

**STANSTED AIRPORT ADVISORY PANEL held at COUNCIL CHAMBER -  
COUNCIL OFFICES, LONDON ROAD, SAFFRON WALDEN, CB11 4ER, on  
FRIDAY, 24 FEBRUARY 2023 at 2.00 pm**

Present: Councillor M Foley (Chair)  
Councillors M Caton, J Evans, G LeCount, M Lemon, N Reeve  
and M Sutton

Officers in attendance: D Hermitage (Director of Planning) and C Shanley-Grozavu  
(Democratic Services Officer)

Also

Present: M Peachey, Councillor L Pepper and T Wilson

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

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Luck and Dean.

The Chair introduced Mr Martin Peachey and Mr Tom Wilson, both specialists within the field of aviation, who were in attendance as guests to advise the Panel.

Further introductions were given by all.

**2 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved as a correct record.

The Chair gave an update on engagement with the airport since the last meeting. He explained that due to the ongoing legal dispute at the time with the Manchester Airport Group (MAG), he had been advised against scheduling a meeting of the Stansted Airport Advisory Panel (STAAP) in 2022. Furthermore, there had been limited communication between MAG officers and UDC members. As MAG had been unable to attend this meeting, he was keen for another meeting to be arranged before the pre-election period with the airport in attendance.

Councillor Evans, Portfolio Holder for Planning, Stansted Airport, Infrastructure Strategy and the Local Plan, provided a brief summary on the recent meeting of the Stansted Airport Consultative Committee (STACC); including his request for MAG to share their Sustainable Development Plan (SDP) which was in the process of being redrafted and would set out the strategic context for the long-term growth and development of the airport.

In response to questions, Councillor Evans clarified that public transport usage was not included in this strategy. At the end of 2022, Stansted Airport had reported that 47% of airport users travelled to and from the site on public transport, which was lower than the pre-pandemic level of 52%.

### 3 **APPOINTMENT OF A VICE-CHAIR**

Councillor Le Count proposed that Councillor Evans be nominated as the Vice-Chair of the Stansted Airport Advisory Panel.

This was unanimously agreed.

### 4 **CAA CONSULTATION ON AIRSPACE CHANGES**

The Director of Planning provided a verbal report on the Civil Aviation Authority's (CAA) current consultation on the Revised Airspace Change Process Guidance, also known as CAP 1616. He said that there had been various rounds of consultations, including with local communities, and he requested that if members had any further comments, then they should contact him. Overall, there were no substantive changes to the stages and steps within the airspace change process requirements, but the proposals brought more flexibility. He highlighted various proposals including amending the requirements around Temporary Airspace Changes or Airspace Trials, as well as the requirement for mandatory current-day scenarios at the early stages of consultation but raised slight concern around the suggestion to transfer responsibility from the CAA to the proposer when publishing consultation responses.

The Panel discussed the impact which the revised CAP1616 could have both on the airport and the district, and the following was noted:

- Prior to the introduction of the CAP 1616 Airspace Change process, the CAA used the CAP 725 process. The transition to the new process included more stages which while it slowed down the process, ensured that it was done more thoroughly, and a fair outcome was achieved for all interested parties. Previous Post Implementation Reviews (PIRs) carried out under CAP725 concentrated on operational objectives, and not environmental results.
- CAP 1616 affects arrival and departure routes; while, Stansted Airport has not changed their departure routes since 1989, the volume of traffic on the two Clacton departure routes was increased in February 2016 with the removal of the Dover departure routes. This had resulted in the intensity of traffic doubling above some residents' properties which are under the Clacton routes.
- The Airspace Modernisation Strategy (AMS) programme currently underway was designed to improve efficiency for the airlines as well as minimising adverse noise impacts for local residents. It could provide greater capacity for the airport as well as the possibility of switching between alternative routes would provide noise respite for residents.
- The next phase of the AMS programme was Stage 3 where Stansted Airport would publish its proposed new routes with options for public consultation. This was anticipated later this year following Stage 2, the establishment of design principles, for which the Council was represented by Councillor Evans in the airport's Stakeholders

Engagement Group during the latter half of 2021. There has subsequently been a delay while vertical climb profiles for departures were being finalised. This would allow additional time for the Council to prepare their response.

- Departures must follow fixed Noise Preferential Routes (NPRs) which are 3km wide corridors from take-off to 4,000ft.
- There were no fixed routes for arriving aircraft but rather a wide swathe of flight paths where aircraft have to arrive at an intercept point at 2,000ft for final approach to the runway. This was roughly above Thaxted (for the south westerly runway) and High Wych (for the north easterly runway). Typically arriving aircraft are less noisier than departing aircraft.
- The Government's policy is that as technological advantages become available they should be shared between the aviation industry and local residents affected by flight paths. For example, BAA have previously made reassurances that technology was being developed so that an aircraft's navigation would adjust to go over less populated areas, particularly on incoming flights.
- Modern aircraft have a better climb performance which has an instant effect for housing in close proximity to an airport. Current take-offs were at a 4% gradient, whereas now many can depart at between 6 – 8%. Despite the steeper climb, generally the same amount of thrust is used.
- There are two types of take-off procedure for noise abatement (NADP1 and NADP2) and Stansted Airport uses NADP2, which effectively reduces the noise levels closer to the airport (about 5 to 13 miles) by moving it further out.
- Contributions are made by the airport to a Community Fund when an aircraft infringes flight rules. It was clarified that, for departures this is a corridor 3km wide and the airport has a track keeping performance accuracy rate of above 99%.

Members asked that a brief response to the consultation to be submitted to the CAA.

The Director of Planning highlighted the Sound Insulation Grant scheme; the airport's enhanced sound insulation grant scheme which provided funding to help deal with excessive aircraft noise. Further information could be found on a dedicated webpage on the UDC website.

In addition, members requested officers look at noise mitigation on heritage buildings to ensure that relevant guidance was available for those who wished to apply appropriate mitigation measures to listed buildings.

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## **AIRPORT PARKING DISCUSSION AND UPDATE**

Councillor Caton, member for Stansted South and Birchanger, provided the Panel with a summary of the issues of airport fly parking in and around Stansted Mountfitchet. He explained that the Parish Council had worked with the airport to install "No Airport Parking" signage on the Mountfitchet Green and Foresthall

Park estates in the south of the village, following concerns around airport users parking in the area to avoid paying carpark fees. However, whilst the signage had been beneficial, it has moved the fly parking into the north of the village and the airport had since said that they had exhausted funds to extend the initiative further. The problem was echoed in other areas, such as Takeley and Bishops Stortford.

Councillor Sutton highlighted airport parking issues in Takeley, particularly the impact that they had on the safety of the roads. Issues included residents renting out their drives then parking their own cars on the road, vehicles using the area as a pick-up point to avoid airport fees and several airport transfer and parking businesses operating out of Takeley.

The Panel discussed the following solutions as possible ways to resolve the parking issues:

#### Enforcement through the North Essex Parking Partnership

This approach would see restrictions being imposed and enforced by the North Essex Parking Partnership. It was highlighted that operations of the Parking Partnership had resolved the issue of fly parking in Hatfield Heath.

Members raised concerns that some residents may not be able to afford the resident permits which cost £70 for the first car and £105 for a second car. In addition, it would require agreement from 75% of each road impacted by a proposed scheme.

#### Working with Stansted Airport and MAG

Members discussed requesting MAG to enforce a similar model to their parking operations in Wythenshawe, near Manchester Airport. This would require them to fund the parking permits for residents in nearby areas and offset their costs with the income from penalties issued the enforcement of the permit scheme.

Members suggested additional action from MAG including providing further funding for more signage, reducing the pricing of their car park, setting up off-site car parking provisions, and permitting private companies to provide additional parking facilities elsewhere.

#### Policies within the Emerging Local Plan

Members requested that officers and the Local Plan Leadership Group work to include policies around airport parking in the Local Plan.

#### No Action

Members raised concerns that members of the public were committing criminal damage when it has been left to residents to deal with.

The Director of Planning agreed to conduct further research into the schemes implemented by MAG in the areas which surrounded Manchester Airport.

*Councillor LeCount left the meeting at 15:50*

## NIGHT FLIGHTS DISCUSSION AND UPDATE

The Chair gave a verbal update on the government's recent consultation on night flights restrictions at the designated airports (Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted), as well as national policy beyond 2025. The DfT is currently reviewing the results of this consultation and is expected to publish a decision later this year together with its proposals, for public consultation, for the next night flights regime which starts in October 2025. In the meantime, the government has rolled over the 2017-2022 regime which imposed a limit on the number of movements and the total number of noise Quota Count (QC) points allowed. Together this limits the number of aircraft able to take-off and land during the night and puts a cap on the total amount of noise QC points allowed. The QC system is effectively a proxy for the amount of noise each aircraft emits, so the QC limit is the total amount of noise allowed.

He highlighted several schemes implemented to reduce or limit night flights including a voluntary local agreement with Heathrow, a ban on night flights as part of a condition of Planning permission in Frankfurt and a limit on night-time airport slots at Brussels Airport by the Belgium government. In addition, he outlined the Australian noise metric system which is an additional tool to measure noise impacts known as 'Number Above' contours. This metric combined information on every aircraft noise level above 60, 65 and 70dB with the number of aircraft movements and was now adopted in the UK and elsewhere as a supplementary noise indicator.

Should the Panel work toward a night flight ban, then he asked to use the WHO definition of an 8-hour night, rather than the DfT definition of 23:30 – 06:00.

Members discussed the possibility of seeking a reduction of night flights and the following was noted.

- There needed to be further consideration into the increase of freight movements to and from the airport and the impact that this would have on noise generated at night.
- Most night flights operating out and in of Stansted Airport were long-haul cargo flights and it was inevitable that if the airport chose to prohibit this, then the night traffic would be pushed to another part of the country, at night, as operators had to rework their schedule. However, there were reports that it was not economically advantageous to fly freight at night.
- Due to the rural nature of the surrounding area, there was greater sensitivity to noise generated from Stansted Airport, compared to other airports located in built-up areas.
- As different aircraft generated different levels of noise, Stansted Airport could choose to be selective with who they accept at night in order to mitigate noise.
- There were several factors which influenced the pricing and timing of flights, including the peak flying times, demand for a flight and the length of a rotation. Stansted Airport could seek to reorganise their pricing structure and remove cheaper flight slots at night in order to reduce the number of commercial night flights.

- Members discussed the impact which budget airlines had on the noise generated from the airport. Ryanair operated using predominately 737-8 and 737-9 aircraft which were less noisy and were usually on time, but their profit relied heavily on volume with high load factors and new routes. This business model worked well from Stansted Airport as the location better suited cheaper, short-haul flights.
- A total ban on night flights would disrupt the priority mail services which operated out of the airport; however, this could be negotiated by accommodating additional flights in the shoulder periods.

Members acknowledged the economic influence in which Stansted Airport had within the district and were keen to encourage working between the two organisations as this would be beneficial for all. The Chair requested officers looked to schedule another meeting of STAAP, before the pre-election period, and for the relevant officers at MAG to attend in order to begin to discuss the prospect of a voluntary agreement of noise reduction at night, whilst working towards a night flight ban.

The Chair thanked Mr Peachey and Mr Wilson for their contribution to the discussions.

*Meeting ended at 16:38*