

SASIG AVIATION BULLETIN

Aviation News & Policy

July 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

News agenda in the UK during the month of July was dominated by the change of Prime Minister, and yet despite the associated political disruption, UK aviation policy appears to have emerged from the turmoil on an unexpectedly stable footing.

Keir Starmer resigned as Prime Minister and Labour leader in June, and on 20 July Andy Burnham was appointed the UK's 59th Prime Minister. Encouragingly for the sector, Heidi Alexander was reappointed Secretary of State for Transport and Keir Mather remains the Aviation Minister, so the policy priorities set out in June — the draft Heathrow Expansion National Policy Statement, the Civil Aviation Bill and the Sustainable Aviation Fuel Mandate — appear likely to continue unaffected by the change of leadership, this could change as the new No.10 (of the North) team settle in, but for now it is business as usual.

Heathrow

Heathrow's third runway case moved forward on several fronts in July. The CAA published **CAP3286, a high-level update on its preferred approach to regulating Heathrow expansion**, inviting further comment by 13 August 2026 ahead of a fuller work plan due in September. Separately, the CAA confirmed on 29 July that Heathrow Airport Limited may recover £320 million of costs incurred developing its expansion proposal since the start of 2025, to be recouped through higher airline charges over 20–25 years, while rival promoter Heathrow West may recover a smaller £4.1 million. **Heathrow itself reported record half-year traffic of 40 million passengers**, restating its case for a third runway to the new Prime Minister, while the Transport Committee's call for evidence on the draft HENPS closed on 23 July. **SASIG submitted a response to the Committee's call.** *Ref: Airport Expansion & Capacity, page 5 and National & Regional News for London Airports, page 6.*

Gatwick

At Gatwick, campaign groups GACC and CAGNE lodged applications for permission to appeal June's High Court dismissal of their judicial reviews into the Northern Runway Project; the Court of Appeal heard argument on the permission application over two days, 27–28 July, with a decision awaited. The airport also suffered a significant water supply outage affecting toilets and catering in both terminals on 26 July, though flights were unaffected. *Ref: Airport Expansion & Capacity, page 5 and National & Regional News for London Airports, page 6.*

Civil Aviation Bill Completes Its Lords Passage

The Civil Aviation (Consumer Protection and Regulatory Reform) Bill completed its passage through the Lords during July. At Report Stage on 13 July, peers secured Government amendments addressing the Delegated Powers and Regulatory Reform Committee's concerns — including a requirement for the Secretary of State to have regard to specified matters before setting CAA rule-making powers, and support for Lord Moylan's amendment applying the affirmative procedure to related regulations — alongside further changes on family seating, wheelchair compensation caps and disabled passengers' complaints routes. **The Bill passed Third Reading on 20 July and now moves to the Commons for consideration.**

Sustainable Aviation Fuel and Farnborough Airshow

On decarbonisation, the Department for Transport published its response to the SAF Revenue Certainty Mechanism levy design consultation in early July, and its call for evidence on future non-HEFA SAF supply and fuel tankering closed on 28 July, with a summary of responses expected later in the year. The Farnborough International Airshow held 20–24 July, delivered several hundred aircraft orders across Boeing, Airbus and Embraer and showcased early-stage hybrid-electric and eVTOL aircraft, underlining the pace of change facing airspace and airport planning alike. *Ref: Sustainability, SAF & Decarbonisation, page 5.*

Action for Members!

Member authorities are encouraged to note the CAA's CAP3286 update on Heathrow's regulatory framework, with comments invited until 13 August 2026, and to continue preparing responses to the draft HENPS consultation, which remains open until 1 September 2026. Authorities should also note that the Civil Aviation Bill will begin its Commons stages, when Parliament is next sitting, and that Parliament has now risen for the summer recess, with both Houses returning on Tuesday 1 September 2026.

Chris Cain

Policy Director, SASIG

Monthly Highlights

Key stories from this month at a glance:

- **14 July 2026** — [Civil Aviation Bill completes Report Stage in the Lords](#) — peers secure Government amendments on delegated powers, family seating and wheelchair compensation ahead of Third Reading.
- **16 July 2026** — [CAA publishes CAP3286, an update on Heathrow's regulatory framework](#) — high-level update on the CAA's preferred approach to regulating Heathrow expansion; comments invited until 13 August 2026.
- **20 July 2026** — [Civil Aviation Bill passes Third Reading in the Lords](#) — the Bill now moves to the Commons for further scrutiny.
- **20–24 July 2026** — [Farnborough International Airshow 2026](#) — hundreds of commercial aircraft orders announced across Boeing, Airbus and Embraer, alongside a strong defence and advanced air mobility presence.
- **28 July 2026** — [SAF Mandate call for evidence on future SAF supply closes](#) — sought industry views on non-HEFA SAF supply, the HEFA cap and fuel tankering ahead of the 2027 cap.
- **30 July 2026** — [CAA permits Heathrow to recover £320m of early expansion costs](#) — costs to be recovered through higher airline charges over 20–25 years, with a separate process for post-2027 costs.

Potential Actions for Local Authorities

Items for member consideration this month:

- Consider a response to the CAA's [CAP3286 update on Heathrow's regulatory framework](#) — comments invited until 13 August 2026.
- Continue preparing a response to the [draft Heathrow Expansion National Policy Statement consultation](#) (closing 1 September 2026) — relevant to any authority within, or adjoining, the Heathrow expansion impact area.

SASIG Activities This Month

- No SASIG Members' Meeting was held in July; the Secretariat used the period to prepare the autumn programme.
- Policy Director continued to monitor the passage of the Civil Aviation Bill through the Lords and its forthcoming introduction to the Commons.
- SASIG noted the change of Prime Minister on 20 July and the confirmation that both the Transport Secretary and aviation minister remain in post.
- SASIG continues to track the CAA's CAP3286 update and will consider a formal response ahead of the 13 August deadline.
- 23 July 2026 — SASIG submitted its response to the Transport Committee's Call for Evidence on its inquiry into the draft HENPS.

Events, Meetings & Consultations

SASIG Meetings

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

CAG Members Meeting: Tuesday 15th September 2026, 10am (Online)

SASIG Members' Meeting: Tuesday 6th October 2026, 10am (Online)

Consultations

- **16 July 2026:** [CAA CAP3286 — Heathrow capacity expansion: update on the approach to the regulatory framework](#) — comments invited until 13 August 2026, with a detailed work plan expected in September 2026.
- **Closed 23 July 2026:** [Transport Committee — call for evidence on its inquiry into the draft HENPS](#).
- **Closed 28 July 2026:** [DfT — SAF Mandate: SAF supply and industry certainty in an evolving market](#) — call for evidence on non-HEFA SAF supply, the HEFA cap and fuel tankering; summary of responses expected later in 2026.
- **Closing 1 September 2026:** [DfT — Draft Heathrow Expansion National Policy Statement \(HENPS\)](#) — carried forward from June; ten-week consultation covering the Northwest Runway scheme, surface access and the four tests of growth, carbon, air quality and noise.

External Conferences & Events

20–24 July 2026: Farnborough International Airshow 2026, Farnborough, Hampshire.

Parliamentary & Government News

Transport Questions: House of Commons

The House of Commons rose on 16 July 2026 for the summer recess and returns on Tuesday 1 September 2026.

There were no Ministerial Statements, Transport Questions or Westminster Debates in July.

Transport Questions: House of Lords

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There were no Ministerial Statements, Transport Questions or Westminster Debates in July.

Parliamentary Questions

Q. Heathrow Airport: Climate Change (*Munira Wilson MP (Twickenham); Commons Q.15444, 2 July*): *Whether an assessment has been made of the potential impact of climate change on Heathrow Airport over the next 10, 20 and 50 years.*

Keir Mather MP (answered 10 July): The draft HENPS was published alongside an Appraisal of Sustainability (AoS), which assesses the likely effects of expansion including climate change adaptation during construction and operation of a third runway; the consultation remains open until 1 September, with all responses to be carefully considered before any final HENPS is laid before Parliament.

Q. Sustainable Aviation Fuel Mandate progress (*Gregory Campbell MP (East Londonderry); Commons Q.15933, 6 July*): *What assessment his department has made of the adequacy of progress towards meeting the target of 10% of UK aviation fuel required to be SAF by 2030.*

Keir Mather MP (answered 9 July): Provisional 2025 statistics show over 2% of reported aviation fuel supply was verified and unverified SAF; while early, this shows a continued increasing trend, with final 2025 statistics due in November.

Q. Airport drop-off charges (*Richard Holden MP (Basildon & Billericay); Commons Q.16554, 7 July*): *What assessment she has made of the potential impact of increases in airport vehicle drop-off charges since 2016 on the cost of air travel for passengers.*

Keir Mather MP (answered 14 July): The setting of vehicle drop-off charges is a commercial matter for individual airport operators; the Department has not undertaken an assessment of their impact on passengers, though most airports continue to provide free drop-off options further from terminal forecourts.

Q. Heathrow expansion — health impact of noise and recreational land (*Munira Wilson MP (Twickenham); Commons Q.19108, 16 July*): *With reference to the Health Impact Analysis conducted as part of the draft HENPS, how many of the 671 sports and recreational facilities within 15km of Heathrow are playing fields and how many are sports halls.*

Answer awaited: the question was tabled shortly before the House rose for summer recess; a response is expected once the Commons returns on 1 September 2026.

Government and CAA Announcements & Publications

2 July 2026 — [SAF revenue certainty mechanism: levy design — government response](#) (DfT) — sets out the Government's response to the second levy design consultation, ahead of the first SAF Allocation Round expected to open in early 2027.

15 July 2026 [CAA publishes CAP3285, a new General Operations Manual template](#) for UAS operators applying for an operational authorisation under UK SORA.

16 July 2026 — [CAP3286: Heathrow capacity expansion — update on the approach to the regulatory framework](#) (CAA) — high-level update on the CAA's preferred regulatory approach; comments invited until 13 August 2026, with a fuller work plan due in September.

22 July 2026 — [CAA publishes report marking progress towards hydrogen aviation in the UK](#) — sets out the regulatory steps taken so far to support the safe introduction of hydrogen-powered aircraft.

29 July 2026 — [CAA permits Heathrow Airport Limited to recover £320m of early expansion costs](#) — to be recouped through higher airline charges over 20–25 years; a separate process will determine arrangements for costs incurred from 2027.

Transport Committee

23 July 2026 — [Deadline for written evidence closed](#) for the Committee's inquiry into the draft HENPS, chaired by Ruth Cadbury MP, which continues its statutory scrutiny role alongside the ten-week public consultation.

Environmental Audit Committee

July 2026 — The Committee's ongoing inquiry into airport expansion and climate and nature targets remains a live reference point, with the Committee expected to scrutinise the draft HENPS's climate and air quality tests once the public consultation concludes on 1 September.

UK Aviation Policy

Airport Expansion & Capacity

16 July 2026 — CAA publishes CAP3286, a high-level update on Heathrow's regulatory framework — comments invited until 13 August 2026; a detailed work plan is expected in September 2026. *For details see Government and CAA Announcements & Publications, page 4.*

23 July 2026 — [Heathrow reports record half-year passenger traffic of 40 million](#) and restates the case for a third runway to the new Prime Minister, citing growth in North America and Asia-Pacific traffic.

27–28 July 2026 — [Court of Appeal hears GACC's application for permission to appeal](#) the High Court's dismissal of its judicial review of the Gatwick Northern Runway Project; a decision is awaited.

29 July 2026 — CAA permits Heathrow Airport Limited to recover £320m of early expansion costs through higher airline charges over 20–25 years; rival promoter Heathrow West may recover a smaller £4.1 million. *For details see Government and CAA Announcements & Publications page 4.*

Airspace, ATM & Air Navigation

9 July 2026 — [NATS agrees a new ten-year air traffic control agreement with Belfast International Airport](#).

17 July 2026 — [NATS records its busiest day of 2026 so far](#) (8,538 flights), and its busiest weekend since 2019 (16,037 flights, 11–12 July), as the summer peak takes hold.

Sustainability, SAF & Decarbonisation

2 July 2026 — [DfT publishes its response to the SAF Revenue Certainty Mechanism levy design consultation](#), confirming the guaranteed strike price mechanism will be industry-funded, with the first Allocation Round expected to open in early 2027.

23 July 2026 — [Over £7 million to fuel zero-emission flight across the UK](#) — Government funding awarded to electric and hydrogen aircraft projects to help bring emerging technology closer to commercial service.

28 July 2026 — [SAF Mandate call for evidence on future non-HEFA supply and fuel tankering closes](#); a summary of responses and next steps is expected later in 2026.

31 July 2026 — [Transport & Environment urges the Government to hold firm on the HEFA cap and PtL sub-target](#), warning that changes this early in the Mandate could undermine investment in domestic advanced fuel production.

Advanced Air Mobility, Drones & New Technology

15 July 2026 — CAA publishes CAP3285, a new General Operations Manual template for UAS operators applying for an operational authorisation under UK SORA. *For details see Government and CAA Announcements & Publications, page 4.*

27 July 2026 — [Loganair Wants to Introduce Europe's First All-Electric Fleet](#) following Loganair's Farnborough order for up to ten Beta Technologies Alia CX300 all-electric aircraft.

Land Use, Planning & Economic Impact

23–24 July 2026 — [UK airport drop-off fees rise by a third since last summer](#), prompting several parliamentary questions on regulation of surface access charging; the Department maintains that charges remain a commercial matter for individual airport operators.

National & Regional Aviation News — UK

London Airports

Heathrow

23 July 2026 — [Heathrow reports record 40 million half-year passengers](#) and restates its third runway case to the new Prime Minister, with growth in North America and Asia-Pacific offsetting softer Middle East demand.

29 July 2026 — CAA permits recovery of £320m of early expansion costs; passengers face decades of higher fares as the costs are recovered through airline charges. . *For details see Government and CAA Announcements & Publications page 4.*

Gatwick

26 July 2026 — [Water supply failure leaves Gatwick passengers without working toilets or catering](#) in both terminals; flights were unaffected.

27–28 July 2026 — [Court of Appeal hears GACC's application for permission to appeal](#) the High Court's dismissal of its Northern Runway judicial review.

London Stansted, Luton & London City

There are no significant new developments to report for Stansted, Luton or London City this month.

Midlands & East of England

1 July 2026 — [Birmingham Airport ranked among the UK's worst-performing hubs for summer 2026 delays](#), alongside Manchester, reflecting capacity and air traffic control pressures across the network during the peak school-holiday period.

3 July 2026 — [Eastern Airways collapses into liquidation after rescue talks fail](#), ending regional services from several UK airports including Humberside, Newcastle and Aberdeen.

North of England

16 July 2026 — [Recruitment and simulator installation progress reported as Doncaster Sheffield Airport's reopening plans gather pace](#), part of continued efforts to restore commercial operations at the closed South Yorkshire airport.

Scotland

1 July 2026 — [Jules Matteoni takes over as Chief Executive of Glasgow Prestwick Airport](#), succeeding Ian Forgie, as the airport continues to develop its cargo and e-commerce role.

13 July 2026 — [Glasgow Prestwick Airport marks seventh consecutive year of profitability](#) as cargo tonnage continues to grow under its new business model.

15 July 2026 — [Scottish Government confirms the Highlands and Islands will retain their Air Departure Tax exemption](#), prompting criticism that the arrangement leaves Aberdeen at a competitive disadvantage.

Wales & South West England

24 July 2026 — [Bristol Airport announces new summer routes](#) to Seville, Reus, Bari, Cape Verde and Thessaloniki as it prepares for record summer passenger numbers alongside its £400 million terminal redevelopment programme.

Channel Islands & Crown Dependencies

There are no significant new developments to report for the Channel Islands and Crown Dependencies this month.

Wider Industry News

Air Cargo & Freight

21 July 2026 — [IAG Cargo adds a third daily Delhi service](#), growing its UK–India network to 70 weekly flights.

21 July 2026 — [MSC Air Cargo orders five Boeing 777-8 Freighters](#) at Farnborough, marking the fast-growing operator's first widebody freighter commitment.

Aerospace Manufacturing & Innovation

20–24 July 2026 — [Farnborough International Airshow delivers a landmark week for global aerospace](#), with total commercial orders, options, MoUs and conversions reaching 432 aircraft by the close of the show, Boeing narrowly outscoring Airbus.

21 July 2026 — [ZeroAvia and Safran forge a partnership on hydrogen-electric technologies](#), part of a wider showing of early-stage electric and hybrid-electric aircraft at Farnborough.

Technology, AI & Airport Operations

8 July 2026 — [Minimum age for airport e-gate use lowered from 10 to 8](#) across UK airports, intended to speed up family processing during peak summer travel.

International Context

8–9 July 2026 — [Commons and Lords hold urgent question sessions on the European Entry/Exit System](#), with ministers confirming the Government is working with the EU and juxtaposed ports at Dover, Eurotunnel and St Pancras to minimise disruption to UK travellers.

21 July 2026 — [European Commission confirms it will not extend the EES 'flexibility' suspension window](#), meaning full biometric checks continue through peak summer despite airports and airlines reporting queues of two to five hours at major hubs.

Library Additions

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

- SASIG Bulletin — June 2026 in *Newsletter & Bulletins*

Full library available in the SASIG members' area.

Contact & Membership

CONTACT

SASIG Secretariat
Strategic Aviation Special Interest Group
www.sasig.org.uk

Policy Director: Chris Cain

Email: secretariat@sasig.org.uk

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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