

# Farnborough Noise Newsletter

## November 2022

There has been no progress on any of the issues and concerns raised by the public directly or via FNG because the “establishment” i.e. the CAA and Farnborough Airport has gone into defensive mode. Time is running out to address this with the PIR.

### News Summary

1. Dreadful FACC meeting in November
2. Questions submitted to the FACC not being answered
3. Complaint submitted to FACC chairman
4. Planned meeting arranged by Jeremy Hunt with CAA, FACC, FNG and MPs cancelled
5. FAL submitted a planning application to be able to ignore noise complaints from the public
6. Rushmoor Borough Council rejects complaints regarding breaches of the 2010 S106 planning consent by Farnborough Airport.
7. CAA sets dates for meetings to discuss the national Airspace Modernisation Strategy

On Remembrance Sunday, I suspect there aren't many people reading a report produced by the *Institute and Faculty of Actuaries* about climate change but it will impact all of us, much sooner than we think and much more extensively than any global war. There was a paragraph in the report that holds true for everything related to Farnborough Airport, be that emissions, pollution or noise:

*“Given the societal importance of climate change, the same principles apply to governments and non-financial regulators, as well as business. It is important for decision makers in all areas, but especially policymakers, to ensure they have the climate and risk literacy to make complex decisions under uncertainty. They need to be open and honest in their dealings and be capable of engaging with the public in good faith. Importantly, they need to be accountable for their decisions.”*

While the PIR includes an assessment of noise, it also includes safety, emissions and pollution. The people considering the impact of Farnborough Airport through the PIR process must be open, honest and accountable and they must engage with the public in good faith. From what I and many others are experiencing, this isn't happening and it needs to be called out and decision makers held to account.

### 1) Dreadful FACC meeting in November.

When the FACC puts the recording of the meeting online ([www.facc.org.uk](http://www.facc.org.uk)), you will be able to see what the meeting was like. I suspect it will be reluctant to do so. Those who attended experienced it first-hand. For the fourth meeting in a row there was chaos with the public not being able to hear the conversation. Microphones, cameras and chat were turned off for two hours and when the public were allowed to speak, only two questions were answered before the meeting was closed. There have been three meetings during the year-long PIR process (April, June & November). The

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next meeting is in February, just before the PIR ends. There has been no discussion in any of the FACC meetings before and during the PIR to discuss the scope of the PIR and the concerns raised by the public and stakeholders.

### 1. Questions submitted to the FACC not being answered.

The FACC has progressively made it more and more difficult to ask questions and get answers. Questions from the public in the FACC meeting are restricted to 20 minutes and one per person. Questions submitted in advance of the meeting have to be sponsored by a FACC committee member (hard to do that when the list of FACC members isn't available on the FACC website because it has been corrupted for the past five months). Questions also have to be submitted 10 days before the meeting. While most questions aren't answered, this is the standard of response with the few that are:

**Question submitted:** The same Farnham Herald article reported that it was Rushmoor Borough Council who wanted the change in airspace. FAL has stated that it did not want or need the controlled airspace, yet it was the sponsor for the airspace change. Can FAL clarify who wanted the change in airspace and if nobody wanted it, why did it happen?

**FAL response:** The airports flightpaths are per the ACP. The CAA will review the analysis of the data submitted to ensure the anticipated impacts and benefits of the approved change were as expected.

This is not good enough. All questions to FAL/NATS/CAA/FACC will be submitted again.

### 2. Formal complaint submitted to FACC chairman

It is evident that the FACC is being directed by the chairman, Philip Riley, and it is not performing the role required of it. The government's *Guidelines for Airport Consultative Committees* state:

1.1 *"ACCs are structured forums that provide an opportunity for the exchange of information between aerodromes and interested parties. They make recommendations to the aerodrome management and other bodies when appropriate as well as being a place where there is an opportunity to reach common understanding between interested groups about the nature of the aerodrome operation in the hope that issues can be resolved amicably."*

I don't think anyone observing the FACC meetings could believe that the meetings are achieving this objective. Regarding the Chair, the government guidelines state they should:

3.2 *"...not be closely identified with any sectional interest. Thought should also be given to a term limit for chairs (for example, two terms of a maximum of five years), or at least reviewing the chairmanship periodically."* Philip Riley has spent his career in BAE at Farnborough. He has been chair of the FACC for 15 years. According to the FACC constitution it states *"The Farnborough Airport License Holder shall appoint and pay for an independent Chairperson"*. How can a chair, selected by the airport and paid by them possibly be independent?

There are a significant number of other breaches to policies and legislation by the airport and FACC. The attached paper highlights them. These issues need to be addressed by the FACC regardless of the current PIR but especially because of the PIR because the FACC hasn't fulfilled its role in the

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review process. As a result of the current situation, a formal complaint has been sent to the FACC highlighting the breaches and inconsistencies with the way the FACC is operating and the government guidelines.

### **3. Meeting arranged by Jeremy Hunt MP with CAA, FAL and FACC on 16th November to discuss the PIR has been cancelled.**

At the FACC meeting, the chair stated that he and the secretary did not know the reason for the meeting with the CAA/MPs arranged by Jeremy Hunt and would not attend. Following the FACC meeting, they said they wanted Farnborough Airport and NATS to be represented as well as councillors, the CAA, MPs and FNG. Counting up the people who would now need to be included, it will be more than 11 people. The meeting was then cancelled.

The objective of the meeting was originally to highlight the need for the CAA to carry out the PIR properly and to ensure that all the stakeholders were listened to – not to have what would end up being a very technical meeting with all stakeholders in front of MPs. A background paper was sent out to attendees in advance to frame the discussion (attached). What FAL and the FACC chair have succeeded in doing is to kick the meeting further down the road until ultimately it will be too late to do anything about the PIR in the time left (PIR ending March 2023).

### **4. FAL submitted a planning application to be able to ignore noise complaints from the public.**

The S106 agreement forms part of the planning consent given to the airport. It sets out the required process to handle complaints. The process from the S106 is set out below.

#### **4. Response**

- On completion of investigations a full response is made to the complainant by telephone call, email or postal letter as appropriate.
- Details of all findings are reported together with appropriate supporting documents i.e. identified track maps.
- All written responses are produced with the aim of addressing the specific complaint of the individual though may contain portions of standard or pre-prepared information.
- Responses concerning identified infringements of procedure contain full details of action taken with respect to aircraft operators
- TAG aims to provide a response to all complainants within 10 working days though investigations requiring playback of Air Traffic Control Radio Telephony Tapes may take longer.
- The type and date of each response is recorded on the complaints database.
- Copies of all written responses are kept in TAG files and used in reference when responding to complainants on multiple occasions.

A lot of complaints have been made to FAL and it has stopped answering them, so it is in breach of planning consent. Rather than try to understand and address the causes of complaints, FAL decided to submit an application to RBC in May to change the process so that it can ignore complaints it doesn't want to answer. It failed to mention this to the FACC in advance of June's or November's FACC meeting despite it being required to do so. It also appears RBC did not record it on the planning website until a couple of weeks ago. It also became apparent in last week's FACC reports that the complaints data being provided by FAL is incorrect. There are more complaints being submitted by one individual in a month than the number of all complaints being reported by FAL in a

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month. FAL is also not showing the location of all the people who have complained on the location maps. Rather than trying to find ways not to respond to complaints, FAL should be investigating the root cause of the errors and re-establishing the noise sub-group that used to be in operation but was closed.

### 5. Rushmoor Borough Council rejects complaints regarding breaches of the 2010 S106 planning consent by Farnborough Airport.

A complaint was submitted to RBC by FNG regarding four breaches to the S106 agreement:

- a. Allowing scheduled/non-business flights to operate
- b. Sound monitoring equipment not being made available
- c. Complaints not being managed properly (above)
- d. Air Quality Monitoring Scheme not being carried out properly

All complaints were rejected despite the S106 being very clear. For example, regarding noise monitoring equipment the S106 states the equipment is available in response to “requests from groups or individuals in the surrounding community”:

2.3 The portable NMT (No. 1) does not form a part of routine noise monitoring scheme however is provided for ad-hoc monitoring in connection with trials of alternative Noise Abatement Procedures or in response to requests from groups or individuals in the surrounding community.

2.4 NMT's are subject to full maintenance checks, calibration and certificated on an annual basis.

RBC replied “The Council would consider it reasonable to deploy the NMT on request by members of the surrounding community in situations where procedural trials are being undertaken or when residents are requesting consideration under the Sound insulation Grant scheme. In any event, the Council would not expect the NMT to be deployed in areas that fall outside the 55dB(A) Leq noise contour.” But this position by RBC isn’t consistent with the S106 text that does not apply any conditions or restrict use of the equipment. The complaint has therefor been escalated to the next level.

### 6. CAA sets dates for meetings to discuss the national Airspace Modernisation Strategy.

As mentioned before, FAL has joined in with Heathrow and Gatwick as part of the UK’s national Airspace Modernisation Strategy. This will mean another review of airspace under the CAP1616 process, similar to the process that was used leading to the current PIR (here we go again.....). The airspace change will certainly have a huge impact on everyone, particularly in the south east as the government’s intention is to double the capacity of flights from the current 900,000 flights using Gatwick and Heathrow. It includes a re-design of all airspace and flightpaths. If they use the same design parameters as the current process it will mean a much higher density of aircraft flying over the same people most of the time and the routing of these “super highways in the sky” over rural areas as there are fewer people disturbed by noise. The public are not being consulted on these changes but some stakeholders have been invited to meetings in December (attached).

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### Aviation in the news

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/63544995>

<https://www.uecna.eu/international-airport-communities-conference/>

<https://www.transportenvironment.org/discover/rising-use-of-private-jets-sends-co2-emissions-soaring/>

<https://www.politico.eu/article/tax-private-jets-france-government-backing-environment-minister-christophe-bechu/>

<https://www.euractiv.com/section/biofuels/news/eus-draft-green-jet-fuel-law-risks-worsening-emissions-study/>

### Glossary

| Acronym | Term   | Explanation  |
|---------|--|--|
| ACP     | Airspace Change Proposal                       | The CAA's process to change airspace (uses CAP1616)  |
| AMS     | Airspace Modernisation Strategy                | Government's plan to re-design the UK's airspace. FASI-S or FASI-N (South and North) are part of this  |
| CAA     | Civil Aviation Authority                       | UK's aviation regulator  |
| CCC     | Climate Change Committee                       | Independent UK body formed by government to advise policymakers  |
| CAP1616 | CAP1616  | The process the CAA must follow when considering a change in airspace  |
| FACC    | Farnborough Aerodrome Consultative Committee   | The formal consultative body to engage with Farnborough Airport  |
| FAL     | Farnborough Airport Limited                    | The owner of the airport (previously TAG). Ultimate owner is Macquarie   |
| ICCAN   | Independent Commission on Civil Aviation Noise | Now abolished independent group established to investigate aircraft noise  |
| IPCC    | Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change      | UN global body advising governments on climate change  |
| GA      | General Aviation                               | Any non-commercial aircraft such as helicopters and light aircraft. Includes some jets   |
| LGW     | London Gatwick                                 | London Gatwick   |
| LHR     | London Heathrow                                | London Heathrow  |
| MIRA    | Macquarie Infrastructure and Real Assets       | Australian venture capital business that owns Farnborough Airport  |
| PIR     | Post Implementation Review                     | The seventh stage of the ACP to determine if the anticipated benefits of the ACP have been achieved (Farnborough's running from 1/4/22 to 31/3/23) |
| RBC     | Rushmoor Borough Council                       | The Local Authority for Farnborough Airport  |