

**STANSTED AIRPORT ADVISORY PANEL held at COUNCIL OFFICES
LONDON ROAD SAFFRON WALDEN at 7.30 pm on 23 SEPTEMBER 2009**

Present: Councillor D M Jones – Chairman.
Councillors K R Artus, C A Cant, E J Godwin, R M Lemon
and L A Wells.

Officers
in attendance: W Cockerell (Principal Environmental Health Officer), R
Harborough (Acting Director of Development), and R
Procter (Democratic Services Officer).

SAP7 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A Dean, J Cheetham,
D Perry and G Sell.

*Councillor Godwin declared a personal interest as a member of Stop Stansted
Expansion. Councillor Wilcock declared a personal interest as a member of
the Noise and Track Keeping Working Group representing Stansted Airport
Consultative Committee (STACC).*

SAP8 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 24 June 2009 were agreed and signed by
the Chairman as a correct record.

SAP9 MATTERS ARISING

(i) Minute SAP4 – budget for opposing Stansted Airport G2

Regarding the recommendation to Finance and Administration Committee that
the provision in the budget for opposing Stansted Airport G2 be ring-fenced,
the Acting Director of Development gave Members an update. Provision for a
G2 contribution would remain in the 2009/10 budget, but would be transferred
to an earmarked reserve in the 2010/11 budget.

SAP10 STANSTED AIRPORT NOISE ACTION PLAN CONSULTATION

Officers referred Members to the report considered by Environment
Committee on 15 September, which was now referred to the Stansted Airport
Advisory Panel for more detailed consideration. The report set out proposed
responses to a consultation document issued by Stansted Airport Limited; and
sought Members' views on draft responses. A response was to be submitted
by the deadline of 2 October 2009.

The Principal Environmental Health Officer referred Members to concerns
which Councillor Artus, who had not yet arrived, had asked him to raise, as
follows. The action plan was a very unambitious document; it made no
pledges or offers of compensation above the legal minimum; it did not
address Noise Abatement Departure Procedures; and nor did it address the
issue of night noise disturbance caused by a regular Air Asia X flight.

Councillor Godwin expressed her significant concerns about various issues. She said that from the point of view of residents in Birchanger, this was a limp and ineffective document. She endorsed officers' comments. The noise in Birchanger had worsened during the summer, as it seemed aircraft were flying closer to the village, making sharper turns and making more engine noise. The situation was unacceptable.

A large number of the complaints on noise disturbance she had received related to the incredibly noisy Air Asia X arrival at 3 am. It was apparent that this flight was causing disruption to people's sleep for miles around, including people living beyond Uttlesford. It was not right that Air Asia X should continue to enjoy the privilege of dispensation to fly old, noisy, heavy planes at night.

She had also had many complaints about the unacceptable noise disturbance of helicopters over Birchanger village. Helicopters came over at any time day or night, directly over houses, and seemed worse at weekends. People accepted there was a need for police helicopter use at Junction 8 of the M11, and for the air ambulance, but it was totally unacceptable that other helicopter flights should cause this level of disruption, particularly the Harrods helicopter.

Councillor Godwin went to say that the noise during shoulder periods was worse. It was certainly not acceptable to have aircraft stacking up between 11 pm and midnight.

There was also the issue of noise from taxiing and reverse thrust on landing. She knew this noise was also a problem for Takeley, not just Birchanger.

Councillor Lemon said he had recently chaired a public meeting in Hatfield Heath, which had been called to address concerns that aircraft were now flying lower and had altered their flight positions. The strength of public feeling about this was shown by the fact that 120 people attended a 6 pm meeting, scheduled only for 15 minutes, and not all could get into the hall. The aircraft noise in Hatfield Heath was appalling, and he had never known so many complaints.

Councillor Wilcock said the purpose of the Environmental Noise Directive was to manage noise. He had serious concerns at the limits of BAA's ability to control aircraft noise. For example, BAA would have no control over any decision by Air Asia X to increase their flight frequency, and under its operating licence did not have the ability to refuse access to an accredited aircraft/ airline. BAA could only seek to influence airlines and negotiate changes to schedules. It was therefore a weakness of the consultation document that BAA was not seeking additional powers. The document needed beefing up if it was to have any credibility.

He went on to say that Stop Stansted Expansion had made some good suggestions, and in his view the Panel should not be going through the document as presented, but should be working on a completely different, much stronger, set of proposals. It was a concern that many issues causing noise disturbance were not within the control of BAA. By implementing new procedures, airlines claimed they were trying to reduce CO2 emissions, but

the principal driver was minimising fuel consumption and reduction of costs. The fleet operating at Stansted was already fairly new, and therefore one of the quietest in Europe, so significant improvements in the level of noise disturbance could not be expected from fleet renewal by airlines operating at Stansted. The action plan addressed inadequately the issue of airlines running heavy, noisier planes.

Councillor Godwin added that engine ground running testing should be conducted in noise pens, and she was concerned that this was not happening. She took the view that the entire draft plan did not go far enough. Aircraft noise related to Stansted affected many people, even those to the north and further out of the district. She was concerned about the number of movements in the shoulder periods and into the night quota period; BAA were not enforcing the helicopter directive; people had to keep contacting BAA to get them to enforce existing directives. All these issues had to be addressed.

Councillor Lemon said BAA was not at fault over what was happening in Hatfield Heath, as it was the airlines who had changed their system of flying. They claimed to be saving carbon emissions, but the reduction in emissions was not significant; they were boosting their profits from the reduction in fuel use, at the expense of people living underneath noise preferential routes.

Councillor Cant said this consultation was a public relations exercise, containing no measureable targets. Any stated actions were so qualified that they did not say what BAA would in fact do. Whilst airports inevitably entailed noise, she had sympathy for those affected. There needed to be disincentives to those who operated heavy noisy aircraft. She would support endorsement of the points made by SSE in strengthening the Council's response.

Councillor Wilcock said the limitations of END had to be recognised, and that lobbying of other international bodies should be undertaken, since there were international agreements affecting these issues. Sometimes legislation or external bodies' procedures were stopping the Airport's voluntary improvements from being implemented. One such example was better track keeping, which had not been introduced into the Aeronautical Instructions to Pilots (AIP). Safety factors had been given as the reason.

Councillor Godwin agreed that government lobbying was needed to protect communities from disturbance.

The Acting Director of Development said that although the Airport was the competent authority to prepare the action plan for Stansted, such plans were adopted by the Secretary of State for Farming, the Environment and Rural Affairs. Although competent authorities had to send a summary of consultation and their responses to the issues raised, the Council should send a copy of its full representations direct to the Secretary of State.

The Chairman asked about legislative powers available to local councils in dealing with noise disturbance from the operation of the Airport. Officers confirmed that the Environmental Protection Act did not apply to aircraft noise. Conditions to address noise impacts could be attached to planning permission

for development under the Planning Acts. However, BAA had found ways of addressing noise issues in the past without the need for new statutory powers. Discussion continued regarding legal powers, and reference was made to the ineffectiveness of fines of £1K charged to two airlines, Air Asia X and Cosmos, for exceeding departure noise limits. Councillor Artus said answers were needed regarding any 'moral shortfall' in compensation payments. He asked what the level of such shortfall might be.

Councillor Godwin said the number of complaints made was not representative of residents' annoyance at sleepless nights, as many people were tired and frustrated, and did not always go so far as to make the call to the telephone complaints system each time they experienced disturbed sleep. People were also aware that serial complaints were reported separately.

She declared an interest in that her family had received compensation from BAA on behalf of her mother in law, who had unfortunately died before the resolution of the claim. There was a class action, and the process for most claimants took several years.

Officers said the process was claims driven, and that whilst it might be possible to obtain estimates of the total compensation payable, it would require some investigatory work.

The following action was agreed:

- 1 Officers would amend the proposed response to the draft action plan to reflect the substance of the Panel's discussion, taking account of the points raised by SSE in its response;
- 2 The Council's amended response to be circulated to all Panel members before being submitted.

Councillor Artus said it was important to use this opportunity to highlight the compensation issue, and in particular to find out whether there had been instances of properties just falling short of the criteria for compensation. The Chairman said this subject would be a longer term objective, in view of the impending deadline. Councillor Artus asked that a report be brought to the next meeting to discuss the issue in more detail, but said also that the response to the action plan should include reference to compensation.

SAP11

STANSTED NOISE ABATEMENT DEPARTURE PROCEDURES

The Principal Environmental Health Officer presented a briefing note on Noise Abatement Departure Procedures ('NADPs'). He had been contacted by residents of Hatfield Heath a year ago, regarding their perception that aircraft were flying lower than previously. He had established from various studies that this was indeed the case. The Flight Evaluation Unit (FEU) had supplied information confirming that airlines were now following different NADPs. The airlines' decision to use either of the two NADPs which aircraft were programmed to follow, was outside the control of both BAA and NATS. He drew Members' attention to the assertion of the CAA that the two different types of NADPs did not alter the level of noise emitted, but only redistributed it.

Councillor Artus said some airlines had been using NADP 2 for a while but that others had more recently switched over. As a consequence, the altitude of aircraft in the Hatfield Heath area had decreased by 230' to 340'. Thrust settings and different track keeping within the NPR swathe had resulted in air noise changes. He said airlines were achieving significant savings from adopting new departure procedures across their operations, and there was little the Council could do. The CAA was not likely to change aeronautical instructions to pilots. However it would be possible to achieve a short-term gain by getting aircraft to fly closer to the centre line of the NPR. Further work was being done by the Noise and Track Keeping Working Group to this end, through pressing for additional waypoints on the turn. Aircraft were currently well within the swathe, but were flying tighter to the inside curve. This was the reason why residents in Hatfield Heath and Hatfield Broad Oak had noticed a difference, rather than the reduced altitude of planes. Easyjet had agreed to look into establishing additional waypoints in the navigational equipment on its fleet.

Councillor Wilcock said that BAA would locate a mobile noise monitor in the area, but there were no earlier data to use for comparison. Ryanair had been operating these procedures for longer than the period during which complaints about the changes had been received. It had also been operating these procedures across the fleet from all airports. There was a difficulty in that no other location had been identified which seemed to be affected. Councillor Godwin commented, however, she had had complaints from some people to the north of the airport.

Councillor Lemon said in winter there were not so many flights, and that it was from April that he started to receive increased numbers of complaints.

Councillor Artus said BAA had agreed to carry out a study into this issue. For the Group's information, he was now chairman of STAAC's Environment Group.

The Chairman asked whether there was scope for the Council to carry out additional continuous noise monitoring. Officers replied that there was no appropriate equipment available and that if equipment was purchased or hired it would be necessary to have mains power and telephone connections available. Monitoring had to be in place for at least six months in order to give meaningful results.

SAP12

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Officers invited Members to suggest locations to which the mobile air quality monitoring equipment could be moved. It was nearly a year since it had been placed at the site in Broxted Hill Farm. A list of suggestions for a new location would be discussed at the next meeting.

Members suggested the following areas as potential sites: Hatfield Heath, Burton End, Hatfield Forest, and land east of Birchanger.

The meeting ended at 8.45 pm. Page 5