Summary
The British Microlight Aircraft Association [BMAA] supports the opt-out opportunity that the UK could take to enable the national regulation of factory-built aircraft with a MTOM of up to 600Kg and a stall speed, in landing configuration, of not more than 45Knots.

The BMAA proposes that having taken the opt-out opportunity the UK CAA takes the opportunity to redefine microlights within the Air Navigation Order so that a two-seat microlight may have a MTOM of up to 600Kg with a stall speed, in the landing configuration, of no more than 45Knots.

Reasoning
The BMAA is the representative body of microlight pilots within the UK. Since the introduction of the definition that allowed microlights to have a MTOM of up to 450Kg some microlight aircraft, typically three axis control types, have been developed that have very limited payload resulting in limited fuel capacity when flown with two people. It is believed that it is common place for many of these aircraft to be flown with additional fuel at over the MTOM. BMAA members have proposed that the UK microlight definition be changed to allow a greater MTOM to allow their aircraft to carry more fuel. Some of the current UK microlight designs are similar to designs being flown outside the UK at a higher MTOM under different regulation. BMAA members want the opportunity to fly aircraft at that MTOM in the UK.

Following the change to the Basic Regulation other EU States have announced that they will be redefining microlights within their State to take advantage of the potential to increase MTOM. Not all States are in agreement with their final definitions, but it is apparent that if the UK were not to make some change, we would be the odd one out.

A benefit of changing the definition of a microlight in the UK is to improve parity with neighbouring States which will simplify cross border flight regulations with regard to pilot licensing, and create a more likely environment for further mutual recognition of design and manufacturing standards, which will benefit both UK purchasers and UK manufacturers wanting to sell their products abroad.

Airworthiness
Approval process
Aircraft with a MTOM of up to 600Kg are already in existence within the UK. The significant potential change to regulation is to nationally regulate factory-built types up to this MTOM. The BMAA already has the scope within its A8-26 approval to approve the airworthiness of these types to existing airworthiness codes. We see no need to change the approach to airworthiness for factory-built types. We believe that the same scope is also applicable to the Light Aircraft Association [LAA].

Existing microlight aircraft
In some cases, microlight types that have been approved for flight within the UK may be able to be reapproved at a higher MTOM. Operators must be made aware of the requirement for recertification at the earliest opportunity. The process of recertification must be made as simple as possible for these aircraft to avoid cost and to deter operators from flying at an “assumed” or “presumed” increase in MTOW.
Manufacturing approval
There have been informal discussions in the past questioning the need for CAA approval for microlight manufacture. That is, the need to continue to require an A8-1 approval. The BMAA supports a review of the requirements and has proposed a review of A8-1 in the past.

Assuming that an approval is still required by the CAA for manufacturers, and until there is some change, we propose that the current A8-1 approval is sufficient for manufacturers of microlight up to 600Kg but would prefer that the need for the requirement is reviewed.

Licensing
Microlight pilots
The current microlight training syllabus has recently been reviewed [published 1 January 2019]. During the review the possibility of 600Kg aircraft was considered and the authors, the BMAA Training Committee and the Microlight Panel of Flight Examiners, agreed that other than some additional emphasis on aircraft performance, and weight and balance calculations, no other changes were needed to accommodate heavier aircraft and therefore we consider that no further changes to the training regime for new pilots is needed.

Microlight Flight Instructors are already entitled to fly microlight aircraft with a very wide performance range. The BMAA Training Committee and the Microlight Panel of Flight Examiners will be asked to consider whether there should be a requirement for further training, perhaps differences training, of instructors before they have the privilege to instruct on heavier microlights.

Assuming that the microlight definition in the ANO is changed to include 600Kg aircraft existing microlight licenses will entitle to holder to fly them. The BMAA Training Committee and the Microlight Panel of Flight Examiners will consider whether to propose that existing licence holders undergo differences training before exercising the privileges of their licence on aircraft falling outside the current definition. Differences training need not include flight training, but should cover aspects of aircraft performance, and weight and balance calculation.

Avoidance of Unintended Consequences
Aircraft classification
Assuming that the microlight definition is changed as suggested above we propose that existing aircraft types that are not within the new or old microlight class remain within their existing class. This to apply to all aircraft, both in existence and future builds, within existing types.

Pilot licensing
A pilot who is the holder of a licence with either PPL/LAPL SEP or NPPL SSEA privileges should not be required to undertake any training to allow them to fly aircraft that are classified as microlights under the new definition, that would not have been microlights under the old definition.

SSEA/SEP pilots
Currently PPL and LAPL SEP holders are required to complete differences training to fly a microlight using the privileges of their SEP. We suggest, that because the microlight definition will still include low MTOM and low inertia aircraft, following any legal change to the MTOM of microlights differences training should still be required.
Currently holders of a NPPL SSEA are required to hold a Microlight Class rating to fly a microlight. The rating is achieved by test. Since the NPPL was introduced the difference between the requirements for a PPL SEP holder and a NPPL SSEA holder to fly microlights have been demonstrated to be unnecessary. We suggest that holders of a NPPL SSEA simply be required to complete differences training with a microlight instructor to entitle them to fly microlights.

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The BMAA looks forward to working with the LAA and CAA to make changes that will benefit UK recreational pilots and manufacturers.

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