



STRATEGIC AVIATION SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP
of the Local Government Association

SASIG Meeting

24 February 2012

Notes of Previous Meeting

ITEM 2: NOTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING

Strategic Aviation Special Interest Group

Minutes of Meeting

Friday 28 October 2011, Local Government House at 11:00

1. Apologies for absence and new attendees

The Chairman, Cllr Jamie Macrae, welcomed the group to the meeting and invited new attendees to introduce themselves. He welcomed Edward Cheng as the new Policy Officer for SASIG.

The list of those present and apologies received is at Appendix A.

2. Minutes of the last meeting (24 June 2011) and matters arising

Decisions

The Minutes of the last meeting were **agreed** by the group as a correct record.

There were no matters arising.

3. National Aviation Policy Update

The SASIG Chairman summarised the issues discussed at their **meeting in September 2011 with the Aviation Minister**, Theresa Villiers, adding that the Minister appreciated the opportunity to meet and discuss issues with SASIG.

Cllr Jackie Cheetham, SASIG Vice-Chairman said that it had been a positive and useful meeting with two-way dialogue - the Minister asking as well as answering questions, and that the Minister knew her subject well.

Cllr Ian Lake, SASIG Vice Chairman, said the Minister was clear that SASIG was a well-respected organisation, and that it was gratifying the Minister was supportive of SASIG's role providing a coordinated voice in the aviation policy debate. The Minister was grateful for SASIG coming from a productive position.



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In response to a question from the group on new runways, the SASIG Director, emphasised that Government policy advocated no new runways at Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted, but Ministers had not ruled out expansion elsewhere. The Minister did not expand on specific cases such as Luton airport during her meeting with SASIG, but merely clarified policy. It was noted that the Minister had received over 600 responses on the national aviation policy review so far.

The SASIG Chairman and Vice-Chairmen emphasised that they had been limited in what questions could be asked about the national aviation policy review due to the developing state of the review. They proposed June/July 2012 as an appropriate time for the Minister to attend a SASIG meeting, which she has agreed in principle to. The next stage of the policy review will have been issued for consultation by that time and the group will have had some time to digest it.

It was noted that the issue of how the Government can “constitute appropriate mechanisms for the collection of adequate funds for mitigation and compensation measures” was brought to the group by the Minister. Input from the membership would be appreciated as part of a wider response from SASIG on this issue.

On the **South East Airports Taskforce (SEAT)**, the difference in capacity between regional airports and airports in the South East was discussed. While the importance of keeping regional airports on the Government agenda was emphasised, it was recognised that it is likely the work of the Government’s taskforce will focus on larger London airports.

On the **operational freedoms trial at Heathrow**, the group said that Ministers had directed BAA Ltd. to engage with Local Authorities around Heathrow, however, the response from BAA Ltd. to this Ministerial direction has been poor. Hounslow LB has written to request a postponement of the trial due to start on 1 November 2011, to allow more time for engagement as they are concerned that proceeding at this stage will result in flawed data and flawed decision-making. It was noted that there were signs of an attempt to shift responsibility from airport operators to Local Authorities.

On **noise reduction**, it was felt that the usefulness of bunds and noise reduction fencing was not universally recognised and this made it difficult to persuade airport operators to provide funding for them. It was also felt that the traditional noise measurement techniques do not accurately illustrate the impacts of ground noise. It was not clear whether the way noise is measured could provide a reliable indication of what bunds do, and simple measures such as this can be effective.

The SASIG Chairman highlighted the need for noise management measures to be locally tailored, and promoted use of Airport Consultative Committees (ACCs) as a route through which to secure such measures.



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On **air passenger duty (APD)**, the group noted the Government's exception for Northern Ireland and asked if regional airport operators would be able to argue a similar case for provision to be extended. It was argued that the Duty gave airline operators such as Ryanair a price advantage of around £80 per seat over other UK airline operators. The group said it was important to recognise that APD is a tax, and is the only way in which aviation is taxed. It was cautioned that the aviation industry is attempting to avoid the tax when they join the European Union emissions trading scheme (EU ETS) in 2012.

On the **national rail network**, the membership discussed HS1 and HS2, saying that the lack of linkage in the planning of these two lines had been frustrating. Beyond the North West it is envisaged the link will have more effect. There is currently little overlap in terms of the decision-making for high-speed rail, and many choices still need to be made.

Some of the group voiced concern about where money for the proposals was going to come from. Others felt that capacity problems faced by commuters in areas such as Northampton and Milton Keynes provided a strong rationale for the new line to go ahead. The Chairman said that a decision on the high-speed rail route was anticipated in November or December 2011.

On the **new airport proposals**, the group discussed the 'pros and cons' of the Thames estuary as a location. Hong Kong's airport built on reclaimed land was cited as a successful example of how this idea has worked in practice. However, the environmental impact on the estuary as a wildlife protection area and safety concerns over potential bird strikes were also cited as factors for consideration. The cost assessment methodology for a new airport scheme might factor in benefits to the public and all other relevant features.

The specific characteristics of **helicopter noise** were highlighted: planning permission is not needed if activity takes place on less than 28 days per year; the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) should monitor that, however, often no checks are made; the landowner is the responsible party; and the CAA is not being supportive of any input other than from the industry.

Decisions

The issues discussed when SASIG met the Aviation Minister, Theresa Villiers, were **noted**.

The SASIG membership **agreed** to assist the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra) in their work to include a noise indicator in the Department of Health (DoH) policy.

It was **agreed** that SASIG will invite the Aviation Minister to attend a future SASIG meeting, preferably in June / July 2012.

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It was **agreed** that SASIG will develop a response to the issue of how the Government can “constitute appropriate mechanisms for the collection of adequate funds for mitigation and compensation measures”.

It was **agreed** that SASIG will include the issue of helicopter noise in the group’s response to the policy framework.

Actions

SASIG will assist the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra) in their work to include a noise indicator in the Department of Health (DoH) policy.

The Aviation Minister will be invited to attend a future SASIG meeting (June / July 2012).

SASIG will develop a response to the issue of how the Government can “constitute appropriate mechanisms for the collection of adequate funds for mitigation and compensation measures”.

SASIG will include the issue of helicopter noise in the group’s response to the next stage of the national aviation policy review.

4. SASIG Finance Report - 2011/12 Outlook

The SASIG Chairman summarised the key messages from this report, including the intention to fill the post of SASIG Information Officer. With half of subscriptions now paid for this financial year, the group needs to look towards funding for next year. A letter will go out to SASIG Authorities setting out justification for them including the SASIG subscription in their budget planning.

It was noted that time is limited as most Authorities will have already been working on their budget for 2012/13, so it is envisaged that the letter will be sent in the next few weeks.

The Chairman noted that aviation is entering a period of policy change where SASIG needs to reinforce its views. He urged the membership to promote the work of SASIG in their Authorities and assist in raising the group’s income for 2012/13.

The Chairman said the group would continue to explore other sources of revenue beyond subscriptions, including how the group can share resources with other organisations. He explained that a discounted rate had been adopted to attract new Authorities; assistance from the existing membership with promoting this feature was requested. If capacity within the team can be built up, the group will be in a position to commission work – we need the resources in order to deliver. Suggestions were welcomed from the group.

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Decisions

The 2011/12 outlook was **noted**.

Debts are to be cleared by those Authorities yet to pay their 2011/12 subscriptions.

Action

It was **agreed** that SASIG would send out a letter in the next few weeks regarding budget planning for 2012/13.

5. Notes of the Chairman's Advisory Group meeting held 30 September 2011

The Chairman thanked Cllr Cheetham for Chairing this meeting in his absence.

Decision

The report was **noted**.

6. SASIG response to National Aviation Policy Review 'Scoping Document' consultation

The group discussed the suggestion of a 'noise envelope', emphasising that the outcome should be a reduction of noise rather than just a monitoring exercise. The need for more social surveys to measure the impact on communities was stressed.

The membership noted the possible inclusion of a noise indicator in Department of Health policy, saying that this could prove useful in helping to achieve SASIG's own aims in this area. It was agreed that this was an area of work the group should seek to have an input into.

The group pointed out that noise was not included within the section of SASIG's response referring to compensation and agreed that this issue should form part of SASIG's future responses in the policy review.

The timing of the Department for Transport's review of Airport Consultative Committee (ACC) guidelines was enquired about.

The membership thanked the SASIG Director for her work in writing a response to the consultation on behalf of SASIG.

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Decision

The report was **noted**.

Actions

It was **agreed** that the SASIG Director would ascertain the Department for Transport's timetable for their review of Airport Consultative Committee (ACC) guidelines.

It was **agreed** that SASIG would include compensation for noise as an issue in future responses to the Department for Transport.

7. SASIG response to Draft National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) consultation

The membership discussed the draft National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), detailing two headline concerns about the lack of spatial vision in the policy framework and the lack of a clear definition of 'sustainable development'. The membership pointed out that Local Authorities are already getting planning applications for 2012/13 and the timescale for implementation of the framework was too slow. The group agreed to wait and see whether SASIG proposals to accelerate the process would be taken up by the Planning Minister, Greg Clark.

The membership thanked the SASIG Director for her work in writing a response to the consultation on behalf of SASIG.

Decision

The report was **noted**.

8. Dates for future meetings

The dates for future meetings were **noted**:

Chairman's Advisory Group (CAG)
3 February 2012

SASIG
24 February 2012

9. Any other business

No other items of business were raised.

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Presentation from Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council -

Integrating transport and planning at Doncaster Sheffield Airport

Stephen King, Principal Transport Planner, & Jeremy Johnson, Employment Manager, from Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council (MBC) gave a presentation on 'Integrating Planning and Transport at Doncaster Sheffield Airport'. A copy of the slides is enclosed with these Minutes, and is available on the SASIG website.

The following points were emphasised by Stephen and Jeremy:

Doncaster MBC is looking to realise the unique opportunity of providing a 'one-stop aviation shop' at Doncaster Sheffield Airport.

The airport mainly serves passengers within the holiday sector but has aspirations to provide more business services in the long-term. More research needs to be done on where travellers would like to fly.

Partnership working is in place amongst Local Authorities as well as with the private sector.

Passengers are currently well served by a shuttle bus to and from the airport and the centre of Doncaster in 20 minutes - twice as fast as making the journey by car. The shuttle bus receives a European subsidy and runs from 5am to midnight each day. Plans for development of a rail service from the airport are ongoing.

A conditional funding agreement has been awarded from the Regional Growth Fund (RGF), which is reliant on the private sector parties involved. They are currently going through due diligence for the funding package, with the hope that construction of a road link between the airport and the M18 motorway can begin in 2012. Doncaster MBC's role is pump-priming, coordination and driving the process.

A cross-country rail connection will come along when the HS2 high-speed rail network is extended, providing a high-speed connection between Doncaster and Birmingham.

Permission was granted in 2010 for a strategic rail freight interchange; waiting for construction to begin. The airport plus this freight interchange constitute a 'strategic transport corridor'.

In the discussion, the membership highlighted that airports such as Bournemouth have been losing passengers in recent years despite strong initial investment. The team at Doncaster MBC, however, expressed confidence that they can continue to attract investment. The airport is based in a strong local catchment area, and an award for customer experience was achieved in 2010 – travellers like to use the uncluttered, modern & spacious buildings.

The Chairman expressed the group's thanks to Stephen and Jeremy for their time preparing and giving this interesting and relevant presentation.



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Appendix A

Attendance & apologies list

Present	Authority
Cllr Nigel Shaw	Broadland DC
Roger Burroughs	Broadland DC
Cllr David Rowlands	Bucks CC
Cllr Jamie Macrae	SASIG Chairman
Len Smith	Cornwall Council
Cllr Keith Brockwell	Crawley BC
Stephen King	Doncaster MBC
Jeremy Johnson	Doncaster MBC
Cllr Mike Carver	East Herts DC
Cllr Mick Page	Essex CC
Zhanine Oates	Essex CC
Cllr Andrew Gibson	Hampshire CC
Rob Gibson	Hounslow LB
Stephen Service	LGA, Member Support Officer
Wendy Rousell	Luton BC
Cllr Charles Yarwood	Mole Valley DC
John Coates	Richmond upon Thames LB
Anna Mahoney	SASIG Director
Edward Cheng	SASIG Policy Officer
Cllr Ian Lake	Surrey CC
Cllr Jackie Cheetham	Uttlesford DC
Steve Bailes	Uttlesford DC
Cllr David Sleight	Wokingham BC

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Apologies	Authority
Cllr Chris Ridgers	Cornwall Council
Tom Flanagan	Cornwall Council
Cllr Andrew Bosmans	Doncaster MBC
Richard Ward	Ealing LB
Paul Baker	Hammersmith & Fulham LB
Val Beale	Hillingdon LB
Cllr Graham Knight	Reigate & Banstead BC
Peter Long	Reigate & Banstead BC
Richard Worrall	SASIG Honorary President
Rub Nawaz	Slough BC
Monica Wilsch	Slough BC
Cllr Marian Rough	Spelthorne BC
Sue Janota	Surrey County Council
Kath Harrison	Surrey County Council
Cllr Alan Jones	Tandridge DC
John Phillips	Tandridge DC