



ANNUAL REPORT 2012:

Aviation Environment Federation

Message from the Director

2012 has been an important year for AEF. In July, the Government published the Draft Aviation Policy Framework. There are a lot of questions still to be answered. But on noise, there is at least a clear recognition that the current situation is not satisfactory.

Politically, for most of 2012 we had both an Aviation Minister and a Transport Secretary who were actually willing to stand up to the aviation industry. Theresa Villiers perhaps understood aircraft noise better than any of her predecessors, and Justine Greening remained staunch in her opposition to Heathrow expansion.

But just at the time when industry lobbying for airport expansion was escalating, both were moved on. While a new hub airport scheme now seems to be press released every other week, decisions about new capacity were in September delegated away from Government to a new, external Commission.

With the support of our members, AEF made some real campaign progress in

2012. Government is finally looking at new metrics for noise; the requirement for the CAA to secure the best deal for passengers will not be at the expense of community protections; much of the Government as well as many opposition MPs now support inclusion of aviation emissions in the Climate Act; and a proposal from the UN on tackling aviation emissions is, finally, expected by early next year.

2012 also, of course, saw the UK hosting the Olympic Games, and for two weeks I combined meetings and teleconferences with (early-starting!) Olympic volunteer shifts.

Despite the skepticism beforehand, many people now regard the 2012 Games as something the UK can be proud of for years to come. Let's hope that in 2013 we'll be able to say the same about our aviation policy.

With very best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T. Johnson', is positioned below the text 'With very best wishes,'.

Tim Johnson
12th November 2012

AEF's role in UK policy

AEF continues to act as one of the Department for Transport's key environmental stakeholders and has been in close face-to-face contact with them throughout 2012.

The draft aviation framework was published in July. We welcomed the fact that it reflected a number of the points we made in our response to the scoping study last autumn, including specific mentions for General Aviation and helicopter noise, acknowledgment of the health effects of noise, and recognition of the value of looking beyond Leq when assessing noise impacts. Overall, however, although long the document is policy-light. In the absence of firm environmental limits, AEF has called for the development of effective guidance notes alongside the Framework, to encourage implementation of its recommendations.

AEF retains a seat on the South East Airports Taskforce (on which AEF has provided the sole representation for community and environmental interests) and at stakeholder groups within DfT and Defra. Our focus for 2013, however, is likely to be on providing appropriate evidence to the Airports Commission headed by Sir Howard Davies.

Tackling wider debates: air travel demand and economics

In June, AEF published a detailed critique, following engagement with DfT modellers, of the Government's latest air passenger forecasts. We noted that on each of the four occasions that the forecasts have been revised, they have gone down, and this message has helped sound a note of caution in the context of some of the year's wild predictions from airports about possible future growth. We also argued that forecast demand between now and 2030 was still likely to be too high. And the latest indications from DfT are that the next revision will indeed be another downward one.

Helping to secure some environmental balance in the Civil Aviation Bill

The Civil Aviation Bill proposes giving the CAA a primary duty towards passengers. In February, AEF produced a written briefing and gave oral evidence to the Bill's scrutiny committee on the need for an environmental counterweight to this duty. The Bill is in its final stages and now includes protection for airport environmental programmes.

Keeping up the pressure to include aviation emissions in carbon budgets

When the Coalition came to power it tore up the Air Transport White Paper on the basis that it gave insufficient weight to climate change. So far, however, despite already having published its draft framework for aviation, the Government has yet to commit either to the groundbreaking emissions target for aviation that was introduced by Labour (ironically in the context of its support for a third runway) or to inclusion of aviation in the UK's carbon budget. Under the Climate Act, a decision on the latter must be taken by the end of this year.

The Committee on Climate Change, the expert body created under the Act, has

now recommended inclusion - long advocated by AEF - on the basis that measures taken by the EU make UK carbon accounting straightforward and free from additional cost implications for airlines.

While the Government may still be wavering over whether to accept this advice, AEF's liaison with the CCC and our expert analysis of what their conclusions could mean for new airport capacity has led to the Liberal Democrats adopting a 'no net increase in runways' policy, and Labour committing to fight for the integrity of the Climate Act on which the inclusion of international aviation depends.

Whatever the Government decides, climate change considerations are likely to form a key part of our evidence to the Davies Commission.

AEF success under the Freedom of Information Act

AEF has been campaigning for several years for improvements to the Government's policy on public safety around airports. One of our concerns has been the lack of public access to information on how 'Public Safety Zones' (within which private development such as housing is restricted) are drawn up: planning inquiries for airport expansion can take place without anyone knowing the shape or size of the consequent PSZ.

In September, following our complaint under the Freedom of Information Act, the Information Commissioner rejected the Government's defence of commercial confidentiality and required the data to be released to us. We will continue, in 2013, to work towards securing greater transparency in this area.

Unique role for AEF in international work at the UN in 2012

Representing global environmental coalition as climate talks escalate

It has been clear for many years that in terms of imposing environmental limits at a policy level, the Government will only ever go so far before citing concerns about competitive disadvantage. To help overcome this, we led efforts to secure a seat for environmental organisations at relevant UN discussions, and we continue to head up the NGO coalition ICSA (the International Coalition for Sustainable Aviation) which in 2012 has been part of a small, high profile group

working up a global policy for tackling aviation emissions.

AEF, together with other environmental NGOs, intervened successfully to defend the EU's decision to include airlines in its Emissions Trading System when this was challenged in the European Court of Justice. The measure, which came into effect this year, continues to draw criticism, however, from many states outside the EU. Perhaps as a direct consequence, the UN has finally geared up to find a solution on which all parties can agree and a proposal is expected in the early part of 2013.

Engaging in EU noise policy

The EU's Airports Package, which is currently being debated, proposes a number of measures to ease Europe's perceived airport capacity challenge. The EC has little authority over noise measures imposed by member states on their airports, but is proposing 'call in' powers if states have not followed the correct procedures for establishing these policies. We believe that this is politically motivated and potentially harmful and, although there are some aspects of the noise proposals that we welcome, we have been lobbying against new EC powers in this area.



AEF Director Tim Johnson, March 2012.

Beyond the policy world: wider engagement

Our core work has always been in taking our members concerns directly to policymakers and working constructively to help find solutions.

But we also recognise the importance of wider engagement: influencing political debate by keeping the public informed; building coalitions with community groups, high-profile NGOs and others; engaging with and challenging the aviation industry; and liaising with local authorities over noise and planning issues. This section summarises our work in these areas.

AirportWatch and other NGOs

AirportWatch was founded in 2000 to bring together NGOs and community groups concerned about airport expansion. While airports spent much of 2012 coming up with rival bids for new runways, the key community groups at UK airports have, through participation in AirportWatch, focused on shared demands for better regulation of environmental impacts rather than calling for those impacts to simply be shifted elsewhere. 6-weekly bulletins, a frequently updated website, and both Facebook and Twitter accounts ensure that stories relating to individual airports or

national policy are effectively shared and publicised.

AEF provides meeting space and administrative support to AirportWatch (which is run by volunteers), and has regular input to the organisation's policy positions. We also liaise closely with other environmental organisations and in 2012 have given advice to a number of large NGOs.

Press and Media

Despite very limited resources for this work, in 2012 our media activity included television appearances on BBC1 and BBC World; quotes in The Independent and The Guardian in the UK and the New York Times and International Herald Tribune in the USA; and a number of letters in the Evening Standard, London's evening newspaper distributed to commuters.

We also began developing a series of short briefings on aspects of recent media debate and have begun using these to take our message to a wider audience.

Industry

To help progress the debate about management of aircraft noise through air traffic management, we continued

our discussions this year with BAA, the Heathrow community group HACAN, NATS and BA on a joint initiative to trial alternative departure routes at Heathrow.

We also continued to participate in the stakeholder panel of the industry coalition 'Sustainable Aviation', with Tim Johnson this year acting as the panel's Chair. While the stakeholder panel acts only in an advisory capacity and has no authority over SA's positions or publications (some of which argue for explicitly different policies from those advocated by AEF), this and similar engagement with the industry helps ensure that both sides are well-informed and that no inaccurate claims go unchallenged!

Local authorities

Local authorities in areas affected by significant aviation operations often share our interests in effective mitigation of local environmental impacts including noise and air pollution. AEF has maintained a good working relationship with SASIG (the Strategic Aviation Special Interest Group of the Local Government Association), and this year we have had particular contact with local authorities in areas of the South East threatened by airport expansion.

Universities

We were pleased in 2012 to have had contact with a number of UK

universities, including Cranfield, Manchester Metropolitan, and Essex, where we took part in a series of events in relation to aviation politics.

Members

AEF members have access to advice and information from staff and in 2012 we engaged with members on issues as wide ranging as: assessing airport noise action plans; the policy process in relation to UK airports; and how to resist inappropriate development, secure effective planning conditions, and take action if they are not appropriately implemented.

In 2012 we proposed that for a trial period we reduce the frequency of our newsletter *Flying Green* while we develop alternative ways of communicating with members. Our web designer has been busy developing tools for us to be able to send email newsletters, designed for a general readership, and we look forward to launching these in 2013. We will, however, continue to produce printed newsletters for members.

The public

Finally, we always try to respond to queries from the public or students, most often regarding either identifying flight paths or how to complain about noisy aircraft.

Fundraising and finance

Generating funding during an economic downturn is inevitably challenging and AEF is particularly grateful to its members for helping to support the organisation over the past two years. A significant part of the staff's time is now devoted to raising funds to support our work, both by applying to grant-making organisations and developing paid collaborative projects with other environmental NGOs.

The prominence of AEF's role in the international negotiations to secure a global agreement on aviation's role in tackling climate change allowed us to secure significant support from the European Climate Foundation for our work in 2012. Continuing to work with large foundations will be a key part of our funding strategy over the coming years.

In relation to our UK activities, we are very grateful for the ongoing support of the Aviation Environment Trust (formerly the Airfields Environment Trust) in funding research projects.

Full accounts are presented in a separate document.

People

Staff

Director: Tim Johnson

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AEF represents a membership comprising community groups and individuals across the UK. We are hugely grateful for their support.

The Aviation Environment Federation is the only UK NGO concerned exclusively with the environmental impacts of aviation. Supported by individuals and community groups affected by the UK's airports and airfields or concerned about aviation and climate change, we promote a sustainable future for aviation which takes full account of all its environmental and amenity affects.

The objectives of the Federation are:

- to foster a climate of opinion which takes full account of the environmental issues arising from aircraft and aerodrome use;
- to promote a relationship between the environment and aviation in which the detrimental effects of aviation on quality of life and on the natural and man-made environment are kept to a minimum;
- to encourage wide discussion of the problems involved and to seek practical solutions;
- to consult and co-operate with local, national and international governments, the aviation industry, regulatory authorities, universities, professional institutions, research bodies, and any others for the purpose of reducing noise, disturbance and all forms of pollution by technical and operational means;
- to pursue these objectives with policy-making and legislative bodies - local, national and international - so that laws and policies include measures for effective environmental protection;
- to provide relevant advice and information to assist its members;
- to publicise and promote the viewpoint of the Federation through the media and through representation among bodies responsible for aviation matters as appropriate.

Editor: Cait Hewitt

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