Significant progress was made in 2014 to make regulation of the UK’s General Aviation (GA) sector more proportionate and evidence-based the UK Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) said earlier this month (January).

In the first of what will be regular updates to confirm its work in the area the CAA said that in the last 60 days it had:

- Launched proposals to simplify the initial testing process for experimental aircraft in the UK that will benefit small-scale aircraft designers and manufacturers, as well as encouraging the growth of aerospace excellence in new design concepts. Details at www.caa.co.uk/consultations

- Used the new proportionate approach to regulation to grant an approval to a UK microlight manufacturer that has made it financially viable to sell its aircraft as finished factory-built types rather than amateur-build kits. More details here.

- Published its finalised policy framework for GA. This will be used by the CAA as a basis for decisions around GA regulation, providing a transparent process for the GA community and others to follow. It explains how decisions will now be made based on evidence and risk. It can be viewed at www.caa.co.uk/ga

- Scrapped the need for UK validation of design changes for Annex II aircraft via supplementary type certificates approved by a state with which the UK holds a bilateral agreement – such as the US or Canada. Meaning the owner/operator of an aircraft can simply arrange for installation of the modification as per the approval and then get their maintenance organisation to certify its installation in the aircraft’s log-book. More details here.

- Withdrawn the overflight restriction from the permit operating limitations of factory-built, type-approved gyroplanes. Meaning they can be flown over congested areas providing pilots can demonstrate they can manoeuvre their gyroplane clear of a built up area should it suffer a failure preventing continued safe flight, such as an engine failure. More details here.
Allowed owners of light aircraft to choose which fuel they use, including MOGAS, providing it is approved for their aircraft. Details at www.caa.co.uk/ga

Published clear guidance on restoring vintage aircraft, available at www.caa.co.uk/ga

All these changes support the CAA’s new top level principles for GA regulation as it:
• Only regulates directly when necessary and does so proportionately
• Deregulates where it can
• Delegates where appropriate
• Does not gold-plate, and quickly and efficiently removes gold-plating that already exists
• Helps create a vibrant and dynamic GA sector in the UK.

Commenting on this work Grant Shapps, Government Minister Without Portfolio, said: “This is yet another good set of measures that will provide a much-needed boost to GA. They will allow for innovation to be unlocked in the sector, creating exciting new business opportunities that could bring jobs and growth to the UK”.

Similar sixty day updates will be published throughout 2015 on 2 March; 1 May; 1 July; 1 September and 2 November.

More detail on the CAA’s GA activities and the work of the GA Unit are available at www.caa.co.uk/ga

The General Aviation Unit of the Civil Aviation Authority
The creation of a dedicated GA Unit within the CAA emerged from the UK Government’s Red Tape Challenge in 2013, which explored ways to reduce the regulatory burden on the general aviation sector. The 25-strong Unit has been assembled from airworthiness, flight operations and licensing specialists from across the CAA. All have significant knowledge and experience of general aviation, with most being active private pilots. The Unit is based in the CAA’s Aviation House facility at Gatwick.

The CAA is the UK’s specialist aviation regulator. Its activities include: making sure that the aviation industry meets the highest technical and operational safety standards; preventing holidaymakers from being stranded abroad or losing money because of tour operator insolvency; planning and regulating all UK airspace; and regulating airports, air traffic services and airlines and providing advice on aviation policy.