

## **Tandridge District Council's response to the Department for Transport's questions in its consultation on the Draft Aviation Policy Framework**

### **Chapter 2: The benefits of aviation**

#### **Connectivity**

**Question 1 - Do you agree with our analysis of the meaning and value of connectivity set out in this chapter?**

#### **Council's Comments**

The Council agrees with the description of connectivity, and the value of connectivity, as presented in paragraph 2.14 of the Draft Framework and the Government's objective of making the UK, through its air links, one of the best-connected countries in the world. The Council considers that this can be achieved by encouraging better utilisation of existing runway capacity in the short term supported by improved surface connections, particularly high speed rail links and dedicated airport express services and a more stringent night flights' regime to encourage the use of the quietest aircraft during the night period. The Government's short term approach of making best use of existing runway capacity is supported in principle. The Government should acknowledge that growth in the use of runways should be subject to agreements and commitments which manage local environmental impacts.

The establishment of an independent commission to address the provision of longer term capacity is also supported. When published, the Aviation Policy Framework should make it clear that all options for the long term are to be given due consideration to include the balance between hub capacity and point-to-point, and that there is no presumption in favour of either. The scale and location of future capacity should rightly be determined following a full examination of all the options.

Development of connectivity by air should not, however, be seen in isolation. It should be looked at in the context of other modes of surface transport and, more specifically, against the background of the rising use of the internet for long distance communication. Whilst it is not always a replacement for face-to-face communication, the internet performs an increasingly valuable economic and social role. The UK should establish and maintain its role at the forefront of electronic communication and avoid becoming overly focused on a mode of transport which may be seen by future generations as only a small part of a much more complex network of communication.

#### **Extending fifth freedoms**

**Question 2 - Do you support the proposal to extend the UK's fifth freedom policy to Gatwick, Stansted and Luton? Please provide reasons if possible.**

#### **Council's Comments**

The proposal to extend fifth freedom policy will potentially open up greater opportunities for air passengers to access a wider range of destinations and, therefore, careful consideration should be given, on a case-by-case basis, to when this would be appropriate. In practice this could mean larger and noisier aircraft using Gatwick for comparatively few passengers.

**Question 3 - Are there any other conditions that ought to be applied to any extension of the UK's fifth freedom policy to Gatwick, Stansted and Luton?**

#### **Council' Comments**

Extending fifth freedom policy could offer greater potential for airports to offer differential terms for carbon limits and low noise aircraft. There is also a need to ensure that fifth freedom flights are taken fully into account in the night flights' regime, both as an arrival and as a departure, so that there is no deterioration in the noise environment for those under the flight paths.

## **Airports outside the South East**

**Question 4 - Do you agree that the Government should offer bilateral partners unilateral open access to UK airports outside the South East on a case-by-case basis?**

### **Council's Comments**

None

**Any other comments on approach and evidence**

**Question 5 - Do you have any other comments on the approach and evidence set out in Chapter 2?**

### **Council's Comments**

The proposed upgrade to the rail network will help to meet domestic passengers' requirements but it is important that rail links to airports are extended and improved through better rolling stock designed for the needs of the airline passenger. The importance of rolling stock design for rail services serving airports should be recognised in the Aviation Policy Framework building on the references made in the Government's Rail Command Paper issued last year. Air passengers have unique requirements, which differ from commuters and other rail passengers, as they are often carrying baggage in a foreign country on part of a longer onward journey. It is considered that in order to integrate airports more successfully into the wider transport network, rail services to airports should seek to meet the needs of air passengers by providing step-free access, wide doors, large luggage racks and information displays.

In addition to Local Enterprise Partnerships, airports should be encouraged to engage actively with new Local Transport Bodies to ensure that, where possible, transport investment supports airport growth plans and the integration of investment and services.

## **Chapter 3: Climate change impacts**

### **Reducing emissions**

**Question 6 - Do you have any further ideas on how the Government could incentivise the aviation and aerospace sectors to improve the performance of aircraft with the aim of reducing emissions?**

### **Council's Comments**

The Government should rigorously pursue opportunities to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from air transport through work at an international level. The UK should be seen as a leader in seeking international agreements. At a national level the Government should look to incentivise reductions in greenhouse gas emissions but should not look to adopt unilateral measures which would significantly undermine the UK's international trading role.

The measures identified in Chapter 3 regarding efforts to improve the performance of aircraft with the aim of reducing emissions are supported. The proposed new powers for the Civil Aviation Authority regarding improved public information on the environmental effects of civil aviation will help raise awareness amongst the industry and air passengers, and will establish benchmarks against which progress can be measured.

The Council welcomes the Government's recognition that further detailed analysis of aviation's non carbon dioxide emission impacts is needed in order to provide a more consistent analysis of the impacts of policy measures.

## **Any other comments on approach and evidence**

### **Question 7 - Do you have any other comments on the approach and evidence set out in Chapter 3?**

#### **Council's Comments**

The Council welcomes the Government's commitment (paragraph 3.3) to participating in and helping to fund a number of projects into non carbon dioxide impacts. As evidence of the effects of non carbon dioxide emissions emerges, the Government is urged to use this evidence to inform the overall aviation policy and ensure these impacts are addressed. If a re-think of overall aviation policy in relation to climate change is required, the Government should undertake this with full stakeholder consultation. The Government is urged to consider a range of additional measures to address aviation's impact on climate change otherwise 2020 and 2050 emissions targets will not be met.

The Government's objectives of encouraging shorter movements by train is supported, however, greater consideration should be given to the surface transport issues at airports other than Heathrow. Airports such as Gatwick need to be supported by improved surface level access. At a strategic level this may involve investment beyond that which could be accommodated in local surface transport strategies.

## **Chapter 4: Noise and other local environmental impacts**

### **Government controls – the designated airports**

#### **Question 8 - Do you agree that the Government should continue to designate the three largest London airports for noise management purposes? If not, please provide reasons.**

#### **Council's Comments**

It is considered that the Government should continue to designate the three largest London airports for noise management purposes. It is important to retain the movement limits and noise quota counts that are applied as the night flying regime at the three largest London airports. It is vital to retain both of these controls, and, in particular, movement limits as they represent an important feature of the impact of aviation activity on communities – the actual number of over flights.

It is important for Gatwick to continue to be noise managed but it is necessary to have some more meaningful measurements that reflect the noise nuisance. Adjusting the flight paths as and when possible through the operation of P-RNAV and ultimately achieving a better use of London airspace can be a step towards improving the noise climate. However, it is important that the public has a clear understanding of the management processes and policies in place as it is often the adherence to flight policy that causes disturbance and annoyance.

The noise designation of airports should not, however, prevent the airport and local authorities from continuing to work together to establish other locally agreed improvements and mitigation measures to improve the noise climate.

### **Policy objectives**

#### **Question 9 - Do you agree with the Government's overall objective on aviation noise?**

#### **Council's Comments**

The Government's objective for limiting and reducing the noise impact of air travel is welcome. It must be recognised, however, that the delivery of the long term capacity needed to maintain the UK's global connectivity may conflict with this objective.

It is important that the new Aviation Policy Framework prevents a deterioration in the local environment around airports and should provide further detailed guidance on noise exposure levels to support the strategic overview given in the Noise Policy Statement for England which currently lacks the detailed guidance needed on which planning decisions can be based.

The discussion in Annex D of the draft Aviation Policy Framework on the use of different noise contours is welcome. It is considered that given the choice between using 55 dB(A) $L_{den}$  or 54 dB  $L_{Aeq,16h}$  contours, there is a preference to changing to the use of the 55 dB(A) $L_{den}$  contour to align with the END strategic noise maps and noise action plans. For Gatwick, with year-round operation, and with a significant number of night flights, it is felt that  $L_{den}$  more accurately reflects the real situation.

**Question 10 - Do you agree that the Government should retain the 57 dB  $L_{Aeq,16h}$  contour as the average level of daytime aircraft noise marking the approximate onset of significant community annoyance?**

### **Council's Comments**

The Council does not consider that the  $L_{Aeq,16h}$  metric is appropriate for measuring aircraft noise disturbance. Serial one-off aircraft events of aircraft flying overhead cannot be equated to a continuous steady state noise like a fan. As each aircraft passes overhead, attention is drawn to it and so the number of events is as important as the overall sound levels produced. The 57 dB  $L_{Aeq,16h}$  sound average disguises the much higher noise peaks created by the aircraft and gives a misleading impression of the annoyance caused. The Government should, therefore, use a lower level, e.g. the 54 dB  $L_{Aeq,16h}$  contour, as the average level of daytime aircraft noise marking the approximate onset of significant community annoyance. The alternative of the European level of 55 dB(A) $L_{den}$  has its flaws as it is also based on the  $L_{Aeq}$  with the addition of weightings for evening and night time producing a rating level that has to be calculated rather than measured.

The Council, therefore, urges the Government to undertake new research into the levels of noise and annoyance as the current threshold is too high.

**Question 11 - Do you think that the Government should map noise exposure around the noise designated airports to a lower level than 57 dB(A)? If so, which level would be appropriate?**

### **Council's Comments**

Please see the response to Question 10 above. The Council would like the Government to map noise exposures around Gatwick Airport to 54 dB  $L_{Aeq,16h}$  and there is also a need for the Government to consider the monitoring and publishing of data on movements on approach routes.

### **Noise envelopes**

**Question 12 - Do you agree with the proposed principles to which the Government would have regard when setting a noise envelope at any new national hub airport or any other airport development which is a nationally significant infrastructure project?**

### **Council's Comments**

The principles seem appropriate, however, it should be recognized that while this approach may contain the overall noise levels and limit the number of new people affected, it provides little benefit to existing sufferers. People under the landing approaches will not see any improvement in their noise environment for the foreseeable future and these people should be compensated appropriately.

## **Noise abatement operational procedures**

**Question 13 - Do you agree that noise should be given particular weight when balanced against other environmental factors affecting communities living near airports?**

### **Council's Comments**

Noise and the frequency of the disturbances are considered to have the most serious local environmental impact for communities living near airports. However, that does not mean that other factors should be given a reduced weight. There is also a major concern about noise and air pollution from road traffic accessing airports via local roads and through village communities.

**Question 14 - What factors should the Government consider when deciding how to balance the benefits of respite with other environmental benefits?**

### **Council's Comments**

The current Government policy is to concentrate flights along the fewest number of routes and that these routes should avoid densely populated areas. In the case of Gatwick, the prevailing wind conditions mean that an average 70% of all landings come from an easterly direction creating significant noise disturbance to many local communities close to the flight path.

Respite is crucial for those communities affected by noise. The concept of respite is supported provided that it does not involve diverting flight paths over areas which are at present peaceful. Implementation of respite could mean negative impacts for some people and in such cases compensation should be offered to those suffering negative impacts or to those who have bought houses after investigating flight patterns and bought outside the major swathes.

The Council considers that the current noise preferential routes (NPRs) should remain. P-RNAV gives a great opportunity to fly more accurately, discover which is the most appropriate line, or use of lines on a rotation, to fly within the NPR. P-RNAV also provides the opportunity to discover possibly better paths to fly that may be just outside the NPR, but affect fewer people. This information could be useful when LAMP is introduced in 2018. It is highly likely that one size will not fit all when deciding the path to fly so respite needs to be investigated whether for departing or arriving aircraft. It may be possible to share the annoyance rather than concentrating on a specific population if an acceptable single route is unacceptable.

## **Noise limits, monitoring and penalties**

**Question 15 - Do you agree with the Government's proposals in paragraph 4.68 on noise limits, monitoring and penalties?**

### **Council's Comments**

The number of noise infringements at Gatwick has fallen significantly since the introduction of twin engined aircraft. The noise limits no longer provide an incentive to continue seeking improvements. A redefinition of departure limits would encourage not only the manufacture of quieter aircraft, but for the benefit of local residents, the use of quieter aircraft.

The proposals in paragraph 4.68 on noise limits, monitoring and penalties are welcome. However, the Council considers that there is a need for a mix of measures to address sound level; number, time, duration, altitude and frequency of flights; noise signature of aircraft; predictability of flight paths; and reliable periods of respite, including for those suffering from approach noise.

The proposal to review the penalties for breaches of the limits is supported. It is important that the new limits, with tougher penalties, are more effective with the desired outcome of containing the noise climate around airports. The proposal to give consideration to imposing penalties on airlines which fail to comply with CDA and minimum height requirements is also supported. Details of penalties imposed should be published on the airport website.

**Question 16 - In what circumstances would it be appropriate for the Government to direct noise designated airports to establish and maintain a penalty scheme?**

**Council's Comments**

Designated airports should continue to operate a penalty scheme. Although no Order (under the Civil Aviation Act 1982) has been made to establish the penalty scheme at Gatwick, the scheme was introduced on the understanding that, if not adhered to, the Government would introduce an Order. If there was any case where an airport refused to set up a penalty scheme, or (more likely) where an airline refused to pay, then it would be appropriate for an Order to be made.

**Question 17 - In what circumstances would it be appropriate for the Government to make an order requiring designated airports to maintain and operate noise monitors and produce noise measurement reports?**

**Council's Comments**

The maintenance and operation of noise monitors should be a mandatory requirement for noise designated airports.

**Use of differential landing fees**

**Question 18 - How could differential landing fees be better utilised to improve the noise environment around airports, particularly at night?**

**Council's Comments**

Making best use of existing capacity is supported but measures need to be put in place to ensure the noise climate around airports is not made worse. Greater use of differential landing fees will incentivise airlines to invest in quieter and cleaner aircraft. It is considered that there should be higher landing fees at night on the noisiest type of aircraft.

Lower landing fees for operating the quietest aircraft at night will incentivise airlines but this needs to be in conjunction with a meaningful movement and noise quota scheme. The current night flights regime at Gatwick is not effective in winter as the quotas and movements limits have been set too high and are, therefore, underused providing little incentive for airlines to invest in or use quieter aircraft. These should be reduced to a level reflecting past use.

It is considered that the Government should acquire evidence on how landing fees are being used to incentivise the use of the quietest and cleanest aircraft. It is also considered that further research is needed into the impacts of differential landing charges to be undertaken in order that the optimum level may be achieved to reduce the negative impacts of noise for local communities, in particular, at night.

**Compensation schemes**

**Question 19 - Do you think airport compensation schemes are reasonable and proportionate?**

**Council's Comments**

It is considered that airport compensation schemes are not reasonable or proportionate. The noise levels at which compensation falls due are too high. Gatwick Airport has in place a noise insulation scheme for local residents as well as for other noise sensitive buildings. It is considered that the current scheme could be more generous and should be applied to a wider area e.g. within the whole of the 57 dB  $L_{Aeq,16h}$  contour, all rooms within a house should be eligible, not just bedrooms, and grants should be offered for the replacement of double glazing installed many years ago.

If the idea of respite is to be taken forward then those who suffer the negative effects of changes to flight patterns should be considered for some means of compensation. In addition, it would appear that undefined “annoyance” is creating a noise problem and the first step should be to reduce the noise level of the 69 dB  $L_{Aeq,16h}$  to a much lower level. The high number of aircraft movements is making the average measurements over a period of time meaningless and is also responsible for the “annoyance” factor.

## **Noise from GA and helicopters**

**Question 20 - Do you agree with the approach to the management of noise from general aviation and helicopters, in particular to the use of the section 5 power?**

### **Council’s Comments**

It is not considered that there are sufficient local powers for adequate local resolution of noise from general aviation and helicopters, therefore, the application of the “section 5 power” is advocated.

**Question 21 - What other measures might be considered that would improve the management of noise from these sources?**

### **Council’s Comments**

It is considered that legislation should be introduced to address helicopter noise. Given that helicopter noise has different characteristics and can affect a wide range of communities, close to both commercial and private helicopter landing sites, the Government should address helicopter noise through specific policies rather than within the general context of reducing noise from aviation.

**Question 22 - Do you have any further ideas on how the Government could incentivise the aviation and aerospace sector to deliver quieter planes?**

### **Council’s Comments**

It is considered that the publication of performance data, for example on track-keeping and CDA adherence, broken down by airline and aircraft type, will incentivise airlines to improve their operating performance and ensure flight procedure best practice.

Differential landing fees based on noise emissions would encourage airlines to use quieter aircraft.

## **Air quality and other local environmental impacts**

**Question 23 - Do you believe that the regime for the regulation of other local environmental impacts at airports is effective?**

### **Council’s Comments**

It is considered that the way air quality and environmental impacts related to waste management and habitat are managed is also important in regulating airports.

As air quality at airports is closely linked to surface transport connecting to the airport, the Council welcomes the commitment in the draft Aviation Policy Framework that the Government, as stated in paragraph 4.99, will “work with airport operators to develop low emission surface access strategies through, for example, improving rail access to airports and promoting lower emission vehicles”. The Council also welcomes the recognition of the role Airports’ Air Transport Forums can play in delivering surface access improvements.

Gatwick, like other airports, should be encouraged to take measures to reduce pollution levels even where they do not exceed EU limits. It is considered that aviation policy should focus on

reducing aircraft particulate emissions (for example by reducing the amount of sulphur in aircraft fuel).

**Question 24 - Do you think that noise regulation should be integrated into a broader regulatory framework which tackles the local environmental impacts from airports?**

### **Council's Comments**

Yes, noise regulation should be integrated into a broader regulatory framework which tackles the local environmental impacts from airports.

Whilst Gatwick does have strategies for reducing its environmental impact, airports by the nature of their activities will have an impact on their local communities e.g. commercial vehicles delivering/collecting air freight over which they currently have little or no regulatory control, therefore, there is merit to widening the framework.

## **Chapter 5: Working together**

### **Airport Consultative Committees**

**Question 25 - Do you think Airport Consultative Committees should play a stronger role and if so, how could this be achieved?**

### **Council's Comments**

The Council welcomes the Government's commitment to updating and consulting on the 2003 guidance to Airport Consultative Committees which will be an important element of understanding how these Committees can play a stronger role. Whilst there should be scope for Airport Consultative Committees to play stronger roles within their existing remit, it must be remembered that they are consultative bodies with no executive powers and are reliant upon the relevant airport operator for resources and for much of the information they have to consider. A strengthened role will require interest on the part of members and an ability to relate with more detail than present to some of the issues and the availability of information that is presented in terms that lay people can understand. Strengthening the role of Airport Consultative Committees will require enhanced engagement with members, local communities and other bodies, and the need for more independent research, scrutiny and advice, possibly through the Committees' Secretariats. It may also mean the formation of sub-groups that meet and report to the full Committee. The Government will, therefore, have to consider how this can be provided and who should fund an enhanced role.

**Question 26 - Is there a case for changing the list of airports currently designated to provide consultative facilities?**

### **Council's Comments**

It is considered that there is no need to change the list of airports currently designated to provide consultative facilities due to the limitations of such Committees. It is considered that there is a need to reflect the difference between the expected role of Airport Consultative Committees at the larger airports and the smaller aerodromes.

### **Noise management**

**Question 27 - Do you agree that the Civil Aviation Authority should have a role in providing independent oversight of airports' noise management?**

### **Council's Comments**

It is considered appropriate for the Civil Aviation Authority to contribute to the oversight of airport operators' noise management schemes working in concert with other bodies to improve such schemes. It is also considered that the Civil Aviation Authority has the expertise to contribute to the process of airport noise management.

### **Working together**

#### **Question 28 - Do you agree with the Government's overall objective on working together?**

### **Council's Comments**

The Council agrees with the Government's overall objective of "working together". The Government's objective for strengthened joint working is supported and reflects the approach being adopted in the Gatwick area. The Government should recognise the importance of translating non-statutory plans prepared by the airport in consultation with the local community into local planning policies so that they can be formally examined. This will help provide confidence to the airport and the local community that airports can grow in a sustainable and environmentally acceptable way.

### **Annex E**

#### **Question 29 - Is the high-level guidance provided in Annex E sufficient to allow airports to develop local solutions with local partners?**

### **Council's Comments**

The high-level guidance as provided in Annex E of the draft Aviation Policy Framework is considered sufficient to allow airports to develop local solutions with local partners. It provides enough guidance to provide a skeletal structure and best practice without being too prescriptive.

As regards the guidance for Airport Transport Forums, it is suggested that depending on the size of the airport and the issues to be addressed, flexibility on the number of times the full Forum meets is needed particularly if sub-groups of a Forum are established and feed into the full Forum meeting.

### **Incorporation of airport surface access strategies in master plans**

#### **Question 30 - Do you agree that master plans should incorporate airport surface access strategies?**

### **Council's Comments**

Surface access strategies should align with airport master plans, but do not necessarily need to be incorporated. They need to take into account all means of accessing the airport, namely road, rail and bus/coach. The Aviation Policy Framework should require consistency of timeframes and clear linkages between the planning processes for airport master plans and surface access strategies.

The Aviation Policy Framework should make a clear distinction between, and set separate specific requirements for, targets which monitor performance (that is, focus on outcomes) and targets which are linked to the delivery of actions. This will help improve effectiveness and performance. In general, the Aviation Policy Framework should require that targets are evidence led and follow good practice in target setting.

### **Alignment of periods covered by master and noise action plans**

#### **Question 31 - Do you agree that, where appropriate, the periods covered by master plans and noise action plans should be aligned?**

## **Council's Comments**

The Council considers that where appropriate the periods covered by airport master plans and noise action plans should be aligned with the aim of facilitating community engagement in discussions around noise and aviation activity. Such alignment would allow for more effective joined up planning and the consideration of associated issues.

Noise action plans should be a key driver for airports to manage and mitigate the impact of aircraft noise in their area and should be seen as “living” documents with a transparent monitoring and reporting regime as well as a mechanism for regular review.

Tandridge District Council  
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