

Airspace and Noise

What this paper is about

Updates delegates on Government policy on airspace and noise. The paper seeks to provide an overview of developments. The meeting will receive presentations from both the Department for Transport and the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) which will supplement this paper.

Points for discussion

Airspace:

- How does the airport /NATS engage with ACCs on airspace developments? (delegates may wish to amplify their recent comments made to the Secretariat).
- Has the position changed since the CAA issued a Direction to airports earlier this year?
- What are the key areas that ACCs like to see covered by best practice guidance in respect of the new Airspace Guidance?

Noise:

- The recent CAA Noise Impact Survey suggested that local residents had registered six main areas of concern:
 - Increase in frequency of aircraft;
 - low flying aircraft;
 - early morning flights;
 - late night flights;
 - aircraft off track;
 - lack of action by airport to manage noise impacts.
- Is this mirrored by ACCs' local experience? Delegates may wish to comment on how noise complaints are managed locally. The Secretariat's recent survey provides further background.
- In terms of current Government policy, are existing compliance and enforcement mechanisms fit for purpose?
- Are existing community compensation arrangements fit for purpose?
- When might compensation be appropriate for airspace changes and in what form?

Possible Action

Dependent on the discussion at the meeting

Background on Airspace and Noise

Airspace

1. As Members will be aware the CAA's new Airspace Design Guidance ([CAP1616](#)) came into effect in January 2018. The Guidance makes several references to the use of airport consultative committees (ACCs) in the airspace change process as a way of engaging with communities and being used as a focus group in the development of proposals.
2. In February 2017, DfT published "Upgrading UK Airspace Strategic Rationale¹," advising that if the UK's airspace structure was not upgraded, passenger delays were likely to increase sharply as traffic levels increase. The analysis, showed that without modernisation, a conservative estimate is that 1 in 3 flights from all UK airports are expected to depart over half an hour late and the average delay by 2030 would be 72 times more than in 2015. Although not fully modelled, the analysis also suggested that after 2030 air traffic delays and short notice cancellations would continue to rise sharply year on year. An increase in delays would also have noise consequences on the ground, for example from the greater use of holding stacks.
3. A range of organisations from across the aviation industry are working together on a joint programme to tackle the issues with today's airspace, known as the Future Airspace Strategy (FAS). Through engagement with industry and their responses to the Aviation Strategy Call for Evidence², it is clear that these stakeholders view further government policy as necessary to support the FAS in modernising UK airspace.
4. The modernisation programme is expected to deliver significant environmental improvements. Aircraft will be cleaner, quieter (in climb and descent), and be able to navigate more accurately around populated centres. Today's quieter and cleaner modern aircraft will be able to use more efficient flightpaths, which are optimised to reduce noise impact and offer relief to communities. However, there will be some environmental impacts associated with the forecast growth in traffic levels, and the distribution of the noise impacts will change, affecting different people.
5. The Government's approach to supporting modernisation and addressing associated environmental impacts has been fourfold:
 - a) The publication of a new set of Airspace and Noise policies in October 2017³, aspects of which have been implemented through the CAA's new airspace change process (CAP 1616)⁴ which came into effect on 2 January 2018. The DfT's policies provide a framework which will ensure a greater focus on industry and communities working together to find ways to manage noise impacts. The policies included the creation of the Independent Commission on Civil Aviation Noise (ICCAN); the introduction of the Secretary of State' call-in to the airspace change process; and; clarifying guidance on Altitude Based Priorities to set out that the environmental priority between 4,000ft and 7,000ft is noise.
 - b) the Government is reviewing whether further policies are required to address the noise impacts of aviation through the Aviation Strategy
 - c) In October 2017 DfT set the CAA a new Direction that they should develop and maintain a strategy for modernising UK airspace to 2040, and from end-2018 provide the Secretary of State an annual update on this. The Department is believed to have started discussions with the CAA about how they will fulfil this requirement, focussing on the future design and operation of airspace and what technology should underpin this.

Next steps

6. Members of the Secretariat recently met the CAA's Airspace Regulators to talk through the various stages of the new airspace design process, their role as moderators in the process and the role of ACCs. (The CAA will be making a presentation at the meeting)
7. The Secretariat has previously circulated Appendix C of the CAA's Guidance (CAP 1616 - Airspace Design: Guidance on the regulatory process for changing airspace design including community

¹ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/586871/upgrading-uk-airspace-strategic-rationale.pdf

² https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/698247/next-steps-towards-an-aviation-strategy.pdf

³ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/653801/consultation-response-on-uk-airspace-policy-web-version.pdf

⁴ <https://publicapps.caa.co.uk/docs/33/CAP1616%20Airspace%20Design%20interactive.pdf>

engagement requirements). This sets out the best practice for ongoing engagement to ensure that the airspace change proposals are received by an informed, engaged audience around airports so that consultees, residents, interested parties can effectively feed-in views. ACCs have an important role to play in this process in ensuring that the airport's consultation plans and mechanisms to engage reach the right people/organisations. Accordingly the Secretariat plan to develop best practice guidance for ACCs. Any suggestions from delegates as to the content of the guidance would be welcome.

Direction

8. The Department for Transport updated the [Air Navigation Guidance](#) in October 2017. As delegates will be aware, airports and air navigation service providers are now expected to inform and engage overflown communities about aircraft operational change and change to aircraft movements whenever such changes could affect the noise impact on communities. These expectations are described in detail from page 96 of [CAA Publication 1616](#). Crucially, this states that:

- Where communities have noticed a difference in noise impact, and this has been caused by operational changes, airports and air navigation services are expected to highlight and explain to communities the operational changes responsible.
- Airports and air navigation services are also expected to proactively make available information relating to aircraft movements.

To this end, the CAA recommends that airports and air navigation services:

- Routinely collect and publish data on aircraft movements to identify where they may be responsible for changes in noise impact.
- Make available information about identified changes that affect noise impact in an accessible form that a layperson can understand.
- Communicate to (and discuss with) local communities the potential to mitigate the adverse noise impact of changes where they occur.
- Develop relationships with local communities to understand their information requirements.
- Consider whether it is appropriate to make available flight tracking information to local communities.

9. Whilst the CAA appreciate that the new guidance has only been recently published, they plan to publish an update on airports' and ANSPs' activity to date in terms of the new guidance in the second Quarter of 2018. Airports have therefore been asked to advise the CAA as to:

- Which elements of this guidance they currently fulfil;
- Which elements of this guidance have airports fulfilled since its publication and how; and
- Which elements of this guidance are airports planning on fulfilling and how – and according to what timescales.
- Links to webpages that contain the information the airports publish on noise and airspace use.

Noise

10. At the last ANEG meeting in March, the DfT outlined their proposals on stakeholder engagement in the build up to the development of the green paper for the aviation strategy. The Department plans a number of stakeholder engagement activities in helping to develop the strategy. This will result in the development of a co-ordinated plan.

11. As part of the Aviation Strategy paper 'Support growth while tackling environmental impacts', it is understood that officials will be looking into a wide range of policy questions to support the development of the strategy. These are likely to include:-

Are existing compliance and enforcement mechanisms fit for purpose? Are existing community compensation arrangements fit for purpose? When might compensation be appropriate for airspace changes and in what form? Are the right incentives in place for industry to reduce noise? How to address the challenge of growing populations near airports? (i.e. the need for housing vs noise impacts of aviation)

12. The recent CAA Noise Impact Survey suggested that local residents had registered six main areas of concern :-

- Increase in frequency of aircraft;
- low flying aircraft;
- early morning flights;
- late night flights;

- aircraft off track;
- lack of action by airport to manage noise impacts.

13. Delegates may wish to reflect whether the CAA survey reflects their own local experience.

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