



Department for Transport

Update of the Guidelines for Airport Consultative Committees

Background

In the Aviation Policy Framework published earlier this year the Department committed to reviewing the Guidelines for Airport Consultative Committees, with the aim of supporting airport consultative committees in their work and sharing best practice.

There are 51 airports and aerodromes in England, Wales and Scotland that have been designated under Section 35 of the Civil Aviation Act 1982 to provide adequate facilities for consultation with respect to any matter concerning the management or administration of the airport which affects the interests of users of the airport, local authorities and any other organisation representing the interests of persons concerned with the locality in which the airport is situated. However there are also committees at airports that have not been designated under Section 35.

Last updated in 2003, the Guidelines for Airport Consultative Committees are intended to assist those involved in establishing, running and participating in Airport Consultative Committees (ACCs). They are intended to be applicable to all aerodromes with a consultation process, not only those designated under section 35 of the Civil Aviation Act 1982. The guidance is non-statutory and is intended to help committees operate in an effective and constructive way.

Objective of the Review

Our aim is to continue to ensure constructive engagement at the local level while supporting and enhancing the effectiveness of ACCs. As indicated in the Aviation Policy Framework we intend to retain the principle that the guidance remains flexible, proportionate and non-prescriptive and do not wish to upset existing good governance and working arrangements.

Proposals

The proposed update of the Guidelines contains a number of changes and additions from the 2003 version which are intended to support and enhance the effectiveness of ACCs. The two main additions are a set of principles for ACCs and a code of conduct for committee members, more detail about which can be found below. We would appreciate your feedback and comments on the draft, particularly in the following areas.

Principles for Airport Consultative Committees



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While we recognise that committees vary widely in size and scope and what is appropriate at one aerodrome may not be appropriate at another, we think that all committees, whether designated or non-designated, at a small or large aerodrome, do have a common role and purpose. Therefore we are proposing to include a set of five principles (Independent, Representative, Knowledgeable, Transparent and Constructive) that all committees can use as a common basis. More detail about the principles can be found in Chapter 2 of the draft guidelines.

Do you agree the principles described in Chapter 2 provide a common basis for all consultative committees to work to? Are there any additions or alternatives that should be considered?

Code of Conduct

We believe that a big part of committees working effectively and constructively is down to the members themselves. All members should commit to participate actively in the work and discussions of the committee. To help support committees and members in this, we are proposing to include a draft Code of Conduct that can be used and adapted by committees to help members understand what is expected of them, especially when joining the committee for the first time. The draft Code of Conduct can be found on page 16 of the draft guidelines.

Do you agree that a Code of Conduct would be a useful way to ensure members participate constructively in the work and discussions of the committee? Does the draft Code adequately reflect what should be expected of committee members?

Sharing Best Practice and Knowledge

The Department would like to encourage committees to share best practice and information between themselves and other organisations. For committees at larger airports we feel that the Liaison Group of UK Airport Consultative Committees (UKACCs)¹ is an ideal group to do this through and is a good way to disseminate information. However, we are concerned that smaller committees are often working in isolation and do not have the opportunity to share information and best practice in the same way larger organisations are able to.

In the guidance we are encouraging committees to share best practice and knowledge on an informal and ad hoc basis, by attending other committee meetings or working with other committees on issues of common interest.

¹ UKACCs is a subscription membership organisation. More information can be found at www.ukaccs.info.



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We also see consultative committees as being ideally placed to work with other organisations that may benefit from the particular expertise of committees on certain issues. While we would not like to see any unnecessary further burden on resources, we would like consultative committees to think about how they could work with organisations such as the CAA and local authorities on areas of common interest.

Can you suggest some ways in which best practice can be best shared between committees? Do you agree that committees are well placed to work with other organisations on areas of common interest?

Rest of the Document

We have changed the layout of the document from the 2003 version. The draft is divided into four chapters covering the basics of committees (their background, their role and the purposes of consultation), the principles, effective meetings and best practice and knowledge sharing. The text has been updated and added to where relevant. The main omission is a section on complaints as we feel that as committees are not dispute resolution forums, so although at their best, committees can play a constructive role in facilitating understanding and resolving issues, complaints should, as a matter of course, be handled by the airport.

Do you feel the layout of the document is user friendly and easy to understand? Are there any areas of the text you think need clarifying?

Section 35 of the Civil Aviation Act 1982

Section 35 of the Civil Aviation Act 1982 provides for the designation of aerodromes for the purposes of consultation while *The Aerodromes Designation (Facilities for Consultation) Order 1996* as amended (SI 2002/2421) provides the list of airports that are designated. The list includes some airports that are no longer operating and thought was given to whether to update the list when the Aviation Policy Framework was being drafted. At the time the decision was made, for reasons of practicality, not to update the list at this time. That remains the position of the Department, however during the Red Tape Challenge we were asked to review the statutory requirement on airports to provide facilities for consultation, in order to allow airports greater flexibility in their community engagement. The Department's view is that the statute remains a useful way of ensuring airports communicate openly and effectively with the local communities about the impact of their operations while at the same time ensuring the interests of the users of the airport are considered on an equal basis.

Do you agree that Section 35 remains a useful way of ensuring different interests concerned in the operation of an airport are consulted in a fair and equal manner?



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Would it be possible to achieve these objectives in a non statutory way - for example by the use of best practice guidance alone? Are there any areas where a statutory approach imposes unnecessary or disproportionate costs?

Case Studies

You will notice a series of green boxes spread throughout the document. We would like to include examples of best practice from committees around the country to make the guidelines more useful. If you think your committee (or organisation) does one of the following particularly well and that other committees could learn from your example, please provide us with a paragraph or two outlining what your committee does in the following areas:

- How a committee provided benefits to the airport, to local authorities and local communities
- How a committee has used specialist expertise
- Examples of sub-groups
- Ways in which a committee is:
 - Independent
 - Representative
 - Knowledgeable
 - Transparent
 - Constructive
- Examples of sharing knowledge and best practice between committees

Responding

We would appreciate it if you could respond by Friday 14 February 2014 to:

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We would appreciate responses from both committees themselves, members of the committees and the organisations they represent (including airports) as well as anyone else with an interest in Airport Consultative Committees.