

ENVIRONMENT & LOCAL ISSUES SUB-COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting of the Environment & Local Issues Sub-Committee held on Friday 5th March 2004 in the Conference Room at the Visitor Centre

PRESENT

Members:

Sam Jones	Chairman
Maurice Hudson	Technical Adviser
Carole Havercroft	Secretary
Cllr. Peter Roberts	Bucks CC
Cllr. Peter De Vic Carey	LB Hounslow
Cllr. Rodney Bennett	LB Richmond-upon-Thames
Cllr. Mewa Mann	Slough BC
Cllr. James Maxwell	Surrey CC
Cllr. Mike Cox	LB Hillingdon
Cllr. Malcolm Beer	LB Windsor & Maidenhead
Cllr. Don Lyons-Davis	LAANC
Peter Viggers	EANAG
Virginia Godfrey	HACAN/Clearskies
Paul Ellis	IATA
Tony Lucking	AUC
Roy Featherstone	ABTA
Andy Hull	Independent

BAA Heathrow

Gerard Silverstone	Public Affairs Manager - Consultation
Nita Easey	Flight Evaluation Communications Manager

Others

John Stewart	HACAN/ClearSkies
Steve James	General Manager, National Air Traffic Services
Davide Minotti	Head of National & Local Air Quality Policy Branch (DEFRA)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Andrew Dryland (BAA), Gill Kirk (Head of Public Affairs), Cllr. Digby Jacks (LB Hounslow), Cllr. Christopher Knight (Runnymede BC), Cllr. David Bishop (LB Hillingdon), Cllr. Gerry Ceaser (Spelthorne BC), Cllr. Sydney Kallar (ALG), Roger Wiltshire (BATA), Diana Johnson (London Assembly), Iain Hope (HASG), Keith Harlow (Independent), Brian Yates (Consumers' Association).

2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

2.1 Minutes of the meeting held on 25th April 2003 were agreed with the following amendments:-

5.6 Sub-paragraph entitled 'Air Quality' - Cllr. Bennett stated that the wording 'aviation's contribution to poor air quality' should omit the word 'poor'.

5.6 Peter Viggers suggested that the wording 'improvements in noise' should read 'reduction in noise'.

The Chairman acknowledged these amendments.

5.6 The Chairman welcomed Cllr. Don Lyons-Davis to his first meeting of the Sub-Committee as the newly elected member of LAANC, representing Datchet Parish Council.

3. "UK AIR QUALITY STRATEGY"

A presentation by Davide Minotti, Head of National and Local Air Quality Policy Branch, Department of Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) (*enclosed*).

The presentation (*enclosed*) was considered in the context of the White Paper proposals for a third runway at Heathrow Airport which provided that air pollution levels would have to comply with European Union standards.

3.1 An outline was given to the Committee on the Government policy on air quality, the health effects, the Air Quality Strategy itself, its objectives and measures with the progress to date and plans for the future.

The Government objective for an air quality policy was to ensure that polluting emissions and ambient air quality do not cause harm to human health and the environment.

The Department of Health Committee has carried out a study on the medical effects of air pollution.

A 1998 report was the first attempt to quantify the impact of short-term air pollution on people living in the UK.

The report suggested that the deaths of between 12,000-24,000 vulnerable people might be brought forward with 14,000-24,000 hospital admissions associated with short-term air pollution each year.

COMEAP advised that PM₁₀ might also be associated with cardiovascular hospital admissions. They also stated that it was likely that long-term exposure to air pollutants damaged health, and overall may be substantially greater than those quantified previously.

The Air Quality Strategy was introduced under the Environment Act 1995. The National Air Quality Strategy was published in 1997. A New Air Quality Strategy for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland was published in January 2000 and an Addendum was published in February 2003.

Standards and objectives for 9 key air pollutants were concentrations of pollutants in air at which no significant health effects were expected to occur with a medium term (2003/10) aim.

Pollutants included in the Air Quality Strategy were:-

- 5 Benzene
- 6 1,3-Butadiene
- 7 Carbon Monoxide
- 8 Lead
- 9 Nitrogen Dioxide (Oxides of Nitrogen)
- 10 Particles (PM₁₀)
- 11 Sulphur Dioxide
- 12 Ozone
- 13 PAHs

The running annual mean for each pollutant by area was shown with target dates, together with objectives for vegetation.

The Strategy explained how each sector could contribute to delivering the objectives.

There was a role to be played by Government, regulators, industry, individuals and local authorities through Local Air Quality Management.

National Measures taken include the industrial emissions controlled by the Environment Agency (and local authorities) through an industrial pollution control framework established in 2000. A new Pollution Prevention and Control regime is being phased in over the next 3-4 years.

Other emissions from domestic sources and small industries were controlled through Clean Air Act legislation with vehicle emissions regulated through EU standards for vehicles and fuel.

With regard to the Air Transport White Paper and Heathrow Airport, all scenarios modelled predicted that there would be people exposed to levels of NO₂ exceeding the prospective EU 2010 mandatory limit around Heathrow. Given the uncertainties involved, the prospects for avoiding exceedence towards 2020 were substantially better. The further development of Heathrow was supported, but only if stringent environmental limits can be met.

Local Air Quality Management was introduced by Part IV of the Environment Act 1995 and given legal effect by the Air Quality Regulations 1997 and 2000. Legislation applied in England, Scotland and Wales.

The local authorities' role was to review and assess the air quality in their respective areas and designate Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs), drawing up action plans which set out the local measures they intended to take in pursuit of the air quality objectives.

As regards progress so far, this was on track or targets had been met for most pollutants. However, Particulates, Nitrogen Dioxide, Ozone and PAHs remained a problem and additional measures would be needed to meet the objectives.

Geographical maps were shown of the objectives and the estimated annual mean background concentrations.

The dissemination of information was available from a national network of monitoring stations. Via the TV, radio and other media, via Ceefax and teletex (Ceefax pages 410-417), www.defra.gov.uk.

The next steps at national level will be:-

- 5 the review of the Air Quality Strategy
- 6 the review of the 10 Year Transport Plan
- 7 the review of the Climate Change Programme
- 8 implementation of the Large Combustion Plant Directive
- 9 Possible new Euro Standards
- 10 Road charging lorry users by 2007/2008
- 11 Feasibility study for all road user charging to report in 2004

Quoting from the White Paper in relation to Heathrow Airport:-

“We will institute immediately a programme of work on how to make the most of Heathrow's existing runways and add a new runway after the Stansted runway, while complying with conditions on air quality, noise and improving public transport access”.

The Government is considering how that work will be taken forward.

Following on from the presentation, the members asked questions.

3.2 The Chairman asked how the monitor sites were chosen.

Davide Minotti said this was decided in accordance with European guidelines and technical guidance.

Paul Ellis said the nearest monitor to Heathrow was 200-300 metres to the east of the Visitor Centre with another placed at the Spur Road.

- 3.3 Andy Hull asked in relation to road vehicles, why the DVLA vehicle excise and duty concessions for Euro 4 vehicles do not apply to private passenger vehicles, only commercial vehicles. Why was this the case and what incentive was there for members of the public to upgrade to the Euro 4 vehicle.

Davide Minotti replied there were concessions, but the Strategy did not cover this objective as a specific measure and he would have to investigate further and report back to the Committee.

- 3.4 Cllr. Cox stated that if local authorities decided that the limits had reached a low enough level, they would then in effect, be sanctioning the approval for the third runway, which was not the objective in the case of the LB Hillingdon. Also, who would decide that levels had reached a sufficiently low level.

Davide Minotti stated that he was confident that legally binding limits would be met to European standards.

The Government working in conjunction with local authorities' would make the final decision.

- 3.5 Tony Lucking asked what proportion of pollutant was attributable to motor-cars as opposed to aeroplanes in the M4 vicinity. He quoted that it was reported the overall figure stood at 42% whereas in Central London, Marylebone Road area it was 76%, with Russell Square at 46%, with the M2 at Gravesend where 784 homes were at risk.

Davide Minotti replied that the proportion of pollutant from vehicles as reported in the London Borough of Hillingdon Air Quality Report being attributable from the A40, which was near to the airport was 30 microgrammes per cubic foot.

The Chairman requested that the LB Hillingdon representative ensured that the Committee members each received a copy of the aforementioned Report.

This was agreed.

- 5.6 The Chairman confirmed that it had been stated at the recently held Noise Seminar that the M4 tunnel as featured in the local Press was not a proposal. It had merely been a suggestion that had been quickly dropped.
- 5.6 Cllr. Mann asked how the pollutants from local authorities would be calculated.

Davide Minotti said it had been recognised by Government that local authorities' needed to work towards objectives, so national and local measures would be combined.

5.7 Cllr. Maxwell stated that very little studies had been undertaken on asthmatic children and the affect of PM₁₀'s. He believed that the pollutants from the vicinity of the airport made a distinct contribution to this health problem

Davide Minotti said it was important to protect both children and adults with respiratory problems.

A number of studies had been undertaken on children living near airports in European countries.

3.9 Paul Ellis asked if the road user charging studies were available.

Davide Minotti replied that these would be fed into the overall study.

3.10 Cllr. Bennett asked if we could be confident that the set parameters would be adhered to.

Davide Minotti confirmed the parameters would either remain as now or be tightened, not lessened.

3.11 Cllr. De Vic Carey believed that stress and other illnesses brought about by pollution should be included in the studies.

David Minotti said that not only a respiratory study, but also cardiovascular disease study had been undertaken.

3.12 Cllr. Beer asked if the monitor sites were DEFRA or local authority sites.

Davide Minotti confirmed they were a combination of both local authority and national sites. At local level, a request had been made to follow guidelines and at a national level, European guidance was adhered to.

3.13 Peter Viggers stated that the Government should be seeking to find a better, alternative means of transport.

David Minotti replied that the study was not only about charging control emissions.

3.14 Roy Featherstone requested a list of current pollutant readings compared to those required for the future.

The Chairman asked how these would be defined.

Davide Minotti would report back to the Committee with this information in written format but it was available on the DEFRA website.

3.15 Virginia Godfrey suggested that the Technical Adviser might collate all the

relevant data from the findings of the local authorities' to present to the members.

Gerard Silverstone confirmed that BAA was keen to attend a main HACC meeting at a later stage in the year to put such information forward as a presentation. This was agreed.

- 3.16. The Technical Adviser reminded the Committee that BAA had issued an Air Quality Strategy and copies were distributed to the members in the latter part of 2003. This document contained all the relevant points discussed.

The Chairman thanked Davide Minotti for his informative presentation.

4a. "EASTERLY NOISE PREFERENTIAL ROUTES AND TYPICAL TRACKS – HANWELL AND EALING AREAS"

A presentation by Nita Easey, Flight Evaluation Communications Manager, (BAA) (*enclosed*).

- 4.1a. There were concerns raised by residents who were affected by the westerly operations and disgruntled by the number of early morning arrivals that they experienced over-flying their properties, in comparison to people living under flight paths on easterly operations. The result of this, was the introduction of a weekly switch at night, being westerly preference one week and easterly preference the next.

A map of Noise Preferential Routes was shown together with a typical day's tracks of easterly departures between 1995 and 2003.

Despite the belief from the Ealing residents that easterlies had increased, it could be seen that there was very little percentage difference year on year and had in some instances decreased.

5	1995 - 33%
6	1996 - 40%
7	1997 - 34%
8	1998 - 23%
9	1999 - 25%
10	2000 - 22%
11	2001 - 30%
12	2002 - 31%
13	2003 - 37%

It was a Government requirement that the aircraft should follow the correct track, but a 'swathe' of 1.5 km either side was allowed of the NPR centre line and as long as the aircraft was within that boundary it was considered to be on-track.

There was no evidence to prove that flights were off-track, nor that an undue number of flights were on paths over Ealing and resulting in more aircraft

noise in comparison to other areas.

Many factors affected complaint trends.

- 5 No direct correlation with number of movements
- 6 Direction of Operation
- 7 Improvements in Noise Mitigation
- 8 Better understanding of procedures/constraints
- 9 Changed noise measures:
 - Permanent - Runway Alternation at night
 - Temporary - Maintenance/Weather
- 5 External factors - 9/11, Government consultations.

Although concentration had been given to the particular Ealing route in the presentation, Nita Easey offered the facility to the members of a personal briefing/demonstration to look at their particular areas and issues at a later date.

- 4.1b The Technical Adviser referred to the Department for Transport's Night Flight Consultation meeting held at Victoria on 27th March 2004, at which it was inferred that the consultation due to take place would occur sooner rather than later, probably in the next month or two.

Noise monitoring studies carried out by the Civil Aviation Authority on behalf of the Department for Transport, calculated under a single event departure on the easterly routes, that the flights which go up over Ealing were estimated to involve 30,000 residents when the affect of noise was looked at from the QC4 four-engine aircraft and the 90dBA footprint that it created as a result.

It would be hoped by the publication of this statistical data that members who had an interest in this aspect, would be able to draw a conclusion from this.

Nita Easey commented that with regard to the use of the routes, although it was an Air Traffic Control decision, basically the destination was the main factor that decided which route the aircraft travelled on. It was not an arbitrary decision.

- 4.1c. Peter Viggers spoke as a LB Ealing resident and said that aircraft noise in that vicinity was variable and several weeks could elapse with no easterly take-offs over Ealing and then on other occasions for several days easterlies would be constant. It was a subject of great importance to the residents.

Nita Easey commented that month against month, year-on-year there was no correlation of easterlies. One year could vary greatly from another.

4b. “EASTERLY DEPARTURES FROM HEATHROW AIRPORT”

A presentation by Steve James, National Air Traffic Services, Heathrow (NATS) (*enclosed*).

Standard Instrument Departures (SIDs) were explained.

Airspace Management gave rise to a concentration of departures along a limited number of fixed departure routes.

- 5 Maintain safe separation between successive departures
- 6 Minimise conflicts with inbound aircraft
- 7 Make efficient use of runway capacity
- 8 Standardise departure procedures reducing RT and ATC workload
- 9 Due to position of navigational aids

These considerations concentrate departing traffic along a small number of tracks.

- 5 Therefore made sense to arrange tracks to avoid densely populated areas as far as possible
- 6 Two working groups of the Noise Advisory Council (NAC) in 1960s and 1970's
- 7 Concentration versus Dispersal

View of successive Government

‘the balance of social and environmental advantage lies in concentrating aircraft taking off from airports along the least possible number of specified routes consistent with airspace management considerations and the overriding need for safety’.

This policy is given effect by the Secretary of State's requirement for aircraft to follow Noise Preferential Routes (NPRs) which form the initial part of the Standard Instrument Departure (SIDs) promulgated in the UK – AIP.

Noise Preferential Routes

Do

- 5 Preclude radar vectors below specified altitudes
- 6 Require a minimum climb performance
- 7 Provide local maps showing ‘swathes’ 1 ½ km either side of the NPR centre line

Do Not

- 5 Have specific Government performance standards for track-keeping accuracy

Exceptions

- 5 Avoiding loss of separation
- 6 Severe weather avoidance radar vectors below specified altitudes
- 7 Require a minimum climb performance
- 8 Provide local maps showing 'swathes' 1½ km either side of the NPR centre line

Therefore it made sense to arrange tracks to avoid densely populated areas as far as possible

- 5 Two working groups of the Noise Advisory Council (NAC) were set up in the 1960's and 1970's and favoured Concentration versus Dispersal.

Runway 09L Departures

- 5 When ILS is unserviceable vis <6km cloud ceiling <1000
- 6 Runway 09R is unserviceable
- 7 IRVR is better on 09R for landing in LVP's (Low Visibility Procedures)

The Chairman thanked both Nita Easey and Steve James for the interesting presentations.

5. "NOISE CONTOURS AT HEATHROW AIRPORT"

A discussion piece by John Stewart, Chairman of HACAN/Clearskies on the methodology of computing these contours and doubts on their validity.

A copy of an extract from the Mayor of London's draft 'Ambient Noise Strategy' relating to this matter was circulated with the Agenda to provide a background for discussion. The delayed Noise Strategy is due for publication in 2004.

A copy of the Summary 'The Quiet Con' was tabled. – Summary and Brochure – 'A' Weighted Leqs as the Index of Aircraft Noise Annoyance (*enclosed*).

- 5.1 John Stewart stated there was a belief that there were real doubts as to how the noise contours were actually measured. HACAN/Clearskies, with the assistance of the Federation of Aircraft Noise Groups (FANG), had produced a publication entitled 'The Quiet Con' which detailed a study into the noise contours, which had revealed that they were not faultless. It was suggested that those responsible for assessing aircraft noise should use resources to produce additional indices to 'A' weighted Leqs, the sole reliance on which was likely to be distorting the truth, as the contour figures did not actually match up to the noise heard on the ground.

The impact of noise from Heathrow can be experienced by residents in communities twenty miles from the airport. HACAN/Clearskies now had membership from people living in Greenwich, Henley, Blackheath, Finsbury Park, Stockwell and Mile End.

A survey conducted by the Greater London Authority published in 2002, revealed that over 400,000 Londoners claimed that aircraft noise was a serious problem in their lives.

Aeroplanes fly over the area of Fulham at between 60-70 decibels, but the recording would show the noise averaged out at 55 dbA Leq. It was argued that this figure was meaningless as the actual noise was much higher.

Quiet periods were included in the exercise to average out the findings, which gave a distorted picture to the reality of the situation.

The Department for Transport does not measure low frequency noise and underestimated the level at which aircraft noise annoyed people.

The 'Quiet Con' made a number of recommendations although it did not suggest the abolition of the Leq system of averaging out and it was recognised that this would be difficult as it is used internationally. However, it was suggested that changes that could be made to make noise measurement reflect more accurately the way people hear aircraft noise were as follows:-

- 5 That quiet periods of the day and quiet days of the year are eliminated as far as practicable when averaging out noise levels.
- 6 That additional methods are used to assess the noise climate as recommended by the World Health Organisation. At Sydney Airport, which is similar to Heathrow Airport because it is sited so that approaching aircraft over-fly the city, does not rely solely on Leqs. Instead, maps were produced showing the density of air traffic and also gave information such as the number of noise events above 60 dBA on an average day.
- 7 That when measuring aircraft noise 'C' weighting should be used to allow low-frequency noise to be captured.
- 8 That the UK Government should adopt the World Health Organisation standards of when noise disturbance sets in. 50 and 55 decibels were used. The international way of measuring noise was by L_{den} for day/evening/night as opposed to Leq which proved to be more accurate.
- 9 When selling a property the vendor should be bound through the Estate Agent to accurately reflect the sort of noise experienced by over-flying aircraft throughout the day and night periods and pass this information on

to the prospective purchaser.

- 5.2 Nita Easey confirmed that the Flight Evaluation Office do provide a service and an information pack on flight paths to prospective purchasers of property in the vicinity.

Following on from the Noise Seminar held at the 'Le Meridien' Hotel on Wednesday 3rd March 2004, BAA had undertaken to further explore this service with Estate Agents and develop the system on the Internet.

The Technical Adviser pointed out that it would soon become law that vendors would be duty bound to provide this information as part of a 'Home Information Pack'

- 5.3 Cllr. Beer asked if it was possible that there was any waiting time to very early morning incoming flights when there would be no background noise at all.

John Stewart replied that the World Health Organisation recommended much lower levels of background noise at night, 45 decibels, than that experienced at Heathrow.

- 5.4 Virginia Godfrey stated that based on the calculations at present, the noise contours would remain the same and flights would hugely increase.

- 5.5 Peter Viggers said that over the years, individual noise from aircraft had decreased, but until 'averaging' was abolished the contours would not be accurate. A more realistic method was needed.

- 5.6 The Technical Adviser confirmed that both he and the Chairman would be attending the ANMAC meeting on Monday 8th March 2004 and would raise the subject of noise contours.

- 5.7 The Chairman thanked John Stewart for his constructive discussion piece.

6. "CONTROL OF AIRCRAFT NOISE"

A summary of the new powers available to airport operators, and for the designated BAA London airports by the Secretary of State, was annexed to the Agenda and was noted by members. The main document was published as one of those issued to support the aviation White Paper in December 2003. The article entitled '*Integrating aviation into an EU emission trading scheme*' by Mike Clasper, Chief Executive, BAA plc. was annexed to the Agenda and was noted by members.

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There were no further matters to discuss and the Chairman closed the meeting at 12.30 p.m.