

Drone Leadership Group Agenda

Chairperson	Kirstie Hewlett
Date/Time	Wednesday, 4 March 2020 3.00-5:00pm
Location	Ministry of Transport 3 Queens Wharf, Wellington, 6011 (opposite TSB Arena).
Attendees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kirstie Hewlett – MoT • Janine Hearn – CAA • John Kay – CAA • Katie Bhreatnach – Airways • Michelle Schulz – MBIE • Jude Rushmere - MBIE • Prue Williams - MBIE <p>Note, other staff from the respective member agencies will also be in attendance</p>

1. Attendance, apologies and conflicts of interest

Attendees were asked to declare any known conflicts of interest arising from their participation in the meeting. No conflicts were identified.

2. Drone intervention in the Civil Aviation Bill

MoT provided an update on the progress of the Civil Aviation Bill since the previous Leadership Group meeting. It was noted that policy agreement is currently being sought from Cabinet on proposals in the Bill, including enforcement powers for authorised persons.

3. Regulatory investigation update

MoT provided an update on the progress of the regulatory update work.

The Ministry has completed recruitment of two new staff members to carry out the regulatory investigation. Initially, the new staff will look at registration and pilot competency. MoT expects to provide a briefing paper, proposed consultation document, and a cabinet paper to the Minister in May. However, it was acknowledged that resourcing and time constraints may make this difficult.

4. Airways update

Airways has continued work on drone detection trials at Auckland Airport. Attention has been given to addressing the regulatory and legislative hurdles arising from utilising radio spectrum identification. Trials are ongoing and are progressing well.

Airways has recently completed its restructure process. MoT noted the change in Airways' representation on the Drone Leadership Group, and said that this may better reflect the role of Airways in the cross-government work programme. It was noted that the change should also help to address potential conflict of interest issues related to AirShare.

5. CAA Update and restructure

CAA described the current progress made towards its restructure. The process involves significant levels of co-design with existing staff, and there has already been positive engagement on the process. Currently, the restructure is intended to conclude in May.

CAA talked about changes to the structures and work streams for staff involved with the drone work programme. It was noted that in the future, the teams involved in certification will be consolidated to improve workflows. It was also noted that CAA is recruiting staff for the drone work programme.

6. Airspace Integration Trials Programme TOR ratification

It was noted by the Group that further amendments have been suggested for the Airspace Integration Trails Programme Terms of the Reference, specifically in regards to the description of the role of Airways. The Group agreed that the Terms of Reference would be updated. The Group agreed to approve and ratify the Terms of Reference in principle upon the document being updated to reflect this discussion.

7. Airspace Integration Trials update

MBIE provided an update on the current work on the establishment and implementation of the Airspace Integration Trials programme, including the approach to further defining the scope of the trials, selection process, and broader stakeholder engagement.

In relation specifically to the selection process, the Group agreed that the members of the Testing and Trialling working group, which are currently triaging the applications should have the ability to make decisions on which applications are progressed forward.

The Group discussed Wisk's progress within the Airspace Integration Trials Programme.

MBIE stated that the NZDF's Enhanced Maritime Awareness Capability (EMAC) project had shown interest in participating in the Airspace Integration Trials Programme. The Group discussed the potential for this and requested that MBIE provide more information via a written brief to the Group.

8. Test site/location update

MBIE described the recent stakeholder engagement on test sites and test locations for drones.

MBIE said that the feedback showed that there was some desire from the sector to be able to test in Christchurch or Auckland. Stakeholders also indicated that they would like to see a more streamlined process for obtaining permissions to conduct their tests and flights. Some respondents indicated that they need facilities to test large drones or BVLOS.

The Group noted that any further work on this would require coordination and involvement between the government agencies working on drones and also with the wider the drone sector. The Group agreed that the findings also be discussed at the Testing and Trialling meeting to determine priorities for future action.

9. UTM paper discussion

MoT talked about the background of the current work on Unmanned Aircraft Traffic Management (UTM). MoT explained that it is currently producing a policy paper providing a high level approach to UTM. MoT discussed the structure of the paper. The Group discussed the content of the paper in brief, and were generally happy with its current state.

The Group discussed the membership of the UTM Working Group, and the possibility of adding extra members from Airways to ensure adequate representation from both Airways and AirShare.

The Group discussed the need for a cross-agency effort to ensure alignment on any work related to or potentially relating to UTM in the future. It was suggested that a meeting be held in the near future to discuss UTM work across agencies, and ensure alignment before the current paper is finalised.