

Challenge to the FACC regarding the operation and effectiveness of the FACC

Questions to FAL and NATS from the public are supposed to be answered between FACC meetings. This is not happening and many questions that have been submitted over recent years have either been ignored or the information provided has nothing to do with the question submitted. As a result, an increasing number of questions have had to be submitted to the FACC. Questions submitted to the FACC have not been answered either. I think everyone will agree that the way that the past four FACC meetings have operated is not acceptable. Regarding February's meeting, the chair has unilaterally decided that the public will only be able to watch proceedings via YouTube. The new procedure effectively excludes the public who, according to the constitution, are allowed to ask questions of the committee in meetings. Groups like the Farnborough Noise Group represent a large number of people who can't attend meetings in the middle of the working day and who consolidate questions from hundreds of people – yet they can only submit one question. The agenda for each FACC meeting is only published after the closing date to submit questions via a FACC member has passed.

Meetings are a very poor use of time as topics like noise complaints should be handled in a sub-group and the airport's update sent out as pre-reading rather than read out verbatim in the meeting. Some members of the committee do not seem to have the knowledge of aviation and the noise, emissions and pollution issues being raised to the FACC, nor do they contribute to discussions. As a result, the FACC has become nothing more than a voice for Farnborough Airport.

The view from many groups and members of the public that are involved with Farnborough Airport and the FACC is that the FACC is failing in its obligation to fairly represent the interests of all stakeholders and to communicate openly and effectively with communities. That is not a criticism of many of the councillors and community representatives who give their time to the FACC but a failure of administration and management of the FACC.

The FACC is directed by government guidelines (Guidelines for Airport Consultative Committees 2014). The FACC is not compliant with these guidelines. These points were raised two years ago and they have not been addressed. The public should not have to battle with the FACC to get their voices heard, it should be independent and fairly representing the interests of **all** parties. A properly functioning FACC was critical during the PIR that is coming to a close and with the national Airspace Modernisation Strategy that has started. The issue of the FACC's role will be raised in the meeting on 17th March with MPs, the DfT and the CAA.

The government's guidelines state in section 3.21 "Disputes involving members of the committee or the working of the committee should be handled within the committee in the first instance." The committee needs to address these issues immediately and properly and set a new way forward so that it is compliant with its obligations.

Farnborough Noise Group
24th January 2023