


**MINUTES OF ACP-2021-038 ASSESSMENT MEETING
(CONCERNING SKYFARER NHS DRONE DELIVERY TRIALS, COVENTRY)
HELD ONLINE ON 4 JUNE 2021 AT 3PM**

Present	Appointment	Representing
	Airspace Regulator	CAA
	Engagement & Consultation Regulator	CAA
	RPAS Sector Team Lead	CAA
	Flight Operations Inspector	CAA
	CEO (and airspace change sponsor)	Skyfarer
	Consultant for Skyfarer	Across Safety

	Action
<p>Item 1 – Introduction</p> <p>All participants introduced themselves and the Airspace Regulator read out the CAA opening statement below to set the scene for the assessment meeting.</p> <p>“The CAA received ‘Agenda for CAP 1616 Assessment Meeting 04/06/2021, ACP-2021-038’ and ‘Skyfarer TDA Engagement Document v1.2’ in advance of the Assessment Meeting and confirmed that the documents were required to be published together with the minutes of the meeting on the airspace change portal. The purpose of the Assessment Meeting (as set out CAP1616) was for the Change Sponsor to present and discuss their Statement of Need, provide information on how it intended to fulfil the requirements of the airspace change process, and present its provisional timescales. The sponsor was also required to provide information on how it intended to meet the engagement requirements of the process”.</p>	
<p>Item 2 – Statement of Need</p> <p>A slide pack of information was presented by Skyfarer 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 (established in 2017) 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 aim was to progress the operational capability of drone technology into a logistical use case, specifically for medical delivery in association with the NHS. The potential benefits of conducting medical deliveries by drone included reductions in transport times, road congestion, and CO₂ emissions. • Skyfarer had been working closely with NHS Blood & Transplant, O2 Telephonica UK, Altitude Angel, and Phoenix Wings to optimise logistical and distribution systems for pathology samples. The planned business trials required Beyond Visual Line of Sight (BVLOS) drone operations between routes that connected Coventry University Hospital, Rugby Hospital and a staging area ‘Feldon’ located near the village of Marton, approximately six nautical miles to the south of Coventry Hospital. The operating area was outlined on a map setting out the three routes from ‘Feldon’. • The details of the 33kg/3.5m wingspan drone and other specifications were outlined. EVLOS approval had been secured to fly the drone up to 500 feet with visual sight of 3km. • The business trial would take place over a two-month period commencing 26 August 2021 and ending 25 October 2021. 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It was confirmed that this application was for a temporary airspace change and not for an airspace trial. 	
<p>Item 3 – Issues or Opportunities Arising from the Proposed Change</p> <p>The Skyfarer highlighted the following key issues and opportunities arising from the proposed change:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitated flight trials of medical deliveries. Reduced CO₂ and road traffic. Improved delivery times for blood and organ transplants. <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 mode 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</p> <p>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 assess and make a decision on the application. The final stage (after ‘Decide’ 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</p> <p>Additional guidance was available from the CAA concerning the targeted stakeholder process which should include the MoD through DAATM, SAR agencies and selective NATMAC members. The standard stakeholder engagement requires a six-week period but could be scaled if there was a strong argument for lengthening or shortening the duration.</p> <p>Skyfarer highlighted that, in light of receiving advice from James Price (CAA Airspace Specialist), Skyfarer had initiated and publicised the engagement period on 20 May 2021 via the ACP and directly to over 80 stakeholders, including Birmingham Airport and nearby airfields. During the meeting, the Regulator liaised with James Price (about the advice provided earlier to Skyfarer) and confirmed that the stakeholder engagement period could commence prior to the assessment meeting, but the sponsor would be proceeding at their own risk on the basis that they may not have a clear understanding of the regulatory process and the CAA's expectations, which could potentially lead to their formal proposal submission falling short of regulatory requirements and ultimately being rejected.</p> <p>The CAA highlighted that the final submission should include how many activations were planned over set periods of time to inform stakeholders. The CAA highlighted some specific stakeholders: emergency services, public utilities, Air Ambulance, National Grid, Western Power, and Network Rail. The contact details of relevant stakeholders would be provided to Skyfarer via the Airspace Regulator.</p>	

<p>Skyfarer presented information related to the proposed engagement period, and the three proposed TDA options to minimise the impact on airspace users. Drone activation would take place in 60-minute slots over the 60-day period and an emergency scenario involving the air ambulance and drone operations was considered. It was confirmed that the drone device had an ADS-B out unit which was CAA compliant.</p> <p>iii. Safety Assessment</p> <p>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 for BVLOS operational approval.</p>	
<p>Item 5 – Provisional Timescales</p> <p>Skyfarer set out the provisional timescale which included the following key events:</p> <p>16 April 2021 – TDA application submitted 20 May to 1 July – stakeholder engagement period 2 July – submission date of final proposal to CAA 16 July – AIC publication submission 26 August to 25 October – start and end of 60-day TDA period</p> <p>The meeting considered the above and the CAA agreed to provide feedback on the appropriateness and timeliness of the proposed timescale.</p> <p>Post meeting the CAA accepted the proposed timescale, however due to additional ACP work, any delay with the final submission will lead to a delay in decision and therefore data submission to NATS. This ultimately would delay the implementation of the ACP should the ACP be approved.</p>	
<p>Item 6 – Next Steps</p> <p>It was agreed that the draft minutes of the meeting would be reviewed and approved by the CAA by 18 June 2021 (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>No other business was raised and the meeting concluded after 53 minutes.</p>	

ACTIONS ARISING FROM ACP-2021-038 ASSESSMENT MEETING

Subject	Name	Action	Deadline
Stakeholder Details		The contact details of relevant stakeholders would be provided to Skyfarer via the Airspace Regulator.	4 June 2021
Provisional Timescale		To provide feedback on the appropriateness and timeliness of the proposed timescale.	Completed
Minutes and Recording		To approve the minutes and delete the recording of the meeting.	18 June 2021