguarding underpins development control around airports; rule changes that affect safeguarding zones, obstacle limitation surfaces or PSR/SSR performance should not be made without engaging the authorities that operate the safeguarding regime.*
- **S8. Statutory threshold for slot designation.** Amend new section 34A(2)(a) Airports Act 1986 to require that any airport designation order be supported by an evidence-based threshold (for example annual passenger throughput or movements, or evidence of sustained capacity constraint) and a published impact assessment specifically including noise distribution and surface access.

*Why: an unbounded designation power is disproportionate, and slot designation has direct noise, traffic and amenity consequences for adjacent communities.*
- **S9. Local authority consultation on ATS charge classes.** Insert into new section 75(7) Transport Act 2000 a requirement that, before specifying a class of charge-payers that includes local authorities or local authority-funded operations, the Secretary of State must consult the LGA and the local authorities concerned and publish an impact assessment.

*Why: the “available for use or benefit” trigger is sufficiently wide that local authorities funding PSO routes, AAM enablement projects or vertiport infrastructure could be designated charge-payers without any local-authority-specific consultation.*
- **S10. Narrow the offence-creating power in clause 9.** Amend clause 9(2) (3) so that the expanded offence-creating power and the extension to “any other person or any property” are confined to clearly identified categories of harm; in particular, ensure that the wider drafting cannot be used to criminalise lawful local authority planning, environmental health or surface access decisions.

*Why: the present drafting makes the criminal law contingent on the breadth of secondary legislation; affected ground-level interests should be on the face of the Bill.*
- **S11. Reserved subject-matter list.** Use new section 61A(7) — the Secretary of State’s power to specify matters that may not be made by CAA rules — by tabling an amendment requiring the Secretary of State to make initial regulations under that power, listing as minimum reservations matters materially affecting aerodrome safeguarding, noise abatement at non-designated airports, and AAM ground-infrastructure standards.

*Why: without such reservations, the practical scope of CAA rules is the whole of substantive aviation law.*

- **S12. Cost recovery for local authority engagement.** Insert a new clause enabling the Secretary of State to make provision for cost recovery, by local authorities from airspace change sponsors and rule beneficiaries, for the reasonable costs incurred by local authorities in responding to consultations under the new regime.

*Why: statutory consultation duties without corresponding cost recovery have historically resulted in local authority disengagement on resource grounds; the Bill should not create unfunded burdens.*

## 5. Conclusion

The Bill's centre of gravity is its delegation of substantive aviation rule-making to the CAA under clause 8 and the extension of the CAA's implementation directions power under clause 4. While the headline ambition — improved consumer protection, modernised airspace and air traffic regulation, and a unified UK-domestic regulatory architecture — is unobjectionable in principle, the deficiency from a SASIG perspective is the absence of any statutory duty on the face of the Bill to consult local authorities, to assess noise, air quality and public health impacts, or to take account of the local authority functions that interact with aviation regulation. The CAA's industry-orientation, while a natural consequence of its statutory remit, makes the present procedural safeguards inadequate. Without amendment along the lines set out in section 4, the regulatory regime that emerges from this Bill is likely to be built around operators and at hub-airport scale, with the local community and planning consequences left to be picked up retrospectively by local authorities — at their own cost, and without statutory recognition of their role. SASIG members are encouraged to take these recommendations to their constituency MPs as a matter of priority, given that primary-legislation amendments at Lords Committee or Report are the most efficient point of intervention before the powers are exercised in secondary legislation or rule making.

## Annex — References and Sources

All citations to clauses, sections and schedules in the body of this Note are to the Civil Aviation (Consumer Protection and Regulatory Reform) Bill [HL] (HL Bill 1, as introduced 14 May 2026) unless otherwise stated.

- Civil Aviation (Consumer Protection and Regulatory Reform) Bill [HL], HL Bill 1 (House of Lords, ordered to be printed 14 May 2026). Bill page: <https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/4125>. Current version: <https://bills.parliament.uk/publications/66343/documents/8251>.
- The King’s Speech 2026, GOV.UK: <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/the-kings-speech-2026>.
- Civil Aviation Act 1982 (as amended), in particular sections 4 (general objectives of the CAA), 60, 61, 78 (noise abatement) and 105 (interpretation); new sections 61A–61J as inserted by clause 8 of the Bill.
- Airports Act 1986 (as amended), in particular section 82(1) and new section 34A as inserted by clause 7 of the Bill.
- Transport Act 2000, Part 1, in particular sections 11A, 11B, 19A–19E, 73, 75, 76 and 81 (as amended by clauses 5–6 of, and Schedule 2 to, the Bill); Schedules A1, B1 and C1.
- Air Traffic Management and Unmanned Aircraft Act 2021, sections 2, 3, 8 and 12 (sections 2, 3 and 8 as amended by clause 4 of the Bill; section 12 repealed by clause 7(7) of the Bill).
- Digital Markets, Competition and Consumers Act 2024, Part 3 and Schedules 15 and 16, as amended by clause 2 of, and Schedule 1 to, the Bill (including new Schedule 16A).
- Consumer Rights Act 2015, Schedule 5 (investigatory powers etc.), as amended by Schedule 1 to the Bill.
- Environmental Protection Act 1990, Part III (statutory nuisance) — LA statutory duties relevant to aircraft and ground noise.
- Environment Act 1995, Part IV (local air quality management) — LA statutory duties at and around airports.
- Environment Act 2021, section 17(5) (environmental principles, as incorporated into new section 61F(8) Civil Aviation Act 1982).
- Health and Care Act 2022, provisions relating to local authority public health functions.
- Town and Country Planning (Safeguarded Aerodromes, Technical Sites and Military Explosives Storage Areas) Direction 2002, and equivalent Welsh and Scottish directions — aerodrome safeguarding consultation framework.
- CAP1616 (Airspace Change Process), Civil Aviation Authority — non-statutory guidance relied on for stakeholder engagement on airspace change.
- Strategic Aviation Special Interest Group (SASIG), Annual Reports to the LGA Board 2024 and 2025, Local Government Association: <https://www.local.gov.uk/about/our-meetings-and-leadership/special-interest-groups/strategic-aviation-special-interest-group>.
- Scotland Act 1998, Schedule 5, Head E1 (civil aviation reserved); Government of Wales Act 2006, Schedule 7A (corresponding reservation).
- Regulation (EC) No 261/2004 (denied boarding, delay and cancellation); Regulation (EC) No 1107/2006 (disabled persons and PRMs); Regulation (EC) No

- 2111/2005 (operating bans); Regulation (EC) No 1008/2008, Article 23 (price transparency) — assimilated direct legislation, listed in new Schedule 16A.
- Council Regulation (EEC) No 95/93 and the Airports Slot Allocation Regulations 2006 (SI 2006/2665), as amended by clause 7(4)–(5) of the Bill.
  - Regulation (EC) No 549/2004, 550/2004, 551/2004 (Single European Sky) and Regulation (EU) 2018/1139 (EASA Basic Regulation) — assimilated direct legislation identified in new section 61A(3) Civil Aviation Act 1982 as within the scope of CAA rule-making.
  - Regulatory Enforcement and Sanctions Act 2008, Schedule 7 (as amended by clause 1(9) of the Bill).



SASIG Meeting: 17 June 2026  
Item 8

## **Item 8: Discussion of Passenger Demand/Air Cargo Outlook and implications for UK airports**

**Recommendation: that members note content of item and attached report and participate in discussion**

### **Passenger Demand/Air Cargo Outlook and implications for UK airports**

Below is a summary on passenger demand and air cargo outlook along with their various implications for UK airports. Some research on this has been done and members are invited to read and discuss:

#### **Passenger Demand:**

The outlook for passenger demand at UK airports is structurally strong but increasingly constrained and volatile, with major implications for airport strategy, investment, and regulation.

#### **1. Short-term outlook (2025–2027)**

The CAA says that in the short-term, recovery will be strong but remains, perhaps, a little fragile. UK aviation has fully recovered and surpassed pre-pandemic levels, with 302 million passengers in 2025 (record high) and demand remains buoyant with 31% of consumers planning to fly more. Key drivers for these trips are leisure travel and visiting friends and relatives. However, short-term volatility has been rising due to geopolitical shocks (e.g. fuel supply disruption, airspace closures, conflicts, etc.) and cost pressures that reduce discretionary spending per passenger.

#### ***Implication:***

*Airports face a paradox—high volumes but unstable operating conditions, requiring resilience rather than just growth.*

#### **2. Medium-term outlook (to 2035):**

There is where demand will likely exceed capacity. Long-term, the demand remains structurally upward (income growth, global connectivity, tourism). Historic and forecast trends suggest 300m+ passengers has already been reached with ICAO saying that 345m passengers will pass through UK airports by 2030 if unconstrained.

Capacity constraint is therefore a key issue with London airports expected to be full by 2030 without new runways (again says ICAO). Growth will likely then increasingly shift to regional airports instead.

**Implications:**

*If there is to be sufficient capacity to meet prospective future demand, the need for additional capacity by 2035 becomes unavoidable. The DCOs for Gatwick/Luton expansion, the planning approvals at Stansted and London City should go a long way towards meeting this requirement, but in the longer terms further expansion will still be required.*

*Traffic should also become more regionalised with more growth in places like Manchester, Edinburgh, etc. Pricing pressure will continue with airport charges likely to rise to fund infrastructure (this has already been debated at Heathrow).*

**3) Long-term outlook (to 2050)**

Growth is likely to be constrained by sustainability with two competing forces shaping the long-term prospects for UK airports:

**(a) Strong underlying demand**

- Global demand is expected to more than double by mid-2040s, and
- ICAO says UK passenger demand could reach 520 million by 2050 (central unconstrained forecast).

**(b) Climate and policy constraints**

- The UK Climate Change Committee suggests passenger growth may need to be limited to no more than 400 million by 2050 to reach net zero compatibility goals.
- In its 2017 passenger demand forecasts, the DfT's modelling showed at least 409m passengers per year could be accommodated already at UK airports.
- Policies shaping demand may therefore include sustainable aviation fuel mandates; carbon pricing/taxes and associated demand management.

As a consequence, the Aviation Environment Federation (AEF) says that its analysis shows that this lower level of projected growth can be achieved *within existing* UK airport capacity, without the need for any extra airport expansion.

The Secretariat's estimate of *existing* capacity in the London system is 190-200mppa vs 180mppa using the six airports in 2025. But additional capacity has already been approved at:

*Gatwick (DCO) - 62.5 mppa from 42.5mppa in 2025 (i.e. +20mppa)*

*Luton (DCO) - 32.0 mppa from close to 18mppa in 2025 (i.e. +14mppa)*

*Stansted (Planning) - 43.0 mppa close to 30mppa in 2025 (i.e. +13mppa)*

*Giving a total of 47mppa already in the pipeline.*

With Regional Airports at 120mppa the putative gap to say 407 mppa would be 60mppa. The regional share of that is likely to be 40% so 24mppa and the remainder – 36mppa would/could be met either at a bigger Stansted (50mppa), Gatwick (70mppa) and London City/Southend (+7.5mppa) and a bigger regional share, or via a third

runway Heathrow.

**Implication:**

*Future demand is not policy-constrained in the short-term, but would become so in the long term. The debate in terms of passengers is therefore about 2036 onwards, and encompasses how much of the projected demand should be met and where?*

**4) What are the Key implications for UK airports?**

- a. **Capacity investment is critical but risky.** Airports must invest in runways, terminals, surface access, etc but they face regulatory uncertainty and a certain amount of political/environmental opposition. There is also a risk of stranded assets if demand is capped by climate policy.
- b. **Shift from volume growth → yield optimisation:** With constraints, airports will prioritise higher-value passengers/routes and encourage long-haul over short-haul but with the result of higher passenger charges and aeronautical revenues.
- c. **Regional airport growth opportunity:** Capacity limits in the South East will lead to spillover resulting in regional airports gaining additional traffic. This therefore could rebalance UK aviation geographically.
- d. **Increasing operational complexity:** Airports must manage:
  - Supply chain and fuel volatility
  - Airspace/geopolitical disruption
  - Higher passenger expectations

This, in turn, drives investment in automation and “smart airport” technology and places the focus on resilience and efficiency, not just expansion.

- e. **Sustainability transformation becomes central:** Net zero targets reshape airport strategy with the introduction of SAF infrastructure along with electrification of ground operations for example. Airports could increasingly become energy and sustainability hubs, not just transport nodes.

**In Summary:**

Demand outlook is strong and growing but there is a binding constraint in capacity (medium term) and carbon (long term) along with a strategic shift from “build more capacity” to “manage constrained growth efficiently”. UK airports are moving into a phase where success depends less on attracting passengers—and more on how they handle scarcity, regulation, and sustainability pressures.

**Air Cargo Outlook:**

Air cargo transport is more than just moving goods from one place to another. It is the lifeline of the economy, ensuring seamless connectivity between manufacturers and consumers worldwide. Aviation infrastructure is, of huge importance to the air freight industry and the six main London airports (Heathrow, Gatwick, Stansted, Luton, London City, and Southend) handle roughly three-quarters of the UK’s total air cargo—though the exact percentage varies slightly by year and dataset.

The dominance is largely driven by Heathrow alone handling the majority of UK cargo - well over half by itself in some datasets. Additional contributions come from Stansted, Gatwick, and Luton, which together add meaningful (though much smaller) volumes.

While London does dominate, a few non-London airports (especially East Midlands and Manchester) are also important cargo hubs—particularly for dedicated freight operators and express logistics. Even so, the concentration of long-haul passenger flights (which carry cargo in the hold) keeps London's share very high.

As has been highlighted by items at previous meetings:

Pressures on slots make it very difficult for freight volumes to be expanded at London airports. This is resulting in 500KT of the UK's 3.0MT exports and imports by air (and these account for 40% by value of trade) being trucked to or from Europe, which is inefficient economically, environmentally, financially and in terms of reliability; taken together it also make the UK far less competitive as a trading country.

By 2050 freight demand will have risen to 4.5-5.0MT and currently there is no plan as to how and where the additional capacity, much of which will need to be freighter led, can be accommodated. A UK air freight strategy is badly needed, but at the moment, DfT have no plans to produce one. SASIG is joining others in pressing for one to be developed urgently.

### Appendix: Sources of information:

The IATA Sustainability and Economics ‘Global Outlook, Trade, AI, and the Energy Transition’ – (published December 2025 and seen [here](#)), classes one of its key takeaways as being “*Global trade has been surprisingly resilient, despite the volatile trade policy environment. Air cargo came to everybody’s rescue as a critical enabler of rapid adaptation, ensuring that goods arrived ahead of announced tariff deadlines...*” “*Air cargo is also playing an increasingly central role in the growing trade in AI-related goods. While trade growth may slow in 2026, air cargo is well-positioned to remain robust, benefiting from AI-driven investment, growing demand for high-value, time-sensitive goods, and the structural shift toward e-commerce. In times of uncertainty, when speed matters most, air freight remains the preferred option. As a result, air cargo traffic is projected to grow by 2.6% in 2026*”.

And according to research company [Mordor Intelligence](#), in a report published in May 2025, the market for freight and logistics in the UK was estimated to be worth \$142.3 billion in 2025 and is expected to reach \$163.8 billion by 2030, with an average annual growth rate of 2.85%.

In January of this year, Airports Council International (ACI) World released its [World Airport Traffic Forecasts 2025–2054](#). Key highlights from this are:

- Global passenger traffic forecasted to reach 10.2 billion in 2026 (+3.9% YoY).
- Long-term demand remains strong with global passenger traffic projected to double by 2045 and reach 18.8 billion (3.4% CAGR).
- Although demand shows structural strength, it is increasingly uneven across regions, with mounting capacity constraints.

The long-term outlook is firmly positive. Global passenger traffic demand is projected to more than double by the mid-2040s, driven primarily by emerging and developing markets. However, this growth is increasingly accompanied by:

- **Capacity constraints**, such as airport infrastructure limitations and aircraft delivery challenges.
- **Uneven regional growth**, with some markets significantly outperforming while others structurally lag.
- **Operational complexity**, driven by supply-chain disruptions, geopolitical uncertainty and sustainability imperatives.

The **Executive Summary** from this document may be seen [here](#).

*To note: figures may change if the underlying data is updated so for the most accurate information, it is recommended to always check the latest dataset or report.*





**SASIG Meeting: 17 June 2026  
Item 9**

## **Item 9: CAA Aviation Consumer Survey 2025 - Results**

### **Recommendation: that members note content of item and attached report and participate in discussion**

The 2025 Aviation Consumer Survey (**attached to this item at 9(a)**) shows that flying demand in the UK remains strong, with 62% of consumers having flown in the past year — the highest sustained level since tracking began in 2016. Younger consumers continue to dominate air travel and are more likely to fly frequently and increase their travel in 2026, while older consumers expect their flying habits to remain largely unchanged. Affordability remains the biggest barrier to flying, especially among non-flyers, with 36% citing financial limitations as the main reason for not travelling by air.

Overall satisfaction with air travel has reached a record high, with 88% of passengers reporting positive experiences. However, satisfaction is lower among vulnerable groups, including passengers with disabilities, digital barriers, and financial challenges. The report highlights that consumer vulnerability can arise from accessibility needs, communication or language barriers, digital exclusion, financial hardship, or personal circumstances. Although satisfaction is generally high, these groups face more obstacles throughout the travel journey.

Disabled passengers continue to encounter significant difficulties when flying. Nearly 60% report challenges accessing airports or using air travel services, particularly related to walking, standing, and managing luggage. These barriers contribute to lower flying frequency compared to non-disabled consumers. Complaint handling is a notable weak point, with satisfaction among disabled passengers lower than among non-disabled passengers. The report also finds that passengers with disabilities, digital vulnerabilities, or communication barriers are more likely to require support at airports, including help using technology or understanding procedures.

Cost remains consumers' top priority when flying, with over half of passengers actively choosing lower-cost options such as inconvenient flight times or hand-luggage-only fares. While most travellers believe they understand what is included in their airfare, awareness of additional charges remains inconsistent. Many passengers are still unaware of fees such as booking charges or penalties for printing boarding passes at the airport. Despite concerns about hidden costs, satisfaction with value for money has recovered to pre-2022 levels.

Travel disruption remains a major issue, although the proportion of passengers experiencing problems has declined slightly since 2024. More than half of affected

passengers say they were not informed of their rights during disruptions, and many remain unclear about terms such as refunds, compensation, and reimbursement. Communication during delays and cancellations is often inconsistent, with passengers frequently relying on passive updates such as airport screens. Many travellers also report receiving inadequate guidance on accessing support during disruptions.

At the same time, complaint handling has improved considerably, with satisfaction increasing to 72% due to better access to support, quicker responses, and smoother processes. However, disruption management and complaint handling still score lower than other aspects of the passenger journey. Older passengers are especially vulnerable to information gaps, reporting lower awareness of their rights and less confidence in escalating complaints.

Overall, the survey concludes that while the aviation sector has continued to recover strongly since the pandemic and passenger satisfaction is at a record high, important inequalities remain. Younger consumers are driving growth in air travel, while vulnerable and older passengers continue to face greater barriers and poorer outcomes. The report emphasizes the need for policymakers, airlines, and airports to prioritise accessibility, communication, and consumer support to ensure the aviation experience better meets the needs of all passengers.



**SASIG Meeting: 17 June 2026**  
**Item 10**

## **Item 10: Developing an Evidence Base on Economic and Social Value of Airports and how these can be Maximised (Scope, purpose and potential collaborations)**

**Recommendation:** that members note content of the item and support further work from the Secretariat to develop a paper setting out how the local and regional economic and social benefits of airports can be maximised and the role than Local Authorities can play in delivering this.

### **Introduction:**

It is important to recognise that Airports are not just transport infrastructure - they are also regional economic platforms and also support a range of social and cultural systems that are vital to local communities throughout the UK. This draft paper, when finalised, is intended to highlight to members the economic/social value of the airports within their own boundaries and their importance to the surrounding community. It will be used as evidence to argue for a new policy focus aimed at maximising the opportunities airports present to create sustainable economic and social value rather than simply supporting airport growth for its own sake.

### **How Airport Value Can Be Maximised:**

Maximising value requires shifting from “infrastructure provider” through to “economic ecosystem orchestrator.” An airport’s value is maximised by such as the following:

#### **a) Enhance Connectivity Quality (not just volume)**

- Target high-value routes (business, trade links, etc.
- Improve frequency, reliability, and global reach
- Evidence shows connectivity increases economic activity directly

#### **b) Develop Airport-Centric Economic Clusters**

- Aerotropolis/airport cities
- Logistics hubs, freeports, innovation zones
- Co-location of aerospace, manufacturing, and tech firms

#### **c) Improve Surface Access & Integration**

- Rail, metro, and last-mile connectivity
- Integration with national transport systems
- Reduces congestion and expands labour catchment

#### **d) Drive Non-Aeronautical Revenue & Value**

- Retail, real estate, cargo, digital services
- Business parks and commercial property development

#### **e) Workforce & Skills Development**

- Apprenticeships and training academies
- Partnerships with universities and technical colleges

#### **f) Digitalisation & Operational Efficiency**

- Smart airports (AI, data platforms, automation)
- Reduced delays - increased economic efficiency

#### **g) Sustainability Leadership**

- Net-zero strategies (SAF, electrification, efficiency)
- Community mitigation (noise insulation, local investment funds)
- Evidence suggests sustainability investment can improve performance

#### **Potential Collaborations**

Opportunities for collaboration aligns incentives across public, private, and community stakeholders for airports. There are many ways to achieve collaboration which will ensure the success of an airport, such as the following:

#### **a) Government & Public Sector**

- National transport and industrial policy alignment
- Local authorities (land use, planning, housing)
- Economic development agencies

#### **b) Private Sector**

- Airlines (route development partnerships)
- Logistics and freight operators
- Real estate developers (airport cities)
- Technology firms (smart airport solutions)

#### **c) Academia & Research Institutions**

- Economic modelling (input-output, CGE models)
- Social impact assessment
- Environmental and sustainability research

#### **d) Communities & Civil Society**

- Co-design of mitigation strategies
- Social value frameworks (jobs, inclusion, wellbeing)

#### **e) International & Industry Bodies**

- Aviation organisations (e.g., ACI, EUROCONTROL, UKRI, etc.)
- Cross-airport benchmarking and best practice sharing

continued...

### **Some Case Study Insights**

Appendix A sets out some case studies which help to demonstrate Regional airports do not need high passenger numbers—specialisation can deliver strong economic value.

Connectivity type matters more than size and regional UK airports create value in different but complementary ways. Some, such as Manchester, drive global competitiveness whilst others i.e. Bristol enable regional growth and tourism. Going further, some anchor industrial clusters – Glasgow Prestwick for instance - whilst others provide essential connectivity and social value. Newquay is a good example of the latter.

### **Conclusion and Proposal**

**Using existing literature and their own data and analysis, and contributions from SASIG Members, it is proposed that the Secretariat develop an analysis along these lines to support:**

- (a) A presentation to the LGA Inclusive Growth Committee**
- (b) A policy paper to the Aviation Minister when SASIG secures its meeting with him.**

**The first step will be an initial draft paper for discussion at a Workshop in September and the second would be to incorporate feedback from that process and produce a final document to be used as suggested above.**

**continued.....**

## **Appendix: Regional Airport Case studies:**

Below are four case studies of UK regional airports to perhaps help illustrate some of the points raised above and to demonstrate in particular how important regional airports are to the UK economy and the wider ecosystem.

### **Manchester Airport – Large Regional Gateway**

Manchester Airport is considered by many as perhaps the largest regional global gateway in the UK outside London.

#### **Economic value:**

- Supports tens of thousands of jobs directly and indirectly
- Major contributor to the Northern economy
- Strong long-haul connectivity (North America, Middle East, Asia)
- Anchor for the “Northern Powerhouse” growth strategy

#### **Value drivers:**

- Connectivity-led growth: extensive route network reduces reliance on London hubs
- Airport City Manchester: a large-scale “aerotropolis” development including offices, logistics, hotels
- Strong integration with rail and road networks

#### **Social value:**

- Expands access to global travel for Northern populations
- Significant apprenticeship and skills programmes
- Local regeneration and employment in surrounding boroughs

#### **Key insight:**

Manchester Airport demonstrates how a regional airport can act as a national-scale economic engine, not just a local asset.

### **Bristol Airport – Medium Regional**

Bristol Airport could be classed as a high-growth regional connector. It is a fast-growing regional gateway that is increasingly connecting the UK’s South West to Europe—and it is aiming to expand into long-haul markets—but it still relies on larger UK hubs to fill key connectivity gaps. It is therefore better described as an emerging / scaling connector rather than a mature hub

#### **Economic value:**

- One of the fastest-growing UK airports pre-pandemic
- Strong short-haul European connectivity supporting tourism and SME business travel
- Important for the South West economy, which lacks rail alternatives to Europe

#### **Value drivers:**

- Focus on point-to-point leisure and low-cost carriers
- Expansion projects to increase capacity and passenger throughput
- Strong airline partnerships (e.g. easyJet, Ryanair-type models)

**Social value:**

- Improves regional accessibility (historically the south-west is an under-connected region)
- Supports outbound and inbound tourism economy
- However, it does face community opposition (noise, expansion and environment concerns, etc)

**Key insight:**

Bristol Airport shows trade-offs between growth and social licence, especially in environmentally sensitive areas.

**Cornwall Airport Newquay – Small Regional**

Cornwall Airport Newquay's location is stunningly beautiful but one that is geographically at a disadvantage being at the furthest end of one point of the UK. It is therefore a lifeline of connectivity for its communities, to the rest of the UK.

**Economic value:**

- Smaller scale but high strategic importance
- Supports tourism (core regional industry) and until recently provided connectivity to London via a Public Service Obligation (PSO) route

**Value drivers:**

- Until very recently, it had a Government-supported route to London to maintain essential connectivity.
- It has a considerable space to grow i.e. a business park and an aerospace cluster (Spaceport Cornwall initiative)

**Social value:**

- Reduces geographic isolation
- Enables access to healthcare, education and employment opportunities

**Key insight**

Highlights social and territorial cohesion value, beyond pure economic metrics.

**Glasgow Prestwick Airport – Small Special Mission**

Glasgow Prestwick Airport is also a niche cargo, aerospace and training hub.

**Economic value:**

- Smaller passenger volumes, but strong in air cargo, aircraft maintenance, repair and overhaul (MRO) along with Aerospace training

- Supports high-skill, high-wage jobs

**Value drivers:**

- Specialisation rather than scale
- Strategic location for transatlantic cargo and refuelling
- Public ownership enables alignment with regional policy goals

**Social value:**

- Critical employer in a post-industrial region
- Skills development in aviation engineering
- Anchors regional economic resilience



**SASIG Meeting: 17 June 2026**  
**Item 11**

**Item 11: A.O.B.**

Just to note: due to continuing uncertainty regarding the roles, responsibilities and portfolio adjustments in some of our member councils, following the recent council elections, the decision was taken at the last Chairman's Advisory Group meeting held in May, to adjourn the nominations for Chairman and Vice Chairman positions until the next members' meeting later this year.

Our Chairman, Keith Artus is happy to continue in this role and will be seeking re-election for the forthcoming year 2026-27. There will also be up to three vacancies available for the position of Vice Chairmen. Anyone interested in either of these positions, should notify the Secretariat at their earliest opportunity.





**SASIG Meeting: 17 June 2026  
Item 12**

**Item 12: Future dates in 2026 for SASIG/CAG and any additional meetings plus plans for future speakers, workshops and webinars**

**Recommendation: that members note all dates for their diaries.**

**SASIG Full Members Meetings:**

Additional dates for SASIG meetings for 2026 to be decided.

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

Additional dates for CAG for 2026 to be decided.

**Plans for future speakers, workshops and webinars**

The Chairman and Policy Director will discuss with members their ideas for forthcoming speakers and their topics for future SASIG meetings and any proposed additional workshops.

It is proposed to hold an online webinar – possibly in September - split into two sessions which will cover two of the following subjects:

- (a) Aviation National Policy Statement/Heathrow Third Runway,
- (b) Noise Policy and/or
- (c) Economic Development

There is the possibility of this webinar being advertised within the LGA's own 'First' magazine (or any other appropriate LGA Bulletin) and for SASIG to be able to use LGA mail out facilities if the subject of the webinar is of interest to all local authorities and also fits in with LGA priorities.

