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Your ref:

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Dear Secretary of State

**CONSULTATION RE DEVELOPING A SUSTAINABLE FRAMEWORK FOR UK
AVIATION: SCOPING DOCUMENT MARCH 2011**

Thank you for the opportunity to take part in this consultation. This letter forms the Council's response, which has been prepared by officers and the Council's Stansted Airport Advisory Panel and subsequently endorsed by the Cabinet. As you will no doubt be aware, aviation is a key local issue because Stansted Airport lies within the district. Whilst the scoping document relates to a UK framework, the Council's response is inevitably influenced by what has happened at Stansted.

The format of this response is as per Section 5 of the scoping document using the same headings, question numbering and wording. Paragraph 1.21 of the scoping document states that a response to every question is not expected from every consultee, rather just to those that are of most relevance and interest. Accordingly, questions that the Council is not answering are omitted.

This response takes into account the DfT's recently published UK aviation forecasts to 2050, and the Government's response to the Committee on Climate Change's report on reducing CO2 emissions from UK aviation to 2050.

THE AVIATION SECTOR

5.1

How does the aviation sector as a whole benefit the UK? Please consider the whole range of aviation activities including, for example, air freight, General Aviation and aerospace.

5.2

What do you consider to be the aviation sector's most important contributions to economic growth and social well-being?

Aviation is important to the economy (and social life) but the contribution of any particular service or airport to the national and local economy will vary. Similarly, the environmental costs will vary. The aviation policy framework needs a transparent methodology to enable economic benefits and disbenefits to be evaluated. One reason for this is that the draft of the national planning policy framework (NPPF) gives considerable weight to promoting economic development through planning policy and decisions on planning applications. Unless there is a clear and balanced national aviation policy, there is a risk that the NPPF could become the same type of blunt instrument as the 2003 Air Transport White Paper (ATWP) was considered to become in promoting airport expansion unwanted by local communities.

For the Stansted second runway project (Generation 2), BAA's consultants sought to estimate the economic benefits of a new runway. Whilst the estimate was never tested at inquiry the results were unconvincing to the Council. Representations on Generation 2 from the business community keenly pointed out what the airport already did (how many people it employed, how much cargo tonnage was handled etc), but there was little analysis of what a second runway would actually add.

The Council's experience is that capturing economic benefits is not easy, and a growing airport does not ensure growth in airport related developments even where the local planning policy is aimed at achieving this. As Stansted grew from 15 to 25 million passengers per annum (mppa), the Council's experience was that the type of short haul low fares services using the airport did not bring any appreciable growth in local demand for commercial premises or an influx of new businesses. Indeed, as modern technology advances, it is quite common for airport related businesses to be located off-airport unless they actually need a landside / airside interface such as hangars and Customs.

Stansted does employ around 10,000 people, but the increase has not been met through employing the local un- and underemployed and has created other issues from inward migration. Stansted might be said to be exceptional but the economic benefits, aside from direct employment, of developing airports need to be evaluated for individual locations. The new DfT constrained forecasts (Table G.10) indicate that Stansted will continue to be dominated by short haul in 2030 and 2050, with zero long haul.

5.3

Are some sub-sectors of aviation more important than others? If so, which and why?

5.4

How do you think the global aviation sector will evolve in the medium and long term (twenty to fifty years)? What do you expect to be the most significant changes?

Much will depend on the health of the World economy (when / if bounceback occurs) and whether the major polluting nations will fully embrace the environmentalism agenda. To a certain extent these are unknowns.

The Committee on Climate Change's (CCC) December 2009 report (Meeting the UK aviation target - options for reducing emissions to 2050) projects that UK aviation demand could grow by between 115% - 200% depending on what, if any, constraints are imposed. In the DfT's recently published forecasts, the central forecast for UK unconstrained demand is 520mppa in 2050, compared to 470mppa with airport capacity constraints (146% and 122% increases respectively over current throughput). Notwithstanding these robust increases, there does seem to be the likelihood of market maturity suppressing demand for more leisure flights in the longer term. The DfT forecasts show relatively strong growth in leisure flights at Stansted from 2010 to 2030 (13mppa and 23mppa respectively taking into account both UK and foreign), but no subsequent growth in that sector at 2050.

5.5

How, and within what constraints, can aviation growth occur as technological developments and improved operating procedures reduce CO₂, pollutant emissions and noise impacts?

The Council would refer to the CCC report mentioned in the previous paragraph.

5.6

How should decision-makers address trade-offs or competing interests, where these occur both (a) between different aviation objectives, e.g. CO2 emissions versus local noise reduction, and (b) between aviation and other sectors, e.g. airspace use versus renewable energy objectives, or the use of land for maintaining a viable network of smaller airfields versus housing development?

(a) Please see question 5.44.

(b) The Council's experience of small airfields, such as Andrewsfield at Stebbing, is that when they are well run and managed they can be a local asset. Much is down to the personalities involved. In landscape / visual terms, small airfields can be surprisingly well integrated with the countryside, perhaps because of their higgledy-piggledy arrangement of huts, hangars and small aircraft within large areas of open space. Use of small airfields for housing creates a number of issues that are more difficult to reconcile. One of these is sustainability, as very often these airfields are in isolated locations away from the main transport network. Another is visual impact, as no matter how well designed housing is, there will be hard edges and a sense of enclosure. In no respects can small airfields or housing development be regarded as "like for like".

5.7

Should some aspects of UK aviation be considered to be of strategic national interest (e.g. certain airports, air traffic control)? If so, based on what criteria?

5.8

How might the cost of regulation to the aviation sector be reduced, while achieving the Government's objectives of promoting sustainable aviation, improving the passenger experience at airports, and maintaining high standards of safety and security for passengers and freight?

INTERNATIONAL CONNECTIVITY AND HUB AIRPORTS

5.9

How important are air transport connections – both international and domestic – to the UK at both national and regional levels?

5.10

As long as people and goods can easily reach their desired destination from the UK, does it matter if they use a foreign rather than a UK hub airport?

5.11

Are direct connections from the UK to some international destinations more important than others? If so, which and why?

5.12

How will the UK's connectivity needs change in the light of global developments in the medium and long term (twenty to fifty years)?

5.13

What are the benefits of maintaining a hub airport in the UK?

5.14

How important are transfer and transit passengers to the UK economy?

5.15

What are the relative merits of a hub versus a point-to-point airport?

5.16

Would it be possible to establish a new 'virtual' hub airport in the UK with better connectivity between existing London and / or major regional airports? Could another UK airport take on a limited hub role? What would be the benefits and other impacts?

REGIONAL CONNECTIVITY AND REGIONAL AIRPORTS

5.17

Can regional airports absorb some of the demand pressures from constrained airports in the south-east? What conditions would facilitate this?

Yes, particularly if some passengers currently have to travel to the south east for flights that could easily be provided from regional airports. Indeed, the DfT's central demand forecasts for 2050 suggest that without new runways the three largest London airports will be at capacity by 2030, and all growth beyond 2040 will occur at regional airports. In the meantime, perhaps reduced rates of Air Passenger Duty could be levied to encourage international flights from regional airports where passenger origin / destination data reveals that there would be local demand for those flights.

5.18

What more can be done – and by whom – to encourage a switch from domestic air travel to rail?

Much will depend upon the journey that is to be made. A trip from, say, a south east airport to a Scottish mainland airport may involve just one flight, but will likely require a number of changes of train. Whatever, passengers will only be encouraged to make the switch to rail if it competes favourably with air in a combination of factors such as frequency, reliability, convenience, quality, speed and price. The following general points about rail can be made:

- Rail travel can be expensive, with confused ticketing offers, eligibility and qualifying travel times.
- Rail repossessions over Bank and other public holidays inconveniently curtail the use of the railway for travel at those times.
- Rail has weather related resilience issues as air does.
- Punctuality and reliability can be affected by the capacity of the rail network, especially during peak hours. In some areas such as the West Anglia rail corridor timetable changes can help to a degree, but a step change in the service provided to passengers will only take place if there is significant new investment, such as four-tracking on choked parts of the network. This is something that the Council is pressing for through its membership of the West Anglia Routes Group.

5.19

How could the benefits from any future high speed rail network be maximised for aviation?

This is a difficult question to answer as to some degree high speed rail and aviation will be competitors, although for short haul air seems able to compete with any rail service in terms of time and price. Competition could lead to benefits for the passenger, but high speed rail also has environmental disbenefits for local communities such as community severance and noise, and up front costs (such as for HS2) would be high before a single passenger is carried.

If there was a need to divert flights to regional airports because of congestion issues in the south east, a high speed rail network or an improved standard network could be of benefit for passengers needing onward travel to and from the south east. A more cost effective and flexible option could, however, be an improved national coach network. Coach as an onward means of travel has been a success at Stansted and is an effective competitor for rail, particularly on the London route. It must also be remembered that there is region to region demand for both rail and coach services (such as Stansted Airport to Birmingham) which does not go through London.

Network Rail's recently published London and South East Route Utilisation Strategy (2011 - 2031) paints a rosy picture of future rail connectivity should HS2 and Crossrail 2 both be built in addition to HS1 and Crossrail 1, but that is a lot of investment, many years away and is focussed on London.

5.20

How can regional airports and the aviation sector as a whole support the rebalancing of the economy across the UK?

The obvious answer is to make more use of regional airports, and to make them the preferred location for sustainable UK aviation growth where that would both assist regional regeneration and would be supported by local communities. Whilst it would be wrong for the policy framework to pre-empt individual planning applications (a criticism rightly levelled at the 2003 ATWP), it could weigh in favour of sustainable regional aviation growth as a general concept.

MAKING BETTER USE OF EXISTING CAPACITY

5.21

To what extent do UK airports meet the needs of their customers? How might those needs be more effectively met within existing capacity? What is the right balance between competition and regulation?

5.22

Can we extract more capacity out of the UK's existing airport infrastructure? Can we do this in a way which is environmentally acceptable? To what extent might demand management measures help achieve this?

For any one airport, extracting more capacity will depend on what the capacity is of the "weakest link" in the system, be that the terminal, runway, airspace or the local environment. In the case of Stansted Airport no one has ever really doubted that the unconstrained handling capacity of the existing runway and terminal is above the currently permitted 35mppa, but the airport is fed from already crowded airspace and lies in an area of high environmental quality.

Paragraph 2.12 of the document states that *"In the short and medium term, the Government will continue to work with the industry and other stakeholders to maximise the benefits from existing connections and capacity"*. This begs the question of whether this would amount to support for some kind of "Generation 1.5" proposal at Stansted to increase capacity beyond 35mppa off the existing runway, although the DfT's forecasts of runway and terminal capacities do not seem to indicate any increase beyond 35mppa when it is reached by 2030. The Council also wishes to seek further assurances about the abandonment of a second runway at Stansted beyond the lifetime of the present Government.

The history of the development of Stansted Airport since the 1980's has been one of incremental growth authorised by successive planning permissions for 15, 25 and now 35mppa. The cumulative impact of that growth on the local area has been enormous, yet the airport is currently operating at just over half its approved capacity. The incremental growth approach has allowed the airport operator to use fallback and base case scenarios to play up the impacts of what has been permitted in order to seek to minimise the predicted additional impacts of the next stage of growth. The result is a dice that always seems loaded against the local community when it seeks to resist further growth. If the new policy framework is to be more balanced, it should include a mechanism for giving considerably more weight to the cumulative impact of airport growth that has already been experienced by local communities.

In relation to demand management, this issue is discussed elsewhere in the replies about regional airports and resilience.

5.23

How can we support Heathrow's hub status within the constraints of its existing capacity? Can we do this in a way which is environmentally

acceptable?

5.24

How important is increased resilience at the UK's major airports to reduce delays? How best could resilience be improved with existing capacity, e.g. how might trade-offs between existing capacity and resilience play a role in this?

Increased resilience is fundamentally important to reducing airport delays. The recently published Heathrow Winter Resilience Enquiry clearly illustrates the problems of an airport operating at or near capacity when severe weather sets in, even though the airport had responded well to earlier weather events, but which were less severe. Keeping airports operational in these circumstances is a combination of having the right procedures and the right equipment (and enough of it).

There is much community annoyance from aircraft flying stacking patterns during peak arrival periods, especially in the crowded south east airspace. Whilst stacking may be unavoidable at times, its regular occurrence is environmentally / socially unfriendly and economically inefficient.

Improving resilience within existing capacity must involve looking at issues of demand and supply. If major airports are to reduce delays and stay resilient, more slack may need to be built in to the busiest schedules, reducing throughput. If there is no alternative to flying, the Government should look at how regional airports in less crowded airspace could take up some of the slack without disadvantaging local communities and without increasing night flights.

Resilience is not just an issue for the aviation sector, but is an issue for all sectors of the UK transport industry, particularly when there is severe weather. Airlines will sometimes cancel all or part of their domestic schedules at short notice during stress periods in order to retain the resilience of long haul, but what other transport options are then suggested to or made available to passengers who are unable to fly? There is nothing worse than having stranded passengers with little or no onward travel information being available to them. It is far better to plan in advance to run a reduced schedule to a published revised / emergency timetable within the capability of the operator to cope with the conditions.

Aviation policy needs to be developed as part of an integrated transport policy for the UK as a whole.

5.25

Could resilience become an issue at regional airports? If so, how might this be avoided?

This is unlikely in the short or medium terms. The DfT forecasts are based on the assumption that there will be no new runways in the UK, with only incremental developments to airport terminals to make maximum use of existing runways. It is important, however, that any regional airport growth has local support and is not imposed just because there are no opportunities for growth elsewhere.

5.26

Could existing airport capacity be more efficiently used by changing the slot allocation process, for example, if the European Commission were to alter grandfather rights? If so, what process of slot allocation should replace it?

5.27

What provision, if any, should be made for regional access into congested airports?

See answer to Question 5.17. Any regional demand should ideally be met from regional airports to reduce congestion in the south east.

5.28

What provision, if any, should be made for General and Business Aviation access into congested airports?

This should be a matter for the airport operator. General and business aviation can be valuable to the local economy, and is a source of skilled jobs in the maintenance and engineering sectors. Stansted has a number of companies like this, some of whom have off-airport offices in surrounding towns and business parks. Recently, there have been two planning applications submitted at Stansted Airport for new business aviation hangars (one of which has already been built), and others for refurbishment and extensions to other buildings.

5.29

What is the role of airspace design and air traffic management in making better use of existing capacity?

The role must complement any decisions made about airport capacity. Comments made in response to question 5.24 apply. The aim must be the seamless movement of arrivals to their destination without the need for stacking over populated or environmentally sensitive areas.

CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACTS

5.30

What do you consider to be the most significant impacts of aviation, including its non-CO2 emissions, on climate change? How can these impacts best be addressed?

As is said in Paragraph 3.7 of the scoping document, CO2 makes up about 99% of the aviation sector's Kyoto Greenhouse gas emissions. However, it seems that scientific opinion on the contribution of CO2 to climate change is as polarised as ever, and there is still much uncertainty over the non-CO2 climate impacts of aviation. What is clear is that the local effects of non-CO2 pollutants generally are very important to local communities, such as aviation fuel smells and oily deposits on buildings and water surfaces alleged to come from aircraft. Further research is necessary, in particular on the role which aviation technology as opposed to air traffic management can play in reducing all emissions.

5.31

What role should aviation play relative to other sectors of the economy in reducing greenhouse gas emissions in the medium and long term?

5.32

How effective do you believe the EU ETS will be in addressing the climate impacts of aviation? Should the UK consider unilateral measures in addition to the EU ETS? If so, what?

It's all a question of scale. A worldwide ETS would be better than an EU one, but an EU scheme is better than nothing. It is doubtful whether any unilateral measures introduced by the UK would be of any real practical benefit other than the "feelgood factor". It is noted that the Government is continuing to push for what it describes as an "ambitious global agreement to reduce CO2 emissions from aviation".

5.33

What is the best way to define and quantify the UK's share of the CO2 emissions generated from international aviation?

Emissions per flight would have to be shared between the origin and destination countries. This should be relatively easy to do for point to point flights, but if there are scheduled intermediate stops a proportion would need to be reallocated to the relevant country. For the sake of simplicity, emergency stopovers and diversions could be disregarded.

5.34

What is the potential for increased use of sustainable biofuels in aviation and over what timeframe? What are the barriers to bringing this about?

The main barrier will be the amount of farmland needed to feed the World's ever increasing population, shortly to exceed 7 billion. The DfT's central forecasts predict that biofuels will only account for 2.5% of fuel used on flights using UK airports in 2050.

5.35

What mechanisms could the Government use to increase the rate of uptake of sustainable biofuels in the aviation sector? In particular, how can we accelerate the successful development of second generation biofuels?

Financial incentives / disincentives would be the most obvious mechanism, but there would be a problem if disincentives merely resulted in airlines purchasing less sustainable fuels abroad where disincentives may not apply. An international initiative is required.

5.36

Which technologies (e.g. for aircraft and air traffic management) have the most potential to help reduce aviation's CO2 emissions (noting potential trade-offs with local environmental impacts)?

5.37

What more could be done to encourage the aviation industry to adopt new technology to reduce its climate change impacts?

5.38

What more can the UK aviation industry do to reduce the climate change impact of its ground operations and surface access to and from the airport (which can also help reduce local environmental impacts)?

Please see the reply to question 5.42.

5.39

What scope is there to influence people and industry to make choices aimed at reducing aviation's climate change impacts, e.g. modal shift, alternatives to travel, better information for passengers, fuller planes, airspace management (which can also help reduce local environmental impacts)?

Some of these issues are dealt with elsewhere in this reply, particularly airspace management and modal shift. Promoting alternatives to travel is a possibility, but it is acknowledged in the scoping document itself that videoconferencing tends to be in addition to, rather than a substitute for meetings requiring air travel. The DfT forecasts assume no more than, at best, a 10% reduction in business flights due to videoconferencing by 2050.

Fuller planes are an obvious goal, and the Stansted low fares airlines are already quite good in that respect. However, if the only reason people are flying in the first place is because it is so cheap, it could be argued that full planes are a false indication of sustainability.

LOCAL IMPACTS

5.40

What do you consider to be the most significant impacts – positive and negative - of aviation for local communities? Can more be done to enhance and / or mitigate those impacts? If so, what and by whom?

This Council has a wealth of information on the impact of airports on local communities, most recently through its work in determining the planning application for the expansion of Stansted Airport to 35mppa (Generation 1) and the subsequent appeal, as well as preparing for the call-in inquiries relating to the Generation 2 second runway proposals.

Attached to this response is a commentary that officers prepared on the representations received about the Generation 1 application, and which was used to inform their report to committee. This commentary has been re-edited to suit the main environmental and economic issues raised in this scoping document consultation. Whilst much of the information contained in this commentary relates to a specific planning application and is now somewhat dated, the main issues relating to local community impact remain consistent over time.

More can always be done, especially to provide mitigation whilst an airport expands rather than just controlling the end product. The replies to other questions give more details.

5.41

Do you think that current arrangements for local engagement on aviation issues, e.g. through airport consultative committees and the development of airport master plans, are effective? Could more be done to improve community engagement on issues such as noise and air quality? If so, what and by whom?

This Council's experience of engagement through the Stansted Airport Consultative Committee is generally good, but issues have arisen where:

- The airport "consults" on a development where the basic decision has already been taken, such as through the 2003 ATWP. In the case of Stansted, the community had some justification for feeling that the results of a BAA consultation in 2005 on second runway options was not representative, as the "no extra runway" option had not been offered. Turkeys do not like being asked to vote for Christmas.
- The community want a change in airport operations that is not in the airport's business interests, so no change occurs (e.g. Air Asia night flights at Stansted).
- The community expects more from the airport than it is willing / in a position to provide (e.g. noise action plan or surface access strategy).

The purpose of airport master plans is unclear and, in any event, Stansted's stalled at the interim stage in 2006. As master plans were introduced by the Labour Government in the 2003 ATWP, there is a suspicion that they were intended as nothing more than a sop to the community for the growth that the ATWP was promoting. The policy framework should clarify the role of master plans within the planning system. For instance, could / should the master plans become some kind of a business-led neighbourhood plan under the Localism

Bill? If the policy framework is to propose a more collaborative approach to aviation planning, balancing economic and environmental issues, synergy needs to be built between local development frameworks, airport master plans, local transport plans and airport surface access strategies so that common aims and timescales can be developed.

5.42

Do you think that current arrangements for ensuring sustainable surface access to and from airports, e.g. Airport Transport Forums and airport surface access strategies, are effective? Could more be done to improve surface access and reduce its environmental impacts? If so, what and by whom?

From the experience at Stansted current arrangements are effective, and the commitment remains from the airport operator and local stakeholders to make them work. It is hoped that the future owner of Stansted, whoever that may be, will stay similarly committed.

The Stansted Area Transport Forum was established following the 1998 White Paper "*A New Deal for Transport*", and the annual assembly seems to be popular and increasingly well attended. 4 working groups operate under the Forum's umbrella (highways, bus/coach, rail and local access/travel planning) which meet quarterly, reporting to a steering group. These groups have helped to draw up and update the airport surface access strategy (ASAS), evaluate its progress and deal with day-to-day surface access issues, including monitoring car park usage. Work has just started on an update of the ASAS. Following the granting of planning permission for airport expansion to 25mppa and then 35mppa, the Forum has (via a separate monitoring group) monitored progress with relevant planning conditions and obligations. The various working groups have also had a key role in implementing some of those planning conditions and obligations, such as producing a coach study, pump priming new national / regional coach and local bus services (with varying degrees of success in the current economic conditions) and discouraging airport related on-street car parking by funding no waiting and clearway orders.

More can always be done, and the Council is keen to continue to work with the airport operator and others in promoting the airport's role as a regional and local transport interchange. Stansted is identified as a regional transport node in the shortly to be abolished RSS, and the Forum's work up to now has been complementary to this. The Government should use the new policy framework to refresh the 1998 White Paper guidance, making it clear in the absence of the RSS that a key role of the Forums will be to continue to promote airports as

regional and / or local transport interchanges, linking in with the new round of local transport plans that are being produced. It should also be re-emphasised that the statutory duty to co-operate being promoted through the Localism Bill applies to Forum work.

Based on CAA data (2011 Q1), 48.1% of passengers use public transport to get to and from Stansted. Whilst this is one of the highest percentages in Europe this is not a cause for complacency because the figure could drop back once the UK leisure flights market picks up again, which is predicted in the DfT forecasts. Forums need to be tasked with setting challenging but realistic public transport mode share targets combined with reducing "kiss and fly", which is the most polluting type of car journey. Forums are important in monitoring the quality of the surface access interchanges at airports through passenger surveys and satisfaction indices. Whilst it is always pleasing to see improved scores, this should not prevent a critical look from taking place at the negative comments.

5.43

What are your views on the idea of setting a 'noise envelope' within which aviation growth would be possible, as technology and operations reduce noise impacts per plane? What do you consider to be the advantages and disadvantages of such an approach?

A noise envelope is a valuable tool, but has limitations. Its major value is to provide a maximum noise climate which will not be exceeded. As this maximum is related to an increased throughput level to be achieved at some time in the future it is always likely that, given improved noise emissions from aircraft, the maximum will never be achieved. To be more valuable for noise minimisation airports should offer, in discussion with the community, intervening forecast envelopes which would provide some constraint on existing / near future noise levels. Airport noise action plans would be the obvious source of these forecasts.

At Stansted, a planning condition defines a maximum contour area (16 hour average day 57dBA Leq), which together with a further condition limiting the total number of aircraft movements provides the local community with certainty as to the maximum (annual day) noise climate that could eventually be experienced. However, as previously explained, the envelope is no constraint on existing noise levels. Also, it does not relate to any area of significant community disturbance and does not address existing issues. Furthermore, using an averaged sound metric is not representative of the disturbance experienced on the ground.

Any new noise envelope concept should include the European Lden metric (which adds weighting for the sensitive night periods), and arguably the

maximum noise Lmax metric of each flight, the background noise L90 metric, as well as the number of flights.

The noise envelope is an essential part of the noise compensation regime for most airports. At present, the scheme for Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted is related to the conditions applying at Heathrow. Airports such as Stansted should have individual (more generous) schemes based on a wider noise envelope reflecting local circumstances where ambient noise levels in largely rural surroundings are low and consist largely of pleasant natural sounds. Any scheme should not be limited by the very different conditions that apply at Heathrow. There are concerns about how the existing compensation regime operates, in particular how residents are disadvantaged by the partial completion of development projects. These concerns are explained in Paragraph 5.49 under any other comments.

5.44

Is it better to minimise the total number of people affected by aircraft noise (e.g. through noise preferential routes) or to share the burden more evenly (e.g. through wider flight path dispersion) so that a greater number of people are affected by noise less frequently?

Concentration will bring increased disturbance to some beneath the flightpath. For the first section of departure within noise preferential routes (NPRs), extended to about 5,000ft, it is thought better to use concentration. Where feasible (using modern accurate onboard navigation) it may be possible to vary the concentrated flightpaths within the NPR swathes so that (relative) respite can be provided at times.

Dispersion at higher altitudes is suggested, including for arriving aircraft. Dispersion must take account of population density to avoid particular areas. However, a situation where dispersed aircraft may fly anywhere in a locality is unlikely to be acceptable to residents who prefer the certainty of specific flightpaths.

It is not clear what flexibility exists over the routes of flightpaths, especially in the crowded south east airspace. It is sensible to place routes over less densely populated areas, but overflying tranquil countryside (as can occur approaching or departing Stansted) can significantly impinge on quality of life. A sensible balance is required avoiding densely populated areas and preserving tranquil areas, but it is acknowledged that this may be difficult to achieve. "Legacy" is important - flightpaths should not be moved from their historic positions where noise has always been concentrated without good reason.

In all cases where flightpath changes are envisaged, there should be meaningful local consultation. As has been said before (question 5.41) there is no value to be added in consulting on a done deal other than to tick a box. The Council welcomed the opportunity to take part in the NATS Terminal Control North consultation that ran from 2006 - 2008, but the general impression was that the process was a reluctant one because, at the end of the day, there was nothing much that was really on offer.

5.45

What is the best way to encourage aircraft manufacturers and airlines to continue to strive to achieve further reductions in noise and air pollutant emissions (notably particulate matter and NOx) through the implementation of new technology?

The best way will be through international legislation for manufacturers on performance standards for new aircraft and / or financial incentives for airlines to introduce more fuel efficient and less noisy aircraft as part of their fleets. The continued practice of the ICAO noise classification to phase out the noisier aircraft is welcomed.

5.46

What are the economic benefits of night flights? How should the economic benefits be assessed against social and environmental costs?

The economic benefits of night flights will be those benefits that only accrue because those flights take place during the night period.

In assessing whether night flights are economically beneficial, the question to ask is whether those benefits could still be realised if the flights instead took place during the day period. At Stansted, most night flights are either freight, or charter holiday flights by UK residents. It is suspected that most of these take place out of business / customer convenience rather than necessity. A rigorous independent assessment should be made of any alleged economic benefits of these flights judged against their social and environmental costs using a transparent methodology. If night flights are to continue, a default position should be established whereby economic necessity can be the only reason for them. If as a result businesses have to make adjustments, or customers have to have reduced expectations, so be it.

5.47

How can the night flying regime be improved to deliver better outcomes for residents living close to airports and other stakeholders, including businesses that use night flights?

There is no doubt that night noise is one of the most, if not the most disturbing element of aircraft activity for the local community and has adverse health impacts. This has been evidenced locally by representations received by the Council in relation to both the Stansted Generation 1 and Generation 2 planning applications. There should be a re-evaluation of the need for night flights based on clear evidence of real business need (see Question 5.46 above) and the introduction of incentives to move flights into the day period where possible. This should ideally have as an eventual goal a total prohibition of movements (or a prohibition on movements deemed not to be economically necessary), except in an emergency between 23:00 and 06:00 in a phased programme. The night period should start at 23:00.

Any airport noise regime must relate to the genuine business needs of airlines at that airport, and the needs of the local community to enjoy a proper night's sleep. The default position should not be meeting all perceived business demands. A business model based on increased night disturbance is unacceptable, and the night noise regime should require steadily decreasing night movements so the operators look to other solutions. Operators looking to fly at night should be required to use the least noisy aircraft that are available.

5.48

Should extended periods of respite from night noise be considered, even if this resulted in increased frequency of flights before or after those respite periods?

The key point is that aircraft noise through the 8 hour night is disturbing and night flights throughout that period must be constrained to minimise that disturbance. The present system based on quota counts and aircraft numbers is a reasonable one, but the existing regime allows both too noisy individual aircraft to fly at night and too many aircraft. A low quota number does not mean no disturbance on the ground. There is no convincing evidence at Stansted as to whether sleep disturbance is greater in the different night periods, namely the late evening (23:00 - 01:00), the early morning (05:00 - 07:00) or the deep night. To be awakened by an aircraft is to be awakened by an aircraft, and it is little comfort whether that is at 05:30 compared to 02:30 or 00:30.

ANY OTHER COMMENTS

5.49

If you have comments on any strategic issues not covered in this scoping document, which you consider to be relevant to the development of the aviation policy framework, please include them in your response.

Helicopters

Stansted now has a very good monitoring and information package for fixed wing aircraft, but for helicopters there is no access to flight track, height or noise monitoring data. This means that complaints about noisy helicopter movements cannot be followed up.

Compensation

Part 1 of the Land Compensation Act 1973 allows certain homeowners to claim compensation when their homes are reduced in value by the use of a new road, railway or public works. Part 1 is concerned mainly with new works coming into use for the first time, so intensification of use of existing works will not give rise to compensation entitlement. In the case of aerodromes, the Part 1 provisions apply where:

- (a) an existing runway is extended, strengthened or substantially realigned, or
- (b) an existing taxiway or apron is substantially enlarged or altered for the purpose of providing facilities for a greater number of aircraft.

In 1999, reserved matters approval was granted for expansion of Stansted Airport from 8-15mppa as Phase 2 of the outline planning permission following the Graham Eyre inquiry in the early 1980s. Public works included in the application were Satellites 3 and 4, and Echo taxiway and cul-de-sac northeast of Satellite 4. Satellite 3 has been built and is in use, but Satellite 4 has not been built. Echo cul-de-sac has been partly constructed and is sometimes used for remote parking of towed aircraft.

At the meeting of the Stansted Airport Consultative Committee on 28th July 2010 (minute 59), London Stansted advised that claims for 8-15mppa compensation could be made at any time, but that it would reject these until the Echo taxiway and cul-de-sac had been completed. At that time, London Stansted would invite claims from interested parties. The facilities would not be built until demand required it.

Local residents are aggrieved that compensation has not been paid because the qualifying infrastructure has not been finished, yet the airport is operating at beyond 15mppa, in fact peaking at just under 24mppa before the economic

downturn. It seems unfair that compensation should be tied retrospectively to the building of infrastructure when, in the case of an airport, it is the increased number of arriving and departing aircraft that cause the community annoyance.

Yours sincerely