

**STANSTED AIRPORT ADVISORY PANEL held at COUNCIL CHAMBER -  
COUNCIL OFFICES, LONDON ROAD, SAFFRON WALDEN, CB11 4ER, on  
THURSDAY, 17 AUGUST 2023 at 3.00 pm**

Present: Councillor J Evans (Chair)  
Councillors A Dean, M Foley (Vice-Chair), J Moran and  
M Sutton

Officers in attendance: P Heath (Principal Planning Policy Officer), D Hermitage  
(Strategic Director of Planning) and C Shanley-Grozavu  
(Democratic Services Officer)

Also

Present: M Belcher, N Robinson (Manchester Airport Group)

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

Introductions were made by those present.

There were no apologies for absence.

The Chair and Vice-Chair both declared that they lived under a Noise Preferential Route (NPR).

Councillor Dean declared that he lived near to the Airport's runway and was also member of Stansted Airport Watch (SAW), formerly known as Stop Stansted Expansion (SSE).

**2 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

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

**3 PRESENTATION ON STANSTED AIRPORT'S NOISE ACTION PLAN**

Members received a presentation from Neil Robinson of the Manchester Airport Group (MAG) on Stansted Airport's Noise Action Plan (NAP).

The Chair requested that MAG provided their data on listed building under the airport's NPRs.

Members discussed the draft NAP, and the following was noted:

- The Sound Insulation Grants were being publicised through a number of channels including outreach sessions, a community newsletter, communications with Parish Councils and advertisement on the UDC website. MAG welcomed any further ideas from members as to how to generate greater and deeper publicity.
- The Sound Insulation Scheme was least successful when it was over-prescriptive, with a frame-work contractor with a standardised product. Under the new scheme, homeowners were given the freedoms to make decisions of the best way to insulate their homes and MAG provided a

financial contribution for the acoustic benefits.

- Stansted Airport had a greater number of night flights, compared to other airports, when measured against the Department for Transport's 6 ½ hour definition of "night". This was however not the case when the World Health Organisations' definition of night as an 8-hour period was applied.
- Freight operators typically used QC2 rated aircraft as there was not much alternative in the market. Manufacturers were often a model cycle behind in freight aircraft, compared to passenger aircraft.
- Currently the airport had variable charges on their night flight slots and managed night noise with a Quote Point budget which would be reviewed under the plan. MAG intended to speak to STAAC about the practicalities of having graduated incentives and how to manage the expectations of airlines, especially when established operators often had historic rights to their flight slots. The Chair said that it would be interesting to see if reality matches the expectation when it comes to the pricing and aspiration of driving out. Moreover, it was important to create the right incentives within the framework.
- Some freight operators, such as FedEx, had a preference for nighttime slots as this complimented their business model of offering international next-day delivery for high value, time critical freight. If these operators were unable to obtain nighttime flights slots, the business model and subsequent premium that they charge wouldn't be viable.
- Whilst passenger flights generally did not fly through the night, there were a greater number of early morning flights offered between 6am to 8am as this was around the most popular slot of 7am. In addition, the Ryanair business model relied on intensive rotations to generate enough passengers to offer low prices which resulted in night departures and arrivals. By removing one element out, such as a rotation, the company wouldn't be able to operate as effectively and would take business elsewhere.
- There had been some timetable slippage in the summertime which had resulted in a greater number of late arrivals and the accumulation of delays during the day meant that more flights ran into the night. This was for a number of reasons, including strikes, loss of airspace and difficult weather. Members advised MAG to consider looking into a night flight quota without financial penalty, and to review the timetables in order to manage this in future.
- The Airport monitored operational components daily and these were regularly reported to the relevant sub committees of STAAC, as well as the Council's Environmental Health department.
- MAG was statutory consultee on planning applications where they had a sphere of influence, and they did usually comment. However, it was noted that when developers chose to build near the airport, a source of sound, it was their responsibility to ensure the acoustics were resolved, and not the Airport.
- Stansted Airport were working towards airspace modernisation, as part of the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) Airspace Modernisation Strategy. They had completed Gateway 2 of the formal airspace change process in 2022 but had made minimal progress since as there was a need to integrate with the other airports who weren't up to the same point in the process.
- When delivering flight paths, it was not in the Airport's interest to change

the current 6-mile arrival approach as there currently was not a system approved in the UK that could be used for more accuracy. Members highlighted that technology had moved forward, and the arrival corridor could be calculated to not fly over populated areas, such as Thaxted.

During discussion, Councillor Dean emphasised the need to co-operate and work more closely with the airport.

The Chair thanked Mr Robinson for his attendance and contribution to the meeting.

#### **4 RESPONSE TO STANSTED AIRPORT'S NOISE ACTION PLAN 2024-2028**

The Director of Planning presented a report on the proposed consultation response to the Stansted Airport Noise Action Plan for 2024-2028. He noted the areas of concerns raised by members during the discussions on the previous agenda item and requested that any additional comments be sent in writing to him.

In response to comments from Councillor Dean regarding the annual reporting of aircraft operations noise within the noise contour areas, officers clarified that this was a requirement of the Planning permission.

#### **5 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Mike Belcher was invited by the Chair to provide an update on the ongoing Land Compensation dispute between local residents and Stansted Airport.

He explained that the matter began in 1985, when Stansted Airport Ltd (STAL) obtained planning permission to expand to a throughput of 8 million passengers per annum (mppa). This would be followed by approval of Phase 2 in 1999 which allowed expansion to 15mppa. As both of these phases had an adverse impact on local house prices, due to factors such as increased noise, STAL agreed to compensate local homeowners for the devaluation of their homes, in accordance with its obligations as the statutory "Compensating Authority" under the 1973 Land Compensation Act. However, a long-term dispute had arisen around the airport's legal obligation to pay until it has completed everything listed in Phase 2 planning permission.

In response to questions from members, Mr Belcher clarified that he was not seeking the support of the Council, who had no involvement in the matter, and his attendance at the meeting was to provide members with an update.

The Chair reminded members that STAAP was a working group of Cabinet with broad Terms of Reference. Moving forward, he hoped to bring information from STAAC and SASIG, as well as reports from interested parties including SAW.

In addition, the Chair highlighted that officers in Planning Enforcement were taking steps to stop the operation of unauthorised parking sites around the airport. This included serving a 28-day temporary stop notice.

*Meeting ended at 16:45*