




**MINUTES OF ACP-2021-057 ASSESSMENT MEETING
(CONCERNING SKYFARER NHS DRONE DELIVERY TRIALS, COVENTRY)
HELD ONLINE ON 9 SEPTEMBER 2021 AT 2.30PM**

Present	Appointment	Representing
[REDACTED]	Airspace Regulator (first-half Case Officer)	CAA
	(second-half Case Officer)	CAA
	Principal Airspace Regulator	CAA
	RPAS Inspector	CAA
	CEO	Skyfarer
	Systems Engineer	Skyfarer
	Remote Pilot & Compliance Engineer	Skyfarer
Consultant/TDA Application Support	Across Safety	

	Action
<p>Item 1 – Introduction</p> <p>The case officer opened the assessment meeting reading the opening statement as below:</p> <p><i>‘The CAA has received a Statement of need, presentation and agenda in advance of this Assessment Meeting and can confirm that the documents are required to be published together with the minutes of this meeting on the airspace change portal.</i></p> <p><i>The purpose of the Assessment Meeting as set out CAP1616 is for the Change Sponsor to present and discuss their Statement of Need, provide information on how it intends to fulfil the requirements of the airspace change process and present its provisional timescales. Lastly, the sponsor is required to provide information on how it intends to meet the engagement requirements of the process.’</i></p> <p>All participants introduced themselves and the Airspace Regulator invited the sponsor to set out the Statement of Need.</p>	
<p>Item 2 – Statement of Need</p> <p>A slide pack of information was presented by the CEO of Skyfarer (as the sponsor) to set out the application and Statement of Need.</p> <p>As part of the deliberations, the following key points were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skyfarer Ltd was a UK-based Unmanned Aircraft (UA) operator leading the UKRI sponsored project 84502 to ‘enable drone powered medical logistics in the UK’. The project aimed to progress the operational capability of drone technology into a logistical use case specifically for medical delivery in association with the NHS. • The application was a modified update of a previous unsuccessful application and shared the same Statement of Need. • The potential benefits of conducting medical deliveries by drone included reductions in transport times, road congestion and CO₂ emissions. • The planned trials required Beyond Visual Line of Sight (BVLOS) drone operations along routes connecting Coventry University Hospital and Rugby Hospital and would simulate ‘hub & spoke’ operations. • The details of the 33kg/3.5m wingspan drone and other specifications were outlined. 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skyfarer had been working closely with NHS Blood & Transplant, O2 Telefonica, Altitude Angel, and Phoenix Wings to optimise logistical and distribution systems for pathology samples. The planned trials required Beyond Visual Line of Sight (BVLOS) drone operations between routes that connected Coventry University Hospital and Rugby Hospital. • The staging areas between the hospitals had been modified (bringing it further north) since the first application to take into account feedback from the last stakeholders' engagement exercise. The operating areas were outlined on a map setting out the three routes. • The trials would take place over a 90-day period commencing June 2022. • It was confirmed that the flight trial was for a temporary airspace change and not an airspace trial. 	
<p>Item 3 – Issues or Opportunities Arising from the Proposed Change</p> <p>The CEO of Skyfarer highlighted the following key issues and opportunities arising from the proposed change:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitated flight trials of time-limited medical supplies to improve NHS deliveries. • Improved delivery times for blood and organ transplants. • Reduced CO₂ and road traffic. <p>The proposed change also involved the following environmental benefits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zero emissions, as the drone was electric powered. • Low noise levels (with vertical take-off and landings and fixed wing modes) operating largely over rural areas. On take-off/landing would be on par with an average quad copter, and in fixed-wing mode would be a lower-than-average quad copter. 	
<p>Item 4 – Options to Exploit Opportunities or Address Issues Identified</p> <p>The following three key aspects of the submission were considered:</p> <p>i. TDA Policy Statement The Airspace Regulator summarised the process, timescales, and how the application would progress through the stages if successful. The final submission would end with stage five and the CAA having 28 days to finalise the assessment. The final stage (after gateway) would conclude with the implementation stage which would require the need for the monitoring and evaluation of complaints and feedback.</p> <p>ii. Stakeholder Engagement The Principal Airspace Regulator set out the stakeholder engagement process and highlighted the latest list of relevant organisations and stakeholders who should be contacted as part of the process such as MOD, DAATM, Airspace for All and General Aviation Alliance.</p> <p>The CAA highlighted that the submission should include how many activations were planned over set periods of time to alert stakeholders, such as emergency services, public utilities, Air Ambulance, National Grid, Western Power, and Network Rail. The Principal Airspace Regulator would forward the NATMAC contact details of relevant stakeholders to the engage with.</p> <p>If proposed operations could alter traffic operations below 7,000 feet there was an additional requirement to engage with community stakeholders: additional</p>	

<p>guidance was also available from the CAA if this was the case. Engagement evidence (including complaints and clear audit trails) would be required as part of the applicant's submission for the stage 5 process.</p> <p>It was also suggested that documentation generated by the previous ACP engagement, and the fact that the drone technology had been used in other UK trials, should be outlined in the new application.</p> <p>It was highlighted that Coventry Airport had refused to participate in the previous ACP formal stakeholder engagement exercise, and there were informal indications that a similar approach would be adopted for the revised application. It was acknowledged that Coventry Airport was a key stakeholder and the CAA agreed to consider the matter further with a view to providing additional guidance on this matter.</p> <p>The applicant agreed to take up CAA's offer to provide feedback on the applicant's stakeholder engagement strategy and potential list of stakeholders.</p> <p>iii. Safety Assessment The RPAS Sector Team Lead set out the CAA's current approach to safety assessment and highlighted the key requirements to successfully conclude the process. As part of the applicants BVLOS operational approval application the CAA indicated that it anticipated all Level 1 findings would be addressed to allow the application to progress to the next stage. Additional feedback from the CAA should be available for the applicant by tomorrow afternoon.</p>	
<p>Item 5 – Provisional Timescales</p> <p>The Consultant set out the provisional timescale which included the following key events:</p> <p>20 July 2021 – application submitted 4 October to 10 January 2022 – stakeholder engagement period Mid-January 2022 – submission date of final proposal to CAA Mid-April 2022 – AIC publication submission Early June 2022 to late August 2022 – start and end of 90-day TDA period</p> <p>The meeting considered the above timelines and the CAA confirmed that they had no objections to the proposed timescale. Any minor variations to the proposed timescale would be permitted in consultation with the CAA.</p>	
<p>Item 6 – Next Steps</p> <p>It was agreed that the draft minutes of the meeting would be submitted to the CAA by 23 September 2021 (and approved by the CAA prior to publishing on the CAA Portal) and the meeting recording would be deleted shortly afterwards.</p>	
<p>Item 7 – Any Other Business</p> <p>The following questions and issues arising from the previous ACP were raised by the applicant and discussed as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Addressing CAA airspace buffer policy dispensation and acceptability of Agreement with key ANSP stakeholder and traffic density analysis as far as reasonably practicable via historical electronic conspicuity (EC) means. A dispensation was crucial in terms of the viability of the trials. The CAA 	

<p>confirmed that a buffer policy currently stands with regard to Birmingham Airport airspace, but the applicant could seek approval to mitigate/refine aspects of the buffer policy by setting out a letter of agreement with the airport. As part of the trials, historical EC data concerning traffic density could be recorded/supplied by a third party (such as Planefinder) for analysis and mapping. The CAA confirmed that it does not regulate third party involvement in these matters and it was not a requirement as part of the process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addressing 'letterboxing'. Acceptability of stakeholder feedback and EC based traffic analysis. The CAA indicated that some form of letterboxing may be inevitable, but the applicant should work as close as possible with stakeholders to minimise infringements. The CAA highlighted the need for the applicant to engage, and have closure, with key stakeholders in the engagement exercise and the CAA could be available to facilitate discussions with key stakeholders if they were declining to participate. • Addressing Coventry Airport traffic flow. Acceptability of detailed analysis of how the proposed TDA remains clear of flight paths associated with traffic to/from Coventry airport. The issue was not considered in detail. <p>No other business was raised and the meeting concluded after 62 minutes.</p>	
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ACTIONS ARISING FROM ACP-2021-057 ASSESSMENT MEETING

Subject	Name	Action	Deadline
NATMAC List	■	To forward the NATMAC contact details of relevant stakeholders to the Consultant.	TBC
Stakeholder Engagement Strategy	■	To forward applicant's stakeholder engagement strategy and potential list of stakeholders to CAA.	TBC
Coventry Airport Engagement	■	To provide additional guidance on the engagement approach between the applicant and Coventry Airport.	TBC
Minutes and Recording	■	To approve the minutes and delete the recording of the meeting.	23 September 2021