

# General Aviation

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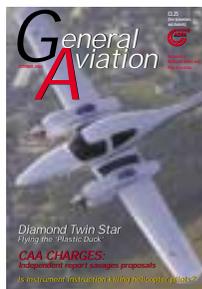
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**Front cover:**  
**Diamond DA 42**  
**Twin Star**  
 Photo: Diamond Aircraft

## Chairman's message

# The CAA and the Cabinet Office

You may well ask, what has the Civil Aviation Authority to do with the Cabinet Office? In a nutshell, the answer is "Regulatory Impact Assessment". The Cabinet Office, as an arm of government, keenly recognises that over-regulation, wherever it occurs, can be stultifying and bad for business, and that means UK Ltd. When the present government first came into power, the Cabinet Office produced an extremely well thought out document on regulation, its processes and effects, and this has subsequently been expanded and improved whilst maintaining a clear, user-friendly and transparent structure.

Of course, the CAA is no stranger to Regulatory Impact Assessments, (RIAs), because every time a policy change is proposed, or the law changed, for instance in the shape of the Air Navigation Order, an RIA must be performed, in order to ensure it '...supports the government's aim of only regulating when necessary and, when it is, to do so in a way that is proportionate to the risk being addressed, and to deregulate and simplify wherever possible...' For example, a major RIA was a necessary precursor to the introduction of the NPPL.

AOPA, together with many other aviation associations and bodies, was invited to comment on the proposed CAA SRG Charges that resulted from deliberations conducted by the so-called Joint Review Team (or JRT), consisting of representatives from the CAA, the DfT, and industry. Readers of *General Aviation* will be familiar with the details and points of contention that were made public when the JRT completed its work and before the formal consultation process began. In previous years, the CAA Scheme of Charges had been revised largely on the basis of inflation, but the current exercise has been different in that the policy behind the charges has been changed, in order to satisfy strong representations from the commercial operators to eliminate apparent cross-subsidies between the airlines and the GA sector. In this case, the Cabinet Office guidelines clearly imply the need for a full RIA to be conducted. Either the need was not appreciated, or there was deliberate obfuscation, but the CAA's feeble attempt at a haphazard impact assessment falls far short of the actual requirements.

This is one of the conclusions drawn by Helios Technology, an independent consultancy specialising in air transport, commissioned by AOPA, BBGA, BHAB and additionally sponsored by over fifty flight training and other general aviation organisations, in their independent review of the charging proposals, with a view to providing an input into the CAA's consultation process. The report is concise and readable, and appears on the AOPA website, [www.aopa.co.uk](http://www.aopa.co.uk). From the point of view of general aviation, there is much to be critical about regarding the CAA's approach, and further comment appears within the pages of this magazine.

It should be no surprise that such a large number of aviation organisations have put their hands in their pockets to sponsor the Helios report, because the impact of the charging proposals affects them disproportionately by comparison with the commercial sector. The Cabinet Office document on RIAs places much importance on the effect on small businesses, which is what flight training organisations are, and states that where appropriate the RIA must include a Small Firms Impact Test (SFIT) plus a competitive assessment. If ever there was a need for such assessments, this must surely be it. Come on CAA, do the job properly!

On another topic, AOPA has been receiving a great number of emails and communications from owners of N-registration aircraft in the light of the DfT spotlight recently falling on operations conducted under other than G-registration. AOPA's policy is to support these owners in a practical and helpful way, if necessary, by providing a level of safety oversight sufficient to satisfy the needs of the DfT. Any permanent change to the status quo will require an RIA and all that goes with it, so we are looking at five years or more hence before much can happen, by which time, EASA may well have replaced the over-complex JAA instrument rating, and the main cause for migration to N-registered aircraft, with something more practical and possibly aligned to the FAA IR. Keep reading *General Aviation* to keep abreast of the situation, and please make sure non-AOPA members who own N-registration aircraft understand who is looking after their interests, and who is paying for it!

*George Done*

