

Minutes from: SASIG Technical Working Group Meeting
Subject: Environment, Planning & Airspace (Meeting No. 1)

Date: Thursday: 28th April, 2016

Time: 11:30 – 14:00 hrs

Venue: Room 6, Local Government House, Smith Square, London, SW1P 3HZ

Attendees:

Cllr Keith Artus	(Uttlesford District Council)
Zhanine Smith	(Essex County Council)
Jeremy Pine	(Uttlesford District Council)
Chris Nash	(Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead B.C.)
Val Beale	(London Borough of Hillingdon)
Kay Mead	(East Herts District Council)
Ajit Bansal	(London Borough of Hounslow)
Colin Stanbury	(London Borough of Richmond Upon Thames)
Chris Cain	SASIG Secretariat (Chair)
Lesley Smith	SASIG Secretariat

Guest Speakers:

Stu Lindsey	(CAA – Head of Airspace Team)
Rebecca Roberts-Hughes	(CAA – Programme Head, Policy Department)
Brian Cox	(Snr Environmental Health Officer – Crawley B.C.)
Anthony Masson	(Senior Planning Officer – Crawley Borough Council)

Introduction

The meeting began with a ‘round table’ introduction of the SASIG members and guest speakers attending the meeting. The Chair explained that this Technical Working Group was one of three that the last full member meeting had agreed should be established by SASIG to review key areas of policy in view of the Government’s intention to comprehensively update the Airports Policy Framework, the aim being to make representations before said policy is published for consultation. In addition this particular TWG will also be responsible for looking at the CAA Airspace, DfT Airspace and Noise and DfT Night Noise Consultations and developing draft policy positions for endorsement by the wider SASIG membership. Accordingly, a skeleton policy position and draft response to the CAA’s document will be taken to CAG on 15th June and then a more fleshed out overall position presented to the next full SASIG meeting on 8th July.

Item 1: Terms of Reference for the Technical Group

The Terms of Reference were approved but it was agreed the opinions of those members who were unable to attend the meeting should also be canvassed.

Action: Copy of the Terms of Reference to be sent round to all SASIG members who are asked to pass comments back to the Secretariat (20th June)

Item 2: London Airspace Management Plan

Lamp 1A is the first of a series of major airspace change proposals affecting airspace arrangements in south-east England, from Stansted to the Isle of Wight. The package has been developed over the last three years and was submitted to the CAA in February 2015. For further details see:

<https://www.caa.co.uk/Commercial-industry/Airspace/Airspace-change/Decisions/London-Airspace-Management-Programme-Phase-1A/>

The group was asked for any thoughts on the plan and to consider whether SASIG should remain as consultees or try to become more involved in the process. It was agreed that LAMP is essentially an operational-design exercise, which is not SASIG's area of expertise, where it has impacts on receptors on the ground this will be of concern to SASIG members hence the consultation process was the right vehicle for making our views known. However, there was a desire from members to learn more about the operational options and technological developments that could influence future design. The Secretariat took away the task of finding ways in which members could be better informed on these issues.

Action: Secretariat to identify papers or speakers for the next TWG meeting

Item 3: CAA Consultation on the airspace change decision-making process – presentation and discussion with CAA leads Rebecca Roberts-Hughes and Stu Lindsay

The group was taken through the CAA presentation that had been circulated in advance. The guest speakers gave an update on the progress of the consultation and the key issues it was seeking to address.

One of these is to ensure complete transparency of the process which would be done by publishing all documents via an online portal. This would make finding out what was happening at each individual airport, much easier.

Another proposal by the CAA was to take a more 'hands on' approach, looking at everything in detail before taking the next step. There would be more work on community engagement process and drawing up common principles with sponsors and stakeholders.

A further proposal was a new option appraisals stage at which all options, including discounted options, would be considered. The CAA would provide necessary guidance as required. The group was informed that there is only a few times a year when airspace changes can be made so the consultation process must be transparent and complete before it can go to the next stage.

The group was informed that the CAA had been advised by Helios to form an 'Oversight Committee' to monitor airspace usage and structure and make recommendations for changes; but that the CAA had decided against this on the grounds that it would not provide any useful contribution to the process. The

CAA felt that airports and other sponsors of airspace change (e.g. airlines) were the experts in the area of operations and that they should be providing this expertise rather than the CAA itself. However it was agreed that the CAA change process had to produce outcomes that were consistent with Government policy and that airports and sponsors should be clear on what issues they needed to go to the CAA and those that would be for DfT consideration.

The CAA will consult on the text of the draft replacement for CAP 725 in early 2017 and all responses to the Consultation process are asked to be in by 15th June 2016. It was unlikely that anything submitted beyond that date would be included. The CAA assured the group that everything submitted would be captured and correctly interpreted and also be understandable not just to the industry but to the public too.

Action: Based on discussions at the Technical Working Group a draft response will be put to the CAG meeting on 10th June (now 15th June) prior to the deadline given by the CAA of 15th June. The full SASIG meeting will then be asked to note the response at its full meeting on 8th July.

Item 4: DfT Noise and Airspace Focus Groups – Report back and discussion

Feedback had been received from some members who had attended the recent DfT Noise and Airspace Focus Groups and this was discussed by the group. It was generally felt that there had probably not been enough discussion or dialogue between the CAA and the DfT before these public meetings had taken place and DfT would have benefitted more by placing the Focus Groups on a more formal basis. Other feedback was as follows:

Focus Group 1 - Independent Aviation Noise Authority (IANA)/Government Engagement: Appeared to be agreement in principle over the benefit of an IANA, conditional on it being able to prove itself useful and not just become a 'talking shop'. The structure and funding of IANA was also something that needed to be clarified – DfT did not have form proposals yet. There was also a visible tendency for DfT to want to keep the scope of IANA's remit within certain limits and not as comprehensive as the Airport's Commission had envisaged.

Focus Group 2 - Role of the Secretary of State in Airspace change/Definition of airspace Change/Noise preferential routes: DfT operated this session under Chatham House rules therefore feedback received that could be made widely available had, of necessity, to be limited. Issues regarding the timetable to implementing policy changes, terrestrial planning systems and how future communities may be affected by any proposals, had all been discussed, however, as had improvements in flying technology would affect NPRs.

Focus Group 3 – Concentration/Compensation/Guidance to the CAA and Environmental significance: Feedback received was dominated by issues of compensation. An example of what was happening at Stansted Airport where throughput was currently at 23 mppa - above the 8-15 mppa infrastructure - was given.

The TWG generally felt that funding community projects was not a substitute for preserving the health and well-being of affected residents, although it was good for enhancing community relations.

Action: SASIG Secretariat will pick up on all comments and feedback received so far and draft a response from SASIG on the DfT Noise and Airspace Policy Review to send to DfT.

Item 5 – Handling airport related noise in local Government development plans

Brian Cox (Senior Environmental Health Officer) and Anthony Masson (Senior Planning Officer) from Crawley Borough Council attended the meeting to discuss their experiences on this subject with regard to Gatwick Airport. The guest speakers provided the group with details on their Local Plan, adapted December 2015, part of which dealt with the policy vacuum left by the revocation of PPG24 (Planning and Noise) which resulted in absence of detailed technical guidance at national level but which was still being used. The group felt that industry were just as keen to know what the current rules are in relation to airport related noise as local planning authorities, and therefore Crawley Borough Council's input would prove very beneficial.

There was some discussion concerning the 66dB threshold as one of Crawley's main concerns was infill development between the northern boundary of the NE Sector and the southern boundary of the safeguarded area (the future airport boundary). This whole area is between the 66 and 69dB contour and would be an extension of the 'major noise sensitive development' but with the current policy vacuum it would be hard to stop it. DfT maintains however that 66dB was the limit of acceptability although it was not clear where the 66dB line would be drawn and what the factors were that it depended upon. The key in Crawley's case was adopting a blanket 66dB level for all noise producing developments, rather than in isolation for aviation, and because of this the Inspector had been willing to support the generic provision that could then be applied at Gatwick.

Crawley noted they had also worked with companies within the aggregates industry (where noise can also be a significant issue) and had changed some of the policy wording based on their feedback. ProPG consultation document had arrived after the adoption of the policy but unless this document was formally accepted by Government or is adopted and embedded into the LA's Local Plan it may not carry much weight. The inspector told Crawley they will need to review their plan based on what will happen at their airport rather than what could happen.

The Chair thanked Crawley for their very helpful contribution and secured their agreement to have their presentation and supporting papers placed in the Library on the SASIG web site.

Action: Secretariat to put Crawley BC presentation and papers on the SASIG web site.

Item 6: Safeguarding

It was agreed there is an absence of clarity on safeguarding amongst local authorities and there have been instances particularly within rural areas where technical issues or problems have not been raised to the appropriate local authority. Tall stacks, windfarms, radar issues, hold ups in static positions and railways at the end of runways, have all been flagged up in different areas. With the APF now being reviewed, this is an excellent opportunity for Government to put a clearer policy in place. There should be greater clarity on the risks involved in safeguarding and the group should cover this in their responses to Parliament. The group was provided with a handout from Tim Johnson of the Aviation Environment Federation (AEF) who unfortunately could not attend the meeting in person. The group was satisfied with the content of the summary which talked about the risks to people living, working or travelling near the ends of airport runways and the way in which AEF viewed the risks and how they looked at solutions.

Action: Group members to send any examples to the Secretariat end June 2016 of where PSZs (Public Safety Zones) have become an issue.

Item 7: Presentation from Sustainable Aviation – Jon Bottomley

Guest speaker Jon Bottomley was unfortunately unable to attend the meeting but submitted to the group a paper for review and discussion. It was agreed that industry has no clear guidance on aircraft noise and land-use planning in areas near to airports and that this was an important area that needed to be addressed. SASIG and airport operators may not wholly agree with specific numbers but should be able to get together especially with regard the 66dB threshold and submit something to the Department.

Action: Members are asked to submit their comments to the Secretariat by end June

A.O.B

None

Meeting Closed

**(Post meeting note: Date of the next meeting has been set for:
Thursday: 22nd September at 11:30 hrs.)**