



ANNUAL REPORT 2018

2018 saw the publication of significant new environmental evidence, including WHO Europe's updated noise guidelines and the IPCC report on what it would take to limit global warming to 1.5 °C. At AEF, we've been considering the relevance of this new evidence for aviation policy and our campaign work. We're hoping that the court action on Heathrow in 2019 will force Government to admit its plans for mitigating the environmental impacts are inadequate. We'll also be challenging the scale of aviation growth the Government has proposed in its draft aviation strategy.



We spend a lot of time at AEF responding to consultations. We decided to try to do things differently with the Aviation Strategy - a wide-ranging policy document that will set the terms for the development of the aviation sector as a whole - and to set out our views before the consultation stage.

We began with a discussion paper on noise, which highlighted the regulatory vacuum in relation to many key noise impacts. In May, we invited members to comment on a draft version of the paper, and after a number of revisions based on this feedback, we met with DfT and the CAA to discuss our recommendations.

The second paper, on climate change, looked at the various relevant policy frameworks in the UK and internationally, and called for action to bring aviation in line with wider climate ambition. We held a roundtable discussion to consider the issues raised, with participants from Government, the Committee on Climate Change, NGOs and industry.

Air pollution was the topic of the third and final paper. This called for a review of the pollution levels around UK airports, taking account of new evidence and recommendations from the World Health Organisation, and for clarity on what happens to aircraft pollution at higher altitudes.

The DfT's own engagement on the strategy so far has been by way of focus groups and meetings. Formal consultation on the Green Paper launched just before Christmas and will form a significant part of our work programme in 2019.

Shaping the aviation strategy

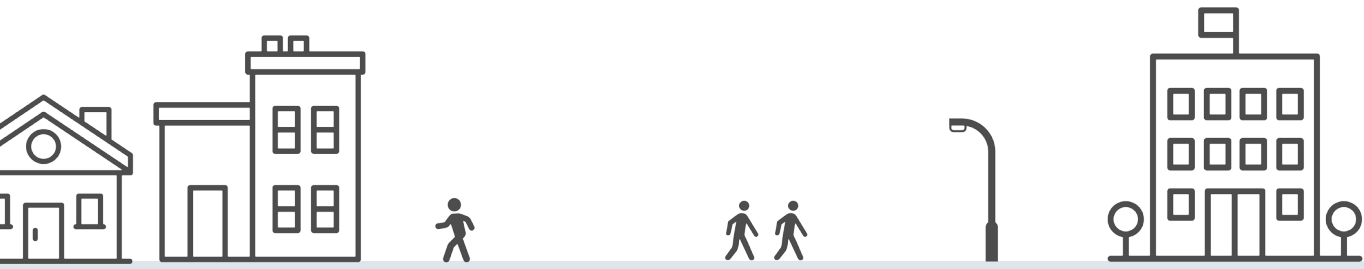
Opposing unsustainable expansion

Just before Christmas in 2017 we were called to give evidence to the Transport Select Committee on the climate change and air quality impacts of Heathrow expansion. Since the committee was providing official scrutiny of the Airports National Policy Statement (the document giving formal approval to the third runway) it seemed important enough for us to postpone our Christmas party in order to be there!

When the Committee's report came out in March 2018, it recommended a long list of improvements to the NPS, and additional environmental policies. Yet the revised NPS still failed, in our view, to put meaningful environmental conditions in place, and in the run-up to the vote we put out a series of postcards calling on MPs to reject the NPS, and gave media interviews on Sky and BBC News, as well as on radio and in the press.

Sadly, we were up against a well-resourced campaign in support of the scheme and the vote passed with a significant majority. Many MPs outside London voted in favour, following lobbying by Heathrow about supposed benefits for their regions, and by Unite the Union, concerned about protecting employment in a sector that is continuing to become leaner in terms of staff requirements.

In October the Royal Courts of Justice agreed to a "rolled up" hearing of five separate legal challenges to the NPS, four of which are specifically environmental. AEF is acting as expert witness in the Friends of the Earth case, which focuses solely on climate change. The case will be heard in March 2019, and could result in Government being required to revise or quash the NPS. We're not giving up yet.



International action to reduce aviation's environmental impacts

In October 2018, the UN published a special report on the impacts of global warming of 1.5 °C, the temperature target that states agreed to aim for at the Paris climate conference in 2015. Achieving it will require “net zero” global emissions in the coming decades. Yet the aviation sector has no long-term emissions target, let alone one that’s consistent with a net-zero future.

AEF, alongside a coalition of international environmental NGOs, has been working to build a consensus on the need for a long-term goal ahead of UN aviation body, ICAO’s, Assembly in 2019, as well as looking at pathways for decarbonising the sector. We’ve also continued to participate in working groups of ICAO’s environment committee. Its next full meeting, in February 2019, is likely to focus on how to reduce pollution from particulate matter through minimum standards for aircraft engines, and on a process to establish what environmental standards should apply to the possible reintroduction of supersonic air travel.

ICAO’s offsetting scheme for CO₂ emissions, CORSIA, takes effect from 2020. But decisions about which offsets will be eligible – a critical factor in terms of how effective the scheme is – have yet to be taken, and Europe is keeping its options open as it decides whether, and if so how, flights should continue to be included in the European emissions trading scheme after CORSIA’s introduction. In October, AEF presented its views on these issues at the industry’s annual Aviation and Environment Summit in Geneva and, in December, at a forum of the European Director Generals of Civil Aviation in Paris.

Raising visibility of those impacted by aviation

In the summer of this year, AEF approached some of our members to ask whether they would like to contribute a film to our new project “Short stories: Living with aircraft noise”. The idea was to demonstrate that aircraft noise affects people from all walks of life, that it can be an issue for those living miles away from an airport, and that it’s not just a problem in the South East, in the way that industry sometimes claims.

We subsequently received several films from across the UK showing clearly what living with aircraft noise can be like. People described waking up to a “wall of noise”, feeling their heart rate increase, and not being able to have a conversation in the garden.

AEF has now edited a selection of the videos we received into a short film in order to promote the project and encourage others to contribute to it. The first cut of our film was screened at our AGM on 5th December, and was well received. We’ve since posted it on Twitter.

Since we began the project, it has widened out to include audio recordings and short “blogs” which also convey what it’s like to live with aircraft noise. We’d like to collate these films and blogs on a map of the UK to help tell these stories in a visual, accessible way. If you’d like to contribute to the project, please contact deborah@aef.org.uk for details.

Whether you live in an urban area, or a rural one; whether you live near or far from an airport; whether the aircraft noise is from airliners, helicopters or small planes – we’d welcome your contribution.

Over 2018, AEF has responded to a very wide range of queries from its members, as well as members of the public across the UK - including flight path issues and Noise Action Plans (which have been consulted upon this year by many airports), planning matters, Public Safety Zones and ice falls from aircraft wings. Supplementing our online noise guide, we also produced a new guide to airspace policy changes. In the light of recent policy changes, we will be updating and adding to our online guides in 2019.

team



Tim Johnson
Director



Cait Hewitt
Deputy Director



Deborah Lovatt
Community Outreach
and Membership



Lizzie Harrocks
Communications



Tim Thomas
Finance



Nic Ferriday
Research

fundraising and finances

As we subsidise the services we provide to members to ensure that everyone can have access to our advice and information, we are particularly grateful to our funders and donors for their continued support. We anticipate we may have a funding shortfall for the current year but we are working hard to identify new opportunities and partners.

aims and objectives

AEF's aim:

- to protect the environment, public health and quality of life through securing policies and measures that ensure effective limits on noise, emissions and other environmental impacts from the aviation sector.

AEF's objectives:

- to seek effective legislation, policies and other measures by working with local, national and international policy-making and legislative bodies;
- to promote practical solutions through consultation and co-operation with AEF members, regulatory and public bodies, the aviation industry, and others;
- to support our members and affected communities in liaising with decision makers and other stakeholders;
- to provide advice, analysis and information;
- to publicise and promote the role and responsibilities of the Federation.