Drone Industry Action Group

Note of 1 December 2016 meeting

Attendees

Iain Gray, Cranfield University (Chair)
Gary Clayton, UAVS
Richard Deakin, AirMap
Phil Binks, NATS
Jeegar Kakkad, ADS
Sue Wolfe, ARPAS-UK
Owen McAree, University of Sheffield
Richard Parker, Altitude Angel
Paul Rigby, ConsortiQ
Simon Ritterband, Moonrock Insurance
Andrew Heaton, UCLan

Officials from DFT, BEIS and CAA

Apologies: Chris Blackford, Sky Futures,
Wendy Welsh, Network Rail
Joel Grundy, Thales
Malcolm Connelly, CyberHawk
Simon Dale, First Person View

1. **Introduction from the Chair**

The Chair welcomed the Group to its second meeting and noted the addition of new attendees, representing the retail and academic aspects of the drone market; as had been agreed at the last meeting. He reiterated that membership of the group was flexible, and that it could evolve as the group continued to inform, support and shape the business environment and regulatory landscape and the challenges and opportunities that presented.

Revisiting actions from the previous meeting, he thanked members for undertaking to forward to the Department for Transport (DfT) positive media reports of drone usage, particularly those in public sector applications. He was aware that some members had proactively approached media sources to ensure factual reporting which he recognised as important if the sector was to grow and enjoy widespread public acceptance. He urged members to continue to feed stories into DfT.

ACTION: All to continue share positive media stories or opportunities with DfT

2. **HMG approach and group discussion**

The DfT updated the Group on their current work on the proposed consultation and public engagement process. A consultation will be published soon, aiming to inform policy and regulatory proposals to support the growth of the UK's emerging drone market whilst addressing safety, security and privacy concerns. The Chair welcomed this and asked members and their networks to take the opportunity to feed in actively. DfT was developing a Comms Strategy and invited IAG members to contribute. ***[NOTE: Consultation launched 21 December)***

ACTION: Members to engage with the consultation process and comms initiatives.

3. **Unmanned Traffic Management System**

Approach: DfT informed the group of the Government's ambition for the UK to lead the world in adoption of UAS for commercial purposes. If this is to be successful then rules, regulations and processes must be in place to allow UAS operations to be conducted safely, securely and with consideration for privacy concerns. A key enabling element of this will be a traffic management system which allows UAS to operate safely in unrestricted airspace, alongside manned aviation. The current aim is for UTM systems to begin to be rolled out and in use by operators in 2019.

To support the vision and development of a UTM system, DfT is working with a group of experts from industry and public sector organisations. These include CAA, NATS, Ofcom, Thales, Transport Systems Catapult, Satellite Applications Catapult, Inmarsat, Aerospace Technology Institute.

The group discussed in high level terms some of the important characteristics a UTM should have:

- Geographical and regulatory information: A service provided by Government and public sector bodies which will be maintained and updated by them as necessary.
- Effective Operation: Commercial, licenced UTM providers will then use this information to provide a traffic management service for UAS operators, helping operators to meet the requirements of regulation.
- Effective Integration: Any UTM system would have to complement existing architecture for General Aviation and overcome risks posed by criminal activity and nuisance.
- Registration: Commercial operators must be registered and must use a UTM service as a condition of their operation.
- Resilience: Future proofing against new technologies and integration of unmanned systems operating in other transportation modes (e.g. road and rail) has also been considered.

DfT said they intend to draft a UTM green paper in the New Year and invited industry engagement. The group discussed the best mechanism for this engagement and agreed the Chair would join the partner group to provide a link to the IAG for industry engagement for the future of the project.

ACTION: All to send further comments to Iain Gray on UTM.

DfT envisages several work streams commencing in 2017, starting with a process of engagement with industry, and commitment to share plans and developments with the Group as work progresses. The Group discussed the need to ensure commonality with wider international systems such as the European Single Skies project, and the GUTMA UTM standards system currently being developed. The CAA cautioned that the development of a fully functioning UTM would take some time.

4. Standards

There a number of technical hurdles that will have to be overcome in order to achieve BVLOS. The Group highlighted that in many areas, industry was best placed to articulate and develop solutions to these. Accordingly, the Group discussed the potential to establish industry-led standards in three areas. These standards will help ensure safety and security, assuage public concerns, and in the long run establish the conditions for economic growth and widespread drone use:

- **The CAA permissions process** – The Group examined the potential to develop technological standards to minimise the time taken for 'proof of concept' permission to be given, including

the possibility of a peer review model in which basic 'universal' competency standards set by the CAA could then be certified by a third party.

- **Pilot qualification** – The Group discussed the potential to develop 'basic and broad' pilot competency standards which would satisfy a wide range of operation. These standards would build public confidence in the industry and ensure individuals operated responsibly and reduce the risk associated with each flight – of key importance to the insurance sector.
- **Drone purchase and operation** – The Group noted the long term need to educate the public and future operators on drone usage and the significant potential to do this at point of sale. This would require a partnership with vendors, online retailers and manufacturers of drones and the Group agreed to revisit this item at a later meeting.

ACTION: A subcommittee to draw together a proposal for DfT, in each of the above areas to be discussed at future meetings. NB. membership of this subcommittee to be agreed.

5. **AOB – CAA comms strategy**

The CAA presented their latest communications campaign on drone safety. The campaign, primarily hosted on the dronesafe.uk website, had been very well received by the media and public. The CAA had also published a leaflet that informed potential and existing users of the need to abide by technical regulations, such as flying within 400ft. The 400ft Britain campaign was engaging people and capturing the photographic potential of drones. The dronesafe.uk site also publishes an audience insight report of consumer drone use.

NATS mentioned its forthcoming Drone Assist app, in collaboration with Altitude Angel. The app will assist drone operators in ensuring safe flying, presenting users with an interactive map of airspace used by commercial air traffic, as well as ground hazards that may pose safety, security or privacy risks when operating a drone [**subsequently launched 2 December**]

6. **Close and next meeting**

The next meeting of the IAG will be held early in 2017, dates TBC to align with the public consultation and enable IAG members to clarify any issues on that process.