



WIG

The Whitehall & Industry Group
connecting the sectors



'Infrastructure' Series

Sir Stephen Hillier, Chair, Civil Aviation Authority

Expert Insight

We were pleased to welcome Sir Stephen Hillier, Chair of the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) for some insights from his time at the Ministry of Defence (MoD), and to discuss the CAA's role in addressing challenges faced by the aviation and aerospace sectors. He touched on points including:

- The CAA's priorities over the next period will revolve around maintaining the trust of their consumers, being flexible and adaptable to change, and empowering their people.
- The recovery phase of COVID-19 will continue to bring challenges to the aviation sector, especially in relation to public health and consumer rights. Careful calibration of the pace of this recovery will be integral, and must be supported by an internationally recognised means to enable freer movement of passengers.
- The airspace modernisation plan will be key, not only in tackling vast environmental challenges, but in the integration of new technologies such as remotely piloted air systems.
- Withdrawal from the EASA presents risks but also opportunities for the CAA. The potential to build new international relationships, and greater freedoms in decision-making could be valuable to the UK.
- CAA's Project Horizon will allow for the creation of a coherent strategy, addressing the core challenges mentioned above and more e.g. innovation and technology, consumer interests, skills, stem and diversity.



Spotlight

Sir Stephen shared some valuable personal insights from his time in distinguished roles such as Chief of the Air Staff for the Royal Air Force (2016-2019) and Deputy Chief of Defence Staff, MoD (2012-2016). He mentioned that:

- Leadership considerations are at the heart of success. Importantly, authority must be deployed sparingly; emphasis must be placed on cooperation and enabling other's success.
- Key to excelling in any role is to understand the context you are operating in. In the case of the MOD: imperfect knowledge, reputation management, internal scrutiny, and financial shortfall management shape decision making.

Our members' questions

Our members raised a number of interesting questions. Topics included:

- How the CAA will utilise digital processes during and post-COVID-19
- The biggest hurdles associated with performance-based regulation
- CAA's approach to competition and working with the CMA (Competition and Markets Authority)
- How to best generate collaboration between airports and airlines
- How the CAA will promote innovation investment, and the way this will compare with the EASA

WIG members can listen to Sir Stephen's presentation [here](#)
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