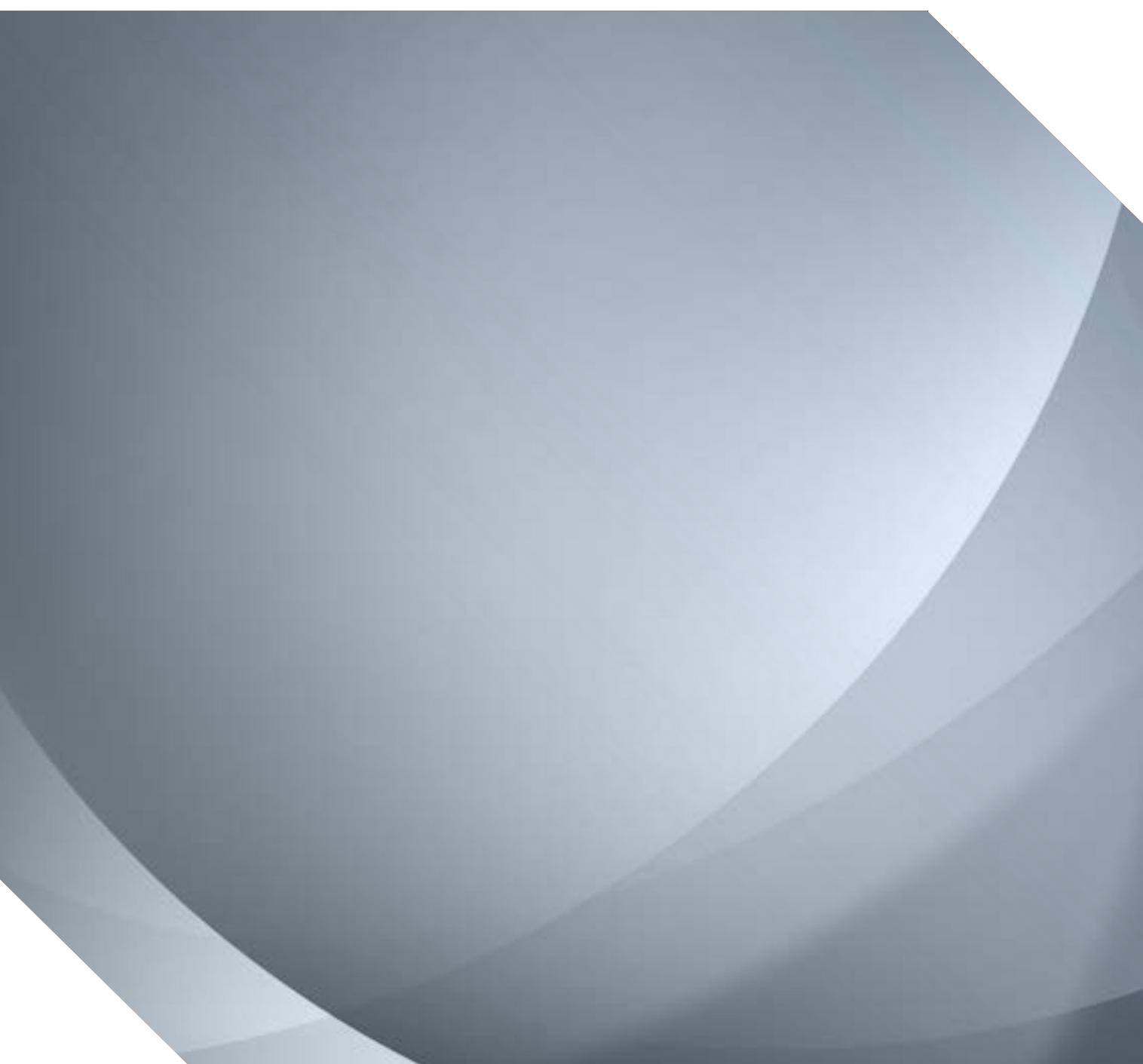


# CAA response to the airports commission consultation on inner Thames Estuary feasibility studies

**CAP 1173**

A large, abstract graphic composed of overlapping, semi-transparent blue shapes in various shades, creating a layered, geometric effect that fills the lower two-thirds of the page.

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Enquiries regarding the content of this publication should be addressed to:  
Safety Regulation Group, Civil Aviation Authority, Aviation House,  
Gatwick Airport South, West Sussex, RH6 0YR.

## Introductory remarks

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1. The CAA welcomes the Airports Commission's discussion paper on terms of reference for feasibility studies of Inner Thames Estuary airport proposals.
2. The CAA is the UK's specialist aviation regulator, and so has significant relevant expertise in certain areas. The CAA collects a broad range of statistics and survey data, and has drawn on these resources to provide analysis to the Airports Commission in order to inform some elements of its phase 1 process to sift proposals into a short list.
3. The CAA's previous contributions to the Airports Commission and other work on aviation capacity policy can be found at <http://www.caa.co.uk/default.aspx?catid=589&pagetype=90&pageid=14751>

## CHAPTER 1

# Response to proposed terms of reference

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- 1.1 In its response to the Airports Commission's March 2013 consultation on sift criteria, the CAA recommended four key decision criteria, that the Commission should have regard to when considering options and potential solutions:
- **Demand-focused:** to ensure that any capacity solution is consistent with trends in demand and geared to deliver connectivity, choice and value for consumers.
  - **Financeable:** to ensure that any solution can be funded on the basis of airport charges at a level consistent with ensuring value for consumers;
  - **Safe:** to ensure that any solution is designed to further improve the safety of the UK aviation system and is consistent with effective airspace management;
  - **Sustainable:** to ensure that any growth in capacity is consistent with environmental objectives, including balancing the needs of consumers with those of local communities.
- 1.2 However, the CAA recognised that these criteria may not be exhaustive and there may be other considerations that the Airports Commission, or Government, feels are valid.
- 1.3 The questions which the CAA feels are relevant for the proposed studies are therefore: (i) do they contribute to one or more of these four criteria; and (ii) are they sufficient for the Airports Commission to decide whether to allow an Inner Estuary scheme to progress to phase 2 assessment?
- 1.4 On question (i), it appears to the CAA that each of the proposed studies have some relevance to one or more of the CAA's four criteria.

### **Study 1 – Environmental / Natura 2000 impacts**

- 1.5 Relevant to deciding whether a scheme is sustainable.

### **Study 2 – Operational feasibility and attitudes about moving to a new airport**

- 1.6 Relevant to assessing whether a scheme is safe (through operational feasibility) and demand-led (through investigating how easily supply, in the form of airlines, would move to serve the demand).

### **Study 3 – Socio-economic impacts**

- 1.7 The CAA's criteria did not explicitly consider wider economic benefits of capacity schemes over and above the benefit received by the consumers that use it.

However, it is possible that the answer to this question may dictate the extent of Government assistance, financial or otherwise, which can be expected of an Inner Thames Estuary scheme. In that sense, it is relevant to the financeability criterion, as it should influence the confidence with which investors approach the scheme.

#### **Study 4 – Surface access impacts**

- 1.8 This study is relevant to the CAA's sustainable and financeable criteria.
- 1.9 Thus it is the CAA's view that the four studies all have something of value to offer the Commission's considerations of the Inner Thames Estuary scheme.
- 1.10 On question (ii), are these studies enough for the Airports Commission to decide whether to allow an Inner Thames Scheme to progress to phase 2, the CAA feels this is something for the Airports Commission to answer. Given that these are the studies that the Commission has proposed, then we must assume the answer is in the positive.
- 1.11 The CAA notes that, were an Inner Thames Estuary scheme to progress to phase 2 assessment, then it would be subject to the appraisal framework which the Airports Commission published for consultation on 16 January 2014<sup>1</sup>. Thus, the CAA is not concerned that the proposed studies do not cover all aspects of its four criteria, since it assumes that a full assessment would only be carried out at the completion of the Airports Commission's phase 2 appraisal framework.

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<sup>1</sup> The CAA intends to submit a response to this consultation also.