

SASIG AVIATION BULLETIN

Aviation News & Policy

May 2026



SASIG's monthly Aviation Bulletin provides LGA members, affiliates and associate members with focused insights into the parliamentary, policy and industry developments shaping the future direction of the aviation sector in the UK.

Editorial

Civil Aviation Bill

May 2026 was a significant month for UK aviation policy. **The King's Speech on 13 May introduced a Civil Aviation Bill covering airport expansion, slot allocation reform and strengthened CAA enforcement powers.** Its arrival coincided with a developing fuel supply crisis linked to the closure of the Strait of Hormuz, requiring parallel ministerial attention to both long-term legislative reform and immediate contingency planning.

Heathrow

Heathrow remained the dominant UK policy issue. The CAA's CAP3251 consultation, launched on 15 May, examines four regulatory models for capacity expansion, including an alternative developer model under which a separate entity would finance, build and operate a new terminal in competition with Heathrow Airport Limited – a structurally significant departure from the existing framework. Concurrently, Transport Secretary Heidi Alexander convened senior airline executives on 30 April to address emergency slot alleviation in response to potential jet fuel disruption from the Strait of Hormuz closure. **The proximity of these two developments illustrates the dual pressures bearing on UK aviation policy: structural reform and operational resilience.**

Action for Members!

Two developments warrant particular attention from member authorities. The revised Airports National Policy Statement (ANPS), expected for consultation in June, will set the policy framework for Heathrow expansion and is likely to address noise, air quality, climate and community mitigation in terms directly relevant to local planning functions. In parallel, CAA data confirming record Q1 2026 passenger volumes – 61.4 million, up 2% year-on-year – underlines the demand context within which capacity decisions are being made, notwithstanding a 20% decline in UK–Dubai traffic attributable to regional conflict.

NATS

The amendment to the NATS licence on 6 May formally established the UK Airspace Design Service (UKADS), providing the coordination mechanism for airspace modernisation that underpins any future runway expansion at Heathrow. Regionally, the month's data reflected strong demand: Scottish airports recorded record Q1 passenger numbers, **Manchester Airport announced twelve additional summer routes, and Edinburgh Airport revised its drop-off charges upward** – developments consistent with a sector operating at or near capacity across multiple regions.

Chris Cain
Policy Director, SASIG

Monthly Highlights

Key stories from this month at a glance:

- **2 May 2026** – [DfT announces emergency slot alleviation measures](#) – Airlines at eight coordinated airports may hand back a limited proportion of slots without losing historic rights, in response to potential jet fuel disruption linked to the Strait of Hormuz closure.
- **6 May 2026** – [NATS licence amended – UK Airspace Design Service \(UKADS\) launched](#) – Changes to NATS' ATS licence give it new responsibilities for coordinating and designing airspace change across the UK.
- **13 May 2026** – [King's Speech – Civil Aviation Bill announced](#) – Government's legislative programme includes a Civil Aviation Bill to unlock airport expansion, reform slots and strengthen passenger rights.
- **14 May 2026** – [Heathrow Third Runway – Commons Adjournment Debate](#) – Government reaffirms ambition for an operational third runway by 2035; ANPS consultation expected by July 2026.
- **15 May 2026** – [CAA consults on Heathrow regulatory models \(CAP3251\)](#) – Consultation open until 15 June 2026 covering four shortlisted models, including an alternative developer option.
- **27 May 2026** – [UK aviation hits record Q1 2026 passenger numbers](#) – Over 61.4 million passengers travelled through UK airports in Q1 2026, up 2% year-on-year – the highest first-quarter figure on record.

Potential Actions for Local Authorities

Items for member consideration this month:

- Respond to CAA consultation CAP3251 on Heathrow regulatory models (closing 15 June 2026) – relevant to any authority within the Heathrow expansion impact area.
- Note the Civil Aviation Bill introduction – slot reform and passenger rights provisions may affect regional connectivity discussions in the new Parliament.
- Prepare for forthcoming DfT consultation on revised Airports National Policy Statement (ANPS), expected by July 2026 – relevant to all councils within or near expanded airport footprints.

SASIG Activities This Month

- Chairmans Advisory Group (CAG) meeting was held on the 26 May 2026
- Policy Director met DfT officials to discuss concerns about the absence of an air freight policy.
- Members were kept informed of the forthcoming new Obstacle Limitation Surfaces framework – SASIG will be attending an important workshop on this in July.
- Policy Director developed submission paper in response to Government consultation on Permitted Development Rights (PDRs) for onshore wind turbines in England.

Events, Meetings & Consultations

SASIG Meetings

Note: SASIG meetings continue to be held predominantly online. Please confirm arrangements with the Secretariat before making travel plans.

SASIG Members' Meeting: Wednesday: 17th June 2026 (Online)

SASIG Members' Meeting: Tuesday: 6th October 2026 (Online)

Open Consultations

Closing 15 June 2026: [CAA CAP3251: Heathrow capacity expansion – consultation on a shortlist of regulatory models](#) – Four shortlisted models for how capacity expansion at Heathrow should be regulated, from enhanced existing framework to alternative developer model. High-level update from CAA expected July 2026.

Expected by July 2026: [DfT – Draft Airports National Policy Statement \(ANPS\) revision](#) – Revised ANPS to be published for public consultation covering updated policy for Heathrow third runway and wider airport capacity, incorporating four tests: climate, air quality, noise and economic growth.

Ongoing: [DfT – Temporary slot alleviation measures – Summer/Winter 2026 seasons](#) – Industry views sought on temporary measures allowing airlines to consolidate schedules without losing historic slot rights, linked to potential jet fuel disruption from the Strait of Hormuz.

Forthcoming – CAA summer 2026: [Revised CAP 1616 Airspace Change Process Guidance](#) – CAA is updating the airspace change process to accommodate the new UKADS model. Consultation expected summer 2026.

External Conferences & Events

3–5 June 2026: [ACI Europe Annual Congress & Exhibition](#), Maastricht, Netherlands

20–22 July 2026: [Farnborough International Airshow 2026](#), Farnborough, Hampshire

Parliamentary & Government News

Transport Questions: House of Commons

The House rose on the 21 May 2026 for the Whitsun Recess and will return 1 June 2026

13 May 2026 – [King's Speech – Civil Aviation Bill](#) – State Opening of Parliament introduced the Civil Aviation Bill to unlock airport expansion benefits, reform slot allocation, consolidate aviation safety legislation and support the UK Airspace Design Service. Also announced: Northern Powerhouse Rail Bill and Highways (Financing) Bill for the Lower Thames Crossing.

14 May 2026 – [Heathrow Airport: Third Runway – Adjournment Debate \(Commons\)](#) – Sarah Olney MP (Richmond Park, LD) led the debate challenging expansion economics and climate compliance. Aviation Minister Keir Mather reaffirmed the government's ambition for an operational third runway by 2035, confirming that taxpayers will not bear the cost and that the ANPS will be laid in Parliament following consultation.

14 May 2026 – [Civil Aviation \(Consumer Protection and Regulatory Reform\) Bill \[HL\] – introduced in House of Lords](#) – Lord Hendy of Richmond Hill introduced the Civil Aviation Bill in the House of Lords on 14 May 2026 – the day after the King's Speech. The Bill has 13 clauses and would: give the CAA new statutory powers to make aviation safety rules; confer new consumer enforcement powers including the ability to fine airlines and airports directly; reform airport slot allocation; and support UKADS airspace modernisation. It also broadens cost recovery for air traffic and air navigation services. Second Reading in the Lords took place on 2 June 2026. Committee Stage provisionally scheduled 16, 18 and 23 June 2026. (Source: bills.parliament.uk)

Transport Questions: House of Lords

The House rose on the 21 May 2026 for the Whitsun Recess and will return on the 1 June 2026

April–May 2026 – [Aviation Safety \(Amendment\) Regulations 2026 – Lords scrutiny](#) – Lords considered SI amending UK aviation safety powers. Ministers confirmed no intention to rejoin EASA as part of the UK–EU reset and that powers remain with the CAA under domestic legislation.

19–21 May 2026 – [Debate on the Address – King’s Speech debate: aviation and economic growth themes \(Lords\)](#) – Both Houses continued debating the King’s Speech during the week of 18–21 May 2026. In the Lords, the day themed on economic growth and innovation included discussion of the Civil Aviation Bill, the ANPS consultation timeline and the government’s commitment to a third runway decision within this Parliament. Lords Peers also noted the DfT’s 20 April 2026 strategic letter to the CAA Chair setting out regulatory expectations for the coming period, including on economic regulation, airspace modernisation, decarbonisation and consumer focus. (Source: Hansard Society Parliament Matters Bulletin, 18 May 2026)

Parliamentary Questions

Q1. Airports National Policy Statement – consultation timeline and parliamentary process (Munira Wilson MP, Twickenham; Questions 338–341, 13 May): *Four related questions sought clarity on when the ANPS consultation would begin and how long it would last; the parliamentary scrutiny timetable; whether a votable Commons motion would precede designation; and the schedule for stakeholder roundtables including community and environmental groups.*

Keir Mather MP (answered 22 May): The Government intends to consult on the ANPS review outcome by the summer. Following publication, the Liaison Committee will be notified to commence parliamentary scrutiny. The revised ANPS will be laid before Parliament after consultation; the House of Commons then has a 21 sitting-day period in which it may resolve to call a vote on approval. Stakeholder roundtables, including with environmental and community groups, have already been conducted as part of the review process.

Q2. Heathrow expansion – regional airports, carbon budgets and domestic connectivity (Munira Wilson MP, Twickenham; Questions 335–337, 13 May): *Three questions addressed transfer passenger proportions at Heathrow under expansion scenarios; whether a third runway would adversely affect regional airport traffic within carbon budgets; and whether domestic connectivity guarantees would accompany expansion.*

Keir Mather MP (answered 22 May): Updated passenger and carbon forecasts will be published alongside the ANPS consultation. The ANPS review is examining whether existing domestic connectivity requirements require revision. Expansion must satisfy four tests, including alignment with climate obligations.

Q3. Jet Zero Strategy – adequacy in light of Luton Airport expansion (Daisy Cooper MP, St Albans; Question 1249, 14 May): *Whether the Secretary of State would review the adequacy of the Jet Zero Strategy given approved capacity expansion at Luton Airport.*

Keir Mather MP (answered 22 May): All known airport expansion plans, including Luton, are incorporated into aviation emissions modelling for Carbon Budgets 4–6. The approach to aviation decarbonisation remains under continuous review.

Q4. Surface access environmental targets (Greg Smith MP, Mid-Buckinghamshire; Question 1259, 14 May): *Whether the Department has issued formal guidance to airport operators on meeting surface access environmental targets.*

Keir Mather MP (answered 20 May): Airport operators, working through their Airport Transport Forums, are responsible for developing surface access strategies in line with national and local policy. Recent expansion approvals at Gatwick and Luton incorporate specific mode share and green growth targets as planning conditions.

Q5. Aviation and the Modern Industrial Strategy (Joe Robertson MP, Isle of Wight East; Question 882, 13 May): *What assessment was made of aviation’s economic contribution in preparing the Modern Industrial Strategy, and what effect does the sector’s absence from the Strategy have on aviation skills and training provision.*

Blair McDougall MP (answered 18 May): Sector assessments are set out in the Industrial Strategy Technical Annex. A £182m engineering skills package addresses sector-wide shortages. The

Generation Aviation Programme supports aviation workforce development through outreach, career signposting, industry partnerships and research into emerging technologies and decarbonisation.

Q6. Drone accountability and traceability (Dr Al Pinkerton MP, Surrey Heath; Question 526, 13 May): *What accountability and traceability requirements apply to operators of unmanned aerial vehicles.*

Keir Mather MP (answered 22 May): From 1 January 2026, new drones over 250g must incorporate direct remote identification. From 2028 this extends to all drones over 250g and all camera-equipped drones over 100g. A £20.5m investment in a Hybrid Remote ID system, announced on 5 May, will enable real-time tracking of drones and operators by authorised authorities.

Q7. Domestic air travel – capacity, technology and Border Force (Jamie Stone MP, Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross; Question 2101, 18 May): *What steps the Government is taking to address airport capacity and regional connectivity, aircraft availability, regulation of emerging aviation technologies, and Border Force operational challenges at UK airports.*

Keir Mather MP (answered 27 May): The sector operates on a largely commercial basis; targeted Public Service Obligations are available where connectivity needs justify intervention. The Government is engaging with the Home Office and Border Force ahead of the summer peak. The Future of Flight Programme is establishing regulatory frameworks for drone and advanced air mobility integration.

Q8. M25 traffic attributable to Heathrow Airport (Munira Wilson MP, Twickenham; Question 2888, 19 May): *What estimate the Department has made of the proportion of M25 traffic related to Heathrow Airport.*

Simon Lightwood MP (answered 27 May): The Department does not hold robust disaggregated estimates of Heathrow-related M25 traffic. The proportion varies along the route, with the highest share closest to the airport.

Government Announcements & Publications

2 May 2026 – [Government sets out plans to protect summer holidays from disruption \(GOV.UK\)](#) – Transport Secretary Heidi Alexander announced emergency slot alleviation following the Strait of Hormuz closure and potential jet fuel supply disruption. Airlines confirmed no immediate supply issues. ACL guidance updated allowing slot handbacks without loss of historic rights at eight coordinated airports.

13 May 2026 – [SAF Mandate statistics 2025: Fourth provisional release \(DfT\)](#) – DfT published the fourth provisional release of Sustainable Aviation Fuel Mandate statistics for 2025, providing updated data on fuel blending compliance across the mandate's first year of operation.

Transport Committee

May 2026 – [Airport Expansion and Economic Growth inquiry \(Transport Committee\)](#) – Transport Committee Chair Ruth Cadbury MP's inquiry into whether airport expansion in south-east England can benefit the rest of the UK continues into the new Parliament following the King's Speech.

Environmental Audit Committee

May 2026 – [Airport expansion and climate and nature targets – inquiry active in new Parliament \(EAC\)](#) – The Environmental Audit Committee's inquiry into airport expansion and climate and nature targets remained a live reference point for parliamentary debate during May 2026. The government response (published December 2025) was cited extensively in the 14 May Heathrow Third Runway adjournment debate, with opposition MPs quoting the EAC's conclusion that the government's climate delivery was "in serious jeopardy" from expansion. The Transport Committee has also indicated its intention to scrutinise the forthcoming draft Heathrow Expansion National Policy Statement (HENPS) once published, which is expected under the Planning Act 2008 parliamentary scrutiny process. (Source: committees.parliament.uk)

Delegated Powers & Regulatory Reform Committee

May–June 2026 – [Lords Delegated Powers Committee raises concerns on Civil Aviation Bill powers](#) – The House of Lords Delegated Powers and Regulatory Reform Committee examined the Civil Aviation (Consumer Protection and Regulatory Reform) Bill [HL] ahead of its Second Reading on 2 June 2026. The Committee raised concerns that certain provisions would give the Government "unconstrained power" to decide which operational and safety aviation rules are delegated to the CAA, and recommended that any regulations made under them be subject to the affirmative procedure, ensuring parliamentary debate and approval before they take effect. These concerns were expected to be

addressed at Committee Stage from 16 June 2026. (Source: Hansard Society Parliament Matters Bulletin, 15 June 2026; bills.parliament.uk)

UK Aviation Policy

Airport Expansion & Capacity

2 May 2026 – [DfT emergency slot alleviation – response to Strait of Hormuz fuel concerns](#) – Airlines at eight coordinated UK airports (Heathrow, Gatwick, Manchester, Birmingham, Bristol, London City, Stansted, Luton) may hand back a limited proportion of slots without penalty. Less than 1% of scheduled flights (c.1,200) removed from the schedule over the 3 May–14 June window.

13 May 2026 – [Civil Aviation Bill introduced in King's Speech](#) – The Bill will support airport expansion by reforming how take-off and landing slots are allocated, consolidating aviation safety legislation, strengthening passenger rights enforcement and underpinning the new UK Airspace Design Service. ANPS revision expected by July 2026 will address Heathrow directly.

15 May 2026 – [CAA publishes CAP3251: Heathrow expansion regulatory models consultation](#) – Shortlisted options range from enhancing the existing framework to a competitive alternative developer model that could see a new terminal designed, built, financed and operated independently of Heathrow Airport Limited. The CAA's working paper notes Heathrow ranks as the world's most expensive airport in the Jacobs Airport Charges Index. Consultation closes 15 June 2026.

Airspace, ATM & Air Navigation

6 May 2026 – [NATS licence amended – UK Airspace Design Service \(UKADS\) comes into effect](#) – Changes to NATS' air traffic services licence give it new responsibilities for coordinating and designing airspace changes, initially focusing on the London Terminal Control Area. The UKADS will support multi-airport change proposals linked to Heathrow runway expansion. Minister Keir Mather described the move as essential to optimising flight paths for a third runway by 2035.

Sustainability, SAF & Decarbonisation

13 May 2026 – [SAF Mandate statistics 2025 – fourth provisional release \(DfT\)](#) – DfT published updated compliance data for the SAF mandate in its first full year. The mandate requires SAF blending rising from 2% in 2025 toward 22% by 2040, with a Revenue Certainty Mechanism providing strike-price contracts for UK SAF producers.

May 2026 – [Jet fuel supply – DfT guidance on Strait of Hormuz disruption \(GOV.UK\)](#) – DfT published passenger guidance confirming that fuel supply from the Gulf is being monitored daily. EU also warned of potentially tighter jet fuel supplies within weeks if the Middle East conflict continues. UK airlines confirmed no immediate shortage.

23 Mar–15 June 2026 – [UK ETS: treatment of sustainable aviation fuel – consultation \(DESNZ / UK ETS Authority\)](#) – The UK ETS Authority (DESNZ, DfT, Scottish and Welsh Governments and DAERA) is consulting on how SAF should be treated under the UK Emissions Trading Scheme, including eligible fuel types, sustainability criteria and greenhouse gas saving thresholds. The consultation considers alignment with the SAF Mandate and the EU ETS and will inform changes targeted for implementation by 2028. Closes 15 June 2026.

1 May 2026 – [CAA consumer travel advice – Summer 2026 guidance published](#) – The CAA published updated consumer travel advice for the summer 2026 season, covering passenger rights during flight disruption, Middle East cancellations and ATOL protection. Passengers whose flights are cancelled have the right to a full refund or re-routing. Guidance signposts to DfT's jet fuel supply factsheet for reassurance on fuel availability. (Source: CAA newsroom)

Advanced Air Mobility, Drones & New Technology

May 2026 – [CAA – Preparing for the Future of Flight: shaping VTOL policy](#) – CAA published a blog and invitation to engage on the future policy framework for vertical take-off and landing (VTOL) aircraft, ahead of anticipated commercial VTOL operations from 2028. Input sought from industry, local authorities and community stakeholders.

Land Use, Planning & Economic Impact

15 May 2026 – [Heathrow alternative developer model – implications for planning \(CAA CAP3251\)](#) – The CAA's shortlisted regulatory models include an alternative developer model requiring a separate Development Consent Order, potentially introducing a new planning entity into the Heathrow expansion process. This has significant implications for land-use planning and community engagement across surrounding local authority areas.

Aerospace, Trade & Defence

20 May 2026 – [UK–Gulf Cooperation Council \(GCC\) Free Trade Agreement concluded \(DBT\)](#) – Minister of State for Trade Policy Sir Chris Bryant concluded the UK–GCC Free Trade Agreement on 20 May 2026. The deal delivers immediate tariff-free access for turbojets and aerospace parts, which currently face 5% tariffs – a direct benefit for UK aerospace manufacturers supplying GCC carriers and supporting Heathrow's hub position on Gulf routes. It also removes tariffs on UK cars and opens market access in life sciences. Agreement is part of the government's Trade Strategy and Industrial Strategy. (Source: GOV.UK – DBT)

28 May 2026 – [UK–Sweden Gripen fighter jet deal for Ukraine announced – 5,000+ UK aerospace jobs \(MOD\)](#) – 16 Swedish Gripen aircraft are being gifted to Ukraine, with a further 20 purchased via EU support loan. Over 30% of each aircraft is manufactured in the UK – including radar systems and landing gear – supporting more than 5,000 UK defence aerospace jobs. Saab is investing £100m in its Fareham facility. While a defence programme, the deal underscores the depth of UK aerospace manufacturing capacity and the dual-use significance of the sector. (Source: GOV.UK – MOD)

Economic Context & Fiscal Measures

21 May 2026 – [Chancellor's statement on economic response to the Iran war – fuel duty freeze confirmed \(HMT\)](#) – Chancellor Rachel Reeves updated the House of Commons on the government's economic response to the Iran war and rising fuel prices. She confirmed a freeze on fuel duty for the remainder of the year, extending the 5p cut for the third consecutive time since the 2024 election, alongside targeted support for fuel-intensive sectors. The statement provides direct fiscal context for DfT's concurrent slot alleviation measures: the government's concern about the impact of oil price volatility on aviation passengers was a key driver of cross-departmental action in May 2026. (Source: GOV.UK – HMT)

National & Regional Aviation News – UK

London Airports

Heathrow

27 May 2026 – [UK airports: 61.4 million passengers in Q1 2026 – record quarter \(CAA\)](#) – CAA data confirms a 2% year-on-year rise driven by short-haul European routes. Most popular Q1 destinations: Dublin, Amsterdam, Geneva, Tenerife and Dubai. UK–Dubai traffic down 20% reflecting Middle East conflict impact.

May 2026 – [CAA CAP3251 – Heathrow ranked world's most expensive airport in Jacobs Index](#) – The CAA's landmark CAP3251 consultation noted Heathrow's top ranking in the Jacobs Airport Charges Index, reinforcing the regulatory drive to consider alternative models that could improve consumer value during expansion.

Gatwick

Apr–May 2026 – [Gatwick cargo growth – airport acquires World Cargo Centre](#) – Gatwick Airport brought the World Cargo Centre fully under its operational control, strengthening cargo infrastructure and supporting future freight growth at the airport.

London City

May 2026 – [BA CityFlyer launches London City–Toulon service](#) – British Airways CityFlyer resumed UK–Toulon flights from London City Airport after easyJet ended Gatwick–Toulon in late 2024, restoring the route after an 18-month gap.

Midlands & East of England

Jan–May 2026 – [NATS completes Birmingham Airport ATC takeover](#) – NATS formally assumed responsibility for air traffic control and engineering services at Birmingham Airport at midnight on 31 January 2026. The handover was completed smoothly, consolidating a major regional hub under national ATC management.

North of England

20 May 2026 – [Riyadh Air to launch London–Riyadh direct flights from July 2026](#) – The new Saudi carrier confirmed a direct service from London to Riyadh, launching July 2026, adding long-haul capacity on a route currently served by British Airways and Saudia.

May 2026 – [Manchester Airport adds 12 new summer 2026 destinations](#) – Destinations spanning Italy, France, Greece, Spain, Croatia, Algeria and the Canary Islands added for summer 2026, operated by easyJet, Jet2, Ryanair and Air Algérie. Manchester's £1.3bn Terminal 2 transformation programme continues; former Terminal 1 is being rebranded Terminal 3.

Scotland

20 May 2026 – [Edinburgh Airport raises drop-off charges for travellers](#) – Edinburgh Airport announced an increase in drop-off charges, continuing a UK-wide trend of airports raising kerbside fees to manage congestion and fund infrastructure investment.

27 May 2026 – [Scotland's airports hit record Q1 2026 passenger numbers](#) – Edinburgh Airport grew 7% to 3.3 million passengers in Q1 2026, driven largely by short-haul European routes. Glasgow Airport grew 4% and Inverness 7%. Scottish airports are part of the NATS/Edinburgh/Glasgow coordinated airspace modernisation programme.

31 May 2026 – [Loganair expands: new East Midlands and Paris CDG routes launch](#) – Loganair launched services to East Midlands Airport and Paris Charles de Gaulle on 31 May 2026, growing its regional connectivity network beyond its Isle of Man hub.

Wales & South West England

May–June 2026 – [easyJet announce new summer route connecting London Gatwick to Newquay](#) - The inaugural flight will take off on 23 June 2026 and operate twice weekly and will strengthen direct domestic connectivity between London and the South East and Newquay.

Channel Islands & Crown Dependencies

No significant developments from the Channel Islands or Crown Dependencies reported this month.

Wider Industry News

Air Cargo & Freight

2025/2026 ongoing – [Night flight regime roll-over to 2028 constrains UK air freight growth](#) – Delays to the Air Navigation and Noise Emissions (ANNE) study have forced the government to roll over the current night-flight regime at Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted to 2028. Air cargo operators continue to call for a QC-only (noise quota count) limit rather than a combined movement cap.

Aerospace Manufacturing & OEMs

29 May 2026 – [Leonardo unveils UK civil helicopter support centre at Elstree](#) – New maintenance facility in Elstree, Hertfordshire will serve operators of around 200 aircraft, representing a significant commitment to UK aerospace MRO capacity. More details [here](#).

May 2026 – [ZeroAvia faces uncertainty as CEO Val Miftakhov steps down](#) – The departure of ZeroAvia's CEO follows a period that included staff cuts in both the USA and UK. ZeroAvia has received Innovate UK support for hydrogen propulsion, and the development raises questions about the pace of hydrogen aviation commercialisation.

Technology, AI & Airport Operations

May 2026 – [Overwatch AI secures \\$1.5m pre-seed funding for aviation operations platform](#) – The UK-based aviation operations AI platform, which supports pilots, cabin crew and airline operations teams, raised pre-seed funding with investment from United Airlines Ventures, signalling growing investor confidence in AI applications for flight operations.

International Context

2 May 2026 – [Spirit Airlines ceases operations](#) – The US ultra-low-cost carrier announced an immediate wind-down after a final attempt to secure \$500m in federal rescue funding collapsed. Spirit's demise follows two bankruptcy filings and is significant for the ULCC sector model globally, though its direct UK impact is limited.

Library Additions

Key publications, reports and official documents added to the SASIG library this month:

- SASIG Bulletin – April 2026 in ***Newsletter & Bulletins***
- Obstacle Limitation Services in ***Industry Reports and Papers***

Full library available on the SASIG members' area.

Contact & Membership

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MEMBERSHIP

SASIG membership is open to local authorities and other public bodies with a strategic interest in aviation.

For membership enquiries, please email the secretariat.

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