



Strategic Aviation Special Interest Group (SASIG)

Agenda

Thursday, 20 April 2023
10.00 am – 1.00 pm

Online via Zoom

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89222376349>

Meeting ID: 892 2237 6349

Strategic Aviation Special Interest Group (SASIG)

Thursday, 20 April 2023

There will be a meeting of the Strategic Aviation Special Interest Group (SASIG) at **10.00 am on Thursday, 20 April 2023** Online via Zoom.

Apologies: Please notify Lesley Smith if you are unable to attend: secretariat@sasig.org.uk

Attendance: Your attendance will be noted by the clerk at the meeting.

LGA Contact: Fatima de Abreu: Fatima.deabreu@local.gov.uk

Agenda

Strategic Aviation Special Interest Group (SASIG)

Thursday, 20 April 2023

10.00 am

Online via Zoom

Item	Page	Time
1. Chairman's welcome, new attendees and apologies from the floor		10.00
2. Review and actions from previous CAG/SASIG meetings:	1	10.05
a) Review and actions from previous CAG meeting 23 March 2023	3	
b) Review and actions from previous full SASIG meeting 19 January 2023	9	
3. Guest Speaker: Charles Lloyd, Aviation Environment Federation	19	10.15
4. SASIG Admin & Finances	21	10.45
a) Chairman/Policy Director's Financial Update		
b) Update on membership and sponsorship		
c) Update on new in-house financial protocols		
5. Policy Update since last meeting & Current Key Issues	23	11.15
a) Meetings held and invitations received		
b) Significant policy developments since last SASIG meeting		
c) Current/forthcoming consultations/publications of interest		

6. Drone Advisory Bureau Proposal:	31	11.45
a) Westminster Transport Forum presentation [for info.]		
b) Correspondence with LGA		
c) Aim and Objectives		
d) LGA 'First' magazine article		
7. Noise policy note and draft consultation responses	43	12.00
8. Research Projects Update	47	12.15
a) LA Impact Study		
b) Policy Challenges of New technologies		
9. Future dates 2023 for SASIG/CAG and any additional meetings	49	12.30
10. Any other Business	51	12.45
Meeting Close		13.00

Date of Next Meeting: To be confirmed.



SASIG meeting: 20 April 2023
Item 2

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

- a) Previous CAG meeting: 23 March 2023
- b) Previous SASIG members' meeting: 19 January 2023

Decision: that SASIG members note the minutes for these meetings (see attached)



SASIG Meeting: 20 April 2023
Item 2

Item 2(a): Review and actions from previous CAG meeting: 23 March 2023

**MINUTES OF THE CHAIRMAN'S ADVISORY GROUP (CAG) MEETING:
Thursday: 23 March 2023**

Date: Thursday: 23 March 2023

Time: 10:00 – 12:30 hrs

Venue: Virtual meeting (via Zoom)

Attendees:

Keith Artus	Chairman & Honorary President, SASIG
Jackie Cheetham	Honorary Vice President, SASIG
Zhanine Smith	Essex County Council
Adrian Smith	Southend-on-Sea Borough Council
Chris Cain	Policy Director, SASIG
Lesley Smith	Policy Executive, SASIG

Apologies Received:

Jamie Macrae Honorary Vice President, SASIG

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

a) Minutes of previous CAG meeting: 15 December 2022:

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

- ***Chairman to write to Aviation Minister regarding various issues with the main one being concern over land-use planning in relation to airspace modernisation.***

Chairman/Policy Director to draft letter to Minister about their concerns highlighting how SASIG has long flagged these up to Government. Policy Director to also raise concerns again at next meeting of Airspace & Noise Engagement Group (ANEG).

- ***Draft Article for submission to LGA First Magazine.***

This is in draft form already and this item to be covered in agenda papers for 23 March 2023 CAG meeting. It was agreed that the Chairman should contact Ian Hughes at LGA to discuss drones issues before the draft article is submitted to LGA.

- ***In-house financial protocol/procedures: final update before implementation.***



These are already established in draft form having been endorsed at the last full members meeting on 19th January. The Chairman outlined progress in implementing the protocols and agreed an update should be provided at the next members meeting. This was noted by CAG.

There were no other outstanding actions and the minutes of the CAG meeting of 15 December 2022 were approved.

b) Minutes of 19 January 2023 – SASIG full members’ Meeting:

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

- ***SASIG in-house financial protocols, once finalised, to be made available to members.***

New protocols to be implemented and an updated provided to members at April 2023 meeting.

- ***Circulation of summary list from CAA Airspace Change Portal detailing proposed airport system and route changes.***

To be actioned but to note, members may access the information portal [here](#).

There were no other outstanding actions and the minutes of the SASIG meeting of 19 January 2023 were approved.

Item 3: SASIG Administration and Finances

(a) Chairman/Policy Director’s financial update

The Policy Director reported that he was just waiting for the final end-of-year accounts from Dudley prior to their cessation of handling SASIG finances and gave an estimate of the likely final carry-over amount. Any outstanding subscription payments from previous years were still being addressed and if recovered, would help towards presenting a healthier balance.

(b): Update on Membership and Sponsorship

The Secretariat continues to investigate opportunities to recruit possible new SASIG members - this is a process that remains ongoing. Fareham BC have recently joined the Group and Slough BC have indicated they would like to rejoin. The Chairman and Policy Director have had a series of meetings with potential new members in the last few weeks and it was hoped that there would be a positive outcome from some of these. The Group agreed that authorities with GA or military airfields should also be considered for approach. However, it continues to remain a difficult time for



recruitment as local authority budgets are still impacted by the current economic climate as a result mainly of the pandemic and the war in Ukraine.

Action: Secretariat to provide Chairman with a full schedule of who has been approached and those being considered for approach.

(c): Update/final sign-off of new in-house financial protocols

The Group reviewed the draft financial protocol/procedures within the agenda papers. There is still a need for a second signatory (the Chairman being the first) which should not be from Northpoint as they will be managing the finances. It was also agreed that an Honorary Treasurer should also be appointed from within the elected members of the Group. Chairman and Policy Director will look at a list of these to decide about some possible candidates. To be further discussed at the next members' meeting in April.

Action: Chairman & Policy Director to establish who second signatory for bank details will be and to look at suggestions for an Honorary Treasurer.

Item 4: External meetings held, and invitations received

The Group reviewed and noted a list of recent meetings held since the last CAG meeting in December last year. The Chairman and the Policy Director have continued to meet with authorities regarding potential SASIG membership and this included Heart of South West LEP. SASIG has also met (once again mainly virtually) with a number of industry colleagues and stakeholders from DfT, CAA and ANEG reinforcing the strong contact between SASIG and these government departments. Chris Cain had a very informative and positive meeting with Dr. Anna Jackman from University of Reading about future collaborative work and he also visited with Cranfield University regarding the same.

This item was for information purposes and taken as read.

Item 5: Major developments and Key Issues:

(a) Important developments since the last CAG meeting:

The Group reviewed this item and noted that some of it had already been covered under previous items. This item was for mainly for information purposes and therefore taken as read.

However, the Group did discuss the ongoing situation regarding Bristol Airport, Manston and Luton Airport expansion plans and it was noted that Doncaster Council was still actively seeking to reopen their airport.

(b) Current and forthcoming consultations/inquiries of interest



The Group reviewed the list of current consultations provided within the agenda papers and it was suggested that members might also be provided with this list. To note: members may see an update of this list within each monthly Bulletin and which is kept updated. The Policy Director would also revisit his Land Use/Airspace planning presentation that he took to ANEG in December 2021 and update for the forthcoming ANEG meeting this month.

Action: Secretariat to provide Chairman with updated list of consultations/enquiries.

Action: Policy Director to update his Land Use/Airspace presentation for ANEG.

It was also suggested that the Chairman make contact again with Sir Timo Anderson, Chairman of ACOG regarding obtaining an update of what was happening with airspace modernization which they are leading on.

Action: Chairman to contact Sir Timo Anderson for a follow-up meeting.

Item 6: Drone Agenda

(a) LGA 'First' magazine article

CAG was provided with an updated draft article about drones and their usage in relation to LAs. The Chairman agreed to read and review in order to formulate the final item for submission to LGA's 'First' Magazine. He would also contact Ian Hughes at LGA to facilitate a face-to-face meeting on drones issues.

Action: Chairman to review draft article and liaise with Policy Director on final version to be submitted to LGA and contact Ian Hughes at LGA for meeting.

(b) Westminster Transport Forum Conference presentation

The Chairman outlined the recent WTF conference where he had attended as a guest speaker and presenter. (The Chairman's presentation accompanied these agenda papers and is available to members in their area on the SASIG website). Feedback from his appearance was very positive and had led to a number of additional contacts and meetings regarding drones.

(c) Drone Bureau Proposal

Following the WTF conference and presentation as detailed previously, both the Chairman and Policy Director were keen on the idea of setting up SASIG's own Drone Bureau to investigate the relationship between drones and local authorities and how this would progress in the future especially regarding planning and safeguarding issues. A letter had already been sent to Robert Courts MP who has taken on the Chairmanship of the APPG for GA, from the Chairman and a reply was still outstanding. The



Secretariat would also try to find out who the recent SASIG application to join the Future Flight Integration Group was submitted to or who was leading this initiative.

Action: Chairman to follow up his letter to Robert Courts, MP.

Action: Secretariat to find out who is leading the Future Flight Integration Group.

A proposal to put before members was still being worked on and this had also formed part of the conversations SASIG had recently had with Heart of South West LEP and Dr Jackman at Reading University in particular. She had mentioned having SASIG attend focus groups that she was looking to set up.

Action: SASIG members to be informed of possible invites to Dr Jackman's focus groups. (To note: FIO at this stage as there has been no additional information provided about these since).

(d) Research proposal to Future of Flight

The Policy Director outlined the basis of a possible research proposal to Future of Flight but there was nothing further to add at this stage.

Item 7: Discussion on content of proposed questionnaire to SASIG members

The Group reviewed the content of a proposed questionnaire to members in order to establish what they would like to see most gained from membership of SASIG. It was agreed that the draft questionnaire was probably too long and needed condensing along with more clarification on its purpose but that there should be something to present to members in April.

Action: Chairman and Policy Director to review and revise draft questionnaire ready for April meeting.

Item 8: LA Impact Study Update

The Policy Director gave a brief verbal update on the progress of the LA Impact study. It was progressing well but there was some more work to do. It was generally agreed that the final item might be of more value to the business side of the Department of Levelling-Up and Communities (DLUC) and the Treasury rather than the DfT itself.

Item 9: Arrangements for full SASIG meeting on Thursday: 20 April 2023 (Virtual via Zoom)

(a) Agenda: The Group noted the draft agenda provided but at this point, it is not finally approved until the Chairman receives a list of actions from this meeting. (Note: post-meeting, this list was sent to the Chairman for review).



(b) Guest speaker: Nobody has been confirmed yet but suggestions include a guest from DLUC or someone who attended the recent WTF conference. To be decided.

Item 10: Future dates 2023 for SASIG/CAG and any additional meetings

The next members' meeting was to be held on Thursday: 20 April 2023 and will be virtual once again. However, it is hoped that the following meeting in July (which will also be the AGM) would return to face-to-face with the addition of hybridity for those unable to attend in person. It was suggested that either 4 or 5 July would be the best date and it should consist of the meeting in the morning with a workshop in the afternoon.

Action: Secretariat to investigate availability of Westminster Suite on either 4 or 5 July.

The Group discussed the possibility of holding some kind of special event as opposed to a members' meeting, possibly in September or October. To be decided.

Item 11: A.O.B.

There was no AOB.

The Chairman thanked attendees and the meeting was closed.

Item 2(b): Note of last Strategic Aviation Special Interest Group (SASIG) meeting

Title:	Strategic Aviation Special Interest Group (SASIG)
Date:	Thursday 19 January 2023. 10am – 1pm
Venue:	Online via Zoom

Attendance

An attendance list is attached as **Annex A** to this note.

Item	Decisions and actions
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1 Chairman's welcome, new attendees and apologies from the floor.

Keith Artus (Chairman) welcomed new and existing colleagues to the meeting.

Apologies were noted.

A full list of attendees is attached at Annex A.

2 Review and actions from previous CAG/SASIG meetings:

2a. Review and actions from previous CAG meeting 15 December 2022

Members reviewed the minutes from the previous CAG meeting, held on 15 December 2022.

The Chairman updated members on the following actions from the meeting:

- Draft article for submission to LGA's First magazine:
- Presentation to be developed for the Westminster Transport Forum Conference in January.
- New financial protocols to be established following Dudley's resignation in the role.
- Review of the CAA: SASIG's proposed submission to this consultation.
- Date/location of SASIG's Annual General Meeting.
- Future SASIG meeting arrangements.

All of the above actions would be covered within the agenda of today's full members' meeting. There were no issues raised and Members accepted the minutes of the last CAG meeting.

2b. Review and actions from previous full SASIG meeting 19 October 2022.

Members reviewed the minutes from the previous SASIG meeting held on 19 October 2022. Actions were as per the December CAG meeting. No other issues were raised and Members accepted the minutes of the last SASIG meeting.

3 SASIG Administration & Finances:

3a. Chairman/Policy Director's Financial Update

SASIG Policy Director Chris Cain provided an update on the current financial position. The Group remains within budget and a small surplus is expected at the end of the year. The Group were delighted to welcome new member Fareham BC.

Independent, supplementary work by the Secretariat regarding the closure of Doncaster Airport, had resulted in a bonus for the Group who would receive a small share of the fee involved.

Members noted that all 2022/23 SASIG subscriptions were paid and up to date.

Action: In-house financial protocols, once finalised, to be made available to members.

3b. Update on membership and sponsorship

Members were informed that Fareham Borough Council had recently become a member of SASIG. In general, attracting new membership during this difficult time of budgetary constraints for all authorities, especially following the pandemic, remains difficult and would never be a quick process. However, the Chairman and Policy Director have had conversations with several authorities over the past few weeks and it was hopeful some of them would agree to join at a later date. As ever, this work remains ongoing.

Regarding sponsorship opportunities, there had been a modest level of interest and this work too, was ongoing. However, any consideration of benefits for SASIG must always be balanced against value for sponsors and also any conflicts of interest. SASIG TORs and the LGA guidelines needed to be adhered to.

Another possible area of revenue which might attract a wider network of interest was regarding drone operations and vertiports which are fast becoming a huge issue for authorities. Members were asked whether SASIG, could for example, set up a 'drone' bureau. It was important for Local Authorities to be involved in management developments in this area including consideration of the benefits as well as acceptability of this technology by the public.

The Group discussed regulation and planning regarding drones and raised concerns about an increase in the issues arising as their usage expanded. They also discussed zero emissions technology including Drones, Air Taxis and the replacement of existing small aircraft powered differently under the Future of Flight programme. The Policy Director recently attended the UKRI Future of Flight programme which included looking at sites for future droneports and vertiports. It was noted that SASIG remain highly regarded by UKRI.

3c. Discussion/update on new in-house financial protocols

The Chairman reminded members of the decision to take management of SASIG finances in-house once Dudley MBC resign in this role at the end of March.

Other member local authorities had been approached to see whether any would be willing to take on management of SASIG finances, but none had responded. Members noted that other LGA SIGs administer their own groups in various ways

and agreed that as long as everything was kept transparent, there should not be a problem with it being administered in-house. As no other authority has volunteered to take this role on therefore it would now be taken "in-house".

The group heard that, with Dudley no longer handling SASIG finances, it was proposed Northpoint would now take on this responsibility and would be opening a bank account specifically for SASIG and administer all invoicing. All outgoing payments would be approved primarily by the Chairman or, in his absence, the Vice Chairman or Policy Director. Members were assured they would be able to request information on the status of the accounts at any time and financial reports would be brought to all full members' meetings.

The Chairman invited colleagues to raise any further issues outside of the meeting saying that, if no objections or other suggestions came forward fairly quickly, then Northpoint would be administering the finances in time for the start of the new financial year.

Members noted the outline of the draft protocols and were asked to approve these. Members agreed the new arrangements from 1 April 2023.

4 External meetings held and invitations received.

The Policy Director outlined details of recent meetings which included.

- The latest meeting of the Airspace & Noise Engagement Group (ANEG). Land use planning issues previously raised by SASIG, were yet to be addressed but new planning legislation recently flagged, might be the stimulus to get our concerns raised again.
- Conversations had been had with Leeds and Kent councils about membership of SASIG.
- The Chairman has been invited to speak at the high-profile Westminster Forum Event on 31 January on the next steps for Drone regulations. Members were reminded that this would be a good opportunity to raise the profile of the group as interface with LAs on this issue was important. Members were invited to submit any comments to the Chairman beforehand if they wished to do so and the final presentation would be made available to members.

Members noted the updates.

Action: Chairman's WTF Drones presentation to be made available to members after 31 January 2023.

5 Major Policy and Industry Developments & Key Events:

5a. Important developments since last SASIG meeting

Policy Director outlined to members some of the important political developments since the group last met and updated them on key Ministers and their engagement around aviation issues. The recent policy document 'Flight Path to the Future' did not appear to be a priority at this time but decarbonisation and new technologies do remain at the forefront of priorities. The Freight Strategy that had recently been published was a little weak.

The Policy Director had been assisting in supplementary work centred on the closure of Doncaster Airport which would adversely affect emissions as passengers would have to travel further to get to another airport.

Updates were provided on planning appeals and judicial reviews regarding Manston, Bristol, Luton and Gatwick.

5b. Current/forthcoming consultations/inquiries of interest - update on Independent Review of CAA

The Policy Director updated members on the current round of consultations which SASIG may provide submissions to. The most important one was the Review of the CAA including the recent Call for Evidence. It was agreed that the CAA still needs to find a more balanced and objective way with greater coordination of presenting itself but via their CAP system on their website, members could see all policy issued by them. There still remains a distinct lack of correlation between land use and airspace planning which was important to LAs.

With regards to developments of the ACOG Airspace Modernisation Masterplan, there was a possibility that some news would be received imminently. However, it was believed that some areas of the UK were prioritised over others although ACOG were trying to tie together certain technical and geographical processes.

SASIG has also reminded ACOG of the issue of aviation noise and how it remains a priority issue for LAs. There was also a certain amount of local opposition to certain airspace change proposals (routing, intensity, etc).

Members agreed that the issues of local parishes need to be considered and included in any response. It was also agreed that the CAA should not be the sole arbitrator on changes – an illustration of this was when they took over the duties of ICCAN when it was discontinued.

The [CAA's Airspace Change portal](#) can provide details of what is happening with individual airports and their airspace change proposals (more news [here](#)) but the Policy Director would be happy to send round a list to members as well.

Action: Secretariat to circulate a summary list from the CAA Airspace Change Portal detailing proposed airport system and route changes.

5c. LGA First magazine article

The Policy Director summarised details of the first draft for submission to the LGA's First Magazine and prior to it being ready for publication, the text needs to be edited to around 700 words. Members were therefore invited to submit their thoughts and/or comments on the draft.

Comments at the meeting included:

- The paragraphs on decarbonization needs to focus on wider transport;
- Reference to the COVID LA impact pandemic study is made within the document - despite a draft still not available;
- The planning system and update to the NPPF should be referenced;
- Reference to struggling airports: the article needs to be balanced and demonstrate that some airports are doing well - more accurately reflecting current situations at airports despite the business sector underperforming;
- The focus of the piece should lean more towards drones, their regulation implications and potential to Local Authorities.

Members were thanked for their comments and it was agreed to look at incorporating these into the final submission.

5d. Summer Conference Event

Members were told of the possibility of having a stand at the British Irish Expo event in the summer to incorporate the AGM. This event traditionally has a very good footfall with ample opportunity to meet Government policy makers and network with other industry stakeholders. The Policy Director informed the Group however, that there is uncertainty as to whether the event will actually be going ahead this year. An alternative would be to hold an event jointly with RABA or ARPAs for example, to incorporate our AGM and invite key people from Government departments to attend. Members were informed that this would likely take place in July and agreed the proposal.

Action: Secretariat to investigate ways of holding Summer Event/AGM.

6 Discussion of SASIG's Top 12 Priorities for Aviation Policy in 2023.

The Policy Director referred to a list of priorities he had drawn up regarding SASIG's main interests in Aviation Policy for this coming year and invited comments. Some of these included:

- Could we link these to the policy 'asks' from the Aviation Strategy Policy Framework to ensure compatibility?
- Not concentrating on trains vs. planes debate as both were important;
- Discovering the best source of data on where emissions come from;
- Emphasis the focus on Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF).

Members noted the list and were invited to submit further comments to the Secretariat if they wished.

7 Importance of Airports to Business in Europe.

This item was one mainly of information to members who reviewed the outline provided which was about the importance of airports to business in Europe. They noted how IATA was trying to bring issues into context and that the industry in general was working to address current issues by bringing together data.

The report outlined contains a lot of analysis particularly around environmental issues and referred to focus on the aviation industry and the need to look at what they can currently control. They also raised concerns about transport being the largest producer of CO2 and that surface road transport should be a key priority in addressing this as well as seeking more sustainable options of travel to airports.

Members noted the report.

8 Are AEF's industry greenwashing claims fair?

By presenting this Item, the Policy Director's aim was to flag concerns from certain environmental groups about the way in which information is presented by the industry and the feeling that government does not fully explain environmental issues created by the aviation debate. The government's priority still seems to be the growth agenda although they were putting a lot of effort into decarbonisation issues.

Members noted the item.

9 Future dates 2023 for SASIG.

CAG will discuss future dates for SASIG meetings and inform colleagues in due course. It was noted that these would probably be in April for the next SASIG members' meeting and then in July for the AGM.

10 Any other Business

Members had received a late supplement to the agenda – 'Current National Planning Policy Consultations'. They noted the paper had been provided further to concerns raised by a member that the agenda for this meeting did not include a current consultation on changes to national planning policy in the National Policy updates section – a consultation which was relevant to LAs.

The Policy Director referred to land use policy and legislations, saying that he felt SASIG should provide a response to the consultation because of the change to use classes order and concerns around airports. It is a fact that public sector airports are doing considerably better than private airports and if national policies are being developed, there needs to be pro-active input from local authorities with a discussion about the broader issues needing to take place with Government.

It was suggested that SASIG draft a response highlighting their interest and then issues need to be picked up at the second stage of the consultation process on national policy.

Members suggested there might be an opportunity for a SASIG workshop to discuss issues within the aviation strategy prior to submitting a response. There were concerns that there has not been a call for evidence regarding Jet Zero and that could be relevant to future planning.

Several issues were raised around noise and housing, planning policy framework guidance and concerns about speeding up planning processes. Members discussed Levelling Up which they felt is not reflected within the consultation. Everything needs to be joined up to avoid controversy.

Members agreed the proposal for a workshop prior to submission of any response and the Chairman suggested compiling a list of 'building blocks' to base the response on.

Action: Secretariat to compile list of 'building blocks' and then arrange a workshop subject to availability before DLUP's deadline of 2 March.

11 Guest speaker: Clean Planet Energy.

The Chairman welcomed Dr Katerina Garyfalou, (Vice President for New Ventures, Clean Planet Energy).

Members received a presentation on the work of Clean Planet Energy to convert non-recyclable plastic into clean energy and thus remove toxic waste from the environment.

The speaker outlined current projects with the development of ecoPlants in the uk and around the world. Members heard about the technical process used in generating ultra-clean fuel from most waste plastic. She said that access to land is key and confirmed that they are not seeking money - but are keen to engage with key people in areas where these sites could be of benefit.

Katerina outlined work with partnerships, including BP, and the creation of a non-profit organisation, the [Clean Planet Foundation](#) which supports development in other countries.

The Chairman thanked the speaker for an interesting presentation and invited members' comments and questions, some of which are below:

- Members were interested to see where these sites already exist. The speaker referred to Teesside as an example and agreed to circulate a link with further information about the sites.
- Members also noted progress in the US.
- Members asked whether CPE had approached larger airports. The speaker said they had although no response had yet been received therefore any assistance from SASIG in promoting their work with the airports will be greatly welcomed!
- Is there a price incentive to use their fuel rather than blend for carbon reduction? The speaker said that there is a premium and negotiations are taking place – it will be cheaper than some, but more expensive than others.
- Would there be a point where this would make a difference to airports? The answer was not clear at this point.
- What safeguards are there in terms of the process i.e. with environmentally harmful gases through purification and how is it dealt with? The speaker said the production process are more efficient than other processes.

Members were informed of the processes for sourcing plastic and how and where it will be refined. Logistics and the underlying green considerations are in place for transferring waste to the sites. Delays to implementation of the Energy Act is slowing things down but that permission to produce under UK law is still required.

The group congratulated Dr Garyfalou on the work being done by Clean Planet Energy and agreed that strategically, the most logical areas for these sites to be built are around airports.

Action: Speaker to provide presentation to Secretariat to circulate to members.

The Chairman thanked the Speaker and all in attendance and closed the Meeting.

Annex A**Attendance**

NAME	AUTHORITY/ORGANISATION
Keith Artus (Chairman & Hon. Pres.)	
Jackie Cheetham (Hon Vice Pres)	
Cllr Phil Geisler	London Bo. Richmond & Wandsworth
Adrian Smith	Southend-on-Sea BC
Zhanine Smith	Essex CC
Cllr John Evans	Uttlesford DC
Chris Stephenson	Doncaster Council
Lois Bowser	Uttlesford/Essex Council
Paul Donovan	Hertfordshire CC
Richard Biggs	Reigate & Banstead BC
Russ Schild	Council of the Isles of Scilly
Colin Stanbury	London Bo. Richmond & Wandsworth
Cllr Louise Pepper	Uttlesford DC
Kay Mead	East Herts DC
Chris Cain	Policy Director, SASIG
Lesley Smith	SASIG Secretariat
Fatima De Abreu	LGA Support Officer

APOLOGIES

Cllr John Bowden	RBWM
Val Beale	Hillingdon BC
Cllr Rod Cooper	Hampshire CC
Jamie Macrae (Hon. V-Pres.)	

GUEST SPEAKER

Dr Katerina Garyfalou	Clean Planet Energy
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Summary of actions from CAG meeting: 23 March 2023

No.	Action	Responsible person(s)	Progress to date
1	Chairman to write to Aviation Minister regarding various issues including land-use/airspace planning and drones use	Chairman/Policy Director	To be actioned
2	Chairman to contact Ian Hughes at LGA to facilitate a face-to-face meeting on drones issues.	Chairman/Policy Director	Actioned: Chairman/Policy Director met with him on 3 April.
3	Draft article for LGA First Magazine to be edited but held in abeyance until after meeting with LGA.	Chairman/Policy Director	Draft available and to be finalized by Chairman.
4	Find out who in DfT/UKRI is determining application to join Future Flight Community Group went to. (Application was submitted on 21 March 2023).	Secretariat	Actioned: Policy Director in communication with Dan de Silver at DfT.
5	In-house financial protocol/procedures to be updated to present to members at April 2023 meeting. Second signatory still needed and probably also an Honorary Treasurer who is an elected member.	Chairman/Policy Director	To be actioned: Chairman and Policy Director to discuss.
6	Revisit SASIG presentation to ANEG on land-use planning/airspace modernization to update and take back to ANEG.	Policy Director	Actioned: Presentation by Policy Director updated and brought to ANEG.
7	Chairman to be provided with schedule/list of contacts made to potential LAs with regards to joining SASIG.	Secretariat	To be actioned.
8	Ask whether any members wish to join Dr Anna Jackman's (Univ. Reading) focus group on drones – she is keen to work with LAs.	Policy Director/Secretariat	To be actioned if given notification of any dates.
9	Follow-up letter to be sent to Robert Courts MP.	Chairman	To be actioned. (Original sent 17 Feb 2023 – awaiting response).
10	Issue members with an update on current and recent consultations.	Secretariat	Actioned: List sent round on 31 March.
11	Chairman to have a follow-up meeting with ACOG Chairman Sir Timo Anderson to establish update on airspace modernisation.	Chairman	To be actioned.
12	Review draft questionnaire to members regarding what they want out of SASIG.	Chairman/Policy Director/Secretariat	To be actioned but not high priority at present.
13	Date/location of summer AGM to be decided along with guest speaker.	Chairman/Policy Director/Secretariat	Actioned: Secretariat has provisional hold on 19 July in Westminster Suite, LGA. Guest speaker to be decided.

Continued.....

**Summary of actions from previous
SASIG meeting: 19 January 2023**

1	In-house financial protocol/procedures to be updated to present to members at April 2023 meeting. Second signatory still needed and probably also an Honorary Treasurer who is an elected member.	Chairman/Policy Director/Northpoint Accounts	To be actioned. Chairman and Policy Director to discuss.
2	Circulation of summary list from the CAA Airspace Change Portal detailing proposed airport system and route changes.	Secretariat	Request sent to DfT-awaiting response. To note: members may access this information here .



**SASIG Meeting: 20 April 2023
Item 3**

Item 3: Guest speaker: Charles Lloyd, Aviation Environment Federation

We are pleased to have as our guest speaker, Charles Lloyd from the Aviation Environment Federation. Charles joined the AEF to lead its Airspace and Noise Community Forum in 2022. Prior to that he co-founded and led the Aviation Communities Forum, a national organisation formed to help communities adversely impacted by airspace changes and aircraft noise share issues of common concern and engage constructively with government, regulators and the industry. The ACF was brought under the AEF structure and became its Airspace and Noise Community Forum on 1st January 2022.

Charles is also a committee member of the Gatwick Area Conservation Campaign and Gatwick Obviously Not, an aviation community group in west Kent. Since 2017 he's been one of the community group representatives on the Department for Transport's Airspace and Noise Engagement Group and Airspace Strategy Board which SASIG also attends regularly.

Charles retired from PwC in December 2015, having been a partner with the firm for over 20 years. His focus at PwC was advising governments on infrastructure policy, financing and transactions. He worked extensively with the Department for Transport and was seconded to the Treasury where he was responsible for PPP/Private Finance policy, the privatisation programme and the creation of Infrastructure UK, a new national infrastructure policy team.



SASIG Meeting: 20 April 2023
Item 4

Item 4: SASIG Administration and Finances

Recommendation: that members note content of financial update and approve in-house financial protocol and procedures.

(a) Chairman/Policy Director's Financial update

Chairman and Policy Director will provide an update at the meeting.

(b) Update on membership and sponsorship

The Secretariat continues to investigate opportunities to recruit possible new SASIG members and, in fact, we are hoping we will shortly be welcoming Central Bedfordshire Council to the SASIG family following a recent meeting with SASIG Policy Director, Chris Cain. Appropriate paperwork has been sent to them for completion - we await its return. Slough BC have also indicated that they would like to re-join SASIG.

Last month, Chris met with Dr Anna Jackman, Lecturer in Human Geography, University of Reading to talk about a few issues including possible sponsorship opportunities and a few weeks ago he also had a meeting with North Lincolnshire Council about joining SASIG. This month SASIG met with the Heart of the South-West LEP and the Policy Director will update members regarding all of these and any further possible contacts. A meeting had also been scheduled for this month with Southampton City Council but this has had to be postponed again and we are awaiting a new date.

To reiterate, recruitment is a process that remains permanently ongoing but it is a difficult time for anything of this nature with the pandemic, in particular, still continuing to impact on local authority budgets.

With regards to proposed sponsorships, if there has been any further progress, the Policy Director will verbally update the Group.

(c) Update/final sign-off of new in-house financial protocols

The Chairman will give a final update to members on the provisions that have been put in place to take over the running of SASIG's accounts now that Dudley MBC have relinquished their 'tour of duty'. A provisional Budget will also be discussed.

**SASIG Meeting: 20 April 2023
Item 5**

Item 5: Policy Update since last SASIG meeting and Current Key Issues

Recommendation: that members note content of the item.

(a) Meetings held and invitations received

As before, a majority of SASIG meetings have continued to be held virtually in the wake of the impact of the pandemic. Since the previous SASIG meeting held on 19 January 2023, the following meetings have taken place:

January 2023:

19th: SASIG members' main meeting (virtual)

24th: Meeting of the Combined Aerodrome Safeguarding Team (CAST) was attended by CAG member Zhanine Smith who will update members at this meeting.

27th: SASIG Policy Director, Chris Cain, had a virtual meeting with Cllr Rob Waltham, Leader of North Lincs Council and he will update the Group verbally.

31st: SASIG Chairman Keith Artus was one of the keynote speakers at the Westminster Forums: 'Next steps for drone regulations and use in the UK'. This (virtual) conference brought together stakeholders and policy makers to discuss the future of remotely piloted aircraft systems (RPAS) regulation and commercial use within the UK. This will be covered under Item 6(a) in this meeting.

February 2023:

20th: The next stakeholder meeting of the Airspace Change Organising Group (ACOG) was held but SASIG was unable to attend.

27th: Chris Cain had a phone conversation with Dr Anna Jackman, Lecturer in Human Geography at the University of Reading and can affirm that she has put forward a follow-up proposal for work with SASIG. He will update members at this meeting.

March 2023:

3rd: Chris Cain paid a visit to Cranfield University to discuss a possible relationship between SASIG and Cranfield and will report details to members at the meeting.



9th: Chris Cain was to have met (virtually) with Cllr Satvir Kaur, Leader of Southampton City Council – this meeting had been postponed from earlier on in the year due to illness. Its aim was to promote membership of SASIG to the council and also to talk about what importance they attach to Southampton being air connected; the significance of the airport to the City economically; environmental issues associated with the airport (noise, CO2, air quality, etc.) and to see what their view was of runway extension plans that have been granted permission. Unfortunately, this meeting was postponed by them for a second time and we are awaiting a new date.

Chris will update the Group on all of these and any additional at this meeting.

16th: Chris and Keith both met (virtually) with Corinne Matthews who is Nuclear/Aerospace Sector Lead for Heart of the Southwest LEP. The aim of this meeting was mainly to promote membership of SASIG and they will verbally update this meeting.

15th: [Air Mobility Insights Summit](#): This Connected Places Catapult event (held at the Urban Innovations Centre, London) was billed as the first interactive insights event for the Future of Air Mobility Accelerator where corporate, investment and technology leaders were to come together to exchange ideas and value. There were conversations around challenges within the sector with a focus on Future Airport & Vertiport Operations, Aviation Sustainability, Future Air & Space Traffic Management and Enabling End-to-End Mobility.

22nd : [Decarbonisation of Transport Summit](#): Connected Places Catapult also held another event at the Urban Innovations Centre. With the Government investing heavily in the decarbonisation of transport all options from hydrogen to electrification were to be placed on the table and looked at.

At this event, the Connected Places Catapult aimed to convene government, industry and academia decision-makers from two leading programmes, funded by the Department for Transport:

- Zero Emission Flight Infrastructure which explores the future of airport infrastructure for hydrogen powered flight;
- Zero Emission Road Freight which delves into how to decarbonise large, long-haul, heavy goods vehicles (HGVs).

Leading keynote speakers from the transport sector were available to explore the findings from each programme of work, the costs associated with different energy sources, the innovation potential and the investment opportunities.

Members were informed of both these events via the SASIG Bulletin.

28th: the next meeting of the Airspace and Noise Engagement Group (ANEG) was held and was attended by SASIG – Chris Cain, Policy Director and Zhanine Smith (Essex CC).



They will be able to update members at this meeting. Further ANEG meetings are now planned for July and November of this year.

30th: The SASIG Chairman, Keith Artus and also the SASIG Policy Director, Chris Cain, were invited by Dr Anna Jackman, Lecturer in Human Geography at the University of Reading, to an online workshop exploring the integration of drones in UK skies, with a focus on community issues and public perception.

Forthcoming:

25th April: Next meeting of the Combined Aerodrome Safeguarding Team (CAST).

(b) Significant policy developments since last SASIG meeting

Politically, the most significant development was the resignation of Scotland's First Minister, Nicola Sturgeon on 15 February. Although this will not make too much difference to our members, it is still worth mentioning!

Low-budget airline Flybe came in for its final landing on 28 January as the airline folded for the second time in three years. Administrators have been unable to find a buyer despite last-ditch talks. There had been speculation Lufthansa and Air France-KLM were in talks with administrators to take over the firm, however, Birmingham-based Flybe said discussions had ended without a new deal being agreed. It faces the start of the winding-down of the business with administrators adding that a further 25 employees would be made redundant immediately on top of the 277 of Flybe's 321 staff members whose redundancies were previously confirmed by joint administrators Interpath Advisory.

With regard to Bristol Airport and its plan to expand its capacity from 10m to 12m annual passengers; in November last year, campaigners against expansion took their case to the High Court. However, on 31 January 2023 the High Court ruled that expansion could go ahead. Campaigners have vowed not to give up on their cause.

And to recap: last November came news that Luton Airport's owner had delayed expansion plans. A development consent order (DCO) application for a second terminal was due to be submitted by the end of last year however the application has been pushed back to early 2023.

(c) Current consultations/publications of interest

This has become a busy time for consultations both current and recent so here goes....

2040 zero emissions airport target: Call for Evidence:



On 7 February 2023 the Government published a Call for Evidence to design a policy for zero emissions airports in England. (Members were informed the same day). The Government are using this call for evidence to gather feedback on the:

- definition of airport operations
- emissions sources that should be included within the target

They state they wish to better understand:

- to which entities the target should apply
- the type and size of airport the target should be applied to
- potential regulatory or voluntary approaches that could be used to implement the target
- how the proposed target could be aligned with current schemes, such as the Airports Council International Airport Carbon Accreditation scheme
- the barriers and opportunities which may exist in implementing the target, including commercial feasibility
- what the appropriate measuring and reporting processes should be

Further details may be seen [here](#) and the consultation will close on 2 May 2023.

Changes to Permitted Development Right: consultation:

On 1 March 2023, the Government launched a consultation proposing changes to permitted development rights to support recreational camping renewable energy and film-making. The proposals could have the potential to have a big impact on aerodrome safeguarding. Members were informed the same day. See [here](#) for more details on the consultation and access to relevant documentation.

The closing date for this consultation is 25 April 2023.

Night-time noise abatement objectives for the UK's designated airports:

On 27 March the Government launched a consultation seeking views and evidence on what a night-time noise abatement objective should be for the noise-designated airports (Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted) from October 2025. For more details and supporting documentation, please see [here](#) and [here](#).

This consultation closes 9 May 2023.

Also on this day, the Government published their [revised overarching aviation noise policy statement](#) and their short update in relation to their work on night flight dispensation guidance. Further detail on this can be found at: [Night flight dispensation guidance: update](#).

Airspace Change Masterplan: consultation scoping the environmental assessments:

27 March saw the CAA launch a consultation seeking views on defining the scope of the environmental assessments for the airspace change masterplan. To ensure that environmental impact considerations are integrated into the development of the airspace change masterplan, the CAA must ensure that the masterplan is subject to a strategic environmental assessment (SEA) and a Habitats Regulations assessment (HRA). The assessments are a legal requirement. The first stage of each of these assessments is to decide what they must cover, including the approach the CAA proposes to use.

The masterplan is being developed by the Airspace Change Organising Group (ACOG) to co-ordinate the airspace changes that will upgrade and modernise UK airspace at a system level.

See [here](#) to access the consultation and supporting documentation.

This consultation closes on 8 May 2023.

Also to note: this month the Government issued their response with regard to their consultation re: Planning for New Energy Infrastructure. Access the document [here](#). However, by way of a quick summary, aviation has been mentioned under the following:

- **Page 13 – Generic Impacts of new energy infrastructure**

Aviation

‘There were several comments on aviation ranging from information for aerodrome safeguarding considerations including Instrument Flight Procedures (IFPs) safeguarding, bird strike risk in relation to environmental mitigation, building induced turbulence, and thermal plume turbulence’.

Government Response (Page 14)

‘Scope of the aviation section has been extended in line with comments which have been addressed in the draft and will be consulted on in due course’.

- **Page 18 – Draft EN-3**

*‘Key areas for discussion for stakeholders focussed on the need case for large scale solar, siting of solar on agricultural land, impacts of glint and glare on **aviation** and the methodology for measuring the capacity threshold of projects’.*

- **Page 34 – Glint & Glare**

‘We received several detailed and conflicting comments from a range of stakeholders. Some respondents considered that the requirements in the guidance were quite onerous. It was suggested that the text in this guidance should specify that any requirements for glint and glare assessments be proportionate, taking into account the irradiance absorption design of current solar panels and the specific site context, particularly where there are no nearby receptors. Some respondents

*also considered that the requirement for the use of anti-reflective panels was unnecessary as, high efficiency anti-reflective coatings are standard on all commercially available panels. They suggested that solar panels posed no risk to **aviation** and flagged evidence from existing glint and glare assessments suggesting that solar panels have significantly less reflectivity than many other common construction materials.*

Conversely, other respondents strongly disagreed with the reference in the text to there being no evidence that glint and glare from solar farms interferes with aviation navigation or pilot and aircraft visibility or safety. They provided documentation and case studies to support their argument, which showed that in some circumstances mitigation was required to avoid unacceptable glare arising and interfering with aviation’.

Government Response

‘To provide further clarity we have included additional detail in the NPS text on the requirements for glint and glare assessments and to highlight that in most cases solar panels are designed with anti-reflective glass or are produced with anti-reflective coating and have a reflective capacity that is generally equal to or less hazardous than other objects typically found in the outdoor environment. However, our technical analysis suggests that, despite this, it may in some cases still be possible for panels to reflect the sun’s rays, at certain angles, causing glint and glare. We have expanded the text to explain how these impacts may be mitigated using screening and/or adjustments to the alignment and elevation tilt angle of panels.

We acknowledge that there is some evidence that glint and glare from solar farms can be experienced by pilots and air traffic controllers in certain conditions, although this does not in our view suggest that this results in significant impairment on aircraft safety. We have updated the NPS to clarify that when determining applications, the Secretary of State should consider the impacts of glint and glare on aviation infrastructure (including aircraft departure and arrival flight paths) as well as the impacts on other receptors’.

- **Page 48 – Overview of Responses**

*‘Respondents also used this question to ask that the language used across the suite of energy NPSs should be consistent for clarity, including the use of terms which could be interpreted in different ways such as ‘significant’. **Finally, some respondents used this question to highlight the need to consider aviation and specifically the placement of electricity infrastructure in relation to airports’.***

And finally, some information regarding other publications.....

(1) Airspace Modernisation Strategy:

On 23 January 2023 the CAA published its refreshed [Airspace Modernisation Strategy](#), bringing it up to date and widening its scope, in particular:

- to extend the strategy out to 2040;
- to maintain and, where possible, improve the UK's high levels of aviation safety;
- to focus on integrating all airspace users with simpler airspace design and supporting regulations;
- to introduce environmental sustainability as an overarching principle across all modernisation activities;
- to align with the ICAO Global Air Navigation Plan and provide a clear strategic path for rulemaking, now the UK has left the EU and EASA.

(2) Net Zero Review:

On 23 January 2023 members were informed that former Energy Minister Chris Skidmore had published his Net Zero Review, outlining the opportunities offered by net zero. A quick review does not reveal much on aviation but nevertheless, it's an important contextual document (e.g. on fuels, infrastructure and net zero ambition) which we suspect will be material in leading Government policy development.

The full Net Zero Review report may be seen [here](#) and the press release and other details may be seen [here](#).

On 9 February there was also a debate in Parliament on the Independent Review of Net Zero. This debate was led by former Energy Minister Chris Skidmore. In the debate, he highlighted that for aviation the mandate for 10% SAF by 2030 is "one of our greatest opportunities to decarbonise in the short term to meet our 2030 nationally determined contribution" but that in order to achieve that, "we need to build out the supply chain and take advantage of opportunities to use biogenetic materials and waste materials for SAF, so we need the processing plants in place."

The full debate can be read [here](#).

(3) ACOG report on economic benefits of airspace modernization

In February, members were informed that the Airspace Change Organising Group (ACOG) had recently published a report on the economic benefits of airspace modernisation. PA Consulting - commissioned by ACOG - assessed over 60 separate pieces of literature on airspace, aviation, and infrastructure projects, and highlighted "the multi-faceted ways in which the benefits from modernising UK airspace might ripple out from the aviation sector into the wider economy and ultimately feed through into additional GDP and employment levels.

Further details are available [here](#) and the report can be seen [here](#).

(4) CAA funding to support airspace modernization projects:

On 1 March 2023 the CAA launched its next round of funding to help support airspace modernisation projects across the UK. More information [here](#). Applications could be made via an application form that could be found on the website and had to be in no later than 31 March 2023. Members were informed.



(5) TSC Third Report: Fuelling the Future:

On 2 March the Transport Committee published their Third report saying that the Government must 'pick winners' by investing in low-carbon fuels for aviation and rail. The full report may be read [here](#) and the report summary [here](#). Additional information may be seen [here](#).

(6) CAA final decision: maximum charges HAL:

Also, in March the CAA published its final decision for the maximum charges that Heathrow Airport Ltd can charge airlines for using the airport for the five-year period up to and including 2026. Decision documents, appendices and more information on the main issues covered in their determination is available on their website [here](#). The summary document can be accessed [here](#). Members were informed.

(7) Government review of airport ground operations:

30 March saw the Government publish a report setting out 10 areas for the aviation industry to focus on to ensure airport ground operations get back to full capacity and avoid a repeat of the travel disruption seen last summer. For more details, please see [here](#) and to see the letter from the Aviation Minister detailing the outcomes of the review of ground handling at UK airports, please see [here](#).

And finally, for more information on Connect Places Catapult's collaboration with the DfT in delivering the Zero Emission Flight Infrastructure (ZEFI) programme, please see [here](#).



SASIG Meeting: 20 April 2023
Item 6

Item 6: Drone Agenda

Recommendations: that members consider the proposal to form a Drone Advisory Bureau under the umbrella of SASIG and endorse the proposals set out below and in the accompanying appendices.

(a): Proposed Drone Advisory Bureau

Introduction

Drones and other forms of Advanced Air Mobility (e.g. electric powered fixed wing aircraft and e-VTOL), the technologies associated with them and the ways in which they may come to be used and regulated have become an increasingly prominent topic within the aviation sector and this is set to continue. This item is designed to highlight the latest intelligence and networking that SASIG has been involved in within this area, and to set out our proposals to establish under the SASIG umbrella, and with the support of the LGA, a Drone Advisory Bureau (DAB)

A summary of the address to a Westminster Forum event, given by SASIG Chairman Keith Artus, is provided at **Appendix A**.

External Engagement on Drones

In addition to presentations the Group has received on drones and Advanced Air Mobility from ARPAS-UK, UKRI Future of Flight and the Connected Places Catapult, discussions have also taken place with a range of Government Officials, CAA regulators, academics and key industry figures, all of whom are interested in the role of LAs both as users of drones, but also as potential regulators within their boundaries.

SASIG's Policy Director was invited to a land use planning meeting by UKRI Future of Flight.

SASIG Chairman Keith Artus and Policy Director Chris Cain have been in liaison with Dr Anna Jackman, Lecturer in Human Geography at the University of Reading. She is leading a research project, [Diversifying Drone Stories](#) which explores the use, perception, and impact of drones in changing UK airspace. The project engages with diverse stakeholders (emergency services, lawyers, industry, pilots, air traffic controllers, and members of the public) to understand different perspectives on how drones may be (re)shaping UK airspace and everyday life below. Dr Jackman is eager to engage with local authorities as a key group likely to be increasingly involved and impacted by drones – for many of the reasons that Keith outlined in his presentation.



Chris Cain has also been discussing how SASIG might contribute to the future roll out and regulatory agendas with Gordon Jacobs at DSIT and submitted an application on SASIG's behalf to DfT to be included on their Future of Flight Communities Board.

Chris and the Chairman have also held discussions with Corinne Matthews at Heart of England LEP about working with them on a regional route map for the roll out of drones in the South West.

They have also had meetings with industry representatives from:

- (a) Ferrovia Droneports
- (b) Wing.com (Google's household delivery start-up)
- (c) CGI (formerly Logica) on digital mapping and its use in helping local routing and policy decisions

The Formation of a Drone Advisory Bureau

Reaction to the Chairman's presentation on 31st January, and SASIG's extensive engagement with Government, regulators, academics and industry in relation to the sector thereafter and their uniform recognition of the important role LA's are likely to have in its development, led to the idea of forming the SASIG DAB to help LAs understand the drone landscape and what additional responsibilities might be coming their way over the next 3-5 years.

With that in mind Chairman Keith Artus and the Policy Director, also met with Ian Hughes, Director of Policy at the LGA on 3 April to discuss SASIG's proposed Drone Bureau after the concept was discussed and supported at the CAG meeting in March. The follow-up letter sent from the Chairman to Ian Hughes, setting out our intentions is at **Appendix B**.

The Aim and high-level objectives for the SASIG DAB are set out in **Appendix C**, and a draft article raising the profile of the issue is due for publication in LGA First Magazine on 28th April – see **Appendix D**.

Resourcing the Drone Bureau

If the SASIG membership support this initiative, the next step will be to develop a business plan for the Bureau to operate on a not for profit basis and then to reach out to:

- Other LGA authorities
- Other LAs and local government organisations in the UK
- Government departments and agencies
- Other key stakeholders
- The industry
- Potential sponsors and Associate members



A further paper will be brought to the next member meeting setting out the business plan and detailed operating parameters for the DAB, including its interface with the LGA. In terms of resources, it is currently envisaged that:

- (i) Any member of SASIG will automatically become a member of the Drone Bureau at no extra charge, if they so choose;
- (ii) Other LAs and Local Government organisations will be charged a modest DAB fee unless they too choose to become full SASIG members;
- (iii) Similarly, parish councils and other categories of Associate member will pay a small fee to benefit from DAB membership.
- (v) SASIG DAB will seek targeted sponsorship.
- (vi) It will also apply for research funding and start-up funding from DfT, DSIT, Future of Flight;
- (ix) SASIG DAB will join Heart of South West LEP in a regional drone project;
- (x) SASIG DAB will extend invitations to COSLA, LGA Wales + NILGA + Regional Authorities/Mayoral Authorities to participate in collaborative work.

Conclusion

It is recommended that members:

- **support the proposal to form a Drone Advisory Bureau under the umbrella of SASIG;**
- **endorse the proposals set out below and in the accompanying appendices and ask the Chairman to confirm this in writing to the LGA;**
- **invite the Secretariat to develop a business plan for a 'low cost' Bureau operation and prepare a marketing strategy to attract both additional members and sponsors; and**
- **to seek partners for the Bureau in promoting research and other projects in the field.**



Appendix A



Westminster Travel Forum Conference: 'Next steps for drone regulation and use in the UK' (31 January 2023)

On Tuesday, 31st January 2023, SASIG Chairman, Keith Artus was one of the keynote speakers at the Westminster Forums: He addressed issues relating to the 'Next steps for drone regulations and use in the UK'.

Keith's presentation has been circulated to members previously and can be found on the Group's website or is available on request from the Secretariat. The following communication circulated after the event by Chairman Keith Artus on 8 February provides a useful summary:

SASIG was asked to provide the Local Authority view at the Westminster Travel Forum's 'Next Steps for Drone Regulation and Use in the UK' conference held on 31 January.

The conference was virtual but very well attended by nearly 100 delegates from Government, industry and interested parties. As the conference proceeded it was clear that the premise of our own contribution was actually being inadvertently reinforced.

The SASIG view is that there needs to be a clear distinction between those approvals, licences and management that will remain with national organisations, like CAA and NATS, and those that will be delegated to Local Authorities. Of course, such delegated responsibilities, and potential liabilities, will be added to existing responsibilities, such as planning and environmental health. This will demand additional expertise and resources, requiring recruitment, training and costs.

Local Authorities will not only be required to administer drone use but will also potentially be huge users of the technology themselves. There are tremendous opportunities for improved service reach, efficiency and budgetary control.

"..... the presentation I gave – it is now in the members' area on the SASIG website - as it summarises the vast growth in drone use by 2030 and the implications for Local Authorities.

I can also supply the text of my contribution, together with the agenda and list of fellow



speakers for further interest.

SASIG has also been engaging with key Government Departments (i.e. DfT, DSIT, DLUHC) and other key partners such as Government bodies like the CAA, UKRI Future Flight and the Connected Places Catapult, and it has been clear for some time that not just the current membership, but all 330 English Local Authorities, 125 other coincident authorities across the UK and 26 directly elected mayors, are potentially major customers for the technology but also could be required to take on regulatory functions and consequently need to have an established and recognised voice as the industry grows.



Appendix B



Mr Ian Hughes
 Director of Policy
 Local Government Association
 18 Smith Square
 Westminster
 London
 SW1P 3HZ

4th April 2023

Dear Ian,

Re: SASIG Drone Advisory Bureau

It was a pleasure to see Kamal and yourself yesterday to update you on our Drone Advisory Bureau project and plans. Personally, I found our discussion extremely helpful in understanding the issues that you anticipate being of importance. It seems we are on the same page as my presentation to the Westminster Forum back in January highlighted many of those points.

I promised I would write to confirm the outcome from yesterday:

1. We are very happy to add our comments to the document Kamal is currently reviewing on the topic. I'm sure we can add valuable insight based on our work to date.
2. The LGA will support our participation in the DfT's Future of Flight Community group on drones and Advanced Air Mobility (AAM).
3. SASIG and LGA will share intelligence and where appropriate work collaboratively (together and collectively with other partners) on research, policy and implementation projects reflecting the interests of LGA members in relation to drones and AAM.
4. The LGA agrees with the principle of SASIG establishing and developing the Drone Advisory Bureau as a not-for-profit sub-set of SASIG as part of its remit as an LGA Special Interest Group, with its governance reflecting SIG principles and summary Aims and Objectives we provided to you yesterday.



5. SASIG will develop and execute a nationwide survey of local authorities to identify needs, wants, concerns, issues etc. associated with drone technology, use and regulation. The survey questions to be coordinated with Kamal Panchal and the results shared with the LGA corporately.
6. The survey will be highlighted in an article on the implications of drone and AAM technology for LAs to published in First Magazine as soon as they can accommodate it.
7. SASIG will seek to research funding from external sources to support its work and will participate with LAs and their partners in projects designed to test, evaluate and roll out the case for drone use by LAs and their prospective engagement in regulation of the sector at local and sub-regional level.
8. The establishment of SASIG's Drone Advisory Bureau will be ratified at the SASIG members' meeting on April 20th.

I have also made note of your keen interest, Ian, in the issues of noise and the community impacts, together with a deeper dive into the financial benefits, implications and scope on drone activity.

We will also keep Kamal and yourself informed of developments as we continue to press the case for Government action on civil aviation noise and the recovery of local economies with significant aviation dependency impacted by COVID.

I look forward to further updating you both in due course.

Kindest regards

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Keith Artus". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Keith Artus
Chairman of SASIG

Cc Kamal Panchal
SASIG Secretariat



Appendix C



STRATEGIC AVIATION SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP of the LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION

DRONE ADVISORY BUREAU

AIM

To provide an independent source of expertise and advice on the emerging drone and wider Advanced Air Mobility sector, focused on the prospective needs of Local Authorities and the wider local government ecosystem which supports them.

KEY OBJECTIVES

1. The Drone Advisory Bureau is being established by the Strategic Aviation Special Interest Group (SASIG) to provide a not-for-profit information, advisory and collaborative facility for all local authorities to discuss and benefit from technical, regulatory, operational, environmental, economic and social acceptability aspects of emerging technologies for drones and advanced air mobility.
2. The Drone Advisory Bureau will be a sub-section of SASIG and be administered by SASIG's Secretariat, which has extensive knowledge of the Advanced Air Mobility sector. All local authorities under the auspices of the LGA shall be entitled to join the Drone Advisory Bureau upon payment of a membership subscription, which will be determined annually to reflect the Bureau's not-for-profit status.
3. The Drone Advisory Bureau will also seek funding from collaborative partners and Government sources that does not in conflict with the aims and objectives of the bureau or with the interests of the membership.



4. SASIG will liaise with and contribute to the work of the LGA in responding to Government and other emerging and interested parties on matters in (1) above taking into consideration the needs, wants and information requirements of local authorities.
5. The Drone Advisory Bureau will issue a regular 'bulletin' to member local authorities advising of recent developments in the sector and advising on actions local authorities might like to take. It will also hold meetings/workshops for LAs to discuss the latest legislation, regulation, industry developments and good practice 3 times a year.
6. The Drone Advisory Bureau will operate fully under the established and approved constitution and policy objectives of SASIG and therefore in conformity with the requirements of Special Interest Groups of the LGA.

Appendix D



LGA 'First' magazine article

A draft of the proposed submission from the SASIG Chairman to the LGA 'First' magazine was provided and discussed at the last SASIG meeting in January. The Chairman and Policy Director have now reviewed and updated that draft (see below in italics) and this version has been submitted to the editor at LGA First.

Are you drone aware?

In the very near future, all authorities are going to need to be, and a lot sooner than is probably realised! Drones and their larger e-VTOL derivatives are rapidly going to become an important new technology that local authorities will wish both to take advantage of - to save costs and improve service delivery - but also to have responsibility to regulate.

By 2030 PWC forecast over 900,000 drones will be flying in the UK, generating a range of substantive impacts including: net cost savings of £22bn, a £45bn contribution to our economy encompassing some 650,000 jobs and carbon emission reductions of 2.4m tonnes.

In addition to the many commercial applications that are being envisaged (especially last mile deliveries), there are also likely to be many applications of drones that can benefit Local Authorities: Blue Light services, healthcare and social services, traffic and environmental monitoring, infrastructure inspections, coastal management and land surveying to mention just a few. With so many drones prospectively in operation, it is anticipated there could be considerable pressures on the regulation and management of airspace, the availability of landing facilities and ground infrastructure for re-charging, low level flight management, value assessment, control and monitoring interfaces, training, knowledge and resourcing. Taken together potentially a considerable headache for un-prepared Local Authorities.

As your LGA Special Interest Group on Aviation, SASIG has been working on drone issues for a while now. We are engaged with the key Government departments and our member workshops have featured sessions by ARPAS (the industry trade association and professional body focused on the UK drone, UAV, RPAS, UAS community), UKRI who are



leading the Future of Flight programme, CAA, ACOG and other interested parties. As chairman I also recently presented a paper at the Westminster Forum on "Where Next for Drone regulation in the UK", which brought to the sector's focus the need for engagement with Local Government on how to assess where and how drones can be used beneficially, a clear regulatory framework where Councils will face taking on additional responsibilities and liabilities and a development pathway to deliver the requisite training and expertise for all types of local authorities and their suppliers on drone management, the interface with planning policy and the H&S and environmental issues associated for instance with ground handling facilities and emergency planning.

Our input has generated considerable interest with our existing 30+ local authority members with airports within their domain, however drones will impact ALL 333 local authorities in England and the 65 others that cover the Devolved Administrations. For this reason, we have formed the Drone Advisory Bureau. This is open to all authorities to join and benefit from not only our work with Government and industry, but also represent all authorities in helping to define and communicate the regulatory and responsibility pathways that are likely to emerge over the next 2-3 years.

For a copy of our Westminster Forum presentation or for details on how to join the Drone Advisory Bureau, an introductory pack and more, please contact the SASIG Secretariat on secretariat@sasig.org.uk

*Keith Artus
SASIG Chairman*

**SASIG Meeting: 20 April 2023
Item 7**

Item 7: Noise Policy note and draft consultation responses.

Recommendation: that members note content of the item and discuss.

In November 2018, the government established the Independent Commission on Civil Aviation Noise (ICCAN) to help ensure that the needs of local communities were properly taken into account when considering the noise impacts of airport expansion and to help ensure that noise impacts of airspace changes were being properly considered. ICCAN was, in our opinion, a strong and beneficial group in helping government attain appropriate and credible advice on aviation noise related matters. ICCAN and SASIG worked well together with representatives from ICCAN actively seeking our advice and experience and regularly appearing at SASIG members' meetings.

However, following an independent review of ICCAN conducted in 2021, the then Aviation Minister, Robert Courts, concluded that many of ICCAN's functions would be more efficiently performed by the CAA and they subsequently took on additional noise functions from April 2022. Their Noise Advisory Objectives were set out as follows:

- *to support departments across the UK Government and devolved administrations to take informed decisions on aviation noise policy;*
- *to increase the level of understanding about aviation noise management as well as the confidence and transparency in how aviation noise is treated in the UK; and*
- *to promote best practice in the aviation sector through the production of guidance on managing noise impacts, including balancing the needs of relevant parties and engaging with stakeholders*

Their Noise Advisory Functions were deemed as:

- *Provision of advice to Government to support policy making*
 - *The CAA will continue to provide objective, technical and expert advice on aviation noise, to inform the UK Government's decision and policy making. To ensure the CAA is able to deliver these functions, it will expand its existing resource and expertise. The CAA will agree with DfT on a rolling basis whether further resource will be required to meet this role.*
 - *Where necessary, the CAA will draw on intelligence from other relevant government Departments and Agencies and stakeholders. The work will be independently and objectively delivered by the CAA.*
 - *The CAA Environmental Sustainability Panel will, as appropriate, contribute to the production of this advice by providing critical technical feedback and/or through the provision of sustainability related intelligence and technical expertise.*

- *Provision of transparent and reliable information and research on noise in the UK*
 - *In addition to the information and research published by CAA on behalf of DfT, the New CAA Noise Advisory Functions will include collating, preparing and/or commissioning information regarding national and local aviation noise levels, measurement methodologies and noise mitigation techniques. This information will be made publicly available and periodically updated in a transparent manner. The purpose of this action will be to highlight standards across the sector and allow for informed and effective engagement between industry and stakeholders.*
 - *The CAA will, when appropriate, undertake or commission further research where significant and relevant gaps in evidence exist. The CAA will undertake to seek agreement with DfT, other relevant government departments and agencies and stakeholders including impacted communities (where appropriate) prior to determining who is best placed to lead the commissioning. There will be cases where other agencies are better placed to commission or undertake research and the CAA will work with Government and others where appropriate to consider the best way to deliver it.*
 - *The CAA Environmental Sustainability Panel will, as appropriate, contribute to the production of this information and research by providing critical technical feedback and/or through the provision of sustainability related intelligence and technical expertise.*

With regard to publication of 'Best Practice' guidance on aviation noise, the CAA said:

- *it will continue to publish, promote and maintain best practice guidance related to aviation noise to enable airports and airlines to make improvements. The New CAA Noise Advisory Functions will expand on this existing remit.*
- *The CAA will monitor up take of aspects of best practice guidance. In doing this, the CAA will seek to ensure that those causes of aviation noise which have the greatest impact on stakeholders are prioritised. In doing so, the CAA will ensure that its resources are proportionately allocated.*
- *The CAA will, where it is appropriate to do so, engage stakeholders, including community groups and industry, in the development of best practice guidance.*

Noise issues have always been and remain, a major issue for many of the authorities within SASIG. It has long been our opinion that Government drags its heels when dealing with noise and its impact on communities with airports in particular. The CAA already has a wider environmental remit and with the demise of ICCAN it is our opinion that noise issues are back to being swallowed up and/or overshadowed by the more contentious issues of CO2 emissions and the drive to reach Net Zero by 2050.

Additionally, it is still the three designated airports that continue to garner the most attention. Indeed, in March of this year the CAA launched a consultation on night-time Noise Abatement Objectives for the designated airports (it closes on 9 May) for the next



night-flight regime to commence in October 2025. But what about the rest of the UK airports all of whom have communities that are impacted by noise.

The Government's previous policy on aviation noise, was set out in the Aviation Policy Framework 2013 and it stated: "The Government's overall policy on aviation noise is to limit and, where possible, reduce the number of people in the UK significantly affected by aircraft noise, as part of a policy of sharing benefits of noise reduction with industry."

2013 – that was 10 years ago! – so it is good to hear that to frame the night-time noise abatement objective consultation and to provide clarity for airports and their stakeholders preparing or responding to Noise Action Plan consultations, the Government has now confirmed a decision on a new national aviation noise policy statement:

"The Government's overall policy on aviation noise is to balance the economic and consumer benefits of aviation against their social and health implications in line with the International Civil Aviation Organisation's Balanced Approach to Aircraft Noise Management. This should take into account the local and national context of both passenger and freight operations, and recognise the additional health impacts of night flights.

The impact of aviation noise must be mitigated as much as is practicable and realistic to do so, limiting, and where possible reducing, the total adverse impacts on health and quality of life from aviation noise."

The Chairman and Policy Director have some significant concerns about this new policy statement, the direction it sets for Aviation noise policy and the way it has been communicated. But we would also like to hear members views

Recommendation

Members are asked to review this item in the light of the presentation by Charles Lloyd, and offer feedback to the Chairman and Secretariat for responses to current consultations and a letter to the Aviation Minister.



**SASIG Meeting: 20 April 2023
Item 8**

Item 8: Research Projects Update

(a): LA Impact Study

(b): Policy Challenges of New Technology

Recommendations: that members note the updates.

Policy Director, Chris Cain, will provide verbal updates at the meeting.

SASIG Meeting: 20 April 2023
Item 9

Item 9: Future Dates 2023 for SASIG/CAG and additional meetings

SASIG Full meetings:

Wednesday: 19 July 2023 SASIG AGM (Westminster Suite, LGA/hybrid)

The Secretariat has a provisional booking on the Westminster Suite, LGA offices, London for Wednesday: 19 July 2023 for the next members' meeting which will also be the AGM. It is hoped that this meeting will be face-to-face once more with the opportunity for those members who are unable to attend in person, to attend hybridly.

The Secretariat did investigate the possibility of holding the July SASIG/AGM at the [LGA Annual Conference and Exhibition](#) to be held in Bournemouth (the Bournemouth International Centre) from Tuesday 4th to Thursday 6th July 2023. The idea was to combine it with the summer AGM but costs were prohibitive and the idea was dropped.

Another suggestion to hold the AGM at the British-Irish Expo in June was also investigated but apparently that event is not taking place this year.

To note: the question of nominations for Chair and Vice Chair positions is traditionally decided at the summer AGM and with the passing of Cllr Shaw last year who was our only Vice-Chairman, vacancies for this position remain.

SASIG is also considering the possibility of holding our own bespoke event later in the year with some key partners like RABA, ARPAS-UK, HSPG and ITC focusing on our most important themes – COVID recovery, building resilience noise, land use planning, decarbonisation, regional connectivity, etc. This would likely be for some time in either September or October.

Finally, the Group should also begin to look at remaining dates for any other 2023 meetings especially if the requirement is for room hire at LGA.

Chairman's Advisory Group (CAG):

As with main member meetings, the Group should begin to look at dates for the remaining 2023 meetings especially if the requirement is for room hire at LGA.

LGA Protocol on Rooms

Our LGA support officer had previously suggested it would be a good idea to canvas members to establish who would be willing to travel to London again for face-to-face meetings or whether the preference is still to attend virtual meetings. (Canvassing has been done by other SIGs and they have reported some reluctance by their own members to attend in person). So far, members have been asked to volunteer their preferences



on more than one occasion but very few have replied. Those few that have replied have indicated a preference for meetings to remain virtual for now.

Rooms at Transport House – LGA Head Office

Whilst the impact on work patterns of the pandemic continues to be felt, our members continue to be recommended (via the Bulletin) to check first with the Secretariat before booking any travel arrangements. The aim is to give as much notice to members should anything change but to also make members aware this may not always be possible.

Some of the rooms at the LGA, including the Westminster Suite - which has been the preferred choice for SASIG meetings in the past, still appear not to be totally suitable for hybrid-style meetings and the room can only now be set up in theatre or cabaret style.

Catering procedures have also changed to reflect LGA's COVID and post-COVID measures and, at present, attendees are not able to pick and choose from a selection of refreshments as put before them as on previous occasions. Costs have also increased – this is to be expected.

Hybrid Meetings

The Secretariat will continue to seek clarification on this and other issues mainly to do with the technological side of holding hybrid-style meetings. We have been told however that we would need to book an AV Technician – this would be done via LGA as they do not provide this in-house. The Secretariat is not exactly clear on how this would work on the day but LGA tell us that AV Technician would set everything up for the Chairman.



**SASIG Meeting: 20 April 2023
Item 10**

Item 10: A.O.B.

