

LGA Special Interest Group Annual Report to LGA Board

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

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Membership: 01/04/2019 - 31/03/2020

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

SASIG represents approximately 11 million people which equates to 20% of the national population and 17% of the UK overall. 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 & ICCAN

- SASIG is now recognised as a 'strategic stakeholder' by DfT and its views are actively sought during consultations.
- Evidence of this is that in late 2018 the SASIG Chairman was invited to sit on the board of the DfT's new Airspace Strategy Board chaired by the Aviation Minister. The last meeting was held in July 2019 which our Chairman attended. The next meeting was scheduled for February 2020 but was postponed.
- SASIG regularly attends the DfT's Airspace & Noise Engagement Group (ANEG). The last two meetings were held in July 2019 and January 2020 with the next meeting scheduled to be held in July 2020.
- The CAA also continues to seek SASIG's views on its programme of work, particularly now on how decisions on airspace change should be made.
- SASIG regularly attended the CAA's Community Discussion Forum (CDF). The last meeting was held in July 2018 followed by a break due to repatriation operations following the collapse of Thomas Cook. The CDF is now set to resume and the date of the next meeting is likely to be in June 2020 which SASIG will attend.
- SASIG continues to be a member of the DEFRA Noise and Nuisance Team external stakeholder panel and attended their last meeting in October 2017. Date of the next meeting is still yet to be advised.
- SASIG regularly meets with the current Aviation Minister to highlight its work and promote future mutual co-operation with Government officials. SASIG was due to meet with then Minister Paul Maynard in March 2020 but a Cabinet reshuffle placed Kelly Tolhurst in that role. SASIG were due to meet her in May 2020 but this has been postponed until a later date.
- April 2019 saw our Chairman invited to be a guest speaker at the Westminster Forum Keynote Seminar on Priorities for the UK Aviation Strategy.
- In August 2019 SASIG was invited to the Heathrow Community Noise Forum discussing measuring noise annoyance and the Survey of Noise Attitudes (SoNA).

Engagement with Other Stakeholders

SASIG's Secretariat has met with, and is continuing to liaise with, other prominent stakeholder groups including the AOA, LEP Network, COSLA, BEIS, Key Cities, Sustainable Aviation, Aviation Environment Federation, National Planning Inspectorate and Gatwick Airport Conservation Campaign.

Throughout the past year SASIG has liaised regularly with the Independent Commission on Civil Aviation Noise (ICCAN) including hosting an ICCAN workshop for members in February 2020.

Conferences and Public Fora

The SASIG Chairman was a guest speaker at the Westminster Energy, Environment & Transport Forum Keynote Seminar: Priorities for the UK Aviation Strategy in April 2019. SASIG also celebrated its 20th year of existence with a reception in the House of Commons on 10 July. It was well attended by members, industry stakeholders and MPs.

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, London and South East 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.

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.
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 Chairman'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 Chairman and up to three Vice Chairmen 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.

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 are listed below and 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.

Annual Membership Subscriptions for 2019/20

Districts around regional airports	£930
Districts distant from London airports	£930
Districts close to London airports	£1,860
Unitaries around regional airports	£1,860
Unitaries distant from London airports	£1,860
Unitaries close to London airports	£3,710
Counties around regional airports	£1,860
Counties distant from London airports	£1,860
Counties close to London airports	£5,700

SASIG Membership Meetings

Dates held – 10th July & 7th November 2019 and 26th February 2020

SASIG held its usual 3 meetings across the year for the full membership - Councillors & officers – with much of the discussion continuing to revolve around the redesign of UK airspace, the development of a new UK aviation strategy, the Heathrow 3rd runway and other major airport growth schemes being planned at Gatwick, Luton, Stansted, Birmingham etc. The September letter from Committee on Climate Change to Secretary of State also an important topic of discussion. Agendas at these meetings focused on SASIG's involvement in, and response to, the many consultations related to these issues. SASIG made submissions in April 2019 on the 2050 strategy and in June 2019 on airspace modernization and the Heathrow 3rd Runway DCO.

Other items covered at the member meetings include; lobbying to support SASIG responses, the Groups' research programme, plans to raise SASIG's profile and membership, the complexities and stages of a DCO process and how the Election and Cabinet reshuffle could affect member authorities. Guest speaker at the July meeting was Kathy Nothstine, Lead, Future Cities, NESTA. Sam Hartley, Secretary to the Head Commissioner, ICCAN was the guest speaker in November and in February this year we were pleased to welcome as our guest speaker, Cait Hewitt, Deputy Director of the NGO the AEF.

SASIG Chairman's Advisory Group (CAG)

Dates held – 13th June & 1st October 2019 and 30th January 2020

The SASIG Chairman's Advisory Group (CAG) meets on a regular cycle, 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.

SASIG Issue Specific Workshops

In 2016-17 three Technical Working Groups (TWGs) were established to look at key themes of interest to SASIG's membership: Surface Access; Environment, Planning and Airspace; and Airports, Cities and Economic Growth. Their function was to develop policy positions for presentation to the SASIG membership for approval and inclusion in SASIG led consultation responses. During the Aviation Strategy consultations (i.e. since April 2018), the TWGs were suspended and replaced by issue specific Working Groups reflecting key areas of policy likely to be included in the final Aviation White Paper. On 10th July 2019 the workshop topic was Aviation and Climate Change with guest speaker Dr Andy Jefferson, Programme Director for Sustainable Aviation and Jennifer Raynor (Head of Aviation and Climate Change at DfT) in attendance. The November 2019 workshop focused on Airport Land Use Planning and Major Development Applications. Our guest speaker at this workshop was Dr. Pauleen Lane, Group Manager National Infrastructure and Senior Examining Inspector at the Planning Inspectorate. Finally, in February 2020 the workshop was guest hosted by ICCAN and focused once more on Land Use Planning in relation to aviation noise. Representatives from DfT, CAA, MHCLG and DEFRA joined us along with colleagues from HSPG, Transport Scotland and the AOA.