

**STANSTED AIRPORT ADVISORY PANEL held at ZOOM on WEDNESDAY,  
19 MAY 2021 at 6.00 pm**

Present: Councillor Foley (Chair)  
Councillors M Caton, A Dean, P Fairhurst, V Isham, G LeCount,  
S Luck and N Reeve

Officers in attendance: C Edwards (Democratic Services Officer), G Glenday (Assistant Director - Planning), R Harborough (Director - Public Services) and J Pine (Planning Policy/Development Management Liaison Officer)

Also present: Councillors L Pepper and M Sutton

**1 ELECTION OF CHAIR**

The Members sent their sincere best wishes to Councillor Eke. A Chair was required for this meeting in his absence. In his absence Councillor Foley was the nominated to take the Chair by Councillor Fairhurst and seconded by Councillor Caton. There were no objections and he was duly elected as Chair for the meeting.

**2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Apologies were received from Councillor Lemon.

Councillor Luck declared a non-pecuniary interest as the President of the Youth and Education Support which works with Manchester Airport Group (MAG) Youth Schools Unit at Stansted Airport.

Councillor Isham declared a non-pecuniary interest as a member of Stop Stansted Expansion (SSE).

Councillor LeCount declared a non-pecuniary interest as a member of SSE.

**3 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 26 February 2019 were agreed and would be signed by the Chair as an accurate record at the next opportunity.

## NIGHT FLIGHTS CONSULTATION

The Senior Planning Policy Officer suggested that this item be postponed until the next meeting as the deadline for the consultation had been extended by the Department for Transport to the 3 September 2021. This was so that further evidence that was shortly to be published could be taken into account, including the CAA's Survey of Noise Attitudes 2014: Aircraft Noise and Sleep report ("SoNA Sleep").

The Chair suggested that the item was discussed so that Members could provide feedback on what had been published to date.

The Senior Planning Policy Officer presented the report and explained that Appendix A set out suggested responses and Appendix B gave an overview of how the existing night flights regime worked.

He particularly pointed out:-

- The operation of the dispensations arrangements where certain flights in the Night Quota Period did not count against the quota count or movement limits. He said there should be no dispensations when there was industrial action and when the daily rotation of aircrafts was pushed into the night time due to overrunning.
- The benefits of a 10 years plus regime with a review half way through this period.
- The operational details of the QC system and the recommendation to phase out the carry over and overrun arrangements as this did not give transparency to residents.
- What would be included in the future night flights policy including: best in class aircraft; providing respite and minimising demand for night flights.
- Support for the proposal to include night flights in the Government's overall policy on aviation noise.

Councillor Dean asked for a seminar to be arranged before the revised report came back to the meeting to refresh the Panel on general aviation details and it was suggested that this included what the Panel's role should be.

The Chair agreed that there should be more regular meetings of the Panel and suggested that the next STAAP meeting took place in August or September 2021.

Councillor Caton was concerned that the report focused on noise, health, and the economy but had no environmental constraints on additional night flights.

The Senior Planning Policy Officer said the forthcoming Net-Zero Aviation Strategy and Transport Decarbonisation Plan would provide this opportunity and would be looked at separately. The Department of Transport had confirmed that these would be separate documents, but could not confirm which one would be published first.

There was further discussion about the environmental impact of night flights and the Senior Planning Policy Officer suggested the inclusion of comments that cargo aircraft were generally more polluting and night flights added to the carbon footprint.

Councillor Pepper agreed to circulate information regarding the impact of aviation on the environment. She had noticed that there were more flights after midnight and she was concerned that this would further increase post-Brexit as overseas trade increased.

The Director of Public Services said there had been growing use of the night time period for cargo but there were some restrictions. Uttlesford District Council had previously made representations which asked for a total night flight ban.

The Chair said that there should be strongly worded statements against night flights. He said airports operated at night because they could.

The Director of Public Services said that the operating license required 24 hour operations at Stansted albeit with night flight restrictions.

Councillor Isham said that low fares airlines like Ryanair relied on late arrivals as there were lower landing fees at night and they needed to move aircraft ready for the early morning flights the next day. He thought it would be difficult to implement a total ban.

Councillor Fairhurst said there should be a clear view and support for a total night flights ban with a consultation across all town and parish councils with regards to the impact of noise on the Community. He said there was no current proposal for the de-designation of the airport now but there could be in the future and the Council should have a position worked out now for this eventuality.

Councillor Sutton said that Stansted had 13,700 night flights per year which was twice the number at Heathrow and these were all within 11:30pm to 6:00am. She agreed it was important to involve the parishes.

The Chair said that MAG and SSE should be invited to meetings to provide information and updates. The Senior Planning Policy Officer agreed that this used to happen and would be a good idea for the future.

In response to comments from Councillor Pepper, Councillor Luck said there were efficiencies made at night due to fewer delays and therefore less consumption of fuel; aircraft were more efficient in cooler temperatures and cargo flights were scheduled months ahead to provide efficient operation of the airport and crews. He thought it would be helpful for an operator like FedEx to be invited to speak at the meeting.

The seminar was discussed again, the Director of Public Services said this had Officer resource implications. He also said there needed to be a balance between the local community's views and what would actually influence the Department of Transport.

Councillor Isham agreed and suggested that Professor Banatvala from SSE be invited to speak on health issues.

Councillor Sutton said MAG had a market research company and there was a small group being formed to work on the airspace modernisation programme. This showed that the airport was interested in communities' view.

The Senior Planning Policy Officer said that details of the airspace modernisation programme were set out on page 53 of his report. The aim of the process was to move away from ground based technology and make use of satellite navigation.

There was an on going application for airspace change at Stansted Airport and Councillor Eke had been involved in the first stage of stakeholder negotiation and the second stage would look at a variety of options. Once a preferred scheme was chosen a full public consultation would take place in 2022.

Councillor LeCount said he thought the Panel should be comparing those airports that have night flights with those that did not and agreed to work on this with the assistance of the Chair, Councillor Isham, and Councillor Fairhurst.

Councillor Isham agreed to share a document which related to night flights with the Panel.

The Director of Public Services said that other national governments had different priorities and this needed to be taken into account when carrying out the research.

*Councillor Reeve joined the meeting at 7:00pm*

SP5

## **GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION ON AVIATION TAX REFORM**

The Senior Planning Policy Officer said that the consultation ran until 15<sup>th</sup> June 2021 and set out the Government's approach to reducing the domestic rate of Air Passenger Duty (APD) to support Union and domestic connectivity and to increase the number of international duty bands so that the further an individual flew the higher the duty (the 'polluter pays' principle).

The Senior Planning Policy Officer said that Appendix A set out the planned responses and he suggested the following:-

- The reduction in domestic duty was not supported as it was not compatible with the aim to achieve net zero carbon status by 2030.
- The response would support the principle of international bands and that option B worked best.
- The Frequent Flyer Levy (FFL) would be difficult to administer.

Councillor Isham said he thought the FFL was an obvious way to increase duty on those who flew on a regular basis both for business and pleasure. He said the administration of the scheme should not be too difficult to work out. He said the current APD should be kept and added to in order to reduce frequent flying.

Councillor Dean said he agreed with the “polluter pays” principle and said a way to administer the FFL needed to be found.

Councillor Fairhurst said it would not be too complicated to find a way to manage the FFL and impose this on each flight an individual took using FFL to fund carbon reduction.

There was some discussion as to where the FFL pot of money should go and the general consensus was that it should go into general taxation to provide for other services and should not be there to encourage more polluting activity.

Councillor Caton thought the APD cut was a populist idea without any thought behind it and he also agreed with the “polluter pays” concept. He said FFL was complicated and had privacy issues.

Councillor Reeve was not in favour of reducing APD, but did agree with the FFL concept. He thought the first flight for an individual should be exempt and then charges increased depending on frequency after that.

AGREED: to endorse the final response to be submitted to Cabinet for ratification to include the additional suggestion of a Frequent Flyers Levy within the response.

6

## **GENERAL UPDATE ON AVIATION MATTERS**

The Senior Planning Policy Officer said that page 52, paragraph 10 related to the Government’s Green Paper on the future of aviation. This was still being developed and a report would be brought back to a future meeting.

Councillor Luck said there were a number of items from the last meeting that needed to be revisited including passport control delays; S106 agreements and pedestrian and cycle access.

*Councillor Luck left the meeting at 7:20pm.*

*The meeting ended at 7:30pm.*