

2024 MAA Conference: Key takeaways

SESSION 1: Forecasting Opportunities: where are aerospace and aviation going and what does it mean for us in the Midlands?

- **Andrew Mair, Chief Executive, MAA** highlighted a new report the MAA has co-authored with the Midlands Engine that shows the economic contribution of the aerospace cluster in the Midlands region is considerably greater than previously thought. Read it [here](#).
- **Klaus Mueller Muller, Senior Advisor, AeroDynamic Advisory** highlighted the challenges our industry will face in the coming years and shared market forecasts. He discussed the net zero options for aircraft and our current reliance on sustainable aviation fuel, which needs to be produced in much higher volumes until our next generation technologies become available. He said new platforms are required to realise electric, hydrogen or hybrid air travel.
- **Nick Barton, Chief Executive, Birmingham Airport** said that all sectors of air travel through the airport have recovered to pre-Covid levels and was optimistic about the aviation market. He shared the significant improvements and growth planned over the coming years. Birmingham airport has sufficient capacity with the existing runway infrastructure for travel to increase threefold from the current 12 million passengers while remaining on target to reach net zero carbon by 2033.
- **Jacqueline Castle, Chief Technology Officer, Aerospace Technology Institute** briefed delegates on the Destination Zero technology roadmaps that were developed during the pandemic, the funding programmes which the ATI are currently delivering and the recent announcement of a new project called the Non CO2 Programme which launches in May and aims to stimulate development of technologies to reduce other emissions such as NOX. She also highlighted the organisation's strategic and SME funding programmes which are open for applications.

SESSION 2: Diversifying markets: wider opportunities for aerospace suppliers

- **Matt Eagle, Senior Supply Chain Manager (Fixed Wing Aircraft), Boeing Defence UK** opened the session with an overview of the company's global commercial and defence aircraft manufacture and services businesses. He spoke about opportunities for UK suppliers to support Boeing's global service offering, a fast-growing aspect offering total lifecycle support, digital solutions, improved distribution, and aftermarket provision. He also summarised Boeing's customer needs and the supply chain principles that support delivery.
- **Mark Dumville, Chief Executive, GMV** gave a great introduction to the rapidly growing space sector in the UK which is now associated with about 18% of our GDP. He highlighted the opportunities for aerospace suppliers to transfer their expertise and capabilities to meet the sector's growth requirements. He also addressed the issues of space sustainability, safety and security which must be overcome, the increasingly commercial lunar economy and the power that is being unlocked through satellites to observe and better understand our planet.

- **Liz Griffiths, Technology Manager MAA** presented information about the Pivot into Space programme, funded by the UK Space Agency, which is designed to support companies in the region to apply their technologies and capabilities into the UK's growing space markets. She highlighted seven projects that have been awarded funding so far to deliver technologies for the sector. Visit [the MAA website](#) to find out more.
- **Robert Wilson, Head of Market Development, AWE** delivered a presentation on what the Atomic Weapons Establishment is, how it is changing today, major programmes it is running and what it needs from suppliers going forward, illustrating many opportunities for aerospace suppliers to support the through-life delivery of the UK replacement warhead and the infrastructure required to achieve that transition.
- **Professor Angela Dean, Head of Apprenticeships and Quality, College of Engineering and Technology, University of Derby** talked about the factors affecting skills development in the UK aerospace manufacturing industry, training options for apprenticeships in the industry, and the university's current aerospace-related research themes.

SESSION 3: Executing and delivering: manufacturing, supply chains, performance

- **Craig Askew, Director, Global Operations, Rolls-Royce** shared the company's strategy for achieving a step change in performance from differentiated technologies and businesses to strategic initiatives and operational excellence. He outlined a clear vision for creating a stronger and more resilient business. He also gave an overview of the different organisational units, in particular civil aerospace and the criticality of the supply chain.
- **Chris Weir, Technology Manager, MAA** took to the stage to introduce the recently-launched Decarbonising the Midlands Aerospace Cluster (DMAC) programme, funded by Innovate UK and Department for Energy Security and Net Zero. He was joined by two of the project partners, Brendan Kelly, HS&E Manager at ITP Aero and Jason Aldridge from Arrowsmith (part of ASG Group), who talked about the approach the project is taking to understand how the cluster could achieve net zero by 2050.
- **Jane Brogan, Operations Manager (Ansty Park), Parker Meggitt** gave insights into the culture and values at the company and talked about the 'Women in Aviation' group for which she is the sponsor. She shared details of initiatives the company is carrying out as part of its commitment to attracting a diverse workforce such as working with local schools, mentoring circles and developing a culture of recognition.
- **Stephen Pilling, Lean Lead (Ansty Park), Parker Meggitt** described the company's lean journey over the last 18 months since the Parker-Meggitt acquisition. Parker has a strong commitment to the Kaizen culture and all levels of the organisation get involved. There have been 26 Kaizen events since the acquisition which have brought huge operational benefits.
- **Tim Holmes, Technology Manager, MAA**, described the SC21 programme and what's involved for suppliers who get involved. Opportunities are coming for up for five companies to take part on a subsidised SC21 programme through the MAA.

- **Luca Garza, Strategy Operations Manager, Collins Aerospace** presented the company's sustainability strategy which leverages people alongside industrial and technology developments to realise the ambition to reach their sustainability goals.
- **Ian Adams, Environment, Health and Safety Manager, Collins Aerospace** described the initiatives taking place at the company's Wolverhampton site to enhance sustainability while reducing costs.
- At the end of the conference, Klaus Mueller, wrapped up day and described the Midlands as the "centre of gravity for the aerospace industry".