



# Review of Community Engagement Mechanisms

# DfT Review of Community Engagement Mechanisms

- Last year the DfT posed a number of questions to ACC's in regard to community engagement and the role they play in the process.
- The DfT response to these questions has been informed by the feedback ACC's have provided, as well as public and local authority feedback from the UK Airspace Consultation in 2017.

## What questions were asked?

- What do you see as the role of ACCs in effective community engagement; how successful have they been in fulfilling this role?
- In view of expected airspace change proposals in the next few years; are there any changes you would suggest to the way that ACCs are structured and operate? How well placed do you think ACCs are to engage with the CAP 1616 process?
- Understanding what works with communities will help to focus efforts and resource; what can be done in cases of limited resource/money?
- Understanding how ACCs represent communities; how can we ensure community views are fully reflected and continue to represent a broad cross-section, bearing in mind the potential for rapid development of local community groups utilising social media?

# Q1) What do you see as the role of ACCs in effective community engagement; how successful have they been in fulfilling this role?

## Key themes highlighted in responses

- Many ACC's stated that engagement with local communities was very good and felt ACCs perform well.
- According to the responses to the 2017 Airspace Consultation from members of the public and Local Authorities, it is suggested that engagement does seem to be a problem at some airports.
- It was recognised that the right ACC membership is key to successful engagement, there was a strong feeling that Local Authorities and Council leaders are democratically elected by the communities that they serve and that this was a key position in the engagement process, including at the CAP1616 level.
- Some felt more needed to be done to clarify the role of ACC's and local authorities.

## DfT Considerations

- More could be done from a DfT perspective to publicly recognise the role of ACC's and how they represent their communities. This could be in the form of a gov.uk webpage which the DfT could help facilitate the publication of.
- DfT can note the role ACC's play in public correspondence that comes into the department and how they can help the general public.

## Q2) In view of expected airspace change proposals in the next few years; are there any changes you would suggest to the way that ACCs are structured and operate? How well placed do you think ACCs are to engage with the CAP 1616 process?

### Key themes highlighted in responses

- ACC's overall did not feel that they needed to significantly restructure or change in response to CAP1616. They did however recognise the need for additional guidance in their role under the new airspace change process.
- There was a suggestion that as ANEG and the Community Discussion Forum bring together a wide range of stakeholders, issues relating to planning and management of airspace could be discussed in those meetings.
- Some saw the intermediary role within CAP1616 as more suited to the sponsor and put forward the suggestion that the CAA should provide case studies and set out the ACC responsibilities within the CAP1616 in order to prepare other ACCs.

### DfT response

- In light of the increased number of airspace changes that airspace modernisation will bring in over the next few years it is crucial that communities get sufficient engagement and chance to share their views, ACC's will play an important role in this change process.
- The UKACCs has taken on the role of drafting a guidance document to help ACC's adjust to and understand what support they need to provide under the new airspace change process. DfT and the CAA have engaged in the development of the guiding principles and will consider if any further guidance is required.

# Q3) Understanding what works with communities will help to focus efforts and resource; what can be done in cases of limited resource/money?

## Key themes highlighted in responses

- It was highlighted at last years UKACCs meeting that any additional funding would be welcome, however it was recognised that money is limited.
- There were mixed feelings as to where additional funding could be sourced from. Some suggested increasing funding through charges from industry, and others that it could come from airport contributions.
- It was suggested Local Authorities could provide some access to resources alongside CAA expertise in research and advice.

## DfT response

- It was clear that there are a range of views as to where any potential additional funding would come from, with the necessity for additional funds debated.
- There are currently skills shortages across the industry, particularly areas such as airspace design. The scope therefore for the CAA increase research and provide additional levels of advice may be limited. The ongoing work of the UKACCs in defining the roles of ACC's in relation to CAP1616 is therefore important at this early stage of the modernisation programme.

## Q4) Understanding how ACCs represent communities; how can we ensure community views are fully reflected and continue to represent a broad cross-section

### Key themes highlighted in responses

- It was felt that ACC's could engage with community groups more directly, rather than these groups going straight to their local MP or DfT.
- It was also felt again that the DfT could do more to publicly recognise the role ACC's can play in community engagement.

### DfT response

- The DfT accept that more could be done to increase the role ACC's play in direct community/public engagement. The role of ACC's could be highlighted more often in DfT correspondence with the public and MPs to raise awareness of their role.
- The DfT also receive correspondence from a number of community noise groups. We would suggest that ACC's increase their engagement with these local groups in their area to highlight the role ACC's can play in noise discussions.
- It is important that ACC members communicate effectively with those they represent to ensure all parties with an interest are aware of how their concerns can be raised (the principle of openness and accountability in the code of conduct).
- For example, the relationship between the different tiers of local government could be strengthened so that parish councils feed in through district councils where they do not have a seat in their own right. Similarly, it is important that community/amenity group members on ACCs have effective liaison mechanisms with other groups in the area and that ACCs review membership to ensure that members are genuinely representative (see para 2.9 of guidelines).

**Any additional feedback?**