

Airports Commission Senior Delivery Group

Delivery Report #1

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Heathrow 

BRITISH AIRWAYS



Gatwick

easyJet

NATS



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Table of Contents

Foreword.....	3
1. Membership and function of the Senior Delivery Group.....	4
2. Measures in scope	5
2.1 Operating to schedule.....	5
2.2 Tactical responses to traffic overloads	5
2.3 Investments in the route infrastructure	5
3. Benefits, timelines and community impacts	7
4. Delivery plan and interdependencies.....	11
5. Conclusion	13
6. Glossary	15

Foreword

The Government set up the Airports Commission to examine the need for additional UK airport capacity and to recommend how this can be met in the short, medium and long term. The Airports Commission published an interim report in December 2013 that includes recommendations to improve the use of existing runways and airspace in south-east England as part of an 'optimisation strategy'.

The Secretary of State for Transport asked the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) to lead a Senior Delivery Group (SDG) of board level representatives from key industry players to develop and drive forward the optimisation strategy. The SDG agreed its terms of reference at the first meeting in March 2014. The second meeting in May 2014 concentrated on the measures included in the optimisation strategy and the activities needed to deliver them.

There is a strong consensus among SDG members that a set of short and medium term optimisation measures should be progressed as a priority because of their potential to improve the operational efficiency of the airspace system, and at the same time offer benefits to local communities. The optimisation strategy will be shaped by economic, political, environmental, regulatory, and technical considerations. It's the SDG's ambition to work within the bounds of these considerations to maximise the performance improvements that can be delivered in the next 2 to 5 years, in advance of any decision on a long term solution for additional capacity, which is a matter still being examined by the Airports Commission.

The SDG is overseeing the delivery of an ambitious set of measures concentrating on improvements to the airspace system. The current system was developed over forty years ago. Since then, the demand for aviation has increased one hundred fold.

The technologies now common in modern aircraft, airport operations and air traffic management create the potential to optimise the system. The measures overseen by the SDG are the cornerstone of the UK's Future Airspace Strategy (FAS), which is about the need to coordinate the implementation of new technologies and operating procedures across the UK. The SDG's optimisation strategy features three sets of measures:

1. Operating to schedule
2. Tactical responses to traffic overloads
3. Investments in the route infrastructure

The SDG will oversee the deployment of the measures and initiate work to track the benefits and community impacts in order to strike the balance between operational and environmental improvements.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank my fellow group members for their commitment to this important initiative. As Chair of the SDG, I'm encouraged by the start we have made and the scope of the optimisation strategy described in our first delivery report. Successful deployment of the optimisation strategy will require significant industry collaboration and Government support to tackle the challenges that have prevented changes being made in the past.

I look forward to setting out the progress made by the time our second report is published at the end of 2014.



Andrew Haines, Chair of the Airports Commission Senior Delivery Group.

1. Membership and function of the Senior Delivery Group

The SDG is made up of leaders from the key organisations involved in optimising current runway and airspace capacity in south-east England. Although the membership of the SDG may evolve, for the first phase of delivery it is envisaged that a small group of key stakeholders will be able to prioritise activities and resolve issues most effectively. At its inception the SDG is comprised of:

- Andrew Haines (Chair) – Chief Executive, Civil Aviation Authority
- Mark Swan – Director of Safety and Airspace Regulation, Civil Aviation Authority
- Patricia Hayes – Director General Civil Aviation, Department for Transport
- Martin Rolfe – Managing Director Operations, NATS En-route Limited
- Normand Boivin – Chief Operating Officer, Heathrow Airport Limited (HAL)
- Stewart Wingate – Chief Executive, Gatwick Airport Limited (GAL)
- Gary Copeland – Managing Director Operations, British Airways (IAG)
- Warwick Brady – Chief Operations Officer, easyJet
- Air Vice Marshall Edward Stringer – Assistant Chief of the Air Staff, MoD

The SDG's primary function is to bring executive level, cross-industry oversight to the delivery of optimisation measures. Where implementation plans are in place the SDG's function will be to establish that the plans are expeditious, key milestones are on track and the risks to delivery are effectively managed. Where measures are conceptual or under definition, the SDG's function will be to initiate the activity needed to bring viable plans to the point of deployment as quickly as possible. In both cases the SDG will encourage the gathering of evidence to help strike the

right balance between operational benefits and the impact on local communities affected by aircraft noise.

The SDG recognises that it must work within the established framework for any consultation, validation and approval activities required to implement the measures within its scope. Many of the measures will require regulatory approval prior to implementation to ensure they are deployed safely and efficiently. Some measures will undoubtedly require the need to secure Government approval if they represent a significant change to existing operational characteristics. The SDG will also help to inform the Government on the likely impact that each package of measures could have on capacity optimisation and aircraft noise, in addition to other evidence, including that arising from broader engagement or consultation. Such decisions will be made in the context of the final Airports Commission Recommendations due in the summer of 2015.

The SDG will meet four times a year to agree the measures to take forward, resolve issues and allocate actions accordingly. Progress against key milestones for each measure will be tracked at the meetings. The SDG's secretariat, provided by the CAA, will work with the group's members and external stakeholders, including the existing FAS deployment groups, to drive delivery.

In addition to the creation of the SDG, the CAA will continue to play a leading role in the wider Future Airspace Strategy through the FAS Deployment Steering Group (FAS-DSG). NATS co-chair the FAS-DSG alongside the CAA. The group is supported by a range of industry led working-groups and the FAS Policy and Regulatory Programme Board. The FAS-DSG will report to the SDG every three months on the progress of the FAS projects of relevance to the optimisation strategy.

2. Measures in scope

The optimisation measures considered by the SDG are based on the recommendations included in the Commission's interim report. The SDG has assessed the recommendations based on their potential to deliver benefits and their impact on local communities affected by aircraft noise. A prioritised set of measures have been grouped into three packages that form the initial scope of the SDG's optimisation strategy and delivery plan. The packages are:

1. Operating to schedule
2. Tactical responses to traffic overloads
3. Investments in the route infrastructure

The focus of each package and the measures included are described below and the impacts are considered further in section 3.

2.1 Operating to schedule

Under this package the SDG will consider the deployment of measures to smooth the flow of traffic and improve punctuality. Heathrow and Gatwick operate at close to maximum capacity and are often subject to congestion, which results in delays. In today's system queues are managed on a first come, first served basis, increasing the impact of delays and limiting the airports' ability to operate to schedule.

The SDG will drive the introduction of electronic support tools and new operating procedures to better sequence the flow of traffic, presenting flights in an optimal order for take-off and landing. The measures are expected to reduce the impact of congestion and require airlines to evolve their operations to accommodate new ways of working.

The measures in scope under package #1 are:

- a. **Airport Collaborative Decision Making** systems to link up information about the aircraft turnaround phase and optimise runway capacity.

- b. **Real-time Departure Planning Information** to optimise airspace capacity.
- c. **Queue Management** systems to sequence inbound and outbound traffic flows.
- d. **Time-Based Separations** to maintain arrival rates in strong headwinds.

2.2 Tactical responses to traffic overloads

Under this package the SDG will consider the impacts of introducing more flexible, temporary measures to reduce the severity of delays as they build up. Tactical measures are relatively quick to initiate but have limited potential to improve performance in the long term. Over the medium-term some measures included in package #1 – operating to schedule – may be deployed to resolve the same issues in a more comprehensive way. As part of package #2, the SDG will consider the Airports Commission's recommendation to increase the flexibility of triggers for Tactically Enhanced Arrival Measures (TEAM) at Heathrow. TEAM refers to operating arrivals on the designated departure runway tactically to manage surges in demand and the build-up of delays. Any decision on TEAM will be taken alongside the Commission's final report in 2015.

2.3 Investments in the route infrastructure

Under this package the SDG will monitor the implementation of new arrival and departure routes for Heathrow and Gatwick, designed to Performance-Based Navigation (PBN) standards. The current route structure is not effective at separating arrival and departure flows onto dedicated routes for the individual airports. Managing the interaction between traffic flows increases the workload on pilots and controllers, interrupts continuous climbs and reduces airspace capacity.