

DRONES IAG – BEIS Conference Centre
12th September - Minutes

Attendees:

Chair: Iain Gray
Graham Browne, ARPAS
James Dunthorne, ARPAS
Yoge Patel, Blue Bear
Philip Tarry, Halo Drones
Simon Ritterband, Moonrock Insurance
Kathy Nothstine, Nesta
Rikke Carmichael, Network Rail
Craig Roberts, PwC
Nick Rogers, Sky Futures

Mark Westwood, Transport Systems
Catapult
Alfred Jackson, Transport Systems Catapult
Andrew Tyrer, Innovate UK
Chris Matthews, DfT
Relve Spread, BEIS

Apologies:

Stuart McGlynn, Cyberhawk
Brian Hampson, ADS
Geoff Pugh, Consortiq
James Bell, DfT
Nikos Pronios, Innovate UK

Minutes of the Meeting

1. Intros

- 1.1. Iain Gray welcomed new members to the group: Rikke Carmichael, Network Rail; Craig Roberts, PwC (joining BEIS); Philip Tarry, Halo Drones; Yoge Patel, Blue Bear.
- 1.2. The previous meeting's minutes were adopted as a true and accurate record.
- 1.3. Actions were revisited. It was noted that the Standards document that had been circulated had received some comments which needed to be addressed.

2. BEIS/RAS Update

- 2.1. Relve Spread updated the group on the Robotics Strategy outlining the three key themes (co-ordination, creating demand, skills) and on progress. The paper had received positive comments from the stakeholder group and was being submitted to the director for review and comments. The intention was to submit to the minister the following week. Next steps, depending on outcome, would be for the strategy to be publicly announced and the Robotics Growth Partnership and RAS Core to be set up.

3. Drones Roadmapping

- 3.1. Mark Westwood presented the outcomes of the second roadmapping workshop. This focused on what actions could be taken from the previous workshop's discussions and identified three key areas to explore and develop:
 - Future Safety Case methodology – with a focus on access and scalability.
 - Development of the Airspace - it was noted that UTM was not featured but as a result of substantial work in this area already happening across industry.
 - Public Perception – noted there was a good existing body of work to draw on from NESTA.

- 3.2. There was some further broad discussion around BVLOS with the need for it to be happening routinely in order to unlock the commercial benefits, while others believed the regulations were the key factor to building the sector, noting e.g. construction sites will operate drones but regulation does not currently exist for them (suggested this could be picked up by the OSC working group). It was also noted that focus should stay bigger picture
- 3.3. It was recommended three working groups should be formed around these, to be led by the TSC. Groups should be constituted by individuals already doing some work in these areas with each to return deliverables within three months (i.e. end of November).
- 3.4. TSC will disseminate roadmap findings through available channels – e.g. ARPAS, Catapult, IAG members’ social media, and it was suggested that all members should disseminate the roadmap via their social medial channels.
- 3.5. The IAG role will be to publish a white paper by the end of November. It was also noted that there needs to be a big comms drive around this, and should target broader stakeholders such as landowners/farmers.
- 3.6. Funding requirement was suggested to be around £5M - £10M. Andrew Tyrer spoke about his UKRI Robotics and AI in Extreme Environments programme, an Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund which runs until 2021. Funding is committed but the funding requirement here will be noted.

4. Updates

- 4.1. **DfT:** Chris Matthews updated:
 - Consultation responses – received over 4,000 responses. Going through these and analysing
 - Operator Registration system – currently out to tender, working with CAA
 - Refreshing Pathfinders programme – working with BEIS and TSC to revive the programme and identify projects to pursue.
 - Working with TSC to better understand UTM
- 4.2. **CAA.** Angela Lynch updated on the CAA’s application to the Regulatory Pioneers Fund. The focus is to update how they facilitate innovation:
 - An innovation gateway - to allow anyone to submit ideas for the aviation sector and receive a quick answer in a simplified manner
 - A regulatory lab – to bring groups together to set out a roadmap, develop test cases and consider potential future regulatory models; and
 - A regulatory sandbox – to give initial guidance to innovators on the development and potential eventual approval of ideas. It is hoped that this work will be done in coordination with key stakeholders already active in developing innovation (e.g. NESTA, TSC). A decision is expected by the end of September.
- 4.3. **NESTA** Kathy Nothstine gave an update on the Flying High programme, providing context around the first phase. Moving into the next phase and they are further developing work around use cases, airspace, regulation, and testbeds. She also provided some brief context around AJC. Funding gap noted in terms of timeline and certainty. The Chair put it to the group that everyone should help NESTA with funding where possible.

5. Standards

- 5.1 The final standards document was circulated to the group over the summer. There had been some comments returned and some discussions had been had offline. **Action:** Chair to review the document taking into account the comments and respond accordingly. The document would also need to be published.

6. Comms

- 6.1 ARPAS has created a DIAG webpage on their website where previous minutes have been stored. It was suggested that this should be brought up front. The rest of the group was also encouraged to promote the IAG through their social media comms as previously discussed. It was also discussed that the KTN had previously declined to work with the IAG on this, but this will be revisited. **Action:** Andrew Tyrer to engage with IAG and KTN.

7. ATI presentation

- 7.1 Simon Weeks from the ATI spoke to the group via Webext on the Amy Johnson Challenge and the work of the AGP/ATI. Slides are attached.

Action: slides to be circulated to the group

Action: IAG members to meet with Simon at ATI to brief further on the work of the group.