

Future Flight for Local Authorities

Future Flight, what is it all about? And why should local authorities get involved?

On the 21st June we heard all about the Future Flight Challenge, a £300 million programme, jointly funded by the UK government and industry, to position the UK as a world leader in the third aviation revolution.

As the world progresses towards a net zero future there is a need to consider alternative solutions and innovations to our everyday activities. Transport is considered to be one of the most challenging sectors to decarbonise and whilst making aviation cleaner and greener will improve our environment, it also has the potential to improve the lives of millions of people.

Future Flight will transform how we connect people, transport goods, and deliver services in a sustainable way providing socioeconomic benefits using new classes of air vehicles with novel technologies. The four-year programme is creating the future aviation system and will demonstrate the safe integration and operation of drones, advanced air mobility, and regional aircraft by 2024.

Local Authorities are a key enabler to the success of this Challenge, playing a pivotal role in the integration and licensing of both drones and advanced air mobility vehicles, supporting infrastructure development, and unlocking local airspace challenges.

In this discussion, we heard from Kerissa Khan, Innovation Lead at UKRI, Fern Elsdon Baker, Future Flight Social Sciences Research Director and Sunil Budheo, Transport Innovation Manager at Coventry City Council (slides can be found here), and the key takeaways were:

- Within Future Flight there are lots of potential opportunities to be unlocked, but to deploy this technology successfully, engagement is required across a variety of stakeholders including industry, policy makers, regulatory public sector and academic research communities. The Future Flight team have set out these building blocks for deployment within the Future Flight Vision and Roadmap document:
<https://www.ukri.org/publications/future-flight-vision-and-roadmap>
- Future Flight has applications across both rural and urban communities. For rural and traditionally disconnected regions, advanced air mobility can improve connectivity, forming part of a highly distributed transport system. While within urban areas it has the capability to provide last mile delivery prescribed medicines, or cargo deliveries. Additional use cases and their potential costs and benefits can be found here:
<https://www.ukri.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/UKRI-140122-ISCFFutureFlightChallenge-Socio-economicStudySummary.pdf>

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Email futureflight@ktn-uk.org to arrange a call with the team

Sign up to the Future Flight newsletter

<https://info.ktn-uk.org/p/2VFU-7A7/future-flight-challenge-newsletter>

Register on the Future Flight Landscape - Innovate UK KTN - you can also explore the landscape map here: <https://ktn-uk.org/programme/future-flight-landscape/>

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