

Agenda Item: 9	Reference: HACC.581
Date : 28 Sep 11	
DfT Scoping Document	

Attached to this report is an initial draft of a possible HACC submission in response to the DfT scoping document on a sustainable framework for UK aviation. It seeks to cover the areas identified at the last meeting of HACC and links them as answers to the most relevant questions posed in the document.

Members are invited to be prepared to agree a final version at the HACC meeting planned for 28 September 2011.

PC/581

DRAFT

Response to DfT Scoping Document on a Sustainable Framework for UK Aviation

Introduction

The Heathrow Airport Consultative Committee (HACC) welcomes the opportunity to respond to the DfT Scoping Document on a Sustainable Framework for UK Aviation.

By its very nature HACC comprises a broad cross section of views and interests, given the range of stakeholders in its membership. Therefore, it is not possible for it to respond to all the questions posed in the document. However, all HACC members recognise the importance of aviation to the UK economy and the particular importance of Heathrow to London as a global business centre. To that end the airport needs to be efficient and resilient in providing a good experience for all the passengers it handles. HACC also recognises that it is vital that every effort be made to minimise the impact of the noise and air pollution generated by aviation activities on the communities surrounding airports.

Responses to Questions

5.40

The positive impacts of aviation for communities local to airports are the high and long term employment opportunities and everything that flows from a thriving local economy.

The most significant negative impacts are noise and local air pollution. These impacts can be mitigated by Government-imposed limits on volumes and times of flight activities and by the continued operation of runway alternation. New metrics to measure the experience of noise would better inform mitigation procedures. Through CAA, the Government can encourage the earliest, safe, adoption of new operational procedures, such as steeper and continuous approaches, continuous climb departures and the use of area navigation. The Government must also be instrumental in encouraging the international phasing out of older technology and the earliest adoption of the new. This could include financial inducements (or penalties or both) for the adoption of the new or withdrawal of the old.

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The current procedures work effectively as far as HACC is concerned. We believe that the range of bodies and individuals that belong to HACC is a good template for other consultative committees to adopt. In particular, we think that the passenger experience at Heathrow benefits from the establishment of our Passenger Services Sub Committee. We know that not all airports have such a body. In the case of PSSC, the members are those bodies representing the consumer viewpoint, such as the Consumers Association, trade bodies, such as ABTA, and independent travellers who regularly use the airport. The members of PSSC carry out unaccompanied, individual inspections of the airport every 4 months. The inspection itineraries are designed by PSSC, but BAA has the opportunity to invite inspection of specific areas or aspects of its operation and this increases the mutual benefit of these inspections.

BAA responds to the content of the reports generated at the following PSSC meeting with a view to improving the passenger experience. Most of the members of PSSC are also full members of HACC. Airport Master Plans are valuable to the wider community in that they set out the growth forecasts, development proposals and aspirations of the airport operator over a set timeframe and can therefore be taken into account by planning authorities, developers, businesses and local people in decision making. We feel that they should be made widely available.

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Readily available, low emission public transport coupled with some incentive to use it and disincentives to using private transport would be a powerful strategy to improving air quality around airports. HACC strongly supports the efforts made to encourage the use of public transport both by travellers and airport workers.

If the size/capacity of south eastern airports is to remain constrained, we believe that the variety of destinations offered to the traveller might be improved by better and faster transport links between those airports, in addition to better links between the airports and London. We propose that DfT sponsors some research into the cost/benefit of the idea.

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There is a view that the idea of a noise envelope is insufficiently defined to allow for a complete response. Some merit can be seen in the broad idea. However, there is real concern that it is not just total noise that impacts the locality but also the frequency of such noise events. Many residents would not wish to be affected more often by noise events, even if they were of a little less individual impact. For Heathrow in particular, there is absolutely no appetite for any increase in the current movement cap of 480,000 atms per year.

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Spreading the noise burden is a hard thing to do. However, there may be an argument for some variation or widening of noise preferential routes. This is because, when they were first created, there was a natural spread of tracks around their centre lines. Improved navigation equipment seems to have concentrated aircraft tracks in recent years. Some dispersal may now be justified, if only to replicate the earlier natural spread of tracks.

PHC

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