

8 January 2022

Department for Transport
Great Minster House
33 Horseferry Road
London
SW1P 4DR

Copy to:

Leader, Rushmoor Borough Council
Chairman, FACC

Dear Sirs,

FARNBOROUGH AERODROME CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE (FACC) CONSTITUTION

Reference: DfT Guidelines for Airport Consultative Committees April 2014 ("Guidelines").

Background

1. I am writing regarding the Farnborough Aerodrome's Consultative Committee (FACC) and represent a number of interested parties and bodies in Surrey and Hampshire.
2. Whilst not a designated Aerodrome in terms of The Aerodromes (Designation) (Facilities for Consultation) (Amendment) Order 2002, the FACC was established in accordance with the Section 106 Agreement entered into between Rushmoor Borough Council (as the local planning authority) and the then operator, TAG Farnborough Airport Limited (and others), on 10 October 2000 when TAG was first given permission to use the aerodrome for private jets.
3. The constitution of the FACC, attached, was reviewed, amended and approved by the FACC last year and purports, at para 2, to have regard to the Department's Guidelines on Airport Consultative Committees.

Problem

4. The Guidelines, at section 2.2, make clear the importance of the perception of independence from the airport in order to maintain the confidence of all interested parties. Specifically, they state that 'chairs should be appointed through an open and transparent process'. At section 3.2, the Guidelines are incontrovertibly clear about the fact that 'the chair should not be closely identified with any sectional interest' and that a term limit should be established. Similarly, at section 3.4 the Guidelines make clear that 'The Secretary should not be closely identified with any sectional interest.'
5. The FACC's constitution takes exactly the opposite approach in relation to an independent Chairperson and Secretary. Para 8 of the constitution states that "The Farnborough Airport License Holder shall appoint and pay for an independent Chairperson, following consultation and with agreement of representatives of the three sectional interest groups." No term limit is

established. Similarly, at para 9, it states that “The Farnborough Airport License Holder shall appoint and pay for an independent Secretary....”.

The current chairman has now been in post since July 2007, a period of over 14 years.

6. Despite protestations during the review, the FACC has chosen to remain in breach of the Guidelines with respect to these critical appointments. Given the necessary 75% voting majority built into the constitution, this has provided the operator (which appoints one third of the FACC’s members) with an unbreakable hold on the Committee and on the appointment of supportive Chairs and Secretaries. This model cannot, in any way, be described as conforming to the Guidelines in relation to the perception of independence and, through his management of recent meetings, the Chairman is lacking independence and identifies too closely with the operator.

Request

7. Whilst acknowledging that the Guidelines are only guidelines, I request your support as the Governmental body responsible for Consultative Committees in addressing this manifest breach in whatever manner you think most appropriate. Protestations over several years have been ignored and it is important that the public have faith in the committee, especially as they about to embark on a Post Implementation Review of airspace changes implemented by the CAA.

Yours faithfully,

SIGNATORY

Attachment:

FACC constitution