



Strategic Aviation Special Interest Group (SASIG)

Agenda

Tuesday, 6 October 2026
10.00 am – 1.00 pm

Online via Teams

To join:

<https://teams.live.com/meet/931292555642?p=rFtXfZGlgZkWIWarXm>

Strategic Aviation Special Interest Group (SASIG)
Tuesday, 6 October 2026

There will be a meeting of the Strategic Aviation Special Interest Group (SASIG) at **10.00 am on Tuesday, 6 October 2026** Online via Teams.

Attendance:

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

Apologies:

Please notify secretariat@sasig.org.uk

LGA Contact:

Fatima.deabreu@local.gov.uk

Agenda

Strategic Aviation Special Interest Group (SASIG)

Tuesday, 6 October 2026

10.00 am

Online via Teams

Please note that large appendixes / supporting documents to Items 6 and 7 will follow via separate email. A full list of these is at the end of this sheet.

	Item	Page	Time
1.	Chairman's welcome, new attendees and apologies from the floor		10.00
2.	Constitutional Matters: i) Election of Chair and Vice Chair(s) ii) SASIG Constitution: Mission Statement & TOR's iii) SASIG Policy Principles, Aims & Objectives		10.05
3.	Review/actions from previous CAG/SASIG meetings:	1 - 2	10.15
	a) Review/actions from previous full SASIG meeting - 17 June 2026	3 - 12	
	b) Review and actions from previous CAG meeting - 15 September 2026	13 - 22	
4.	Guest speaker: Becky Coffin, Director of Communities and Sustainability at Heathrow Airport	23 - 24	10.30
5.	SASIG Administration & Finances: updates from Chairman/Policy Director	25 - 26	11.20
	a) Update on subscription invoices/payments		
	b) Update on member recruitment/sponsors, etc		
6.	Policy Developments/Key Issues since last meeting:	27 – 34	11.30
	a) Summary of recent external meetings held, planned and invitations received		
	b) Recent, current and forthcoming consultations		
	c) Brief round-up of other important developments since last SASIG meeting		

	d) Latest Noise Research		
7.	Heathrow Expansion National Policy Statement (HENPS) latest:	35 – 38	11.45
	a) Select Committee Sessions		
	b) SASIG Submissions		
8.	Review of UK Aviation Forecasts and their implications	39 - 52	12.00
9.	Review of the Latest Developments concerning Drones	53 - 58	12.15
10.	Policy levers to maximise the economic impacts of Airports	59-60	12.30
11.	Future dates in 2026/27 for SASIG/CAG and any additional meetings.	61-62	12.45
12.	AOB	63-64	12.55
13.	Meeting Close		13.00

Date of Next Meeting: To be confirmed

Shown below is a list of supporting documents mentioned in Items 6 and 7 as part of these SASIG agenda papers:

- Item 6(a):** ANEG minutes from 25 June 2026.
- Item 6(b):** ANEG 25 June 2026: Presentation on the CAA ANAS (2023-24) key findings.
- Item 6(c):** ANEG 25 June 2026: DfT ANNE Subjective Study (Tim May).
- Item 6(d):** ANEG 25 June 2026: DfT update on HENPS (Alice Philipson).
- Item 6(e):** ANEG 25 June 2026: Night Flight Regime timeline for engagement.
- Item 6(f):** ANEG 25 June 2026: Noise from A320 operations at Luton Airport (Darren Rhodes-CAA).
- Item 6(g):** ANEG 25 June 2026: Noise from A320 operations at Luton Airport (Exec. Summary).
- Item 6(h):** "What's next for regional airports amid sector expansion? Development opportunities beyond London" (Chris Cain presentation at the Waterfront Conference UK Airport Infrastructure Forum 9 July 2026).
- Item 6(i):** Scottish ADT Technical Guidance Participation Information Sheet.
- Item 6(j):** Draft SASIG response to MHCLG Powers for Mayors consultation.

- Item 7(a):** SASIG briefing for HENPS workshop (Chris Cain).
- Item 7(b):** HSPG perspective of HENPS (Michael Thornton).
- Item 7(c):** Notes from the SASIG/HSPG workshop.
- Item 7(d):** CfE HENPS responses – spreadsheet analysis.
- Item 7(e):** Analysis of how SASIG submission relates to discussions in the initial two sessions of the TSC inquiry.
- Item 7(f):** Telegraph newspaper article published 6 September 2026 re: HENPS.
- Item 7(g):** TSC Transcript HENPS Climate & Carbon (8 Sept 2026 at 4pm)
- Item 7(h):** TSC Transcript HENPS Air Quality, Noise & Health (8 Sept 2026 at 5pm)
- Item 7(i):** TSC Transcript HENPS Airlines, Freight & Delivery (9 Sept 2026 at 9:15 a.m.)
- Item 7(j):** TSC Transcript HENPS UK Airports & Regional Connectivity (9 Sept 2026 at 10:15 a.m.)
- Item 7(k):** Summary notes from TSC HENPS: Local Impacts & Planning Session (15 Sept 2026)
- Item 7(l):** Summary notes from TSC HENPS: Surface Access session (15 Sept 2026)
- Item 7(m):** SASIG submission to HENPS consultation
- Item 7(n):** SASIG submission to TSC Call for Evidence enquiry



**SASIG Meeting: 6 October 2026
Item 3**

Item 3: Review and actions from previous CAG/SASIG meetings:

- (a) Review and actions from previous full SASIG meeting of 17 June 2026**
- (b) Review and actions from previous Chairman's Advisory Group (CAG) meeting of 15 September 2026.**

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

SASIG Meeting: 6 October 2026
Item 3(a)

Item 3(a): Minutes of last Strategic Aviation SIG (SASIG) meeting

LGA Strategic Aviation SIG

17 June 2026 – 10.00am-1.00pm

Online via Zoom

Attendance

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

Minute		Decisions
		Part 1: Introduction, Minutes and Guest Speaker
SASIG	1	Chairman's welcome, new attendees and apologies from the floor Keith Artus (KA), Chairman, welcomed everyone to the meeting. Attendees/apologies can be found at the end of this note at <u>Appendix A</u>.
SASIG	2	Review / actions from previous CAG / SASIG meetings: Members noted: a) Actions from the previous full SASIG meeting held on 25 February 2026 b) Actions from the previous CAG meeting held on 26 May 2026 KA and Chris Cain (CC) Policy Director, SASIG, updated the group on the following: • Contact had been made with the Shadow Aviation Minister regarding concerns around the lack of an air freight strategy and how it impacts economic growth; • As part of the LGA's structural reorganisation, SASIG was now part of its Inclusive Growth Committee, and the Secretariat would be seeking an opportunity to present at one of its future meetings. • SASIG is continuing its attempts to obtain a meeting with the current Aviation Minister (and also MHCLG as well), with a specific list of concerns such as noise and the role of airports in economic development. • The redesign to the SIG's monthly bulletin, which will continue to include all topics of interest, was nearing completion. Members' comments and questions:

		- Members agreed the importance of attracting engagement from Ministers around long-term sustainability of airports, a freight strategy and the emphasis on regional as well as national growth. (Via the Chat function): Concerns were raised that the Civil Aviation Bill suggested less engagement and recognition of Local Authorities (LAs). Decisions: By consensus, the SASIG: Noted the actions from the previous SASIG meeting held on 25 February 2026. Noted the actions from the previous CAG meeting held on 26 May 2026.
SASIG	3	Guest speaker: Nyree Millar-Bell, UK Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) Obstacle Limitation Surfaces: a new framework CC gave a brief update on safeguarding at airports, the forthcoming new OLS framework and its likely impact on airports and Local Authorities. KA introduced guest speaker Nyree Millar-Bell (NM-B) who gave a presentation outlining reasons for updating the OLS Framework, originally built for older aircraft and with a 'once size fits all' approach which is no longer suitable. There was to be a new two-layer approach to surfacing which would comprise of: - Obstacle Free Surfaces (OFS) - Obstacle Evaluation Surfaces (OES) Members were informed of the work of the Aeroplane Design Group (ADG) which are responsible for classifying which surface is appropriate for different aerodromes and runway types. There were changes to ensure that safety and alignment were correct according to individual operational requirements. For example, approach surfaces would keep the same shape but be smaller and steeper. The key changes would focus on where present operations exist and not on where there were no aerodrome operations. The presentation contained a lot of useful technical information and would be made available to members after the meeting. Members were invited to email any queries to the CAA and respond to the consultation in the first instance. This would help inform the industry working group and enable a successful transition to the new framework. Members' comments and questions:

	Q. When will the aeronautical evaluation be implemented – is there a timescale - and would it be part of a local development plan? A. <i>There would be no changes in the actual planning process and all aerodromes would update their plans. No timescales were available.</i> Q. Would there changes to local and strategic planning and what about engagement with MHCLG. A. <i>Anticipated NPPG would need to be updated to reflect the new guidance; CAA will be engaging with MHCLG.</i> Q. This new framework purely relates to obstacles, not noise for instance. Who exactly decides UK specific surfaces and are LAs to be involved? A. <i>Specific surfaces are in place to protect aerodromes and there was a need to ensure OLS safeguarding was required.</i> Q. Is this guidance in line with Airspace Change modernisation and what about concerns such as pressure from developers, protection of existing housing stock and issues affecting each individual airspace. A. <i>All aerodromes were being asked to ‘future-proof’ their operations so that nothing gets missed. However, it is not possible to answer all questions at this point in time but members were encouraged to email questions to NM-B at the CAA.</i> There were other concerns about practical issues that may arise for local authorities, with the introduction of this new system. For example: - how would this work with a new landing site proposal or a runway that does not exist right now; - engagement opportunities to learn more about the changes were not widely known right now; - it would not be easy for LAs in the current climate to amend their Local Plans. It was agreed that SASIG as the aviation ‘voice’ for the LGA, should be seen by the CAA as central to the planning process and the SIG would be best placed to help with dissemination of information and updates. Decisions: By consensus, the SASIG: 1. Noted the presentation. Actions: 1. Secretariat to put presentation in members’ area on website. (Post-meeting: this has been actioned). 2. Further questions and comments to be sent to NM-B via the email address given within the presentation.
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		Part 2: Administrative and Policy Updates
SASIG	4	Review and approval of SASIG annual report to LGA: Members received within the agenda papers: a) Full version of the 2026 annual report (this is for the LGA website) b) Shortened version of the 2026 annual report (this is for the LGA Board meeting) To note: a decision had been taken at the previous Chairman's Advisory Board meeting (CAG) to include a list of achievements within the final submission and this had been actioned. Decisions: By consensus, the SASIG: 1. Noted the SASIG Annual Report for 2026 and submission of both versions to the LGA. 2. Noted implementation of new governance arrangements at the LGA in relation to SASIG and that it now comes under the LGA's Inclusive Growth Committee.
SASIG	5	SASIG Administration & Finances: Members received updates from the Chairman/Policy Director on the following: a) End of year financial position inc: subscription invoices and payments. b) Proposed budget 2026-27. c) Planned meetings with members c) Update on membership recruitment/sponsors. d) Affiliate/Associate Members and collaborations. CC said that a full set of accounts for 2025/26 would be made available at the next meeting as there were still a few outstanding payments yet to be received. However, the projected financial position was fairly settled. This could help towards future research projects and possible additional workshops/webinars. There was also potential engagement with at least two non-member authorities about either joining or re-joining the Group. The Secretariat will continue to investigate all available opportunities to increase membership. Colleagues were also reminded to contact the Secretariat directly should they wish to follow up on any issues that may affect their own authority. Decisions: By consensus, the SASIG: 1. Noted the updates around finances and administration.

		2. Action: Policy Director to provide full set of accounts at next SASIG meeting.
SASIG	6	Policy Developments/Key Issues since last meeting This item was largely a matter of record however CC provided members with the following updates: a) a summary of recent external meetings held, planned and invitations received. b) a summary of the House of Commons (HOC) debate on London Heathrow airport's 3rd runway (14.5.26). This was a very important debate and the adaptation of the revised NPS will be by affirmative resolution. SASIG would endeavour to keep abreast of all MPs interested in aviation issues and look at submitting a follow-up paper to their response submitted this month to the Government's consultation on the Permitted Development Rights for Onshore Wind Turbines in England. c) recent, current and forthcoming consultations and whether SASIG had responded to any plus a review of recent research reports. d) a brief round-up of any other important developments since the last SASIG meeting including a recent meeting attended by CC on the impact of noise and disturbance, effects on health and implications for regional planning. A brief discussion took place around the Irish Government's strategy on addressing/paying for issues including those that arose out of the pandemic. whether the UK governments should be doing the same and whether SASIG could perhaps incorporate anything the Irish do into some of their own summaries/submissions to Government. Members' comments and questions: • Members raised concerns about night bans and actual timings for these to be implemented. Decisions: By consensus, the SASIG: 1. Noted the updates on policy developments and key issues. 2. Action: Policy Director to develop follow-up paper to SASIG response submitted this month to the Government's consultation on the Permitted Development Rights for Onshore Wind Turbines in England.
		Part 3: Substantive Agenda Items
SASIG	7	Civil Aviation Bill and its implications for LAs

		CC provided a summary to members of the implications of the Civil Aviation Bill introduced on 14 May 2026. One of the main issues is the one relating to safeguarding. SASIG has raised concerns about how feedback from LA's would be included in the future - it was viewed that the outlook from stakeholders within the aviation industry was generally more favoured. CC spoke further about key concerns and problems around sufficient engagement, including the lack of the CAA publishing supplementary guidance to the Bill. Members noted that the House of Lords had also raised the same issues and that they were perhaps better understood in HOL when debated there. CC had subsequently written to them the CAA to try and secure assurances that our concerns were not overlooked. Members' comments and questions: • Members agreed the importance of both individual and combined responses to the Bill and that LAs need to pressure Government during expansion projects. • They were concerned about CAA priorities and responsibilities which did not address local environment and communities i.e. they were only concern with what was 'up in the air' and not 'on the ground'. • There were elements that should be incorporated into the CAA's and local planning operations to enable more effective growth. Decisions: By consensus, the SASIG: 1. Noted the update. 2. Action: the Policy Director will circulate a note to members regarding the timeline of the Bill.
SASIG	8	Passenger/Air Cargo Demand Outlook – Implications for UK airports This item was largely to note however CC summarised to members information on growth projections and provided analysis on airport capacity in the short, medium and long-term. There were substantial drops in passenger numbers, particularly at Gatwick which meant that there was not an immediate capacity issue. However, the group were reminded that long-term projections meant that expansion plans were required to enable delivery in the future. CC raised strategic issues concerning regional airports and capacity for freight (especially in the south-east) with a crisis imminent for both the economy and the environment if these were not addressed. Stansted was

		moving towards belly-hold for freight and Luton and East Midlands airports were effectively already at capacity. CC agreed with concerns raised by members and planned to have further conversations with LGA Policy officers and colleagues around these issues. It must also be recognised that the NPS was not just Heathrow-centric – it was not isolated but forms part of a regional network. Members' comments and questions: • Concerns that the new National Policy Statement when published, would be mostly Heathrow-focussed although SASIG has been told it will be more of a review than a re-jig of the document. • Members suggested a critical analysis of the work be undertaken to enable more informed feedback. • the importance of building a consensus of the economic benefits and how these would be extracted. Decisions: By consensus, the SASIG: 1. Noted the report. 2. Action: Policy Director to discuss with LGA implications of new NPS. Secretariat to then look at organising a workshop around freight and capacity issues and the revised NPS.
SASIG	9	CAA Aviation Consumer Survey This item was largely to note with CC summarising briefly the outcome of the CAA Aviation Consumer Survey 2025 which largely tries to explain what is happening in the aviation market. The results showed that younger people were the biggest flyers and were also most concerned about environmental impacts. It was also said that the average person had limited knowledge on the complexities of the aviation industry. Decisions: By consensus, the SASIG: 1. Noted the paper.
SASIG	10	Proposed research on economic/social value of airports and how these can be maximised – scope/purpose and potential collaborations CC updated members on work providing information on maximising local and regional growth and highlighting the social value of airports on local communities. He also outlined the reductions in aviation employment (particularly since the pandemic) and ways in which local authorities could lead in providing training and skills to encourage more interest. It

		was suggested that an outline paper be developed for use at a future proposed webinar. KA suggested that another meeting be held to discuss the outline paper when it was ready to present to the LGA's Inclusive Growth Committee. Members' comments and questions: - Members referred to examples of best practice by regional airports and the importance of replicating this at other airports by sharing information about their work. Decisions: By consensus, the SASIG: Agreed the proposed work around research on economic / social value of airports should be undertaken. Action: Policy Director to develop an outline paper which can then be discussed at a future online meeting for interested members.
		Part 4: Meeting Closure
	11	AOB There was no other business.
SASIG	12	Future dates in 2026 for SASIG / CAG and any additional meetings plus plans for future speakers, workshops and webinars Dates of subsequent meetings of SASIG and CAG would be circulated in due course. Any information on planned webinars and workshops would also be circulated to members.
		Meeting Close The meeting ended at 12.50 pm.

(List of attendees/apologies shown below at Annex A)



Appendix A

Attendance

Name	Authority / Organisation
Keith Artus	Chairman & Hon. Pres. SASIG
Cllr Phil Geisler	London Bo. Richmond Upon Thames
Cllr John Evans	Uttlesford District Council
Kay Mead	East Herts District Council
Surinderpal Suri	Secretariat advisor, SASIG
Michael Thornton	HSPG
Cllr Ben Crystall	East Herts District Council
Zhanine Smith	Essex County Council
Cllr Andrew Priestly	Kegworth Parish Council
Cllr Ray Sutton	North West Leicestershire Council (Kegworth)
Nyree Millar-Bell	CAA - Guest speaker
Chris Cain	Policy Director, SASIG
Lesley Smith	SASIG Secretariat
Fatima De Abreu	LGA Support Officer

Apologies

Cllr Sean Beatty	Spelthorne Borough Council
Jason Newman	Slough BC
Jamie Macrae	Honorary Vice President, SASIG
Jackie Cheetham	Honorary Vice President (SASIG)



SASIG Meeting: 6 October 2026
Item 3(b)

Item 3(b): MINUTES OF THE CHAIRMAN'S ADVISORY GROUP (CAG)
MEETING: Tuesday: 15 September 2026

Date: Tuesday: 15 September 2026

Time: 10:00 – 13:00 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: 26 May 2026:

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

- **Efforts continuing with regard to securing a meeting with Aviation Minister. Also approaches to be made to Shadow Transport Secretary plus relevant Reform MP.**
Action: Policy Director to draw up a list of specific SASIG concerns and to discuss further with SASIG Chairman before another letter is sent to Minister. Letter has been sent to Shadow Transport Secretary. Reform letter outstanding.
- **Letter to go from Chairman to LGA's Inclusive Growth Committee seeking opportunity for SASIG to present on key aviation issues to wider LGA family.**
Action: PD to draft letter(s) on behalf of Chairman.
- **Nominations for SASIG Chair/Vice Chair(s) to be actioned at autumn SASIG members' meeting. (Postponed from June due to recent council elections).**
Action: Secretariat to investigate nominations ready for autumn meeting.

There were no other outstanding actions and the minutes of the CAG meeting of 26 May 2026 were approved.

(b) Minutes from previous SASIG full meeting: 17 June 2026

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

- **Preparation of item for next members' meeting on maximising the economic value of airports and the implications for LAs.**
Action: Policy Director to develop paper for next meeting.
- **Paper to be developed for future online members' meeting highlighting the social value of airports on local communities.**
Action: Policy Director to develop an outline paper for future online meeting.

There were no other outstanding actions and the minutes of the SASIG meeting of 17 June 2026 were approved.

Item 3: SASIG Administration and Finances

(a): Update inc: subscription invoices/payments:

The Policy Director gave a summary of the current financial position of SASIG. Its bank balance was holding up well and it will continue to look healthy once a few outstanding payments have been received.

(b): Update on membership and sponsors:

The Group agreed that approaches should continue to be made to other authorities regarding SASIG membership and emphasis should be highlighted on how valuable SASIG's expertise is within many areas including possible local government reorganisation.

It was agreed that should Mayoral planning powers increase within strategic authorities as has been put forward for consultation by MHCLG, then this would be a good opportunity for SASIG to reach out. It was felt that LAs' financial positions had probably settled down somewhat since the May council elections therefore there could now be more scope to approach authorities about joining SASIG.

There are currently three companies actively keen on sponsoring SASIG and the Policy Director will continue his communication with them.

(c): Recent and planned meetings with members:

The Policy Director briefly outlined meetings he has already held with a few SASIG authorities and also others he was looking to plan in the near future. The Group agreed, however, that, for now, it would be best to leave the bulk of any planned member meetings in abeyance.

All authorities were currently extremely busy with many issues including developing local plans and looking at possible local government reorganization should that happen. The Group was reminded of a promised future site visit to Amazon at their Darlington premises following the recent drone trials there.



Action: Policy Director/Secretariat to discuss with Chairman how to trial new methods of improving meeting attendance levels.

(d): Mailchimp analytics:

The Group was provided with 3 spreadsheets – one for Q1 April-June 2026, one for Q2 July-September 2026 and the third showing a table with the same periods for last year. These spreadsheets give an outline showing the number of recipients, ‘opens’ and ‘clicks, etc. for all Mailchimp communications issued. (These include the monthly Bulletin). It was noted that more interest was likely to be shown in the winter months as during the summer, many members would be away from work on holidays, etc.

The Group agreed that the revamped version of the monthly Bulletin looked good and was working well. There was a suggestion that perhaps it should concentrate on a few key areas/issues of interest each month to members. It was also noted that the Bulletin was now taking less time to produce each month which helped free up the Secretariat’s time to engage in other important work. The Policy Director and his assistant would continue to monitor the Bulletin’s progress.

Item 4: Summary of recent external meetings held, planned and invitations received

The Group reviewed a list of meetings held since the previous CAG meeting in May with verbal updates provided by Policy Director, Chris Cain. These meetings include:

June:

5th: Policy Director had a call with Lisa Hutchinson, Interim Head of Planning Development Management, Darlington Council to talk about the **Amazon drone trials** out of Darlington. Lisa put Chris in touch with Neil Bowerbank, Head of Strategy, Performance and Communications at Darlington Council for further discussions.

10th: SASIG was invited by the CAA to a brief discussion of the **Aviation Noise Attitudes Survey (ANAS)** research findings, which were due to be published that day. DfT would also provide an overview of **Aviation Night Noise Effects (ANNE)** which would also be published on 10 June.

17th: SASIG Members’ meeting (online)

22nd: Policy Director had an online meeting with Neil Bowerbank (as detailed above) for further discussions around Darlington's experience in dealing with the Amazon drones.

25th: The latest meeting of the **Airspace and Noise Engagement Group (ANEG)** was held - SASIG attended. There were a number of documents from this meeting which will be made available to members at the next SASIG meeting in October. The next ANEG meeting is scheduled for 28 October 2026 and SASIG will attend.

July:



9th: Waterfront Conference Company hosted the [UK Airport Infrastructure Forum 2026](#) in London. This event explored how to deliver airport infrastructure, with airports providing updates on their plans for growth and expansion along with relevant timelines. Attendees heard about decarbonising infrastructure, improving connectivity, navigating planning processes and much more. SASIG Policy Director, Chris Cain was one of the afternoon speakers discussing "What's next for regional airports amid sector expansion? Development opportunities beyond London" and his presentation is available to members if requested.

17th: **New ICAO Obstacle Limitation Surfaces Workshop** held at Gatwick. The workshops (one was held in Manchester on 3 June and a further one will be held in Scotland on 8 October) are intended to support understanding of the new OLS framework, including its implementation. SASIG Policy Director was in attendance.

30th: **RTPI 'Planning drone futures' launch event** was held in London. Key speakers were from the University of Reading and Lancaster University and the RTPI planned to publish new practice advice notes later that day.

September:

29th: Policy Director spoke at the AIR conference at Excel which included a strong gathering of the UK aviation industry. More details here: <https://www.air-uk.net>

Forthcoming meetings:

As detailed above, it is hoped to make a site visit to look at the Amazon drone trials at a date later in the year.

Item 5: Policy Developments since previous CAG meeting in May 2026

The Group reviewed a list of recent consultations and other policy developments with verbal updates provided by Policy Director, Chris Cain.

(a): Update on current and forthcoming consultations/inquiries of interest:

The Group were provided with a list of current Government consultations including the Survey on the Draft Technical Guidance for the Air Departure Tax (early September for 4 weeks) – SASIG has been invited to comment on this - and the MHCLG consultation seeking views on how planning powers for mayors of strategic authorities in the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Act 2026 should be implemented (24 August – 5 October 2026). A draft to the latter has been prepared and will be reviewed before final submission.

Action: *Policy Director to review current draft response and make any recommendations agreed with Chairman before final submission.*

(b): Brief Round-up of other important policy developments since previous CAG meeting:

In May (28th), the CAA published its [Airspace Modernisation 2025 Progress Report \(CAP3215\)](#)

In June, plans to reopen Doncaster Sheffield Airport moved a step closer with operators launching a new survey asking future passengers what routes, destinations and services they want to see when flights return. 18th June saw the consultation on the draft Heathrow Expansion NPS launched. On 23rd June, the High Court ruled the approval of plans to expand Gatwick was lawful, after a legal challenge brought by campaigners.

In July Eastern Airways entered liquidation after a last-minute collapse of a key commercial contract. The Irish Aviation Authority proposed to cut passenger charges at Dublin Airport by 15% next year and the Scottish Government said that all flights between the Highlands and Islands and other Scottish airports will be exempt from Air Departure Tax when the devolved levy comes into force next year. News came that UK airport drop-off fees were up by a third in just 12 months with 16 of the UK's 20 busiest airports having increased their costs in this period.

In August, Gatwick was given go ahead by the Appeals Court with development of its Northern runway project and Luton Rising, who own Luton airport, announced that all legal processes had now been completed, allowing plans to increase the airport's annual capacity from 19 million to 32 million passengers by the mid-2040s. A consultation began over the possible impacts of arrival/departure routes when Doncaster Sheffield Airport reopens and Heathrow said that the case for expanding the airport "has never been clearer" after it was overtaken by Istanbul as Europe's busiest hub in July.

In September, an ATC problem on the 8th led to thousands of flights being cancelled. NATS, the ATC provider, blamed a technical glitch and its boss was summoned to a meeting with the Transport Secretary the next day.

Item 6: SASIG's response to the Call for Evidence: draft Heathrow Expansion NPS and next steps

The Group discussed the [public consultation on the framework for future decisions on Heathrow's third runway](#) launched on 18 June 2026 (which has been discussed under Item 5) and the TSC's Call for Evidence which quickly followed it on 25 June 2026. SASIG has submitted responses to both of these.

SASIG and the Heathrow Strategic Planning Group (HSPG) had also jointly hosted an online workshop on 8 July 2026 with invitees from a selected group of relevant SASIG London authority members alongside non-members from the London area. The latter included Ealing Council, Elmbridge BC, Surrey Heath BC, Bracknell Forest Council along with representatives from the UK Airport Consultative Committee. The workshop was warmly received and feedback was encouraging.

In August, the Transport Committee published more than 70 pieces of written evidence received for its inquiry (including one from SASIG) and is scrutinising the draft Heathrow Expansion National Policy Statement published by the DfT in June 2026, with oral evidence sessions starting this month (September).

Item 7: Implications of DfT Noise Research including CAA Noise Attitudes Survey 2023-24 (CAP3131)

This item was mainly taken as read as some of this has already been discussed earlier (under Items 4 and 5) but note was taken of the number of documents listed within this item pertaining to noise issues and research. The Group re-iterated the long-held SASIG view that noise issues should be at the forefront of Government thinking. There was some discussion on whether night freight flights would be moving to Stansted (along with perhaps East Midlands airport) and that Gatwick does not have the capacity to handle cargo flights.

Item 8: Review of UK Aviation Forecasts (published 18 June 2026) and their implications

On 18 June 2026, the DfT published the [UK aviation forecast 2026](#) setting out its 2026 forecasts for air passengers, aircraft movements and CO2 emissions for UK airports. The set of forecasts presented in this document are an update to the [forecasts published in 2017](#). The Secretariat looked at comparisons between the 2017 forecasts and those published this year and provided the Group with an executive summary of the main differences.

It was agreed that forecasting looked better than it was but limited by having only two scenarios provided. It was also agreed that forecasts are not compatible with noise contours/climate objectives. The model was only designed with bigger airports in mind, to the detriment of smaller airports and not much thought has been given to capacity issues – not just runways but, for instance, terminals too.

Item 9: Review of the latest news concerning Drones

This item was mainly for information and taken as read. A list of recommendations for what local authorities should be looking at or doing in next 12 months was noted along with advice given by the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) published on 9 July outlining key issues and considerations for UK planners on the use and oversight of drones in planning practice. It was suggested that these could form part of an item at the next SASIG members' meeting in October.

Item 10: Arrangements for full SASIG meeting/AGM on Tuesday: 6 October 2026 (Virtual via Teams)

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

(b) Guest speaker: the Secretariat has reached out to a representative from Heathrow to give members an update on the Heathrow expansion from the airport's perspective.

Action: Secretariat to confirm with HAL regarding speaker.



(c) Nominations for Chairman and Vice Chairmen: it had been decided at the previous CAG meeting that in light of the recent council elections and ongoing uncertainty about portfolio holders, these would be held over until the autumn SASIG meeting on 6 October 2026.

Action: *Secretariat to investigate Chair/Vice Chair requirements in time for AGM.*

Item 11: Future dates in 2026/27 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: 15 September 2026

No.	Action	Responsible person(s)	Progress to date (Outstanding actions in bold)
1	Now Ministerial responsibilities in the new Administration are clear, Chairman/Policy Director to try again to secure a meeting with Aviation Minister to follow-up on key issues after the meeting they had with his officials.	Chairman/Policy Director	Action: PD to develop list of specific SASIG concerns discussed at CAG and draft another letter requesting meeting with Minister. Chairman to approve/dispatch.
2	Chairman/Policy Director to approach Shadow Transport spokesman, Richard Holden (Cons. MP, Billericay); plus relevant Reform spokesman to discuss SASIG concerns and seek support. Potentially copy in Kemi Badenoch MP. Also to approach Ruth Cadbury (Lab MP).	Chairman/Policy Director	Action: PD to draft letters for Chairman to send to those mentioned.
3	Chairman to send letter 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	Action: PD to draft letter(s) on behalf of Chairman. Chairman to approve/dispatch to LGA.
4	SASIG draft response to Mayoral powers consultation to include SASIG's concerns on how this will affect airports/aviation within local authorities.	Policy Director	Action: PD to review draft response and make any recommendations agreed with Chairman before final submission – closing date is 5 October.
5	Nominations for SASIG Chairman/Vice Chairmen: usually actioned at Summer AGM but due to local council elections in May, this was postponed to be actioned at autumn meeting instead.	Secretariat	Action: Secretariat to investigate Chair/Vice Chair requirements, etc. in time for the October SASIG AGM.
6	Confirm Guest speaker for SASIG meeting On 6 th October	Secretariat	Actioned: Representative from Heathrow attending.
7	Trial new methods of getting attendance levels up	Policy Director/Secretariat	PD to discuss with LS/KA and LS to action.

Summary of actions from SASIG meeting: 17 June 2026

No.	Action	Responsible person(s)	Progress to date (Outstanding actions in bold)
1	Preparation of paper on the social impacts of aviation and implications for LAs for next member meeting	Policy Director	To be actioned
2	Maximising local/regional growth and highlighting the social value of airports on local communities: Policy Director to develop an outline paper for future online meeting for interested members.	Policy Director	To be actioned.



SASIG Meeting: 6 October 2026
Item 4

Item 4: Guest speaker: Becky Coffin, Communities and Sustainability Director, Heathrow Airport

The Chairman is pleased to introduce our guest speaker, Becky Coffin who is Communities and Sustainability Director at Heathrow Airport.

Becky joined Heathrow in 2017 and is leading the delivery of Heathrow 2.0, the airport's sustainability strategy and overseeing Heathrow's relationships with local stakeholders. She leads a team of issue experts and engagement professionals working across the business with all key stakeholder groups to deliver the airport's commitments to the local community and environment.

Over the last couple of years Becky was responsible for overseeing Heathrow's support to communities through the pandemic, including the creation of the Heathrow Local Recovery Plan – a local collaboration with partners to support sub-regional economic recovery. Becky represents Heathrow at community forums and key industry groups including Airports Council International Europe where she helped create a European-wide Sustainability Strategy for airports.



SASIG Meeting: 6 October 2026
Item 5

Item 5: SASIG Administration and Finances: updates from Chairman and Policy Director:

Recommendation: that members note content of the update

a) Update inc: subscription invoices and payments

The Group's account remains in credit and in line with budget expectations. Payments to Northpoint for Secretarial services are up to date and a further £11,000 in fee income is expected. We have also secured our first Sponsor with two others in prospect. This is expected to result in sponsorship income of £4-5,000 before financial year end and also to result in an outturn projection for the year end of a few thousand pounds to be carried over into next year.

The Policy Director will provide a further update to members on the SIG's current finances at the meeting.

b) Update on membership, recruitment and sponsors

The Policy Director will provide members with any updates available on the progress of ongoing work regarding recruitment of new authorities and possible Sponsors. It was felt that LAs' financial positions had probably settled down somewhat since the May's council elections which could now provide more scope to approach authorities about joining SASIG. There are also currently three companies actively keen on sponsoring SASIG and the Policy Director will continue his communication with them.

The Chairman and Policy Director have also previously discussed organising a series of meetings with current members as a way of reinforcing to them the availability of the Chairman's Advisory Group (CAG) for help and support in aviation-related matters within their own authorities.

It was previously agreed to postpone much of this work until after the May local election results. However, at the last CAG meeting (15 September) it was agreed that, for now, it would be best to leave the bulk of any planned member meetings in abeyance as it is understood that all authorities are currently extremely busy with many issues including developing local plans and looking at possible local government reorganisation should that happen. Nevertheless, the Group re-iterates that it stands ready to assist any member authority wherever and whenever required. In that case, members are encouraged to contact either the Chairman or the Policy Director via the Secretariat at: secretariat@sasig.org.uk.



SASIG Meeting: 6 October 2026
Item 6

Item 6: Policy Developments/Key Issues since previous SASIG 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 **17 June 2026** along with notice of recent and forthcoming invites to external meetings:

June:

22nd: SASIG Chairman along with the Policy Director had an online meeting with Neil Bowerbank, Head of Strategy, Performance and Communications at Darlington Council for further discussions around Darlington's experience in dealing with the Amazon drones. Policy Director will verbally update members.

25th: The latest meeting of the **Airspace and Noise Engagement Group (ANEG)** was held which SASIG attended – members will be updated verbally. There are a number of documents from this meeting, attached to this item and which are listed below. The next meeting is scheduled for 28 October 2026 and SASIG will attend.

Item 6(a): ANEG minutes from 25 June 2026

Item 6(b): Presentation on the CAA ANAS (2023-24) key findings

Item 6(c): DfT ANNE Subjective Study (Tim May)

Item 6(d): DfT update on Heathrow Expansion NPS (Alice Philipson)

Item 6(e): Night Flight Regime timeline for engagement

Item 6(f): Noise from A320 operations at Luton Airport (Darren Rhodes-CAA)

Item 6(g): Noise from A320 operations at Luton Airport (Exec. Summary)

July:

9th: Waterfront Conference Company hosted the **UK Airport Infrastructure Forum 2026** at Pinsent Masons in London. This event explored how to deliver airport infrastructure, with airports providing updates on their plans for growth and expansion along with relevant timelines. Attendees heard about decarbonising infrastructure, improving connectivity, navigating planning processes and much more. SASIG Policy Director, Chris Cain was one of the afternoon speakers (as Northpoint Aviation and also representative of industry colleagues RABA) discussing "What's next for regional airports amid sector expansion? Development opportunities beyond London". Chris's presentation is attached to these papers at **Item 6(h)**.



17th: New ICAO Obstacle Limitation Surfaces Workshop held at Gatwick. The workshops (another one was held in Manchester on 3 June and a further one will be held in Scotland on 8 October) are intended to support understanding of the new OLS framework, including its implementation. They also provide an opportunity to explore key considerations, share learning, and discuss common challenges and approaches. SASIG Policy Director was in attendance and can verbally update members.

30th: The Secretariat sent round details (on 22 July) about this **RTPI 'Planning drone futures' launch event** held in London. It was thought some members would be interested in attending this. Key speakers were from the University of Reading and Lancaster University and the RTPI planned to publish new practice advice notes later that day.

September:

8th: Meeting of the Combined Aerodrome Safeguarding Team (CAST). SASIG usually attends but was unable to on this occasion.

29th-30th: Policy Director spoke at the AIR conference at Excel. Entrance was free with all welcome as this was a strong gathering of the UK aviation industry. The Policy Director will be able to verbally update members. See links at:

<https://www.air-uk.net>

[AIR – Aviation Infrastructure Resilience Conference | ExCeL London](#)

Forthcoming meetings:

As detailed above, it is hoped to make a site visit to look at the Amazon drone trials at a date later in the year.

22nd October is the date for the next meeting of ANEG; this is likely to discuss who the new noise research will be used in the context of the HENPS

8th December will see the next meeting of the Combined Aerodrome Safeguarding Team (CAST) which SASIG regularly attends.

Finally, to note: following a letter sent from the SASIG Chairman to the Aviation Minister, Keir Mather, in February 2026, it remains a priority to try and arrange a meeting with him at some point this year. It is noted that he remains in position following the appointment of a new Prime Minister and subsequent Cabinet reshuffle earlier this summer.

(b) Update on recent, current, and forthcoming consultations

Recent consultations:

The latest one that closed which was of interest to members was the [public consultation on the framework for future decisions on Heathrow's third runway](#) which was launched on 18 June and closed on 1 September. The 2018 [Airports National Policy Statement \(ANPS\)](#) sets out the need and policies for any Development Consent Order proposals relating to airport expansion at Heathrow, through the delivery of a Northwest Runway. With the consultation the DfT were seeking views on proposed amendments to



the ANPS, as part of its review. This included changing the name of the ANPS to the Heathrow Expansion National Policy Statement (HENPS) to better reflect its purpose.

The draft HENPS applies only to expansion at Heathrow Airport through a Northwest Runway scheme and takes into consideration surface access (road and rail links to Heathrow Airport) plus economic, social and environmental considerations related to its proposed expansion. Read the [Draft Heathrow Expansion National Policy Statement](#).

The Government press release can be seen [here](#) and the written statement to Parliament can be seen [here](#).

SASIG submitted its final response on 1 September – this will be covered more under **Item 7** where the response can be seen.

SASIG also submitted a response to a [Call for Evidence](#) (24 June-23 July) relating to this document from the Transport Committee and this also will be covered more thoroughly under **Item 7**.

Current consultations:

Survey on the Draft Technical Guidance for the Scottish Air Departure Tax (early September – 4 weeks duration)

From 1 April 2027, the Air Departure Tax (ADT) will replace Air Passenger Duty in Scotland – see more [here](#). Revenue Scotland will take on the collection and management of this new tax. Revenue Scotland has invited SASIG to take part in a survey to help improve the technical guidance that will support the introduction of the new ADT. This research survey seeks feedback on the clarity, usability, and effectiveness of the draft technical guidance for ADT and all input will help Revenue Scotland improve guidance materials for businesses and stakeholders ahead of the tax going live. The Policy Director will update members with any further information and the ADT Technical Guidance Participation Information Sheet can be seen at **Item 6(i)** attached to these papers.

Footnote: this month the Scottish Government [laid draft legislation](#) to amend the Air Departure Tax (Scotland) Act 2017, which, if approved, will bring the new exemption into effect from 1 April 2027. Alongside this, [draft legislation has also been laid](#) for various administrative provisions in preparation for ADT coming into effect from 1 April 2027. Further draft legislation will follow in due course to ensure the administrative and procedural steps are in place for ADT going live and to allow Revenue Scotland to administer and collect the tax effectively.

On 24 August, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) published a consultation seeking views on how planning powers for mayors of strategic authorities in the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Act 2026 should be implemented. The consultation closed on 5 October 2026 and can be seen at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/planning-powers-for-mayors-in-england>

Attached at **Item 6(j)** is a draft SASIG response to this consultation which was sent round to members, Associates and Affiliates asking for comments before final submission.

(c) 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 held on 17 June 2026:

June:

18th: Consultation launched on the draft Heathrow Expansion National Policy Statement – details [here](#) and [here](#). Also on this day, it was reported that a broader aviation industry coalition was calling for [stronger enforcement of EU airport noise rules](#).

23rd: [London's High Court ruled Britain's approval of plans to expand Gatwick Airport was lawful](#), after a legal challenge brought by campaigners. Gatwick's response is [here](#).

July:

3rd: [Eastern Airways entered liquidation](#) after a last-minute collapse of a key commercial contract. It had been operating domestic services across UK.

15th: [Scottish Government said that all flights between the Highlands and Islands and other Scottish airports will be exempt from Air Departure Tax](#) when the devolved levy comes into force next year.

20th: [Vertical Aerospace completed the first public eVTOL transition flight at the Farnborough International Airshow](#).

23rd: [It was reported that UK airport drop-off fees were up by a third in just 12 months](#) with 16 of the UK's 20 busiest airports having increased their costs in this period. Also on this day, the [Government announced £7.3 million in funding for 8 projects aiming to fuel the UK's transition to zero-emission flights](#).

August:

4th: [Gatwick was given the green light by the Appeals Court to go ahead with development of its Northern runway project](#) after campaign groups had attempted to stop the project. Meanwhile, on the same day, Luton Rising, who own [Luton airport](#), [announced that all legal processes had now been completed](#), allowing plans to increase the airport's annual capacity from 19 million to 32 million passengers by the mid-2040s.

8th: A consultation began over the possible impacts of arrival and departure routes when Doncaster Sheffield Airport reopens. The airport, which closed in 2022, is due to resume passenger flights in 2028, but currently has no form of airspace control.

11th: Heathrow said that the case for expanding the airport "has never been clearer" after it was overtaken by Istanbul as Europe's busiest hub in July.

19th: CAA published H8 Passenger Forecast shock factor issues – see the document [here](#). The shock factor is a downward adjustment applied to the annual passenger forecast to reflect that there will be unpredictable events during the period that cause a non-recoverable reduction in passenger volumes (such as adverse weather, volcanic eruptions, terrorist events and international conflicts). Heathrow Airport Limited have suggested that the power outage in March 2025 should be considered a shock event.

26th: As set out in the CAA's Initial Proposals for the [H8 price control](#), published in March 2026, on this day the CAA published an [independent ex post assessment of H7 capital efficiency](#). The CAA are now inviting stakeholders' representations on this key component of their ex post review of HAL's H7 capital efficiency, which they will take into consideration in their final proposals for the H8 price control. Members were informed.

September:

8th: An air traffic control problem in the UK led to thousands of flights being cancelled. Nats, the ATC provider, blamed a technical glitch and its boss Martin Rolfe apologised, saying there would be a full investigation after admitting resolving the issue had taken "longer than hoped". He was summoned to a meeting with the Transport Secretary the next day.

14th: Belfast City Airport has announced details of a public consultation on its potential £200 million draft investment proposals.

15th: Also on this day, the CAA updated the Airspace Change Process – [version 6 of CAP1616 comes into effect from 1 October](#).

16th: Airports Council International (ACI) World called for the modernisation of the global airport slot allocation system.

21st: NATS again experienced a technical issue – this one at their Prestwick centre in Scotland. A press release said it was nothing to do with the problem earlier this month.

(d) Latest Noise Research

On 10 June 2026, the CAA released its report on the Aviation Noise Attitudes Survey 2023-2024 – [CAP3131: Aviation Noise Attitudes Survey 2023-2024 | UK Civil Aviation Authority \(ANAS\)](#) along with supporting documents (these are mentioned at 6(a) above).

The 2023-2024 survey has gathered data at a scale larger than previous UK noise attitude surveys and has done so in a consistent way across the country, providing a clearer understanding of how people respond to aircraft noise and forming an important basis for future studies.



The study surveyed over 45,000 respondents across two waves with almost 30,000 respondents in Wave 1 (Autumn 2023) and over 15,000 in Wave 2 (Spring 2024). This involved randomly sampling communities in the vicinity of ten UK airports. It provides updated evidence on public attitudes to aviation noise, building on earlier surveys such as the [Survey of Noise Attitudes](#) in 2014.

Some key findings include:

- As would be expected, as noise increases, so do annoyance levels. In Wave 1, 7.9% of respondents were highly annoyed by aviation noise at 40 dB, 19.5% at 50 dB, 40.6% at 60 dB and 66% at 70 dB.
- The percentage of respondents who said they were highly annoyed in ANAS 2023-2024 was found to be higher than SoNA 2014 at all noise exposures, including in the same geographical areas surveyed in SoNA. There are differences between airports. The differences are however lower than those seen in similar US studies when compared to the UK.

The ANAS 2023-2024 report does not analyse what may have caused any differences in results with the SoNA 2014 survey. The CAA will undertake additional analysis to investigate the influence of additional factors, such as personal, social, situational and physical contextual factors, on the results.

On the same day the DfT also published research on night noise effects, which can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/aviation-night-noise-effects-anne-study>

The **Aviation Night Noise Effects (ANNE) study** (also mentioned in 6(a) above) is a two-part study examining the relationship between night-time aviation noise exposure, sleep disturbance and annoyance, and how this relationship varies at different times of night.

This research paper presents the findings of the first part of ANNE, the subjective study. It was a large-scale cross-sectional survey of residents living near 8 UK airports, assessing associations between night-time aircraft noise exposure and subjective sleep disturbance and annoyance. The CAA expect to publish the second part of ANNE, the objective study, later this year. The CAA has also published the [Aviation Noise Attitudes Study \(ANAS\) on daytime noise annoyance](#).

Staying on the subject of night noise, on 10 August 2026, the Department for Transport published the socio-economic impacts of night flying study which can be found here: [Socio-economic impacts of night flying study - GOV.UK](#)

The socio-economic impacts of night flying study was commissioned to estimate:

- the economic and social welfare impacts of night flights
- how any changes to UK night flying policy, including to the night flight regime, could impact these



The study consists of three documents: a literature review, a methodology report and a model output report.

In addition, the Department also published its revised Air Navigation Directions and Air Navigation Guidance which will come into force on 1 October 2026. These documents including the consultation response document and impact assessment can be found here: [Changes to the air navigation directions and air navigation guidance - GOV.UK](#)

To note: SASIG was invited by the CAA to a brief discussion held on 10 June 2026, of the ANAS research findings, which were due to be published that day. DfT would also provide an overview of ANNE which were also to be published on 10 June. There are also a number of documents from the last meeting of the Airspace and Noise Engagement Group (ANEG) concerning ANAS and ANNE which are already attached to these papers and are mentioned and listed above in **6(a)**.



SASIG Meeting: 6 October 2026

Item 7

Item 7: Heathrow Expansion National Policy Statement (HENPS): latest update

Recommendation: that members note content of the item including a number of supporting documents, with comments and discussion invited.

Background:

Launched on 18 June 2026 was a [public consultation on the framework for future decisions on Heathrow's third runway](#). The 2018 [Airports National Policy Statement \(ANPS\)](#) sets out the need and policies for any Development Consent Order proposals relating to airport expansion at Heathrow, through the delivery of a Northwest Runway and the Department for Transport were seeking views on proposed amendments to the ANPS, as part of its review. This included changing the name of the ANPS to the Heathrow Expansion National Policy Statement (HENPS) to better reflect its purpose.

The draft HENPS applies only to expansion at Heathrow Airport through a Northwest Runway scheme and takes into consideration surface access (road and rail links to Heathrow Airport), economic, social and environmental considerations related to its proposed expansion. Read the [Draft Heathrow Expansion National Policy Statement](#).

The Government press release can be seen [here](#) and the written statement to Parliament can be seen [here](#). This consultation closed on 1 September 2026.

SASIG and the Heathrow Strategic Planning Group (HSPG) also jointly hosted an online workshop on 8 July 2026 with invitees from a selected group of relevant SASIG London authority members alongside non-members from the London area. The latter included Ealing Council, Elmbridge BC, Surrey Heath BC, Bracknell Forest Council along with representatives from the UK Airport Consultative Committee. The workshop was warmly received and feedback has been encouraging. The following documents from this workshop are attached to these papers:

Item 7(a): SASIG briefing for HENPS workshop (Chris Cain)

Item 7(b): HSPG perspective of HENPS (Michael Thornton)

Item 7(c): Notes from the SASIG/HSPG workshop

Following quickly on from this, on 25 June came publication of a [Call for Evidence regarding Scrutiny of the draft Heathrow Expansion National Policy Statement](#).

SASIG submitted a response to this Call for Evidence on 23 July and this response is referenced later towards the end of this item (**see Item 7(n)**) attached to these papers.

In August, came notification that the Transport Committee has published more than 70 pieces of written evidence received for its inquiry looking at the Government's blueprint



for a third runway at Heathrow. The Committee is scrutinising the draft HENPS published by the DfT in June, with oral evidence sessions that started in September.

The written submissions are available to view on the Transport Committee website – see [here](#) – SASIG’s submission is HEN0069. **Item 7(d)** attached to these papers, is a simple spreadsheet giving a quick analysis of who responded. Also attached at **Item 7(e)** is some analysis of how our submission relates to discussions in the initial two sessions of the TSC inquiry.

It is also worth noting an article which was published in the Telegraph on 6 September and which can be seen at **Item 7(f)**. What the article does not do is link the comment in red to a core criticism of the HENPS and that it focuses solely on Heathrow. It does not factor in wider impacts - primary and secondary - across London and South East airports which also needed to be included in the analysis.

For more information please see: [Scrutiny of the draft Heathrow Expansion National Policy Statement - Oral evidence \(2nd September 2026\)](#).

The 2 September transcript is directly relevant as the “billions” admission in the transcript appears to be the parliamentary source underlying the *Telegraph* story two days later. However, the Committee is still conducting the inquiry and further evidence sessions were scheduled for 8 and 9 September 2026, so there may be additional questioning of the DfT and other witnesses specifically in light of this ‘correction’ as detailed in the newspaper article.

(a): Transport Select Committee Sessions:

As previously mentioned, the [Transport Select Committee is scrutinising the draft Heathrow Expansion National Policy Statement \(HENPS\)](#) published by the DfT in June 2026 and has held a number of evidence sessions already. Aside from the two earlier sessions held on 2 September 2026 and referenced above, others were held on:

Tuesday: 8 September 2026: (2 sessions)

- Climate & Carbon (4p.m.) – see **Item 7(g)** attached to these papers;
- Air Quality, Noise & Health (5p.m.) – see **Item 7(h)** attached to these papers;

Wednesday: 9 September 2026: (2 sessions)

- Airlines, Freight & Delivery (9:15 a.m.) – see **Item 7(i)** attached to these papers;
- UK Airports & Regional Connectivity (10:15 a.m.) – **Item 7(j)** attached to these papers;

Tuesday: 15 September 2026: (2 sessions)

- Local Impacts & Planning Session – see **Item 7(k)** attached to these papers;
- Surface Access Session – see **Item 7(l)** attached to these papers.

(b): SASIG submissions to the Consultation and the TSC enquiry:

SASIG has made submissions to both the Consultation and the TSC enquiry as fully detailed above and these can be seen attached to these papers at:

- **Item 7(m):** SASIG submission to HENPS consultation
- **Item 7(n):** SASIG submission to TSC enquiry



SASIG Meeting: 6 October 2026

Item 8

Item 8: Review of UK Aviation Forecasts (published 18 June 2026) and their implications

Recommendation: that members note content of the item with comments invited.

On 18 June 2026, the DfT published the [UK aviation forecast 2026](#) setting out its 2026 forecasts for air passengers, aircraft movements and CO₂ emissions for UK airports.

DfT's forecasts are a long-term strategic look at UK aviation and are used for the following purposes:

- informing future aviation strategy and policy, including aviation decarbonisation
- informing national aviation policy, e.g. on airport expansion
- feeding into other government departments and the wider aviation sector

The set of forecasts presented in this document are an update to the [forecasts published in 2017](#). Additionally, in 2022 DfT published the Jet Zero emission forecasts, and illustrative scenarios as part of the [Jet Zero strategy](#) are reproduced. This document is designed to sit alongside the [aviation modelling framework](#) which explains how the DfT aviation model works. The Secretariat looked at comparisons between the 2017 forecasts and those published this year – an executive summary of the main differences may be seen below in italics:

Executive Summary of the main differences:

This is a review of the published descriptions of the two forecasts and the Department for Transport's later explanation of how the modelling suite was updated. The 2026 forecast is not simply a refresh of the 2017 numbers; it represents a substantial evolution in modelling philosophy, treatment of uncertainty, policy context, and emissions analysis. The 2026 work builds on and partly replaces the modelling suite that underpinned the 2017 forecasts.

Area	2017 Aviation Forecasts	2026 Aviation Forecasts
<i>Primary purpose</i>	<i>Long-term aviation demand and CO₂ forecasts supporting airport-capacity and aviation strategy decisions</i>	<i>Forecasts designed in a Jet Zero / net-zero policy environment, integrating demand, capacity, emissions and decarbonisation pathways</i>
<i>Baseline context</i>	<i>Pre-COVID growth assumptions</i>	<i>Post-COVID recovery incorporated</i>
<i>Modelling framework</i>	<i>Traditional DfT aviation forecasting suite updated from 2013</i>	<i>Significantly revised modelling suite introduced during 2024–2026 model redevelopment</i>

Area	2017 Aviation Forecasts	2026 Aviation Forecasts
<i>Demand drivers</i>	<i>GDP, fares, population, oil prices, airport capacity constraints</i>	<i>Same core drivers plus stronger treatment of behavioural change, policy measures, technology and decarbonisation impacts</i>
<i>Emissions modelling</i>	<i>Aviation CO₂ forecast mainly from traffic growth and fleet efficiency assumptions</i>	<i>Much more detailed emissions treatment including SAF, technology pathways and Jet Zero policy assumptions</i>
<i>Scenario design</i>	<i>Central, high and low cases focused on economic uncertainty and fuel prices</i>	<i>Wider scenario framework including decarbonisation pathways and policy interventions</i>
<i>Capacity treatment</i>	<i>Strong emphasis on airport capacity constraints and runway expansion impacts</i>	<i>Capacity still important but integrated with emissions and climate policy constraints</i>
<i>Outputs</i>	<i>Passengers, ATMs (air transport movements), fleet mix, CO₂ emissions to 2050</i>	<i>Demand, ATMs, emissions, carbon trajectories and policy evaluation outputs</i>
<i>Transparency</i>	<i>Large forecast report with supporting spreadsheets</i>	<i>More modular framework linked to updated modelling documentation</i>

The detailed comparative analysis of the two forecasting methodologies, covering policy context, model structure, uncertainty, input assumptions, COVID-19, emissions, outputs, capacity treatment and the underlying change in philosophy, is set out in full in **Appendix 1. Appendix 2** sets out the airport-by-airport passenger forecasts (million passengers per annum, mppa) from both publications, by scenario, for 2030, 2040 and 2050. Section 1 below reviews those figures, and Section 2 draws together the conclusions and insights for members.

1. Review of the airport-level passenger forecasts, 2017 and 2026

This section compares the airport forecasts in Appendix 2. The 2017 comparator is the DfT central “baseline capacity” forecast (no new runways; 2017 Table 63). The 2026 comparator is the Current Trends scenario, which includes the approved expansions at Gatwick, Luton, Stansted and London City and the planned Heathrow expansion (2026 Table 6-7). Where relevant, the 2017 Heathrow Northwest Runway (NWR) case is also cited, as it is the closer like-for-like on Heathrow.

Where the forecasts are consistent

At the national level the 2017 forecast has proved remarkably robust despite the pandemic. Interpolating the 2017 central path gives around 293 million passengers in 2024; the outturn was 292.3 million, rising to 299.2 million in 2025. Outside London the two sets of forecasts are also closely aligned to 2040: 126.3 against 128.4 mppa in 2030, and 160.4 against 157.8 mppa in 2040. A number of airports show little material change by 2050, including Aberdeen (4.0 against 4.4 mppa), Inverness (1.1 against 1.2), Exeter (3.1 against 3.0), Cardiff (3.0 against 2.6) and Newquay (0.5 against 0.7).

Where the forecasts differ materially

The national total in 2050 rises from 409.5 mppa (2017 central) to 490.7 mppa (2026 Current Trends), an increase of 81 mppa. **All of this uplift, and more, is in the five London airports**, whose combined forecast rises from 205.4 to 294.7 mppa (+89 mppa). The rest of the UK is forecast 8 mppa **lower** in 2050 (204.2 against 195.9 mppa). The regional share of UK passengers, which the 2017 baseline expected to rise from 39% to 50% by 2050, now stays at around 40%. The main differences at individual airports are:

- **London system, much higher:** Gatwick +26.1 mppa (52.0 to 78.1), Heathrow +37.0 against the 2017 baseline (93.4 to 130.4, though 5.6 mppa below the 2017 NWR case of 136), Stansted +15.1 (35.5 to 50.6) and Luton +13.7 (18.1 to 31.8).
- **Northern and Scottish airports, higher:** Edinburgh +6.6 (17.6 to 24.2), Manchester +4.8, Newcastle +3.2 (6.0 to 9.2), Bristol +1.8 (10.2 to 12.0) and both Belfast airports.
- **Airports that benefited from London “spill” in 2017, lower:** Birmingham –5.4 (32.9 to 27.5), Southend –4.6 (5.1 to 0.5), Southampton –4.4 (7.1 to 2.7), East Midlands –2.8 (10.0 to 7.2), Bournemouth –2.2 (4.4 to 2.2) and Norwich –0.9.
- **Airports downgraded for their own reasons, lower:** Glasgow –3.4 (15.3 to 11.9), Leeds Bradford –3.1 (7.9 to 4.8), London City –2.6 (6.4 to 3.8) and Liverpool –1.6 (8.4 to 6.8). Doncaster Sheffield, which had a 2017 forecast, is not modelled at all in 2026.

Explaining the differences

Four factors account for most of the change:

- **Capacity assumptions drive the allocation.** The 2017 baseline held Gatwick at 50, Heathrow at 90, Stansted at 35 and Luton at 18 mppa. With London full, the model “spilled” demand to Birmingham, Bristol, East Midlands, Southampton and Southend. The 2026 forecast adds over 100 mppa of consented and planned London terminal capacity by 2050 (Gatwick 80, Heathrow 130, Stansted 51, Luton 32). London therefore retains its own demand, and the spill disappears. DfT itself notes “significantly more airport capacity in the Southeast” than in 2017 (2026, para 5.117).
- **Where capacity is binding, the forecast simply equals the cap.** Bristol (12 mppa), Leeds Bradford (5), East Midlands (7), Heathrow (130) and Manchester (55) all sit at or near their assumed terminal capacity by 2050. For these airports the forecast is a statement of planning assumptions, not of demand. Leeds Bradford falls because its assumed capacity has dropped from 8 to 5 mppa since 2017.
- **Post-COVID rebasing to 2024.** The 2026 forecasts start from actual 2024 traffic, not a 2016 base. Airports that recovered strongly (Edinburgh, Newcastle, Liverpool, Bristol, Belfast International) carry that momentum forward. Those that recovered weakly or lost based aircraft and routes (Glasgow, Birmingham, East Midlands, London City, Southampton, Southend) start from a lower base.
- **Updated model inputs.** Re-estimated demand elasticities, carbon pricing, SAF costs and revised economic growth assumptions raise national demand. The

allocation model (NAPAM) then directs most of that increase to where capacity has been assumed, as the London figures show.

2. Conclusions and Insights

Overall assessment of the methodological change

The 2026 Aviation Forecast should be viewed as a **new generation of forecasting**, not merely an update of the 2017 forecast. The most significant changes are:

1. *Post-COVID baseline rather than uninterrupted growth assumptions.*
2. *Net-zero and Jet Zero policy integration.*
3. *Much more sophisticated emissions modelling.*
4. *Broader scenario and uncertainty analysis.*
5. *Greater role for technology and SAF assumptions.*
6. *A shift from airport-capacity planning toward aviation-system and climate-policy assessment.*

While the core demand-modelling structure (economic drivers → passenger demand → airport allocation → aircraft movements) remains recognisable, the 2026 framework is substantially more integrated, policy-oriented, and emissions-focused than the 2017 forecasting framework.

What has changed between 2017 and 2026

- **The national picture is similar; the geography is not.** Nationally, the 2017 path was broadly correct to 2024. The substantive change is where growth is placed: the 2026 forecasts put the whole net increase into the London system, while the regional share of UK traffic stays at about 40% instead of rising.
- **The forecasts have become capacity-led.** Airport-level results now largely reflect which expansions have been consented, or are planned by Government, rather than underlying regional demand. Planning decisions taken since 2017 have effectively reset the national distribution of growth.
- **The forecasts are more fragile at the margins.** The High Growth scenario cannot be solved beyond 2048 because the model “reaches a technical limit” within the capacity constraints (2026, footnote 81). The Regional scenario moves only about 4.7 mppa (around 1%) out of the South East by 2050 (Table 6-4).

Implications for future policy

- The 2026 forecasts give little support to the claim that national growth will be shared across the regions. On DfT’s own figures, Heathrow, Gatwick, Stansted and Luton absorb the growth. Regional airports that planned on the basis of 2017 spill (notably Birmingham, East Midlands and Southampton) face materially lower official forecasts.
- Because regional results are driven by capacity inputs, local authorities and airports should treat them as scenario outputs, not as statements of need. They should not be used to argue against regional capacity proposals, or to understate regional surface-access, economic or environmental impacts.

- The forecasts will underpin the Heathrow Expansion National Policy Statement, the Jet Zero carbon trajectory and future airport planning decisions. Their regional weaknesses therefore have direct consequences, and members may wish to press DfT for a regional sensitivity that tests stronger regional capacity and connectivity, not only population redistribution.

Issues with the modelling and outputs still to be addressed

- **Outturn already exceeding the forecasts.** By 2024 several airports had already passed the volumes 2017 expected for 2030: Manchester (31.6 against 30.8 mppa), Edinburgh (13.9 against 12.5), Bristol (10.1 against 9.5, and above its then 10 mppa cap), Newcastle (5.8 against 4.7), Liverpool (5.6 against 4.2), Belfast International and Bournemouth. The 2026 forecasts show the same weakness: 2024 traffic already exceeds the 2030 Current Trends forecast at Leeds Bradford (4.6 against 3.9), London City (3.4 against 2.7) and Prestwick. Nationally, the modelled 2025 figure (306.4 million) is already 7 million above the 299.2 million actually recorded.
- **Smaller regional airports that barely grow.** The thirteen airports under 5 mppa in 2024 grow by only 3.7% to 2030, against 14.6% nationally, and their share of UK traffic falls from 6.4% to 5.8%. Several are flat or fall: Leeds Bradford and Prestwick decline, and East Midlands barely moves (4.2 to 4.3 mppa). Liverpool, just above this group, is also flat (5.6 to 5.7). Growth arrives late and in steps (Exeter 1.0 to 3.0 and Humberside 0.5 to 1.5 mppa, 2040 to 2050), which suggests overflow from full airports rather than local demand. These airports stay about 6 mppa below their 2017 forecasts by 2050.
- **Exclusion of Doncaster Sheffield.** The 2026 model covers only airports with regular international services in 2024. DSA, closed in 2022, is therefore omitted, although 2017 modelled it (1.2 mppa in 2016; up to 1.6 mppa in the 2050 High case) and its reopening is being actively pursued. No scenario tests its return, so South Yorkshire demand is allocated to Leeds Bradford (capped at 5 mppa), Manchester, East Midlands and Humberside. The report also refers to 29 modelled airports, but only 28 appear in its tables.
- **Internal anomalies.** In 2050 the Low Growth forecast exceeds Current Trends at Leeds Bradford (5.1 against 4.8 mppa), Bristol and Teesside. High Growth falls below Current Trends at Heathrow in 2030. London City falls to 1.4 mppa in 2040, despite consented capacity of 9 mppa. These results point to allocation-model instability at airport level, and they need explanation before the airport figures are relied on in planning or examination.
- **Freight is not modelled.** The 2026 forecasts state that air freight is outside the DfT model (para 3.8). This leaves a gap for airports whose case depends on cargo, and for the treatment of belly-hold capacity in the Heathrow appraisal.

Overall, the 2026 forecasts are a more sophisticated, emissions-led framework (Appendix 1). However, their airport-level outputs are driven primarily by capacity assumptions. They under-represent the smaller regional airports and omit Doncaster Sheffield. Members may wish to endorse the Secretariat raising these points with DfT,



and to request publication of an airport-level regional sensitivity and a reconciliation of the forecasts against 2025 outturn.

Appendix 1: Comparative analysis of the 2017 and 2026 forecasting methodologies

This appendix sets out the detailed methodological comparison referred to in the body of the paper.

1. Different policy context

2017 forecast

The 2017 forecast was produced during the period when the UK was deciding airport expansion policy, especially following the recommendations of the Airports Commission and the debate over expansion at Heathrow Airport. The principal question was: How much aviation demand will the UK experience up to 2050, and what airport capacity will be needed? The report's stated purpose was forecasting passenger demand and aviation CO₂ emissions to support long-term aviation policy.

2026 forecast

The 2026 forecast sits within a fundamentally different policy environment:

- legally binding net-zero targets
- the Jet Zero strategy
- sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) policy
- post-pandemic aviation recovery
- stronger scrutiny of aviation emissions

The emphasis shifts from "How much airport capacity is required?" to: "How can aviation demand, capacity and emissions evolve consistently with UK climate objectives?" This is arguably the biggest conceptual change.

2. Methodology evolution

2017 methodology

The 2017 forecasting system relied on a relatively classical aviation-demand structure:

1. National passenger demand model
2. Airport allocation model
3. Capacity-constrained airport forecasts
4. Air transport movement model
5. Fleet mix model
6. CO₂ emissions model

The sequence was essentially:

Economic growth → Passenger demand → Airport allocation → Aircraft movements → Fleet → Emissions.

The forecasting architecture was largely inherited from earlier DfT forecasting rounds and updated from the 2013 forecasts.

2026 methodology

By contrast, the DfT's updated modelling framework explicitly states that the aviation modelling suite was redeveloped and refined after 2017, with improvements in:

- passenger demand modelling
- aircraft movement modelling
- emissions modelling
- integration between modules

The department describes the newer framework as replacing the 2017 modelling suite and improving precision in emissions forecasting. The architecture becomes more integrated rather than simply sequential. A key change is that emissions are no longer treated as an output after demand has been forecast; emissions assumptions increasingly feed back into demand and policy scenarios.

3. Treatment of uncertainty

2017

Uncertainty was mainly represented through:

- high/low GDP growth
- high/low oil prices
- different fare assumptions
- airport capacity assumptions

These were traditional aviation-demand uncertainties.

2026

The uncertainty framework is much broader and includes:

- pace of aviation recovery after COVID
- SAF uptake rates
- aircraft technology development
- decarbonisation policies
- carbon pricing
- behavioural responses
- economic uncertainty

The result is a much wider scenario envelope.

4. Input assumptions

Economic assumptions

2017

Key drivers:

- UK GDP growth
- world GDP growth
- oil prices
- population growth
- ticket prices

Demand elasticity assumptions remained central.

2026

These inputs remain important, but additional drivers become influential:

- carbon costs
- SAF costs
- net-zero policies
- aviation technology pathways
- post-pandemic travel behaviour

The forecasting environment therefore becomes more policy-driven than purely market-driven.

Aviation technology assumptions

2017

Technology assumptions focused on:

- fleet turnover
- aircraft efficiency improvements
- operational efficiency gains

A separate fleet-mix model determined future aircraft composition.

2026

Technology assumptions become much richer:

- SAF penetration
- aircraft efficiency
- operational improvements
- emerging low-carbon technologies
- emissions reduction trajectories

This is one of the clearest methodological expansions.

5. COVID-19 impact

This is perhaps the most obvious difference.

2017

The forecast assumes uninterrupted long-term growth.

There is no representation of:

- pandemic disruption
- structural demand shocks
- long-term recovery paths

2026

The forecast starts from an aviation market fundamentally altered by COVID.

The model must explicitly consider:

- demand recovery rates
- business travel changes
- remote working impacts
- altered international travel patterns

This alone makes the baseline incomparable with 2017.

6. Emissions modelling

2017

Emissions forecasting was included but primarily as a consequence of traffic forecasts.

The question was essentially: Given projected aviation growth, what are the resulting CO₂ emissions? The emissions model depended heavily on:

- passenger growth
- fleet mix
- fuel efficiency improvements

2026

Emissions become a central modelling objective.

The newer forecast therefore includes:

- decarbonisation pathways
- SAF adoption assumptions
- net-zero compatibility analysis
- policy testing

Emissions move from being an output metric to a policy constraint.

7. Output metrics

2017 outputs

Core outputs were:

- passenger demand
- airport-level demand
- air transport movements (ATMs)
- fleet composition
- CO₂ emissions

Forecast horizon extended to 2050.

2026 outputs

The 2026 forecast still produces those traditional outputs, but adds greater emphasis on:

- emissions trajectories
- policy scenarios
- decarbonisation outcomes
- sensitivity testing

The outputs are therefore more suitable for climate-policy appraisal than airport-capacity planning alone.

8. Airport capacity treatment

2017

Airport capacity constraints were one of the central modelling features. A distinction was made between:

- unconstrained demand
- constrained demand

The allocation model distributed passengers among airports subject to capacity limits.

2026

Capacity remains important but is no longer the dominant policy question.

The modelling focus broadens to:

- capacity
- emissions
- climate policy
- sustainability

rather than simply identifying where future runway shortages may occur.

9. Philosophical shift

The deepest difference is philosophical.

2017 paradigm

"Forecast demand and then determine how infrastructure accommodates it."

2026 paradigm

"Forecast demand, emissions, technology and policy together, and evaluate whether growth is compatible with net-zero objectives." That is a much more systems-based approach.

Appendix 2: Airport passenger forecasts – DfT 2017 and DfT 2026 compared (mppa)

Table A2.1 sets out the airport forecasts from both publications by scenario and year. Table A2.2 compares the central cases, including outturn against the 2017 path, the 2026 Regional scenario and the capacity assumed in each forecast.

Airport	Actual		2030						2040						2050					
	2016	2024	DfT 2017			DfT 2026			DfT 2017			DfT 2026			DfT 2017			DfT 2026		
			Low	Central	High	Low	CT	High	Low	Central	High	Low	CT	High	Low	Central	High	Low	CT	High
London airports																				
Gatwick	43.4	43.9	45.0	45.4	48.8	41.2	52.5	64.1	50.2	49.8	53.8	47.4	68.0	79.5	52.0	52.0	54.7	56.8	78.1	n/a
Heathrow	76.0	83.7	86.6	86.2	85.9	92.8	93.6	91.7	89.4	89.6	90.5	116.9	115.7	116.6	90.9	93.4	97.2	130.1	130.4	n/a
London City	4.0	3.4	6.7	6.5	6.6	2.4	2.7	3.5	6.6	6.5	6.5	1.3	1.4	6.0	6.5	6.4	6.6	1.8	3.8	n/a
Luton	14.5	17.0	17.9	18.0	18.1	18.5	20.2	24.4	18.2	18.2	18.0	18.3	20.7	26.6	17.9	18.1	18.1	17.8	31.8	n/a
Stansted	24.5	30.5	23.6	31.0	35.4	31.8	37.2	42.1	35.2	35.4	35.3	37.5	44.9	50.4	35.2	35.5	35.0	42.5	50.6	n/a
Other UK airports																				
Aberdeen	2.6	2.4	2.7	2.9	3.1	2.5	2.6	2.7	3.1	3.4	3.5	3.0	3.3	3.9	3.7	4.0	4.3	3.7	4.4	n/a
Belfast City	2.7	2.8	2.9	3.2	3.6	3.1	3.5	3.7	3.4	3.8	4.1	4.2	4.6	5.0	4.1	4.6	5.0	5.3	5.3	n/a
Belfast International	5.1	6.5	5.9	6.4	6.6	6.9	7.3	7.7	7.1	7.8	8.3	8.2	8.9	9.7	8.5	9.2	10.0	9.1	10.8	n/a
Birmingham	12.3	12.4	16.2	18.2	20.2	12.6	14.6	16.8	22.9	27.4	29.9	16.4	19.4	27.2	31.3	32.9	35.8	21.4	27.5	n/a
Bournemouth	0.6	1.1	0.1	0.2	1.3	1.1	1.2	1.3	0.5	0.7	4.5	1.1	1.3	2.2	4.4	4.4	4.5	1.4	2.2	n/a
Bristol	7.6	10.1	8.3	9.5	9.8	10.1	11.0	12.2	9.9	10.0	10.0	11.5	12.5	12.4	10.1	10.2	10.1	12.1	12.0	n/a
Cardiff	1.4	0.9	0.8	0.8	0.9	1.0	0.9	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.4	1.0	1.5	2.2	2.8	3.0	5.8	1.7	2.6	n/a
Doncaster Sheffield	1.2	-	0.3	0.6	1.0	n/m	n/m	n/m	0.3	0.6	0.8	n/m	n/m	n/m	0.4	0.4	1.6	n/m	n/m	n/m
East Midlands	4.8	4.2	6.4	6.3	6.9	3.7	4.3	5.1	7.9	8.7	9.9	4.4	5.8	7.4	10.2	10.0	10.0	5.6	7.2	n/a
Edinburgh	11.8	13.9	12.1	12.5	13.3	14.9	16.4	17.7	14.5	15.4	16.1	17.3	20.0	23.4	16.7	17.6	19.3	19.9	24.2	n/a
Exeter	0.8	0.4	0.6	0.7	0.7	0.5	0.6	0.7	0.8	1.0	1.0	0.7	1.0	2.3	3.4	3.1	3.6	1.9	3.0	n/a
Glasgow	8.2	7.7	11.1	12.2	12.9	7.6	8.2	9.3	12.3	13.1	14.3	9.1	10.0	11.4	14.3	15.3	16.0	10.2	11.9	n/a
Humberside	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.5	0.9	0.3	0.6	0.6	0.9	1.5	n/a
Inverness	0.7	0.6	0.8	0.9	0.9	0.7	0.7	0.8	0.9	0.9	1.0	0.8	1.1	1.1	1.0	1.1	1.1	1.0	1.2	n/a
Leeds/Bradford	3.4	4.6	6.9	7.2	7.5	3.5	3.9	5.0	8.1	8.2	7.9	4.0	4.8	4.7	8.0	7.9	8.1	5.1	4.8	n/a
Liverpool	4.8	5.6	4.2	4.2	4.5	5.3	5.7	7.4	4.8	5.0	6.0	5.7	6.3	6.9	9.3	8.4	12.4	5.8	6.8	n/a
Manchester	26.8	31.6	29.0	30.8	32.5	33.9	37.4	37.4	36.8	38.6	41.5	39.6	45.3	54.1	46.0	50.3	54.7	46.0	55.1	n/a
Newcastle	4.7	5.8	4.4	4.7	4.9	5.9	6.5	7.2	4.8	5.0	5.5	6.8	7.6	8.6	5.8	6.0	6.4	8.0	9.2	n/a
Newquay	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.6	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.6	0.7	n/a
Norwich	0.5	0.5	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.6	0.8	0.9	0.6	0.7	0.8	1.4	2.0	3.2	0.9	1.1	n/a
Prestwick	0.8	0.6	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.4	0.4	0.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.4	n/a
Southampton	2.0	0.9	2.5	3.0	3.1	0.9	1.0	1.1	4.8	7.1	7.0	1.1	1.3	2.5	7.1	7.1	6.8	1.3	2.7	n/a
Southend	0.7	0.3	0.7	0.8	0.9	0.6	0.7	1.1	0.8	1.1	2.1	0.2	0.3	1.2	2.9	5.1	5.0	0.2	0.5	n/a
Teesside	0.1	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.2	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.5	0.8	0.6	0.6	0.5	0.9	1.0	0.9	n/a
London (5 airports)	162.5	178.4	179.8	187.1	194.7	186.6	206.1	225.8	199.5	199.4	204.1	221.4	250.6	279.1	202.5	205.4	211.6	249.0	294.7	n/a
Rest of UK	104.2	113.6	117.1	126.3	135.8	116.1	128.4	140.5	146.4	160.4	176.6	137.2	157.8	189.6	192.6	204.2	225.8	163.3	195.9	n/a
UK total	266.6	292.0	297.0	313.4	330.5	302.7	334.5	366.2	345.8	359.8	380.7	358.6	408.4	468.7	395.2	409.5	437.4	412.3	490.6	n/a

Table A2.1: Airport terminal passenger forecasts by scenario, DfT 2017 (baseline capacity, no new runways) and DfT 2026 (approved airport plans and planned Heathrow expansion), mppa.

Sources: DfT UK Aviation Forecasts 2017, Table 63 (2016 is the modelled base year); DfT UK Aviation Forecast 2026, Table 6-7 and data table 5D (2024 is the calibrated base year, matching CAA data). CT = Current Trends. Rest of UK includes Southampton and Southend. Totals are shown as published or summed from unrounded data, so may differ from row sums by rounding.

n/m = not modelled. Doncaster Sheffield is excluded from the 2026 model (Table 4-2). Teesside was modelled as Durham Tees Valley in 2017.

n/a: the 2026 High Growth scenario is published only to 2048 (UK total 509.7 mppa in 2048) because the model "reaches a technical limit" (2026 report, footnote 81).

For comparison, the 2017 central forecast with a Heathrow Northwest Runway (Table 65, rounded) was: Heathrow 132 / 135 / 136 mppa (2030 / 2040 / 2050); London 222 / 241 / 248; outside London 121 / 146 / 187; UK total 343 / 387 / 435.

Airport	Actual	2017 path	Actual vs	2030		2050				2026 Regional	Terminal capacity 2050	
	2024	for 2024*	2017 path	DfT17 C	DfT26 CT	DfT17 C	DfT26 CT	Change	Change %	2050	DfT17	DfT26
Gatwick	43.9	44.5	99%	45.4	52.5	52.0	78.1	+26.1	+50%	77.6	50	80
Heathrow	83.7	81.8	102%	86.2	93.6	93.4	130.4	+37.0	+40%	130.4	90	130
London City	3.4	5.4	63%	6.5	2.7	6.4	3.8	-2.6	-40%	3.7	7	9
Luton	17.0	16.5	103%	18.0	20.2	18.1	31.8	+13.7	+76%	29.7	18	32
Stansted	30.5	28.2	108%	31.0	37.2	35.5	50.6	+15.1	+43%	49.1	35	51
Aberdeen	2.4	2.8	87%	2.9	2.6	4.0	4.4	+0.4	+10%	4.4	6	6
Belfast City	2.8	3.0	92%	3.2	3.5	4.6	5.3	+0.7	+16%	5.3	n/a	8
Belfast International	6.5	5.8	111%	6.4	7.3	9.2	10.8	+1.6	+17%	10.7	n/a	23
Birmingham	12.4	15.7	79%	18.2	14.6	32.9	27.5	-5.4	-16%	28.7	37	37
Bournemouth	1.1	0.4	302%	0.2	1.2	4.4	2.2	-2.2	-49%	2.3	5	3
Bristol	10.1	8.7	116%	9.5	11.0	10.2	12.0	+1.8	+17%	12.1	10	12
Cardiff	0.9	1.1	81%	0.8	0.9	3.0	2.6	-0.4	-12%	3.1	8	5
Doncaster Sheffield	closed	0.9	-	0.6	n/m	0.4	n/m	-	-	n/m	2	n/m
East Midlands	4.2	5.7	73%	6.3	4.3	10.0	7.2	-2.8	-28%	7.3	10	7
Edinburgh	13.9	12.2	114%	12.5	16.4	17.6	24.2	+6.6	+37%	26.0	35	35
Exeter	0.4	0.7	60%	0.7	0.6	3.1	3.0	-0.1	-2%	3.0	4	4
Glasgow	7.7	10.5	74%	12.2	8.2	15.3	11.9	-3.4	-22%	12.6	20	20
Humberside	0.1	0.2	74%	0.2	0.1	0.6	1.5	+0.9	+143%	1.6	3	3
Inverness	0.6	0.8	80%	0.9	0.7	1.1	1.2	+0.1	+5%	1.2	n/a	3
Leeds/Bradford	4.6	5.6	82%	7.2	3.9	7.9	4.8	-3.1	-39%	5.1	8	5
Liverpool	5.6	4.5	125%	4.2	5.7	8.4	6.8	-1.6	-19%	7.0	15	7
Manchester	31.6	29.1	109%	30.8	37.4	50.3	55.1	+4.8	+9%	54.3	55	55
Newcastle	5.8	4.7	123%	4.7	6.5	6.0	9.2	+3.2	+54%	9.4	9	9
Newquay	0.4	0.5	98%	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.7	+0.2	+46%	0.9	1	1
Norwich	0.5	0.5	90%	0.5	0.5	2.0	1.1	-0.9	-46%	1.0	3	3
Prestwick	0.6	0.3	162%	0.0	0.5	0.0	0.4	+0.4	-	0.6	3	3
Southampton	0.9	2.6	36%	3.0	1.0	7.1	2.7	-4.4	-63%	2.3	7	3
Southend	0.3	0.8	34%	0.8	0.7	5.1	0.5	-4.6	-91%	0.4	5	5
Teesside	0.2	0.0	497%	0.0	0.2	0.5	0.9	+0.4	+75%	0.9	1	1
London (5 airports)	178.4	176.6	101%	187.1	206.1	205.4	294.7	+89.3	+43%	290.5		
Rest of UK	113.6	116.8	97%	126.3	128.4	204.2	195.9	-8.3	-4%	200.1		
UK total	292.0	293.3	100%	313.4	334.5	409.5	490.6	+81.1	+20%	490.6		

Table A2.2: Central-case comparison – outturn against the 2017 path, change in 2050 forecast, 2026 Regional scenario and assumed terminal capacity (mppa).

* The 2017 path for 2024 is interpolated linearly between the 2017 central forecasts for 2016 and 2030 (Secretariat calculation). Green shading shows 2024 outturn at least 5% ahead of the 2017 path, or a 2050 increase of 1 mppa or more; red shading shows outturn at least 20% behind the path, or a 2050 reduction of 1 mppa or more.

Change = DfT 2026 Current Trends minus DfT 2017 central (baseline capacity) for 2050. Change % is not shown where the 2017 base is below 0.5 mppa. Terminal capacity sources: DfT 2017, Table 22; DfT 2026, Table 5-12. Belfast airports and Inverness are not shown in 2017 Table 22.

UK actual passengers were 292.3 million in 2024 and 299.2 million in 2025 (DfT 2026, Table 3-1), against a modelled Current Trends figure for 2025 of 306.4 million (data table 5D).

SASIG Meeting: 6 October 2026

Item 9

Item 9: Review of the latest developments concerning Drones

Recommendations: that members note content of the review and comments are invited.

We begin with a quick review of some of the latest drone news to date this year:

January 2026:

1st: New UK requirements introduced a [class-marking framework for drones](#), with UK class marks indicating the operating characteristics and requirements of the aircraft.

The CAA also introduced [Remote ID requirements for relevant classes of drone](#). Remote ID is particularly significant for local authorities. It enables a drone in flight to transmit identification and location information that can potentially be received by other parties. For UK1, UK2 and UK3 aircraft, the CAA states that Remote ID had to be enabled from 1 January 2026. Other categories have different implementation dates.

Registration requirements also changed - from 2026, the CAA states that people flying drones weighing over 100g generally require a Flyer ID, while operator-registration requirements continue to apply according to the applicable class and operating circumstances.

12th: [Amazon announced it had started drone flights in the UK](#) out of its Darlington base.

February 2026:

3rd: [Government launched a competition](#) seeking innovative technologies capable of detecting and countering hostile drones around prisons, sensitive sites and critical infrastructure – this should presumably also include airports?

March 2026:

6th: Stansted's Chief Asset and Development Officer said ['Half a dozen' drone incursions happened per day at the airport](#) and fixing the issue is a problem that needs a plan consistent across the nation. Also on this day it was reported that [DfT was assembling government lawyers to fight the Information Commissioner's decision](#) that it must release a document summarizing the lessons from the 2018 Gatwick drone chaos.

April 2026:

24th: [UK Government - Counter-UAS technology competition](#) launched seeking proposals that offer innovative, low-collateral solutions to counter or defeat hostile drones targeting secure sites and locations. Relevant to councils with sensitive sites or critical infrastructure – again this could include airports.

May 2026:

5th: Nearly £50 million government backing was announced to power up drone and flying taxi technology and also crack down on illegal drones – see details [here](#).

20th: The [Law Commission published the final report of its review into aviation autonomy](#) and say it is now for Government to review and consider their recommendations for reform.

June 2026:

5th: [Vertical Aerospace's third eVTOL completes first piloted flight](#) at Cotswold Airport.

25th: North Yorkshire Council sought funding for a LiDAR-equipped drone programme to monitor complex coastal cliffs – [see here](#).

30th: [DroneShield report](#) revealed serious gaps in airport, critical infrastructure and counter-drone security.

July 2026:

9th: The [Royal Town Planning Institute \(RTPI\) published practice advice](#) outlining key issues and considerations for UK planners on the use and oversight of drones in planning practice, including:

- key terms and resources
- benefits and challenges
- an overview of key technologies and terminology
- real-world case study examples and
- how planners' use of drones, and related issues, may change in future.

15th: The CAA published a new General Operations Manual template for UAS operators applying for an operational authorisation under UK SORA (Specific Operations Risk Assessment). The template provides a clear structure for developing an Operations Manual and sets out the information applicants should include.

It contains suggested compliant wording, guidance for completing each section, and supporting advice that operators can adapt to reflect their organisation, UAS and intended activities. The aim is that the template should help reduce preparation time and support clearer, more complete submissions. The template is available here: [CAP3285: UK SORA General Operations Manual \(GOM\)](#)

20-24th: At the Farnborough International Airshow, it was announced that [Vertical Aerospace were to fly the first eVTOL Public Demonstration Flights](#).

20th: [Prisons, power stations and airports would be able to guard against hostile drone activity](#) with the announcement of Ofcom's plans for a drone detection radar licence.

30th: The CAA published its [Airspace Architecture Concept of Operations \(CAP3269\)](#). This is a significant step towards moving BVLOS operations away from reliance on segregated or bespoke arrangements and into a more integrated, digitally managed airspace system alongside crewed aviation.

August:

12th: [UKAS announcement](#) concerning conformity assessment for UAS under UK Delegated Regulation 2019/945. From 1 January 2028, UAS placed on the UK market will need certification from a UK-approved conformity assessment body against the UK UAS classes/modules. UKAS and the CAA are now working on a pilot approach for accredited product certification.

Some recommendations for what local authorities should be looking at or doing in next 12 months:

Drones — more formally, uncrewed aircraft systems (UAS) — are moving from being a specialist technology into an increasingly important part of the UK's public-service, transport and security landscape. The government's Future of Flight Action Plan also explicitly envisages local authorities having a role in incorporating future flight into planning and communities. Authorities should consider whether their local plan, transport strategy, economic strategy and infrastructure plans adequately anticipate low-altitude autonomous aviation. This does not mean approving speculative drone infrastructure everywhere. It means avoiding a situation in which technology becomes operationally viable before the council has considered where it can safely and appropriately operate them. Noise, visual amenity, privacy, safety and equity should be considered alongside economic benefits.

For local authorities, the issue is no longer simply whether to permit the operation of drones but to look at the rapid expansion of legitimate drone use, including infrastructure inspection, environmental monitoring, emergency response, surveying and medical/logistics deliveries and how it will affect the authority and its communities.

Here, therefore, are some recommendations that LAs may find useful to think about particularly over the next year or so:

1. Establish corporate ownership

Nominate a senior officer or corporate lead for drones/AAM, supported by planning, transport/highways, estates, legal, data protection and cyber security, emergency planning, communications and economic development. Create a simple register of such things as drones owned or operated by the authority, contracted drone services, trained pilots, operational authorisations, data generated and also relevant sites.

2. Review the authority's drone policy

Ensure the policy reflects the 2026 CAA rules, Remote ID, class marking, privacy, cybersecurity, insurance, competency and incident reporting. The CAA's current Drone Code should be the starting point.

3. Build a single operating model

Avoid every service developing its own arrangements. Establish corporate standards for

such things as procurement, training flight authorisation, data management, safety, incident response, maintenance and of course keeping accurate records.

4. Identify high-value use cases

Run a structured review across highways, environment, planning, emergency response, housing, waste, coastal management and public safety. Prioritise applications where drones offer a clear combination of lower cost, reduced staff exposure to hazards, faster information or better coverage.

5. Add drones to emergency and security planning

Work with the police, fire and rescue service, Local Resilience Forum and relevant infrastructure operators. Develop a common response to unidentified drones, drone-related disruption and repeated incursions also taking in drone sightings at major events and dangerous flying. Look at suspected surveillance and suspected hostile activity.

6. Prepare for BVLOS (Beyond Visual Line of Sight)

Even if the authority has no immediate BVLOS requirement, planning teams should understand the implications. This includes possible drone corridors, landing infrastructure, logistics facilities and automated operations.

7. Engage communities early

The successful deployment of drones will depend partly on public trust. Authorities should be able to explain issues such as:

- why drones are being used;
- what they collect;
- what they do not collect;
- how long data is retained;
- who can access it;
- how residents can complain or request information.

Outlook: 2026-2030:

The most likely trajectory is a gradual transition from today's pilot-operated, mostly local flights towards a more connected low-altitude aviation system. By 2030, a leading local authority could plausibly be dealing with:

- routine automated infrastructure inspections;
- BVLOS emergency-response flights;
- drone delivery networks;
- permanent drone bases;
- networked environmental monitoring;

- police BVLOS operations;
- increasingly sophisticated counter-drone systems;
- automated processing of drone imagery;
- integration of drone data into council GIS and operational systems.

The technology itself is unlikely to be the principal constraint. The harder questions will be governance, airspace integration, public acceptance, cybersecurity, procurement and organisational capability.

Key milestones to watch:

- 22 September 2026 - current CAA electronic conspicuity consultation closes.
- November 2026 - FFIG programme expects the 978 MHz ground-to-air decision, supporting real-time traffic and flight information.
- December 2026 - further EC/UTM outputs and a clearer aerodrome/vertiport approval pathway are expected.
- January 2027 - the July FFIG programme identifies a planning-guidance milestone; the NPPF element is England-specific, while planning systems elsewhere in the UK are devolved.
- 2027 onward - routine BVLOS scaling remains the strategic objective, meaning more activity is likely to move from test sites into normal community and council processes.

Issues to keep under review:

- Regulation - CAA capacity, SORA consistency, the State/civil UAS interface, UTM and electronic conspicuity implementation.
- Infrastructure - grid and digital capacity, site availability, technology-neutral design and integration with airports or other transport nodes.
- Community - noise, privacy, safety perception, wildlife, equality impacts, consent and complaints pathways.
- Commercial resilience - operator failure, uncertain demand, stranded assets and the need for phased investment backed by anchor customers.

Bottom line for elected members and senior officers:

Drones should now be treated as an emerging public-service and place-management infrastructure, as well as a security issue. The immediate priority is not large-scale investment in fleets but to establish the governance and capability that will allow the authority to exploit useful applications while managing safety, privacy and security risks. Authorities that begin this work now will be better positioned to participate in future national trials and funding programmes, and less likely to have to retrofit

governance when routine BVLOS and autonomous operations become commercially available.

Recommendations:

Establish a cross-council Drone and Future Flight programme, with an initial 12-month workplan covering regulatory compliance, operational use cases, procurement standards, security, privacy, planning and engagement with the CAA, police, fire and neighbouring authorities.

Other useful or interesting sources/information/news:

- [CAA — Drone Code and current flying rules](#) — the principal source for current UK operational requirements (CAP2320)
- [CAA — Remote ID requirements](#) — useful for understanding the new identification regime.
- [CAA, Airspace Architecture Concept of Operations / scaling drone operations \(30 July 2026\).](#)
- [CAA, consultation on electronic conspicuity \(14 July 2026\).](#)
- [UK Future of Flight Action Plan](#) (March 2024)— useful background for planning and future airspace integration.
- [Airport drone security risks Europe says International Airport Review](#)
- [This forensic platform connects drone flights with digital evidence](#)



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Item 10

Item 10: Policy Levers to Maximise the Economic Impacts of Airports

Recommendation: that members note content of the presentation and discuss

The new Labour administration seems to understand the potential significance of airports as local and regional economic drivers. With that in mind and given our on-going efforts to secure a meeting with the Aviation Minister, the SASIG Secretariat has been looking into various 'levers' that local authorities could potentially pursue or deploy to help maximise the economic impact of airports across the UK.

The Policy Director will provide a presentation to lead members in a discussion about what these policy levers might include; how they will coincide with current Government policy and how to promote to the Minister the important role LAs can play in delivering this policy agenda.

The aim post discussion will be to prepare a policy White Paper to send to DfT and Treasury officials before the subsequent Ministerial meeting.



**SASIG Meeting: 6 October 2026
Item 11**

Item 11: Future dates in 2026/27 for SASIG/CAG and any additional meetings

Recommendation: that members note in their diaries any dates decided.

SASIG Full Members Meetings:

Dates for SASIG meetings for 2026/27 to be discussed and decided.

Chairman's Advisory Group (CAG):

Dates for CAG for 2026/27 to be discussed and decided.

Additional meetings:

Any additional meetings for 2026/27 to be discussed and decided.

A reminder: Please note that until recently Zoom has been used for these meetings but this has now changed to Teams. Please do therefore check that you have Teams installed on your device(s).



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Item 12

Item 12: A.O.B.

The Secretariat would be interested to know whether members are receiving their monthly Bulletins okay, regardless of the date of their issuance. This is as a check to ensure that this document does not end up in spam files or similar and members are unknowingly not receiving these.

