Statement of Work – draft

Following an email exchange between Sarah Allen, Group Director of Corporate Affairs at MAG, and Rebecca Sims-Robinson, Managing Consultant – Insights at Stonehaven, the following document outlines a Statement of Work from Stonehaven about how we would deliver this work.

Brief

* Manchester Airports Group need a rapid, focussed, stakeholder interview project in order to develop a clear, evidence-based understanding of how MAG is currently perceived by key political and official stakeholders, ahead of strategic planning activity to take place in Autumn 2025.

Scope of work

1. Stakeholder list review and build
   * MAG will provide a draft stakeholder list (covering departments such as HMT, DfT, DBT, DESNEZ, and regional bodies such as NISTA).Please note we need a very minimum of 30 names in order to reach the targeted 20-25 interviews
   * Stonehaven will review the list, providing any feedback about names or roles that should be amended, and supplementing the list with any relevant additions from our networks.
2. Stakeholder outreach
   1. Stonehaven will draft outreach communication, which we would then send to MAG to approve.
   2. Stonehaven will reach out to the contact list directly, but it might be useful to be introduced over email if you already have a relationship with that contact – this can be discussed after sign-off
   3. We will book in and schedule the interviews, and keep you updated on this process and the uptake rate, flagging any potential issues in a timely manner
3. In-depth interviews
   1. 30-minute interviews will take place with 20-25 senior political and official stakeholders. We envisage that most of these will be over Zoom/Teams for the ease of participants, but we are very happy to do some of these face-to-face or over the telephone if that is preferred by participants.
      1. If recruitment is easier than expected, up to 30 interviews will be delivered at no extra cost
   2. Interviews will be recorded unless the participant does not consent, and these anonymised transcripts will be provided to MAG
      1. We recommend offering anonymity to participants so that they offer more candid information and therefore providing better insights for your upcoming strategy. While we will provide a list of names of those that took part, the transcripts will not identify who said what.
4. Analysis and reporting
   1. Interviews will be analysed by the team and put together in a report. Analysis will include
      1. Themes emerging across interviews
      2. Views on familiarity, favourability, trust and perceived value
      3. Views on opportunities and potential weaknesses
      4. Emerging strategic communications recommendations (messages, channels, timing etc)

Deliverables

* Reviewed and finalised stakeholder list
* Anonymised interview transcripts
* Final report including thematic findings and strategic communication recommendations, to be presented to relevant stakeholders if required

Timelines (to be finalised on project sign off)

* Start date: ASAP (pending procurement approval)
* Fieldwork: Late July–August 2025
* Final report delivery: By early September 2025

Case studies

ADS (Aerospace, Defence and Security) Group – A new reputation and narrative for a new era

* **Problem** - ADS, the trade association representing the UK’s aerospace, defence, security, and space sectors, was looking to refresh their organisational identity. ADS challenged Stonehaven to help them position themselves to win and retain members while increasing their influence with key stakeholders, by defining their narrative and reflecting it throughout their identity and strategy.
* **Research** - Stonehaven conducted qualitative in-depth interviews with ADS’ members and stakeholders across the different parties and parts of government, to understand perceptions of ADS – as well as the role both members and Government would need the organisation to play to facilitate its critical sectors delivering the country’s future security. Melding these research findings with Stonehaven’s policy and campaigning thinking, we built a new narrative, guiding purpose, and pillared strategy for ADS that facilitates ADS delivering value for its members and policy impact on some of the country’s most crucial challenges – from skills and the future of the workforce, to sustainable aviation and ESG in defence.
* **Outcome** - ADS’s new narrative speaks to what only ADS can do, making clear why members should join and what their members deliver for the UK. This narrative is helping ADS influence policy and strategy in critical and sensitive areas at a time when its sectors are front-and-centre in the national (and international) discourse.

Heathrow – Reputation in the local community

* **Problem** - Heathrow faced a disconnect between its national reputation and its relationship with the local community. While national messaging focused on broader economic and infrastructural themes, local residents felt their specific needs and perspectives were not being addressed, particularly regarding the tangible benefits Heathrow could bring to their area.
* **Research** - Stonehaven conducted an in-depth insights project within the local community, organizing a series of focus groups to develop a distinct 'local narrative' for Heathrow. Unlike the national narrative, this local approach emphasised the economic benefits Heathrow could deliver directly to the community. To strengthen engagement, Stonehaven recommended that Heathrow increase its visibility and communication with local residents. This led to the creation of the 'Heathrow Borough Newspaper,' a quarterly publication distributed to over half a million households, showcasing local stories and economic opportunities linked to Heathrow. Stonehaven then collaborated closely with Heathrow on the 'Giving Back Programme.' This involved further stakeholder interviews and focus groups to identify community priorities and guide Heathrow’s local investments of time and resources.
* **Outcome** - Stonehaven’s approach enabled Heathrow to develop a more authentic and resonant relationship with its local community. The tailored local narrative and consistent communication through the borough newspaper improved awareness of Heathrow’s economic contributions and fostered greater trust. The 'Giving Back Programme,' shaped by direct community input, ensured Heathrow’s initiatives were aligned with local needs, reinforcing its role as a responsible and responsive neighbour.

Universities UK – Realigning the reputation of the UK’s universities to secure a more favourable public policy environment

* **Problem** – UUK brought in Stonehaven for ideas on how to establish a more favourable operating environment for higher education policy, through a sustained and targeted piece of work realigning the reputation of the sector as a whole.
* **Research** - The project included 12 in-depth interviews with relevant political and media stakeholders, focus groups with key voter groups important to the current Government, and a large scale poll. Using the information collected through these three methodologies, Stonehaven have presented back to UUK a number of reports on how the sector is perceived, what key stakeholders want to hear, and what their strategy needs to be in order for things to improve.
* **Outcome** – This project is still taking place, with the aim to launch the new strategy in September 2025