

Airspace and Noise Engagement Group 07/11/2022 - 14:00 to 17:00

Attendees:	
Ian Elston - DfT (Chair)	Darren Rhodes - CAA
Tim May - DfT	John Burton - CAA
Ian Greene - DfT	Ali Eastwood - CAA
Matt Million - DfT	Vicki Hughes - ANS
Meera Sharma - DfT	Robin Clarke - NATS
Gary Marshall - DfT	
Amal Said - DfT	
Kieran O'Shea - DfT (Secretary)	
Rhian Thomas - DEFRA	
Benjamin Fenech - UKHSA	
Joseph Duggan - DLUHC	
David Courtenay - Northern Irish Government	
Neil Robinson - MAG	
Christopher Snelling - AOA	
Paul Beckford - Community Groups	
Martin Peachey - Community Groups	
Charles Lloyd - AEF	
Deborah Lovatt - AEF	
Chris Cain - SASIG	
Frank Evans - UKACCS	Apologies:
Solange Baena - Airbus	Zhanine Smith – SASIG / Essex County Council
Athanasios Synodinos - Airbus	Andy Kershaw- BA
Prof Paul Hooper - Manchester Metropolitan University	Rick Norman - Heathrow
Amanda Francis - AICES	Ian Jopson - NATS

Introductions

Ian Elston (IE) introduced the meeting. There were no new ANEG attendees, IE gave apologies for members who couldn't attend.

Minutes from last meeting

Tim May (TM) updated on 6 actions from the last meeting including focus groups, SASIG/DLUHC meeting and CAA work.

Charles Lloyd (CL) stated that minutes from the last few meetings have not been uploaded on the ANEG website. He also asked whether we could put 2023 ANEG invites in diaries.

IE stated that minutes will be uploaded. Also, it would make sense to put invites in, will take this away and try to do so within the next few weeks **ACTION**

DfT policy updates

IE informed all attendees that we now have a new Secretary of State and Ministerial team. Considering the forthcoming Autumn Statement and possible public spending constraints, he said this shouldn't affect the current research project as the budget for this is very small in comparison to DfT's overall budget.

Baroness Vere has been confirmed as Aviation Minister and the team have spent time with her updating her on noise and airspace. Some of the organisations on ANEG members have had either a meeting with her, or these were being planned.

IE informed everyone that there will be a House of Commons debate on night flights tomorrow brought by Sarah Olney MP (Richmond Park) at 7pm.

IE stated that as aviation recovers post pandemic and there is more aviation activity, this would probably lead to more engagement between communities and airports and airlines on this issue. He reminded everyone to ensure this engagement was courteous.

IE spoke to a set of slides on the following policy areas which DfT had been working on: night flights, Airspace modernisation, Flightpath to the Future and Jet Zero - aviation decarbonisation.

Matt Million (MM) gave a brief update on the Aviation Night Noise Effects research project (ANNE). This is a multiyear project looking at aviation night noise, there are multiple stages including a questionnaire and an objective study using a small number of the participants. A pilot study was conducted earlier in the year to test the questionnaire. The pilot was a success and achieved the expected response rate of 22%. They received feedback on the communication e.g presenting the questions in different ways, streamline questions and highlight key parts of the questions that they need. They will also be conducting a feasibility study for the objective part of the study soon.

Frank Evans (FE) suggested that the DfT should join up with CAA so that the ANAS study and DfT's study can be aligned. IE informed FE that DfT have joined up with the CAA on this. The CAA sits on the DfT steering group and will be presenting later today.

Neil Robinson (NR): expressed concerns on the sampling strategy. NR is concerned that there could be a bias in the sampling, since the pilot study did not specifically test this, what is being done to avoid this bias? MM stated that the pilot study did look at how representative the response was. When the main survey is run, we will work with contractors to get weekly feedback on sampling and other factors.

Meera Sharma (MS) mentioned that we have considered criticisms of other studies and have been making sampling strategy decisions with these in mind.

Robin Clarke (RC) asked how is the sampling being chosen and how are those chosen being incentivised to respond?

MM stated that it is a random sample but they are trying to get range of groups involved.

MS mentioned that a £10 voucher for high street stores is offered as an incentive. The sample is found using post code address files. Although this is a random sample, they are considering factors such as ambient noise levels and socio-economic status in order to get a representative sample.

MM added that the sample is controlled as an individual code is given to the person answering the questionnaire to manage who is replying.

ACTION: DfT to address sampling questions as part of FAQ section on ANNE website

NR asked if work could be done using the data gathered in the pilot study? MM responded that the pilot sample was limited in number. We have to keep in mind that those we use for pilot studies cannot then be used for main study. Therefore, we did not want to contact too many people ahead of the main study.

CL stated that on airspace modernisation, foundational issues remain. CL is trying to engage with the Department and feels there hasn't been meaningful engagement on this. On Jet Zero, the language the Department use such as 'guilt free flying' is counterproductive and offensive to those impacted by noise.

IE stated that DfT will give this feedback to ministers but they may choose to continue with this language.

CL pointed out that there is an industry representative on the research project and wondered whether there is a community representative. MM confirmed that Deborah Lovatt from AEF sits on the steering group as a community representative.

CL also questioned why DfT are funding an industry recruitment campaign (Generation Aviation). TM stated that the campaign which CL referred to is about increasing diversity into aviation. IE agreed to come back to Charles separately on this campaign issue. **ACTION**

DfT update on discussion groups and next steps

TM informed everyone that a paper was circulated on Friday summarising the 5 focus groups held in late 2021 / early 2022. We tried to pick out the high-level points where there was some consensus. The Department aims to set up a subgroup on health matters to review research coming up, what gaps exist and how to close those gaps.

Ian Greene (IG) said that DfT proposed Ben Fenech to chair this group, and other organisations in ANEG can put themselves forward to represent their groups on the subgroup.

Ben Fenech (BF) mentioned that others could nominate themselves to chair if they would like.

IG will send out terms of reference and seek views on whether others want to nominate themselves as chair. **ACTION**

CL welcomed the idea of subgroup on noise and health impacts, would like BF chairing it and will nominate a community rep to take part.

CL stated that he does not agree with the summary for regulatory measures. He thinks the regulatory structure needs a substantial revision, not just a few changes.

Chris Cain (CC) said that a broader conversation on noise policy and planning needs to be had now we have a settled ministerial team and wanted to flag that to take away offline.

TM acknowledged that we haven't managed to agree terms of engagement on the SASIG/DfT/DLUHC meeting but will continue to try to get that meeting. Joseph Duggan (DLUHC) added that policy priorities of their new Ministers were still to be determined so at this stage it was unclear whether there would be a review of the planning policy framework.

Defra update

Rhian Thomas (RT) gave an update on DEFRA's work, particularly on the Noise Action Plans (NAPs) process.



DEFRA are working on the implementation of environmental regulations and updating and distributing guidance on noise action planning. RT stated that they are using a brand-new model for noise mapping. A third party is using this model for the first time. This is a major project, when it is completed, it will be shared with airports.

In terms of Noise Action Plans, guidance has now been published, it is requested that airports submit their plans by September 2023. DEFRA is available for airports to contact if they face any issues.

The guidance reflects the current situation rather than a full revamp. Data from 2021 is not going to give a full useful picture in action planning, supplementary data is recommended to base actions on.

DEFRA have received requests from airports and communities to define what is meant by the legislation. This is difficult as the legislation is left open to interpretation and DEFRA are not able to pin down an individual method that should be used as this wouldn't be legally accurate, and are not aware of any legal precedent on this. RT welcomed further engagement on this but is not able to give a definitive answer and go beyond what the legislation states.

IE asked who the minister on this area of work is. RT replied that she believes it will be Rebecca Pow or Trudy Harrison.

Deborah Lovatt (DL) asked if the updated guidance is online? RT stated that it is not yet online but she can share a copy if needed, though AEF (Charles Lloyd) had already seen a copy. **ACTION**

Martin Peachey (MP) asked what metric DEFRA is using? IG responded that LDEN is used, which is the same legal requirement as last time.

CL thanked RT for the opportunity to contribute to guidance. However, he expressed disappointment that community groups will see the same process go forward in terms of NAPs without assessment of whether the measures work or not.

RT stated that DEFRA is purposely being vague on estimates as there will be a certain amount of interpretation. **DEFRA want to see justifiable estimates rather than being prescriptive.**

RT stated that the regime is a result of the environmental noise regulations from EU regulations, and there is a lot of discussion on what should be done in the future as part of the wider review of Retained EU Law. The current position is that this is the biggest piece of legislation that compels the need to produce noise exposure evidence and is a necessary piece of legislation. Although they would like this to be reformed in the future, this would be a major piece of work and cannot be done in the near future.

MP asked whether as NAPs are done for all forms of transport, is there any conflict there or does this make it more difficult to look at airports NAPs? RT stated that they are two separate areas of work. DEFRA's responsibility is to sign off airports' plans whereas DEFRA makes the noise action plans for road and rail.

ANIMA project

Paul Hooper (PH) presented slides on the Aviation Noise Impact Management through Novel Approaches (ANIMA) project, with the aim to give an overview and some of the deliverables. This covered non-acoustic factors, noise exposure metrics, engagement and future research.

Martin Peachey (MP) asked whether ANIMA looked into helicopters or drones?

PH replied that the high-fidelity modelling was done around new civil aviation aircraft types. There's a piece in terms of acoustic quality where we need to look at different types of aircraft and their sound signatures.

MP mentioned the noise characteristics are quite different, drones have quite a high tonal content whereas modern jets have a large content of low frequency which travels further and penetrates buildings.

Important to aggregate so you can use a metric specific to the aircraft.

PH agreed and mentioned there are a number of questions around that. PH also promised to send the presentation and noted that the deliverables have links to the website, which has a noise platform and other useful material.

TM asked if the ANIMA project has now finished? PH confirmed that the project finished in December 2021.

Community update

Charles Lloyd (CL) presented a slide pack for the community update which covered aviation noise policy, night flights, health impacts, ICCAN and airport expansion.

Frank Evans (FE) introduced himself as the UKACCs representative, expressing slightly different views from those outlined by CL. On noise policy, the best way forward is if ANEG reported to new ministers and updated on work and priorities with a timeline. Night flights are a tricky issue, but we do need some clarity. They would be happy to share work going forward looking at night flights at London airports and across the country. Regarding health impacts, UKACCs would like to be involved in the new subgroup. FE agreed with CL that they need some clarity on ICCAN functions and who is taking these on, so they know who to address concerns to.

Chris Cain (CC) mentioned that SASIG shared a lot of CL's views on noise and are involved in key areas on noise. On night noise, they shared everyone's concerns around this issue and CC asked what the latest position is looking at the economic value of night flights. CC finished by addressing the closure of Doncaster Sheffield, one of the best airports in the country with no night flight restrictions. The Department has been asked to intervene, as it is very important to UK PLC. This strategic thinking of assets and infrastructure is missing when it's needed as there are no night noise issues there and it's being allowed to close.

MP noted FE's point on timelines and linking it to night noise. In a night noise consultation in 2004, the Government said that the then WHO guidelines would be very hard to achieve in the short/medium term, so they said these would be long term targets. There has also been an update in the WHO guidance in 2018 which lowered these levels and 2030 would therefore be a realistic long-term target. Waypoints are needed to see if we are meeting this long-term target of trying to get values closer to WHO recommendations. MP added that he is keen to see results, outcomes and dates to see where progress is going. MP asked whether they could have some timelines to see if outcomes are being achieved?

Paul Beckford (PB) noted that regarding ICCAN, ANEG were promised a clear breakdown of the responsibilities at the last meeting. On night flights, PB wanted to raise a call for greater transparency, at Heathrow there has been an increasing amount of late running operations condensing the respite period. The latest data available is 2020, they know Heathrow report late runners to the DfT but they never see that. PB failed to understand why they can't have real-time information on the reasons for dispensations on either DfT or Heathrow's website. So, they can have an understanding why this disturbance is being caused, this would help improve understanding and be able to hold account airports that are regularly running late, at the moment they can't have this discussion because they don't have the information.

ACTION: DfT to give a breakdown of how ICCAN's functions are being covered off.

CL finished by stating that communities don't want to be back at the next ANEG meeting raising the same points, there must be a way in which ANEG leads to some action on some of these points.

Industry Update

Neil Robinson (NR) started the industry update by wanting to look back over COVID. Airports had a dip in traffic which they could not have predicted, with many operating at 10% or lower than pre-COVID levels. As airports started to get back to normal levels, they still had difficulty recovering as seen last summer. It has been challenging for airports to grow the operational side of the business, in a labour market that is tight and where roles are highly regulated. The industry had to take some exceptional measures for example with slot rules, quite a number of airlines decided they would hand back some slots to improve resilience in the schedule. Through the efforts of airlines and airports they found their way through the summer, which progressively got more robust and more resilient as the season went on. Airports across the board were operating at around 70-90% of pre-COVID levels over the summer season. Different airports have grown back at different rates, low-cost services have grown back faster whereas long haul might take a little longer. Overall, much more normal levels of activity and closer to 2019 with demand looking strong.

NR continued that one of the things seen in terms of recovery is the resilience issue, as on-time performance has been challenging over the summer. NR mentioned that IE alluded to some of that being due to airport staff, this invariably was a factor to a degree, but the single largest factor was the resilience of the air traffic system, particularly across Europe. On a practical level this means that aircraft that do several rotations a day can build up modest but incremental delays. They've seen quite a lot of this, more than usual, which is due to a lack of resilience in the system. From a UK point of view this plays into the airspace modernisation work. Most airports are at or working towards the second stage where they set out their route options. Airports are working closer with the coordinating body ACOG, putting all those individual proposals together as an operating system so they realise the overall efficiency and design a system that makes the most sense. This is quite a complicated exercise where airspace is very interrelated especially in London. What they've seen this summer really makes a case for a resilient and well-resourced air traffic system.

NR mentioned that they are also working collectively through Sustainable Aviation, there were a couple of references to Jet Zero. Pleased to see the outcome to commit globally to Jet Zero by 2050 for international aviation. As an industry they set out what they thought the best forward plan for aviation to achieve Jet Zero by 2050. They're also looking at all elements of the plan but have commissioned some work around sustainable fuels, carbon markets and removals. Their view on potential airspace improvements is unchanged but looks like there's probably more potential in sustainable fuels than last time around. There's more confidence now in alternative forms of propulsion particularly Hydrogen. From what they've seen there's a lot of common ground in the Government's own modelling in their Jet Zero strategy.

NR finished by covering noise roadmaps, Sustainable Aviation was at an advanced stage now looking at a new roadmap, particularly looking at the potential for new aircraft technologies to drive down noise energy and some of the trade-offs with carbon and climate. They're looking to build into the next noise roadmap some of the innovative trials they've done, particularly the Gatwick noise study. In the New Year they will have more to say about this.

Christopher Snelling (CS) added that a lot of the work going on with the two roadmaps is combined and part of the reason they are doing them together. A lot of work around forecast for the future of the fleet was common to both. Going back to the action raised at the start of the meeting for them about industry compiling lists of research projects and activities, they have talked about this at the SA group and

concluded that the narrative work they're working on as part of the noise roadmap will be where the first iteration of that will come out.

Ben Fenech (BF) asked whether hydrogen propulsion was in combination with fuel cells, so essentially when we talk about hydrogen do we mean electrified propulsion? NR replied that the answer is in two ways, one indirectly using fuel cells to generate electricity in smaller aircraft. The other in larger aircraft, liquidising hydrogen and using it as liquid fuel akin to a turbo fan engine.

CAA update

Darren Rhodes (DR) presented two slide packs on the work CAA have done re-examining SoNA, looking at firstly respite and changing annoyance reactions, and secondly sleep and awakenings.

MP thanked Darren and was interested in the average metric and how the number of events matter rather than averaged over a long-time scale, so interested to see the work done on this. Talking about highly disturbed, awakenings is a difficult subject. Since modern aircraft now have a much better climb performance, could they use an 8% rather than a 4% climb gradient, wouldn't that give us another form of respite. When we are redesigning airspace, can we use better climb performance to utilise these new aircraft.

DR replied that it was a lot to fit into 20 minutes, but one part to emphasise is that they were looking at predictable periods of respite. The steeper gradient isn't going to give you 8 hours of predictable relief, so can't imply this work would apply to such a scenario. DR emphasised that this work is tied into the Heathrow system of 8 hours of respite, there are occasionally out of alternation flights, but looking at a substantial change in noise change for a long period of time.

MP added that there's no silver bullet for all these things, it's a mixture of operational, technical, and financial levers. He asked when these two papers are published whether CAA could also look at bringing together the CCO, how it could work with alternate routes and respites to increase around airports.

DR stated that they could do this looking forward, however changing from a 4%-8% climb gradient doesn't come for free. You need to use more thrust to achieve that gradient, it doesn't necessarily mean you get a 10dB reduction in noise. These are all part of the calculations they are doing, and they are also doing some work looking at noise and carbon trade-offs between continuous climb and level offs. Not necessarily looking at steeper gradients but looking at how many aircraft are held down because of today's arrangements.

PB asked when these reports will be published and what definition they are using for respite, remembering that the CAA were working on a new definition that would be more understandable from a community perspective.

DR responded that they hope publication will be within the next week or two. In terms of respite, they are decibel based, it's the decibel change between the flight paths at Heathrow. If you live under the southern runway at Heathrow, it's a noise difference between when they're flying on the northern runway rather than the southern. Found you needed 8 dB to find a significant difference in the annoyance response. DR believed that there could be a respite that gives an annoyance reduction at a lower level, however they need a bigger sample than SoNA looked at. The future to SoNA, ANAS, will have a bigger sample size, so they can find if respite gives an annoyance reduction at a lower dB.

TM mentioned that we have been waiting for these reports for some time and they were worth waiting for. If there's enough interest, we could set up a separate session to answer questions in the new year.

CAA sustainability team update

John Burton (JB) presented slides updating on the CAA's sustainability team's work. The slides covered EU regulation, UK environmental review, ANAS and noise and carbon trade-offs.

TM stated that there was an action from last meeting which asked if their work would cover the review on the ICCAN toolkit and how it would feed through to CAP1616. Is this part of the engagement work mentioned? JB responded that it will be linked to that, there is also a review of that toolkit underway.

Referring back to the question earlier in the meeting, TM gave reassurance, in relation to the two pieces of research, that the Department and the CAA are aligned and that there's no duplication.

DR added that one of the findings of their review on attitudes to sleep disturbance from SoNA is that the exposure is quite different between day and night. They recommended that future surveys ought to separate day and night. The ANNE project and ANAS will provide some of that separation, the ANNE study will have an objective measure of sleep disturbance, it will be complimentary rather than cause duplication.

FE stated that at a meeting with JB and colleagues, communities raised a number of issues regarding the survey, he assumed that JB would take those into account and come back to them. FE added that UKACCs has promoted for a long time, the idea of having a national environmental reporting system. He noted that in JB's presentation environmental reporting will be part of their work and this is welcomed by them.

TM concluded the meeting and thanked everyone for attending. As requested, DfT will send out ANEG dates for the whole of next year, the minutes for the meeting and publish previous minutes online.

Meeting end 17:15