

Farnborough Noise Newsletter

December 2022

At a time when government policy is to halve greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 (towards its legal commitment to net-zero by 2050), the CAA is planning to double the national capacity for aircraft and the majority of the increase will be in the South East. The public are not being involved in this. Farnborough Airport has just signed up to be part of this process and it will mean another consultation and a proposal for more changes to airspace, before the current Farnborough airspace change has even been reviewed.

News Summary

1. **Feedback on the CAA's Airspace Modernisation Strategy meeting**
2. **No response from FAL/NATS/CAA regarding unanswered questions submitted**
3. **Public meeting (online) proposed in January to debunk the myths that the aviation industry is putting out**
4. **Discussions regarding FACC ongoing**
5. **FNG proposes data collection requirements for the PIR (again)**
6. **FAL intending to re-submit planning application in February to be able to ignore noise complaints from the public**
7. **Challenge to Rushmoor Borough Council regarding S106 still pending**
8. **Stay Grounded petition**

There is a lot going on at the moment and a diminishing amount of time to address the issues and concerns that many people are raising. Increasingly, the CAA is just railroading through the changes and selecting policies and procedures that support its objectives and ignoring those that don't. Nobody is able (or willing) to hold the CAA to account. The independent body that the government set up to assess aviation noise (Independent Commission on Civil Aviation Noise - ICAAN) was abolished in 2021 after just three years and the powers it had were given to the CAA. We now have the situation where the CAA is marking its own homework. The Department for Transport is saying that it isn't its responsibility. Exactly the same situation is occurring with other airport consultation groups across the UK. Inevitably in the future, people will ask "why didn't someone do something about this when it was so obvious things were wrong". It's no wonder when there are other issues in the country that have been developing for years but they have just been kicked down the road – the shortage of social housing and social care, the dependence on Russian oil, the growing sewage and water quality problems caused by underinvestment and over development.

This monthly newsletter is going out to about 400 members of the public, 80 parish/borough councils and 8 MPs. There is always a balance between keeping people informed and overloading people with information. The monthly newsletters will continue but things will be happening quickly in the next few months. For example, the 28-day window to assess the data the CAA has collected. If you want to be included in more regular updates, please email farnboroughnoise@gmail.com to give your consent and we will share information as it becomes available.

Farnborough Noise Newsletter

December 2022

1. Feedback on the CAA's Airspace Modernisation Strategy meeting

Four meetings were held last week which were hosted by Farnborough Airport and aviation consultants to explain the objectives and timeline of the CAA's Airspace Modernisation Strategy (AMS). I attended one as Farnborough Noise Group is recognised as an "industry group" but other members of the group were not allowed to attend as they were considered to be members of the public and the public are not being consulted until earliest 2024!

The details of the AMS are too complex to cover in a newsletter but the summary is that the CAA intends to redesign all UK airspace to provide capacity for a 44% growth in flights by 2030. It will do this by increasing the density of flightpaths or by taking more airspace. It will have the biggest impact in the south east where airspace is most congested. The expectation is that overall, fewer people will be overflown but that people who aren't currently overflown may be in the future (sound familiar?). This will result in a significant noise impact to millions of people, a reduction in airspace available to other airspace users and an inability for the country to meet its climate change obligations. What the CAA should be doing is planning to reduce flights by 50% by 2030 (as stated by the government's climate change advisors, the Climate Change Committee) and designing the airspace around that objective. The first task in this goal would be to reduce the number of the most polluting flights - those from Farnborough carrying an average of just 2.4 passengers per plane and causing 20 – 40 times more pollution per passenger mile. Farnborough Airport has just signed up to the AMS with the intention of increasing its capacity and the design for this will be late in 2023, before the outcome of the current PIR and airspace change has been completed. The CAA's policies state this is impossible – how can a baseline for Farnborough Airport be determined if it is still changing because the current Airspace Change Proposal hasn't been completed? The only way they could do it would be to rush through the PIR to complete the process and ignore the issues that will be raised by the public and other stakeholders. You can be pretty sure that this is what will happen.

2. No response from FAL/NATS/CAA regarding unanswered questions submitted

The FACC has declined to respond to the questions submitted in advance of the November FACC meeting and the minutes state they have been answered. You can decide – they are attached. Many of these questions were sent to FAL/NATS between the June and November FACC meetings. Questions are supposed to be answered outside the FACC, but they haven't been. Following the FACC meeting, the questions were sent directly to FAL/NATS/CAA/RBC. Only FAL replied – saying it has answered the questions and has nothing further to add. It is clear that the FACC isn't meeting its obligations as a consultative committee and that CAA/FAL/NATS continue to obfuscate. This doesn't bode well for the PIR as many of the questions that were submitted relate to points that need to be clarified in order to assess data from the PIR e.g. do the flight numbers FAL reports include service flights carried out by Gulfstream when they are servicing aircraft?

3. Public meeting (online) proposed in January to debunk the myths that the aviation industry is putting out

Like the tobacco or the fossil fuel industries the aviation industry is a very powerful body that is happy to put out misinformation to allow it to keep going. An example of this is the suggestion that Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF), hydrogen or electric aircraft will address the emissions problem of the industry. This is patently untrue and if the public are given the facts, rather than half-truths by the aviation sector, they will be able to decide for themselves. The FACC hosted a talk in June by a

Farnborough Noise Newsletter

December 2022

group called “Sustainable Aviation” which was anything but sustainable. The expectation is that a future FACC agenda item should provide a more factual and evidence-based evaluation of the options for aviation. In the meantime, a public online meeting is being arranged in January to discuss the various myths being presented. The time/date of the event will be circulated.

4. Discussions regarding FACC ongoing

Following the dreadful November FACC meeting, many people have asked for the recording of the meeting. Inexplicably, the recording from Teams has been corrupted and isn't available. To make matters worse, the minutes of the meeting do not fairly represent what happened in the meeting. The FACC is not compliant with government guidelines for airport consultative committees, nor is it compliant with its own constitution. Attached is an evaluation of the shortcomings of the FACC against the government's guidelines. This situation needs to be addressed by FACC members and if not, the DfT has a duty to step in.

5. FNG proposes data collection requirements for the PIR (again)

The planned meeting with the CAA and MPs in November was cancelled and it is expected that another meeting will be arranged in the New Year. The objective of the meeting was to discuss the shortcomings of the PIR. An outcome from the meeting would have been a recommendation by FNG regarding the scope of data collection required to carry out the PIR properly. This was previously provided to the CAA in February 2022. As time is running out for the PIR, the proposed scope of data collection is included. The CAA has the option to change the data collected in the PIR at any time or to extend the PIR data collection period if required.

6. FAL intending to re-submit planning application in February to be able to ignore noise complaints

Last month we reported that FAL had submitted an application to vary the S106 planning agreement that would allow it to ignore complaints. Not surprisingly FAL withdrew the application but only after objections were made. However, it has said that it intends to re-submit the application and that it will be discussed in the next FACC meeting in February 2023. The way to address the complaints situation, as has been stated many times, is that the FACC should have a noise working group. Most airports have one. Gatwick receives ten times the number of noise complaints compared to Farnborough yet it responds to every complaint with a full explanation of the situation and a radar map showing all flights in the days prior to the complaint. An example of Gatwick's response has been sent to FAL/NATS and FACC admin.

7. Challenge to Rushmoor Borough Council regarding S106 still pending

A complaint was submitted to RBC last month regarding four breaches by FAL of the S106 planning consent. These were:

- 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

Farnborough Noise Newsletter

December 2022

The complaint was rejected and has been escalated to the next level of complaint. A response is pending.

8. Stay Grounded petition

The aviation industry is global. Stay Grounded is an international group that is challenging all governments. The link is a petition demanding that the aviation sector tells the truth. Should you wish to, please consider signing it <https://stay-grounded.org/stop-greenwashing/greenwashing-sign-the-petition-as-organisation-or-group/>

Aviation in the news

<https://www.caa.co.uk/commercial-industry/airspace/airspace-modernisation/airspace-modernisation-strategy/about-the-strategy/>

<https://www.visualcapitalist.com/cp/when-will-air-travel-return-to-pre-pandemic-levels/>

https://www.theguardian.com/business/2022/nov/30/airbus-boss-warn-delay-decarbonising-airline-industry-hydrogen-sustainable-aviation-fuel?CMP=Share_iOSApp_Other

<https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/virgin-atlantic-ba-easyjet-sustainable-aviation-fuel-handout/>

<https://www.greenairnews.com/?p=3482>

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 7 th stage of the ACP to determine if the anticipated benefits have been achieved (FAL's running from 1/4/22 to 31/3/23)
RBC	Rushmoor Borough Council	The Local Authority for Farnborough Airport