# ANNUAL MEETING

# BUSINESS MEETING AGENDA
# &
# PAPERS

27 & 28 NOVEMBER 2025

The meeting will be Chaired by Colin Flack OBE, Chair of UKACCs
&
David Hall, Chair of Bristol Airport Consultative Committee

# BUSINESS MEETING AGENDA

## Thursday 27 November 2025

## 14:00 – 15:00 - SESSION 1

### 1.1 Welcome and Introductions

- Welcome & Introductions – David Hall, Chair Bristol ACC.
- Welcome – Colin Flack OBE, Chair UKACCs (Chair of Birmingham ACC & Farnborough ACC).

### 1.2 Notes of 2024 Annual Meeting

To confirm the notes of last year's meeting and matters arising (attached).

### 1.3 Modernising the UK's Airspace - CAA update

Presentation by Stuart Lindsey, Head of Airspace Modernisation on the CAA's Airspace Modernisation Strategy, establishing the UK Airspace Design Service (UKADS) and changes to the airspace change process CAP1616. Delegates will have the opportunity to share information on airspace change initiatives, trials and studies at their airports.

## 15:00 – 15:45 - SESSION 2

### 2.1 Bristol Airport – now and into the future

Presentation by Graeme Gamble, Chief Operating Officer, Bristol Airport. Overview of Bristol Airport, its role within the region, sustainability initiatives and social value including employment, and the Airport's work on zero emissions flights, current investment programme and further growth plans.

## 15:45 – 16:00 – BREAK

## 16:00 – 16:45 – SESSION 3

### 3.1 DfT – Sector Update and Forward Look

Presentation by Wayne Gasson and Huw Jones, Airport Engagement, DfT

### 3.2 UKACCs discussion

Delegates will have opportunity to discuss the DfT's current work, policy development and forthcoming consultations.

## 16:45 Close of Day 1 Business

## Friday 28 November 2025

## 09:00 – 09:35 - SESSION 4 (for ACC Chairs & Secretaries only)

## UKACCs INTERNAL BUSINESS – PRIVATE SESSION

### 4.1 UKACCs Accounts – PAPER 1

To approve the accounts for 2024-25.

### 4.2 UKACCs Chair's Report and Key Issues – PAPER 2

The Chair to update on the work of UKACCs over the past year, key issues, a proposal for a new UKACCs website and proposed next steps. Delegates are invited to discuss and agree the next steps.

## 09:35 – 10:15 – SESSION 5 (for all attendees)

### 5.1 Sharing Practice, Ideas and Experience

At the previous Annual Meeting, initial proposals for a UKACCs Practical Guide were introduced, with the aim of providing a resource that complements the DfT's Guidelines for ACCs and to support ACCs in their day-to-day operations. The Annual Meeting will mark the official launch of the Guide, accompanied by an overview and discussion of forthcoming steps led by Colin Flack. Recognised as a "living document," the Guide will be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure it remains current and incorporates evolving circumstances and new insights.

## 10:15 - 11:10 – SESSION 6

### 6.1 Our Airports: 2025 Experiences and Future Opportunities & Challenges - PAPER 3

The summary of ACC contributions shared in advance of the meeting is set out in Paper 3.

- Round Table discussions – Delegates are invited to discuss the key issues and challenges their ACC has experienced over the past year, or are anticipated in the coming year, and any insightful tips.

- Feedback from Round Table discussions on top three common issues together with any suggested actions for UKACCs.

### 6.2 Local Government Reorganisation in England (LGR)

LGR will have implications for the memberships of many ACCs in England. Delegates are invited to briefly share how their airport/ACC is planning to address the changes.

## 11:10 – 11:30 BREAK

## 11:30 – 12:30 – SESSION 7

**7.1 Enhancing service standards and access to assistance at UK airports**
Presentation by James Fremantle, Senior Manager, Consumer Policy and Enforcement, CAA on improving access to special assistance and service standards at UK airports against a backdrop of growing demand.

**7.2 ACCs' priorities for special assistance at their airport – PAPER 4**
To discuss current challenges and emerging trends at airports, as well as the exchange of effective practices. Paper 4 gives an overview of recent progress by the DfT and CAA.

## 12:30 – 13:00 SESSION 8

**8.1 Vision for Environmental Reporting in Aviation – PAPER 5**
The CAA published on 18 September its UK Aviation Environmental Review Roadmap. Paper 5 summarises the CAA's work on environmental reporting and the outcome of its consultation last year on developing the Aviation Environmental Report. Delegates are invited to identify the key issues for UKACCs' focus in 2026.

## 13:00 UKACCs CHAIR'S CLOSING REMARKS

## 13:15 - 14:30 BUFFET LUNCH & ANNUAL MEETING CONCLUDES

# NOTES OF THE 47th ANNUAL MEETING OF THE LIAISON GROUP OF UK AIRPORT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEES (UKACCs) HELD ON 14 AND 15 NOVEMBER 2024 AT LEEDS BRADFORD AIRPORT

## BUSINESS MEETING

**ACCs present:**

| | |
|---|---|
| Belfast International | Tom McGrath |
| Birmingham | Colin Flack (UKACCs Chair) |
| Edinburgh | Robert Carr |
| Farnborough | Philip Riley (outgoing Chair) |
| Gatwick | Tom Crowley |
| | Monique Smart |
| Glasgow | David Flint |
| | Donald Grant |
| Heathrow CISHA | Tracey Waltho |
| | Mark Izatt |
| | Rebecca Cox |
| Inverness | Pat Hayden |
| Leeds Bradford | Alan Wrigley |
| Liverpool John Lennon | Mike Jones |
| Manchester | Rachel Bailey |
| | Denise French |
| Newcastle | John Littleton |
| Prestwick | Bob Smith |
| | Bob Logan |
| Southampton | James Duguid |
| Stansted | Shena Winning |
| Teesside | David Cosgrove |

**In attendance:**

| | |
|---|---|
| Abigail Grenfell | CAA (Sustainability Strategy & Engagement Lead) |
| Huw Jones | DfT (Engagement Lead, Aviation Policy) |
| UKACCs Secretariat | Paula Street |

**Apologies:**

| | |
|---|---|
| Aberdeen | Alan Stewart |
| Bristol | David Hall |
| East Midlands | Guido Liguori |
| London City | Duncan Alexander |
| Luton | Martin Routledge |

## 1. SESSION 1

### 1.1 Welcome and introductions

- Alan Wrigley, Chair of Leeds Bradford ACC for the past three years, welcomed all to the meeting which was last held in Leeds 27 years ago.
- Colin Flack, UKACCs Chair, thanked airport colleagues for an informative visit that morning and welcomed new members, namely Tracey Waltho, Denise French, Bob Smith, and Bob Logan.

**1.2 Appointment of UKACCs Chair**

- Paula Street thanked Colin Flack for his last two terms. Following requests for nominations, only Colin's name had been put forward, with multiple seconders. **AGREED:** It was unanimously agreed that Colin Flack should be nominated as UKACCs Chair for a further term of three years.

**1.3 Notes of 2022 annual meeting**

- Any matters arising were to be picked up on the agenda over the two days. **APPROVED:** the notes of the 2023 annual meeting.

**1.4 Yorkshire's Airport – Leeds Bradford Airport now and into the future**

- A presentation was received from Charles Johnson, Head of Planning Development at Leeds Bradford Airport (LBA), which would be circulated with the meeting notes.
- This outlined the airport's Vision 2030 which had been formulated over the past 18 months and aimed to increase annual passenger numbers from 4 million to 7 million. This would involve a regeneration programme constructing a new 9,500sqm extension; reconfiguring the existing terminal; and building up to an additional 10 aircraft stands.
- Part of the aim was to drive Yorkshire's economic expansion. The airport currently contributed £460m to the local economy, and it was anticipated that the programme would mean that the airport provided 12,000 jobs, directly or indirectly, by 2030 and increase trade and tourism in the region to almost £1 billion.
- There were currently 11 million passenger flights out of Yorkshire each year, with 4 million of these being out of LBA. This, together with the fact that the West Yorkshire economy was the largest growing economy outside of London, meant that there was ample opportunity for growth. It was planned to both increase capacity on existing routes, including to hub airports of Dublin and Schiphol, and introduce new ones.
- The phasing and capital spend on Vision 2030 and the timeline were outlined, and detailed plans of the proposed interior and exterior of the new and existing terminals shared. This development would result in a much simplified and enhanced passenger journey and, in particular, PRMs would have the same experience as everyone else.
- The plan to be net zero for carbon by 2030 was summarised, including work to support business partners and the wider targets for the aviation industry.
- Beyond 2030, LBA planned to be "An outstanding airport connecting Yorkshire to the world'. This would involve demolishing the existing terminal and rebuilding on the eastern edge of the airfield; the construction of additional piers and stands; the creation of more hotel beds and parking spaces; and further route development.
- In response to questions and comments, the following points were clarified:
  - LBA had five car parking offers, of which the meet and greet was the most popular as cars could be dropped just outside the terminal. It was currently focusing on increasing this provision. In addition, it had a one-hour free parking zone which was very well used, particularly since the red route had been introduced in the roads around the airport. It did not consult on charges, as this was a commercial decision.
  - The programme included a new train station which would be ready for 2030, though this was not guaranteed as it was not within the airport's control. It had, however, been in the planning stage for the past 10 years, which was now well advanced, so it was expected that the project would go ahead.
  - LBA did incentivise the use of public transport. There are hybrid electric buses due on the 'flyer route' which were subsidised by the airport and on which staff received a 50% discount. Work had been carried out to map staff by postcode, and they were looking to reconfigure routes based on this. Similar data had been collected on passenger locations. Currently 55% of passengers travelled to the airport by car but it was anticipated that this would reduce once the new train station was operating, as a free shuttle bus would be offered with a journey time of just three minutes.

- LBA also incentivised quieter planes through phased landing charges and penalties for noisy aircraft and breaches of QC1.

## 2. SESSION 2

### 2.1 Working together to improve aviation's environmental performance

- A presentation was received from Abigail Grenfell, Sustainability Strategy & Engagement Lead at the CAA, which would be circulated with the meeting notes.
- The CAA's mission of protecting people and enabling aerospace was outlined. It has regulatory duties on safety, security and consumer protection, and also some duties regarding the environment (many of which are facilitative rather than proactive) and environmental reporting. The latter was a relatively new addition to its work programme and is continuing to evolve.
- The CAA works on the premise that there was a long-term future for aviation, but that growth would have to be sustainable. Its Environmental Sustainability Strategy was published in 2022, encompassing activities such as enabling jet zero technology, airspace modernisation, and incorporating environmental thinking across all of its workstreams. It is due to be updated in 2025.
- The CAA had just established a Community and Information Feedback Forum, which would be holding its first meeting on 18 November. This was a refreshed version of the Community Discussion Forum, and its aim was to increase the CAA's dialogue with communities and obtain feedback on national policy and issues, rather than to discuss individual airports. ACC Chairs and their noise leads had been invited to join and meetings would be held every six months.
- The sustainability team worked closely with the airspace modernisation team, especially in relation to the 4th strategic objective relating to environmental sustainability. A consultation had just been jointly published with the DfT on proposals for a UK Airspace Design Service (UKADS) and those present were urged to respond.
- In terms of reporting and information, the CAA published the Aviation Environmental Review last year, which had been a high-level overview on noise and emissions. It was intended that this should be developed into a more challenging annual report which highlighted where the aviation industry was doing well and where improvements could be made. Those present were again urged to respond to the current consultation on this.
- A previous CAA consultation had looked at how best to provide information to consumers on the carbon footprint at the time of booking a flight. Responses to this were currently being assessed.
- In terms of noise, the CAA's Aviation Noise Attitudes Survey, which looks at ten UK airports, was ongoing. A peer review was just about to be undertaken, and the findings of the survey would be published in 2026.
- The CAA was also carrying out a study on Noise Action Plans at 8 UK and 2 European airports to determine their effectiveness in dealing with noise issues and to look at whether the guidance was helpful. It would be making recommendations to government in Spring 2025.
- The DfT had requested that the CAA take a greater role in understanding and mitigating the impacts of air quality and, as a start to this Abigail had joined the Heathrow Air Quality Working Group.
- A consultation relating to how potential changes to the levels of greenhouse gas emissions are taken into account in assessing airspace change proposals was expected in Spring next year.
- The CAA had just published CAP3041: Guidance for Airport Engagement and Complaints Handling Around Environmental Sustainability. This had involved working with the DfT and focused on five principles: transparency; effective process; community reach; environmental sustainability; and environmental sustainability literacy baseline.
- In response to questions and comments, the following points were clarified:
    - The CAA anticipated that communities would become increasingly interested in air quality. This issue had historically always been pushed back to local authorities as it was perceived to be related to surface access,

but the CAA recognised that there was an aviation angle and that it should be much more involved. The exact nature of the role it should play was currently being considered.

- There were a number of different targets that had been set in relation to achieving net zero. The CAA worked to the legally binding UK net zero 2050 target, but would continue to challenge the aviation industry which was not decarbonising quickly enough, especially in comparison to other sectors. This gap was expected to widen as the other sectors decarbonised. The lack of availability of lower carbon fuels, such as sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) was a contributory factor.

## 3. SESSION 3 – UKACCs INTERNAL BUSINESS (PRIVATE SESSION)

### 3.1 UKACCs accounts

- It was noted that the financial position was much improved, particularly in comparison to the period coming out of the pandemic. Looking ahead to March 2025 there would be sufficient funds in reserve, with the resilience of the organisation being significantly improved.

**APPROVED:** the accounts for 2023-24.

### 3.2 UKACCs Chair's report and key issues

- The period of recovery and growth seen by the airport since the pandemic was welcomed but this had increased pressure on ACCs with a commensurate growth in the impact felt by local communities.
- UKACCs had continued to engage in a wide range of meetings with the DfT, the CAA, and other aviation bodies as far as its resources allowed. Guido Liguori, East Midlands Chair, had been assisting following the death of Frank Evans in the Secretariat, and had recently agreed to take on the role of UKACCs' Policy Advisor.
- In response to questions regarding the representativeness of UKACCs, a map had been drafted which illustrated the population covered by its membership. Whilst it was far reaching covering more than 48 million people based on estimated population figures for 2021 – 2023 across all those local authorities represented on ACCs. It was recognised that there were gaps in coverage which could be filled should airports such as Bournemouth, Newquay, Norwich, and Cardiff decided to join UKACCs. It was planned to map ACCs against airport activity to demonstrate the number of passengers UKACCs covered as well as the estimated economic output of member airports contributing the UK plc.
- UKACCs continued to push the issue of land use planning and noise with the DfT, who were now appreciating its importance. UKACCs' aim was to encourage a government review of the guidance to give developers, local authorities, and airports a robust steer on building developments near airports. This would give confidence that developments met certain agreed standards that would protect residents from significant noise and the effect of overflight
- The Gatwick ACC had referred to UKACCs the issue of compensation to those affected by airspace change, both in terms of loss of value to their homes and mitigation schemes. It was recognised that this was a national issue and that it was incredibly complex. UKACCs had relayed this to the DfT's ANEG suggesting that it was vital that the DfT provide clear, concise, and accessible guidance. This was followed up with a letter and was also raised at the Airspace Modernisation Stakeholder Engagement Group. Again, UKACCs would continue to champion this at meetings.

*There being no further business, the Day 1 sessions closed at 1650*

## 4. SESSION 4

### 4.1 What's new at the DfT

- A presentation was received from Huw Jones, DfT.
- The changes in the Ministerial team following the general election were outlined, with Rt. Hon Louise Haigh MP having been appointed Secretary of State for Transport [Heidi Alexander MP has subsequently been appointed as Secretary of State for Transport] and Mike Kane, the Aviation Minister.
- A new strategic model for the Department had been developed, which included the DfT Strategic Enablers, the Secretary of State Priorities, and the Government's Missions. The Government's top five priorities for transport were not specifically aviation related but were linked:
  - Improving performance on railways
  - Improving bus services
  - Transforming infrastructure to work for the whole country, tackling regional inequality
  - Delivering greener transport
  - Better integrating transport networks
- In terms of aviation, the team had continued to engage with airports over the peak summer period, at a time of record passenger numbers, change, and innovation.
- The areas of key focus going forward included:
  - Aviation Safety: the UK State Safety Objectives were governance, regulatory framework, and global impact.
  - Aviation Skills: focus would be on the ageing aviation workforce, the difficulties attracting young people to the sector, and the gender inequalities within it.
  - Aviation Accessibility Task and Finish Group: this was to be a new expert group led by Baroness Grey-Thompson. Members would include industry representatives, consumer rights advocates, and disability campaigner Sophie Morgan. Their aim would be to make flying accessible to all at every part of the passenger journey.
- Further policies relating to air quality, surface access and aviation resilience were summarised.
- The requirement for airports to install new security scanners was discussed. The deadline had been extended to June 2025, though some had indicated that they may need a further extension. There was yet no timeframe for the change to the 100ml rule, and passenger messaging for Christmas 2024 will continue to be that passengers should prepare for security with liquids in containers up to 100ml in a 1 litre transparent bag. The liquids and aerosols algorithms had been challenged, but certification had now been agreed and airports were working up new ones.
- In relation to airspace modernisation, which had been a manifesto commitment and remained a priority, the joint consultation on the creation of UKADS was currently open and due to close on 17 December 2024. The Manchester region completed a successful design simulation in summer 2024. In the Western Cluster, Bristol has re-started its programme and ACOG is working on agreeing timelines in this cluster. The Scottish airports are awaiting the outcome of the Stage 3 gateway of the CAP1616 airspace change process.
- SAF and decarbonisation had also been a commitment in the manifesto. The SAF mandate requires that at least 10% of aviation fuel mix used should be SAF by 2030 and 22% by 2040 to come into effect from January 2025.
- The outcome of the night flight regime consultation would be published before the end of 2024.
- The impacts of the latest budget on the aviation sector was discussed. These included a reduction in business rates for some retail, leisure, and hospitality, and an increase in APD of £2.00 per passenger on short haul economy flights, and £3.00 per passenger on larger private and business jets.
- Members comments on the presentation were as follows:

- The significant increase in business rates for airports was of great concern and would result in a reduction in investment in their own infrastructure and the surrounding communities. The example of Birmingham Airport was given, whose business rates next year would be greater than the cost of its staff payroll.
- The increase in APD would impact on the Belfast airports, as passengers already opted to use Dublin, which had no APD. This would in turn affect the connectivity of Northern Ireland.
- Parking at airports was not checked for value for money and this contributed to a nationwide problem with parking on local residential streets. The DfT was working with local authorities on PSPOs, as the ultimate responsibility lay with them. Members were advised of the British Parking Association's (BPA) new initiative for meet and greet parking operators and the new parking forum it had set up for its members. The forum gave the opportunity for ACCs to feed in comments about airport parking issues.

**ACTION**: Heathrow's CISHA to share blogs and any other useful CISHA material related to this issue with the UKACCs Secretariat.

- The Government had yet to take a decision on whether the Airports National Policy Statement was to be reviewed. The Government's current position is that it is supportive of airport expansion, as long as it contributes to economic growth and is compatible with strict environmental standards.
- In response to a question, the DfT confirmed that the Government's response to Climate Change Committee report was awaited though this was due to be published imminently.
- A question was raised regarding any plans to amend the UK's air quality standards to bring them in line with the more stringent ones of the WHO.

**ACTION**: DfT to report back to the UKACCs Secretariat to be shared with members.

**4.2 Government and ACCs**

- The DfT advised that Section 35 of the Civil Aviation Act 1982 has not been updated for several years. The legislation outlines which airports or aerodromes are designated for consultative committees, and the list of airports/aerodromes is spread across several Statutory Instruments. The DfT is therefore undertaking a review. There was no plan to change how airports were designated, but the current lists of airports designated were to be looked at to remove any airports that were no longer active and are not in a position to be reactivated, as well as reviewing the requirements for being on the list of designation without removing those that are already designated. The aim was to create a single list that was more accessible to the public.

**5. SESSIONS 5 & 6 - UKACCs INTERNAL BUSINESS (PRIVATE SESSIONS)**

**5.1 Fit for the Future – What does "Good" look like?**

- Those present took part in round table discussions to explore how ACCs can review their ways of working and membership, harness change and add value for member organisations and their airports. Delegates discussed a range of questions on harnessing change, member participation, meeting optimisation and achieving collective actions/influence. It was a productive session with delegates sharing current practices with each other and consideration of where and how improvements could be made.

**5.2 UKACCs Toolkit for Best Practice**

- To support ACCs in their day-to-day work, delegates considered the outline of a draft toolkit to build on the DfT's Guidelines for Airport Consultative Committees. The intention of the toolkit is to support ACCs and airports in achieving better participation

by ACC members, transparency of the ACC's work, and outcomes from ACC meetings which add value to all those participating and the airport's management.

- All those present agreed that proposed toolkit would be helpful and could help manage public expectations of the ACC's role. Delegates were unanimous that the toolkit needed to reflect at the outset that "a one size fits all" approach is not appropriate for ACCs as well as clearly setting out the critical friend, advisory role of an ACC. It is also important that the toolkit is read alongside the DfT Guidelines.
- Several suggested revisions to the draft were put forward for the UKACCs Secretariat to consider, including a new title for the document. The next iteration of the draft would be presented to the UKACCs Working Group to consider.

**ACTION:** UKACCs Secretariat to arrange Working Group meeting to consider next iteration of the draft Toolkit.

**6. SESSION**

**6.1 UKACCs Indicative Work Programme 2024 -2026**

- UKACCs considered an updated Work Programme for the next two years. UKACCs was interested to learn more about the economic and sustainability implications of the Government's growth agenda to assist ACCs in communicating the benefits and opportunities at the local level. UKACCs also wished to ensure passenger accessibility remained one of UKACCs' key topics of focus. The revised Indicative Work Programme 2024-26 was agreed.

*There being no further business, the Day 2 sessions closed at 1245*

**ITEM 6.1**
**PAPER 3**

# OUR AIRPORTS: 2025 EXPERIENCES & FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES

**Introduction**

1. Many airports across the UK have now returned to pre-pandemic levels of passenger traffic and are actively pursuing further growth and expansion initiatives.

2. The sustained success and growth of airport operations hold significant implications not only for the aviation industry but also for local and regional economies, supply chains, labour markets, and public transport networks. Ensuring a positive passenger experience, both within airport facilities and on journeys to and from airports, remains a key focus for our Airport Consultative Committees (ACCs). Continuous improvements in service quality—supported by evolving staffing arrangements, support services, and the integration of digital, self-service, and AI technologies—are pivotal in this regard.

3. UKACCs aims to develop a UK-wide awareness of shared issues and to collectively consider potential solutions. Before the Annual Meeting, member ACCs were asked to report the main issues encountered at and around their airports during the previous year. Many of these issues are also experienced by other UKACCs members. The common issues include:
    - airport expansion and planning processes.
    - sustainability/environmental issues, particularly noise disturbance and night flights, noise management including noise action planning, planning agreement monitoring, noise complaints handling, air quality, carbon emission and net zero targets.
    - surface access issues including the cost of car parking and drop off zones and parking in residential areas.
    - passenger experience with assisted travel, ground handling and border control.
    - airspace modernisation and the potential impacts and processes.
    - Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) in England.
    - ACC member participation and two way communication to and from the ACC.

4. LGR in England will change the membership of at least ten of the 17 member ACCs in England. The English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill, introduced on July 10, 2025, is currently at the committee stage after passing its second reading in September 2025. This bill seeks to transfer powers from the central government to local areas. Recent developments include committee divisions on October 21, 2025, and proposed amendments from organisations like the Local Government Association and the Royal Town Planning Institute.

5. LGR is not expected to impact Town or Parish Councils at this point. However, initial indications suggest that proposals from local authorities affected by LGR may include the formation of new Town Councils. Members are asked to share their experiences and how they are considering any implications for their ACC during the meeting.

6. With regard to other issues raised in responses, the DfT will give a sector update at the Annual Meeting and its policy development work. ACCs will have the opportunity to discuss concerns with DfT representatives to determine which issues could be brought forward by UKACCs at national forums involving the DfT, CAA, or other related parties after the Annual Meeting.

**Paula Street**
**UKACCs Secretariat**

# ENHANCING PASSENGER ACCESSIBILITY: RECENT PROGRESS

## Introduction

1. With rising demand, aviation faces increased challenges and responsibilities in providing assisted travel and services. This underscores the necessity of continuous investment, innovative solutions, and a fundamental shift in industry mindset. Recent developments have occurred across policy, regulatory oversight, and industry practices. The DFT and the CAA highlight the state of passenger accessibility and mandate improvements. In January 2021, Heathrow Airport published the "Open to All: Improving air travel for passengers who require support".[1]

## Expanding the Definition of Accessibility: Building on Heathrow's "Open to All"

2. "Open to All" provided critical insight into the diversity of consumer needs. Large-scale research captured the views of 11,400 consumers, aimed to fill an organisational knowledge gap by looking beyond traditional metrics. The report is valuable for the analysis and research it produces. However, it is worth noting that Heathrow's Terminal 3 is ranked as needing improvement in the CAA's Airport Accessibility Performance Report 2024/2025 (CAP 3117)[2].

3. Nevertheless, "Open to All" serves as a helpful basis for discussion. A core finding was the need to shift the industry mindset away from solely focusing on the simple categorisation of **Persons with Reduced Mobility (PRMs)**, which relies heavily on outdated International Air Transport Association (IATA) codes. The research found that two-thirds (67%) of recent flyers reported at least one *personal circumstance*—permanent or temporary—that could negatively impact their airport experience. These personal circumstances were grouped into five broad categories: physical, sensory, cognitive (e.g., autism, dyslexia), psychological (e.g., anxiety, stress), and cultural. Notably, the survey found that frequent psychological needs (24%) were almost as prevalent as frequent physical needs (23%) among regular flyers.

4. The report identified three fundamental needs spanning all consumer groups: the need **to trust** (that support is available and navigating the airport will be easy), the need **to choose** (maintaining independence), and the need **to enjoy** (utilising commercial offerings). Since the report's publication, later policy work has reinforced this shift. The DfT's Aviation Accessibility Task and Finish Group (AATFG)[3] emphasised moving away from the outdated terminology, such as "special assistance" and "PRM," and favouring terms like "assisted travel" or "assistance services," aligning with the social model of disability.

## Policy Drivers and Sector Priorities

5. The DfT established AATFG to "help drive improvements for Disabled passengers". It reported on 16 July 2025. AATFG engaged widely, hosting consumer roundtables and working with various organisations. They focused on five key areas for improvement: training, passenger information and communications, non-visible impairments, mobility aids design and handling, and Tailored service and delivery.

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[1] https://ukaccs.org/resources/Heathrow_2023/Heathrow%20-%20Open%20To%20All.pdf
[2] https://www.caa.co.uk/publication/download/25293
[3] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/aviation-accessibility-task-and-finish-group-report/aviation-accessibility-task-and-finish-group-report

6. For the complete recommendations, including those made to the CAA, see Pages 8 to 13 of the report. Key recommendations from AATFG include:
    - **Training:** Mandating baseline disability and accessibility awareness training for all personnel (e.g., as a condition for an airport pass). Training materials should be co-developed with individuals who have lived experience to reflect real-world challenges.
    - **Information:** Airlines and airports should implement the 'One Click' standard to provide easy access to key, standardised accessibility information, including booking details and guidance on the carriage of mobility aids. Additionally, relevant information pertinent to the journey through the airport and onto the aircraft is provided. And, perhaps a defining element, who does what and who is responsible for what.
    - **Non-visible Impairments:** Airlines and airports should develop awareness campaigns to reduce stigma and increase confidence among passengers with non-visible impairments.
    - **Tailored Service:** Airlines and airports need to develop improved means of capturing passenger needs beyond the outdated IATA codes to ensure appropriate and individualised support. AATFG said it was important for passengers who needed assistance to notify airlines and airports as early as possible, with as much notice as possible, to help ensure a tailored service.

7. UKACCs and several members attended a workshop in April of this year. Several points were raised by UKACCs, some of which were incorporated into the final recommendations.

**CAA Accessibility Service Standards Monitoring: Key Outcomes 2024/2025**

8. The CAA's eighth annual Airport Accessibility Performance Report 2024/2025 (CAP 3117) provides an assessment of 28 UK airports against the Quality Standards Framework (CAP 1228), covering performance from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025.

9. Key Outcomes Highlighted in the 2024 Report:
    - **Overall Performance:** The majority of UK airports demonstrated strong performance. Eleven airports were rated 'very good' and fourteen were rated 'good'.
    - **Significant Improvement:** Cardiff and London Gatwick notably improved their performance from 'needs improvement' in the previous year to 'very good' in 2024, demonstrating a significant investment and enhanced data assurance processes.
    - **Areas of Concern:** Three airports were classified as 'needs improvement': London Heathrow, Edinburgh, and Glasgow Prestwick.
        - **London Heathrow** was rated 'needs improvement' due to significant concerns localised at Terminal 3, relating to data discrepancies and instances where arriving passengers waited for unacceptably long periods (sometimes over 45 minutes) for assistance or equipment. However, Heathrow has taken action since the last report, including the installation of priority accessibility security channels in Terminals 2, 3, and 5, with plans for Terminal 4.
        - **Edinburgh** faced operational issues following a contractor change, but implemented recovery measures that led to improved performance later in the year.
        - **Glasgow Prestwick** failed to meet its obligation to consult with disabled groups by not convening its Access Forum during the reporting year. However, it has since appointed a new independent chair and three members, all of whom have lived experiences.
    - **Increasing Demand:** The report notes the continued sharp rise in demand, with 5.5 million passengers requesting assistance in 2024 (1.9% of total passengers), up from 4.6 million in 2023 (1.69%).

**UKACCs Priorities**

10. Members will be aware that the UKACCs' Work Programme 2024-26[4] outlines key objectives for national action. One core priority for UKACCs is to engage with the Government, the CAA, and other national bodies to represent a unified member ACC view on any implications arising from "the need to strengthen national policies and strategies in respect of passenger accessibility, service provision and facilities."

**Questions for Consideration** (For 1 to 3, consider no more than two examples**)**

1. **Challenges and Tailored Service:** Given AATFG's emphasis on moving towards a needs-based and tailored service approach, what are the top two specific challenges your airport faces in effectively capturing and responding to the diverse range of *personal circumstances* (e.g., psychological, cognitive, sensory) of passengers, rather than relying solely on traditional mobility categories?

2. **Innovation and Independence:** Beyond existing regulatory requirements, what effective initiatives or new emerging trends (e.g., technology, infrastructure design improvements, changes in staff training based on lived experience) have been implemented at your airport that have successfully empowered passengers to maintain greater independence during their journey?

3. **Data Robustness and Oversight:** Reflecting the CAA's monitoring findings, particularly concerning data assurance, what steps are being taken within your airport's management structure to ensure robust, real-time auditing and oversight of waiting time metrics and customer satisfaction feedback, especially across different terminal areas or outsourced service providers?

4. **Compensation:** AATFG recommends an improved complaint process but remains silent on compensation. Should there be a mandatory compensation scheme in place if travel services fail to meet the consumer's expectations?

5. What can UKACCs do to help airports and airlines increase their offer of assisted services so that more people are able to access support in light AATFG's suggestion that some passengers may not be providing sufficient notice of their needs?

**Guido Liguori**
**UKACCs Policy Advisor**

[4] https://ukaccs.org/resources/2024_Leeds_Bradford/UKACCs%20Work%20Programme%202024-26.pdf

# VISION FOR ENVIRONMENTAL REPORTING IN AVIATION

## Introduction

1. Aviation offers many benefits, such as connecting people and businesses and supporting worldwide trade and tourism. At the same time, it creates significant environmental issues that both the UK Government and the aviation sector are actively working to tackle. Carefully monitoring environmental performance is essential for measuring progress and helping consumers make informed choices. UKACCs has consistently supported more robust environmental reporting to better define strong environmental performance and make it possible to compare different airports.

2. The CAA has a legal duty to report on the state of environmental protection relating to civil aviation in the UK. The duty also requires the CAA to make recommendations which are intended to improve the level of environmental protection in the future. The CAA published its first UK Aviation Environmental Review (AER) in December 2023[5]. The 2023 AER contained 14 recommendations relating to noise, air quality and climate change.

3. The CAA then consulted on the future development of the AER last Autumn[6]. Its aim is to develop the AER into a comprehensive and robust tool that can be used by Government, industry and other interested stakeholders to inform and drive positive environmental change. The CAA sought feedback on:
    - the overall ambition and aims for the AER; and
    - the nature of environmental data reported within the AER, including how data should be presented.

4. The AER could serve as a valuable tool for holding the aviation sector accountable regarding its environmental impact, ensuring that the effects of government policies are accurately recorded and allowing for a proper evaluation of whether UK policies are sufficient.

5. UKACCs responded to the consultation in December 2024, expressing support for the CAA's proposed ambitions and objectives for the AER. UKACCs welcomed the plan to update data and review the AER's recommendations annually, as this would help all stakeholders monitor changes in environmental performance more effectively. However, UKACCs also raised concerns that collecting data more frequently could place additional reporting demands on airports and emphasised the importance of ensuring that the benefits of annual updates did not create an undue burden for airports.

6. UKACCs also emphasised the importance of making performance monitoring data straightforward, much like the CAA's accessibility reporting, to allow easy comparisons between airports and other sources of environmental impact on communities. Additionally, the AER should be accessible to the general public so that everyone can understand it and participate in discussions about their local airport or the aviation industry as a whole.

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[5] CAP3153 UK Aviation Environmental Review (AER) - https://www.caa.co.uk/publication/download/20970

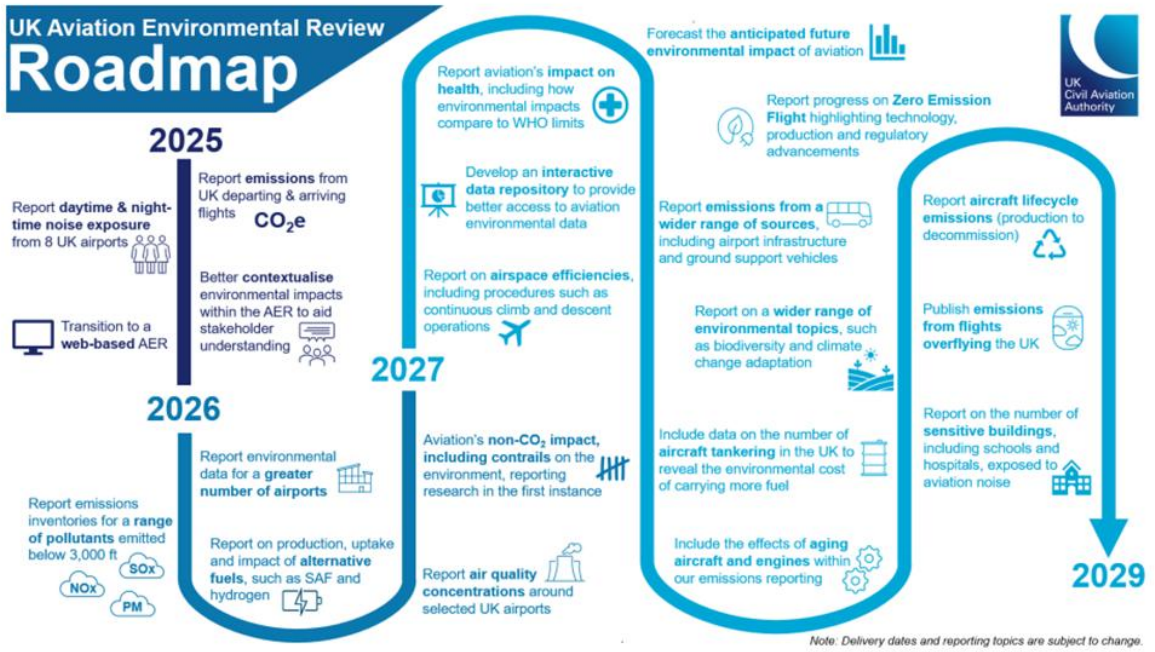
[6] CAP 3039 2024 Consultation on the Future Direction of the UK Aviation Environmental Review https://www.caa.co.uk/publication/download/23067

7. The stakeholder feedback the CAA received from the consultation demonstrated strong support for expanding monitoring capabilities related to climate change, noise, and air quality. There was also considerable endorsement for proposals to examine additional emission sources and incorporate areas previously unaddressed, such as biodiversity.

**UK Aviation Environmental Review Roadmap**

8. In September 2025, the CAA's published its initial Roadmap for the future development of the UK Aviation Environmental Review[7] which provides strategic direction while recognising future uncertainties. To better assess the sector's advancement towards Net Zero and its broader effects on noise and air quality, the CAA is enhancing the frequency, granularity, and reliability of its reporting.

2025 AER Roadmap Infographic




9. The improvements outlined in the roadmap are intended to drive meaningful progress by evaluating the effectiveness of governmental policies, industry measures, and the CAA's own activities in meeting sustainability objectives, while also identifying areas where further policy development is necessary.

10. Over the coming years, the CAA aims to achieve the following:

- Strengthen the evidence base: Utilise the emissions database to accelerate greenhouse gas reporting across the sector, broaden the scope of airport noise analyses, and publish data concerning air quality in the vicinity of airports.

- Refine data granularity: Disaggregate environmental data for more detailed assessments, and provide segmented information on greenhouse gas emissions from flights departing, arriving, or transiting the UK.

- Improve transparency: Establish a dedicated AER section on the CAA's website to facilitate a more interactive user experience and present environmental data in an accessible format.

[7] CAP 3153 Roadmap: UK Aviation Environmental Review - https://www.caa.co.uk/publication/download/25903

11. The CAA also intends to include additional environmental reporting topics in future updates of the AER to provide a more holistic understanding of the sector's environmental performance. Some of the additional topics it is considering reporting on in the future include:

    - Biodiversity to provide a greater understanding of the aviation sector's impact upon flora and fauna; and
    - Climate change adaptation to provide an overview of the risks posed by climate change on the aviation sector and the adaptation measures required to mitigate these risks.

12. The CAA has acknowledged that additional reporting topics were suggested by stakeholders in the 2024 consultation, such as reporting on the aviation sector's impact upon water quality, tranquillity, contaminated land and waste management. These additional reporting topics, amongst others, will continue to be considered for future updates of the AER.

13. The next version of the AER is due to be published at the end of the year.

**Points for consideration**

- What specific points should UKACCs focus on in discussions at national forums to enhance transparency and accessibility of aviation environmental data, particularly in respect of the development of a dedicated AER section on the CAA's website?

- Which additional environmental reporting topics should be prioritised for inclusion in future updates of the AER to ensure comprehensive environmental performance reporting?

- Does your airport have concerns about the potential impact of changes needed in respect of climate adaptation? What should UKACCs' focus include as the CAA prepares to take forward this project?

**Paula Street**
**UKACCs Secretariat**