

Meeting of 14 December 2021

Dear all,

Thanks to all who joined the Drone Industry Action Group earlier this week. I've summarised key points below + request for input! See also a request below from CAA for input before Christmas (highlighted at the end).

I shall be working Mon-Tues next week if you want to get hold of me and back in on the 4th Jan to pick up the momentum again.

Thank you from Iain and me again all for your input this year and wishing you a festive, restful and healthy break!

Gordon

Meeting note: Drone Industry Action Group, 14 December 2021

BEIS presented an outline of the proposed joint (DIAG/ government) ambition statement on commercial drones. This would set a longer term vision and focus on highlighting current use cases, near-term adoption and the regulatory and technology challenges to enabling longer term opportunities. BEIS also reported on recent workshops with end users that found drones are safer, cheaper, faster and lower emission than traditional approaches, but integration into digital change management programmes in large organisations was challenging. Front-line users seek new shared standards for drone operations, cheaper and better technology (smaller, weatherproof, with better image sensors, battery life and data handling) and clearer drone operator skills or qualifications. Participants in public and private sector were keen to collaborate and develop new ways of working.

Action: BEIS asked for DIAG input of:

- Sector successes: Business growth, sector uptake and investment; Technology innovation, research collaborations
- How to best bring end users and drone cos together to tackle adoption , including any stories of best practice
- Where the UK is leading new drone capabilities or technologies sector; showcasing sector dynamism in innovation and entrepreneurship

PwC presented the emerging findings from their revised work on the impact of drones on the UK economy. By 2030, they now estimated that adopting drones could increase UK GDP by up to £48Bn and reduce carbon by 2.3M tons, compared to a baseline scenario where drones are not adopted. *They noted that these are draft figures only and subject to change.* Key challenges to overcome were Perception, (manner of) Drone Implementation, Technology, Regulation and Skills. The report will feature 10-15 case studies with UK entities and PwC

and BEIS both noted that they expect this to be a highly impactful section of the report. PwC and BEIS hope to circulate a draft report early in the new year.

In discussion the following points were made:

- Government should consider combining the ambition statement launch with Future Flight announcements. It should also consider how to amplify key messages, insights and case study examples eg through social media and video content
- The statement should include key recommendations of the Regulatory Horizons Council that we endorse, and aim to build on and respond to these.
- Integration of UAS and CUAS is important as UAV safety needs UTM, Remote ID and Detect/Track sensors. But CUAS discussions were more focused on security than commercial drone development.
- Government procurement offers a real opportunity to drive uptake and support capability emerging from Future Flight Phase 2. Examples included healthcare with NHS, Network Rail given their recent [BVLOS success](#) and the Royal Navy's current drone [heavy lift challenge](#) and recent [MOD heavy lift awards](#)
- Recent workshops showed a clear appetite among end users to collaborate – we should work with them to develop operating handbooks for drone adoption and to maximise their value in, for example, critical national infrastructure, healthcare and emergency services
- The drone insurance market needs to evolve with new autonomous operations emerging. Flock had recently withdrawn from the market
- A focus on drone skills was welcomed: Australia, India and UAE had seen government support for drone skills initiatives
- Jim Scanlan would welcome others with a view on the integrated systems engineering aspects of drones to contact him.

And a plea from the CAA to RSVP to their [call for insights](#) on UTM strategy by 24th December. Introductory information and links here:

- www.caa.co.uk/cap2292
- <https://www.linkedin.com/posts/activity-6873611088366325760-xFM1>

Apologies if you have received this request from multiple avenues.



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