

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

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

Email:	secretariat@sasig.org.uk
Address:	SASIG Secretariat, c/o Northpoint Aviation London & South East Office, 14, Monarch Terrace, Kings Hill, West Malling, Kent, ME19 4NP
Telephone:	01732 220256
Website:	www.sasig.org.uk



advancing sustainable aviation policy on behalf of local communities.

Membership: 01/04/2021 - 31/03/2022

BCP Council	Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead
Broadland District Council	Rushmoor Borough Council
Cornwall Council	Slough Borough Council
Crawley Borough Council	Southend-on-Sea Borough Council
Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council	Spelthorne Borough Council
East Hertfordshire District Council	Uttlesford District Council
Essex County Council	West Midlands Airport Shareholders
Hampshire County Council	Committee comprising of:
Hertfordshire County Council	- Birmingham City Council
Isles of Scilly Council	- Coventry City Council
London Borough of Hillingdon	- Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council
London Borough of Hounslow	- Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council
London Borough of Richmond upon Thames	- Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council
Luton Borough Council	- Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council
Plymouth City Council	- Wolverhampton City Council
Reigate & Banstead Borough Council	Wokingham Borough Council

SASIG represents approximately 12 million people which equates to 20% of the LGA area. Airports covered by Member Authorities handled 75% of air passengers in England in 2019 and 65% in the UK overall.

Aim

SASIG's objectives are:

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

SASIG Policy Principles

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

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

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

Key Activities / Outcomes of work undertaken.

National Representation: The ways in which SASIG is represented publicly emphasises the national nature of the membership and thus the sphere of interest. This has included:

Department for Transport, CAA, ACOG and Aviation Minister

- SASIG continuing to be recognised as an important 'strategic stakeholder' by DfT with its views actively sought during consultations of which, once again, there have been many over this period.
- SASIG Chairman continuing to represent local authorities on the board of the DfT's Airspace Strategy Board chaired by the Aviation Minister. Two meetings were held in this period – one in July and one in November. The date of the next meeting is in May 2022.
- The SASIG Chairman also met with the Chairman of Airspace Change Organisation Group (ACOG) in October 2021. Government established ACOG in 2019 to coordinate delivery of key elements of the UK's Airspace Modernisation Strategy. SASIG looks forward to seeing this strategy develop in the right direction and offered ACOG its support towards this.
- In September 2021, SASIG Chairman met with Kemi Badenoch MP to discuss SASIG's potential to contribute to the Government's revision of the UK aviation strategy.
- SASIG is a regular attendee at the DfT's Airspace & Noise Engagement Group (ANEG). The previous meetings in this period were held in April, July and December 2021 and the next one is scheduled for May of this year.
- SASIG has a strong profile in Advanced Air Mobility: The Policy Director sits on the Future of Flight Government Liaison Group, SASIG has been consulted by BEIS on user cases: by the Connected Places Catapult on planning issues and by ARPAS on future regulation issues.
- SASIG continues to hold regular liaison meetings with the DfT to discuss the development of the Department's UK Aviation Strategy with the Department recognising how SASIG can feed into its development.
- The CAA continues to seek SASIG's views on its programme of work including how decisions on airspace change should be made and also looking at the development of aviation forecasts.
- SASIG also works alongside the CAA as a member of the Combined Aerodrome Safeguarding Team (CAST) formed in January 2021 to co-ordinate future work and good practice. Their focus groups include ones for Regulation & Legislation, Technical and also Safeguarding Training and SASIG attends these focus groups.

- SASIG had regular liaison with the Independent Commission on Civil Aviation Noise (ICCAN) set up in 2018 but which was terminated by the Government at the end of March 2022. The CAA took over ICCAN responsibilities and SASIG will continue to work with them.
- SASIG regularly meets with the Aviation Minister to highlight its work and promote future mutual co-operation with Government officials. SASIG met the current Minister Robert Courts in January 2021 on an individual basis but also took part in a round-table session with him and other industry stakeholders in February 2022. They will be meeting again in June of this year.

Engagement with Other Stakeholders

SASIG's Secretariat continues to liaise with other prominent stakeholder groups including the AOA, RABA, LEP Network, COSLA, BEIS, Key Cities, Sustainable Aviation, Aviation Environment Federation, National Planning Inspectorate, HSPG and the Gatwick Airport Conservation Campaign. They have liaised closely with Connected Places Catapult regarding future collaborative work. CPC also provided our guest speaker at the SASIG meeting held in July 2021.

Another industry stakeholder whom SASIG has developed strong links with is UKRI Innovate UK and their Future Flight Programme.

Since December 2020, SASIG has been working alongside Regional & Business Airports Group (RABA) and the Independent Transport Commission (ITC) on a study looking at future policy challenges likely to be associated with emergent aviation technologies over the next 30 years.

Conferences and Public Fora

The pandemic and subsequent restrictions have continued to affect the number of conferences, seminars and meetings usually available to the industry although many have been held successfully on a virtual basis, including our own. SASIG has received invites to events organised by DfT, CAA, Westminster Forum and Connect Places Catapult.

SASIG Chairman contributed an article to the August 2021 edition of the LGA's First magazine. The article was titled: '*Aviation advice and why councils need it*'. Feedback received was extremely encouraging and also led to enquiries about SASIG membership from non-member authorities.

SASIG Newsletter

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

Appendices:

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

SASIG Mission Statement

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

SASIG Terms of Reference

1. The Strategic Aviation Special Interest Group (SASIG) shall provide the forum within the Local Government Association (LGA) for all local authorities to discuss strategic aviation policies and major aviation issues and advancing sustainable aviation policy on behalf of local communities.
2. SASIG will contribute to the work of the LGA in responding to Government and the European Commission on all aviation issues that have a strategic planning, transportation, land use, economic or environmental health dimension. SASIG, where appropriate, will work through and in conjunction with the LGA. SASIG will make representations direct to Government and elsewhere arising directly from the SIG's special interest. SASIG shall not act in a way that conflicts with or undermines LGA policy as a whole or damages the interests of member authorities.
3. SASIG will develop its role and pursue its objectives in accordance with an annual work programme, which will be kept under review so as to ensure consistency with LGA policy and meet with the aspirations of a wider membership.
4. SASIG will operate under the following constitution:
 - (i) Each authority in membership is entitled to designate one Member and/or one officer to attend each meeting of the Strategic Aviation Special Interest Group.
 - (ii) Whilst the Strategic Aviation Special Interest Group will seek to work by amicable agreement amongst the authorities, the formal position is that only one person from each member authority is entitled to vote.
 - (iii) There is no objection to additional Members and officers attending meetings to observe and speak with the permission of the Chairman.
 - (iv) A Chair's Advisory Group and a Technical Officers Group, with representatives drawn from around airport locations on the Strategic Aviation Special Interest Group, will be maintained to assist in taking initiatives forward but with no specific executive powers unless so authorised or at times when urgency dictates that responses must be made between meetings.
 - (v) A Chair and up to three Vice Chairs will be elected annually to ensure a broad geographical spread of interest.
 - (vi) The role of Honorary President and Vice Presidents may be filled by an appropriate person(s).
 - (vii) The Strategic Aviation Special Interest Group shall submit an annual report to the LGA and shall table other reports for LGA meetings as and when necessary.
 - (viii) The Strategic Aviation Special Interest Group shall set an annual subscription rate for membership based on an assessment of its likely annual expenditure on staff, consultants, printing/publicity and other costs. These costs will be apportioned between member authorities on a formula to be agreed.
 - (ix) Authorities joining SASIG in any quarter of the financial year shall pay the relevant proportion of the annual subscription.
 - (x) Authorities shall be advised of the forthcoming subscriptions each autumn for their approval. The absence of a response to the contrary indicates approval.
 - (xi) Authorities resigning from SASIG shall give notice in writing prior to the end of the financial year.

Annual Membership Subscriptions

The Strategic Aviation Special Interest Group will keep its working methods and subscriptions under review with the aim of setting the subscription for all members at the lowest practical level. The current subscriptions have remained unchanged since 2015/16. Since April 2016 Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council have been providing financial management services to SASIG and ensure that all income and expenditure is controlled and audited within their normal practices and with the approval of the Chairman's Advisory Group (CAG) in accordance with the approved budget.

SASIG Membership Meetings

Dates held – 21 July, 29 September and 16 December 2021

SASIG held its usual 3 meetings across the year (all virtual) for the full membership including councillors and officers and once again, much of the discussion revolved around the devastating impact on aviation by the pandemic and ways of recovery for the sector. Other issues discussed included the redesign of UK airspace, night noise restrictions, reform to APD and the Government's agenda for the UK to be net-Zero by 2050. Agendas at these meetings focused on SASIG's involvement in, and response to, the many consultations related to these issues. SASIG made submissions to both the Night Noise and Net Zero consultations in Autumn 2021.

Other items covered at the member meetings include the Groups' plans to raise SASIG's profile and membership, land use planning alongside aircraft noise, airport safeguarding, the Government's Union Connectivity Review and its decarbonization strategy. Guest speaker at the July 2021 meeting was Andrew Chadwick, Connected Places Catapult talking about future technology within aviation. John Stewart, HACAN was the guest speaker in September talking about Heathrow expansion and in December members warmly welcomed presentations by the Sustainability Manager at Loganair and the CEO of C2 Modelling which compares the carbon footprint of with alternative modes of transport in terms of emissions, costs, connectivity and fiscal burden between any points in the UK and Ireland

SASIG Members' Issue Specific Workshops

Since April 2018, SASIG members' meetings have often been followed by issue specific Working Groups reflecting key areas of policy likely to be included in the final Aviation White Paper and/or the Aviation Recovery Plan. However, as a result of the continuing impact of the pandemic resulting in our meetings being held virtually, these were suspended this year and instead members were able to benefit from having more time for interaction and discussion with the main meetings' speakers as listed above. As on previous occasions, representatives from industry stakeholders and colleagues such as DfT, CAA, AOA, MHCLG, DEFRA and HSPG along with non-member authorities have been among those who were invited to join SASIG members during these presentations.

SASIG Chairman's Advisory Group (CAG)

Dates held – 23 June, 15 September and 24 November 2021 and 16 March 2022 (all virtual)

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

Please return to: memberservices@local.gov.uk

Any queries, please contact marion.stribling@local.gov.uk