

As the general election draws nearer, what's on the table for aviation?

Winter's on the way. By the time you read this, the clocks will have changed, the trees will be golden and Cait will have started wearing her fingerless gloves at work. So as we start making plans for the new year, we thought it was a good time to take stock of what's on the horizon with aviation policy.

In 2009 aviation has taken an even bigger hit than after the 2001 terrorist attacks. The International Air Transport Association has reported falls in both passengers and freight compared with last year, and almost all UK airports have handled fewer aircraft. Nevertheless, long term projections are that air transport will, once the recession passes, return to growth. How fast it grows, and where, will depend on a number of factors, not least of which who is in government.

Heathrow battle lines



Which way will they turn on aviation expansion?
http://i.telegraph.co.uk/telegraph/multimedia/archive/01407/brown-cameron_1407480a.jpg

The deadline for the next election is only seven months away. Labour says that while high speed rail could replace domestic and some short haul flights, aviation should continue expanding, and see a new runway at Heathrow as essential.

The Tories, meanwhile, are opposing new runways at Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted and have promised to make this clear in their manifesto. But the country as a whole, they believe, lacks runway capacity with a need to focus on "improving capacity" at regional airports. They have promised to create a Commercial Flights Officer to act as an ombudsman for noise complaints.

The Lib Dems, like the Conservatives, have ruled out new runways at Heathrow, Gatwick or Stansted and say they would bring aviation into UK emissions targets. They have

also committed to working with the EU to introduce both VAT on tickets and kerosene taxation for intra-European flights.

New policy challenges on the horizon

Whoever wins the election, the Air Transport White Paper will be up for review during their term in office, and a National Policy Statement for aviation, required under the new planning act, will need to be drawn up (currently scheduled for 2011).

And any new vision for aviation will need to take into account the Committee on Climate Change report due in December this year on pathways to ensuring aviation emissions in 2050 are down to 2005 levels – a target announced by the Transport Minister in January this year. While the Committee has so far avoided criticising government policy, we know that they have concerns about the future use of biofuels in aircraft and that they do not envisage radical technology improvements in the short term.

How a different government would treat the 2050 emissions commitment is not yet clear, but the call to bring aviation emissions into line with wider climate policy can only become louder. And AEF will be continuing to say that a rethink on airport capacity, aircraft noise, air pollution and third party risk must be part of the picture.

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Bizjets, consultants and planning policy: a local campaigner's view on using climate change arguments

To date, business aviation has tended to fly under the radar when it comes to greenhouse gas emissions. The industry claims that it is responsible for no more than 1% of aircraft emissions overall and that without it, far fewer signatures would accrue to the national cheque book

But delving only a little deeper finds the emissions per person paint a different picture, while a high proportion of 'bizjet' use relates not so much to business as to celebrity, sport and leisure activities. Such private-pleasure flights to destinations abroad are now treated like business trips and are exempt from fuel tax. Can flyers expect their emissions to be exempted from planning policies too? The Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) in Hampshire and Surrey has been arguing that the answer is no.

TAG Farnborough Airport (home of the Air Show) is seeking planning permission to expand its Business Aviation movements from 28,000 to 50,000 p.a. The decision process, under the aegis of Rushmoor Borough Council, depends on national, regional and local planning criteria just as for a new office-block.

Getting the arguments straight

CPRE Hampshire's response to the public consultation on the application argued that:

1. Planning Policy Statement 1. 'Sustainable Development', and its Climate Change Supplement of December 2007, provide grounds for considering aircraft emissions as material to a planning application, and
2. Aircraft emissions are not, as suggested by the Application and associated Environmental Statements, outside the airport's operational control.

On 1, the relevance of the Supplement to aircraft emissions

is largely untested. At Stansted, the inspector's report indicated that, in taking evidence, he had set it aside as not yet published at the time. However, it was said to have been treated as a material consideration in the final decision.

Then in August 2009, WWF-UK registered an objection to the development of Bristol Airport and on September 29th Friends of the Earth took an action under Judicial Review against the expansion of London City Airport, in both cases quoting PPS1 and its Supplement. The outcomes of both are awaited.

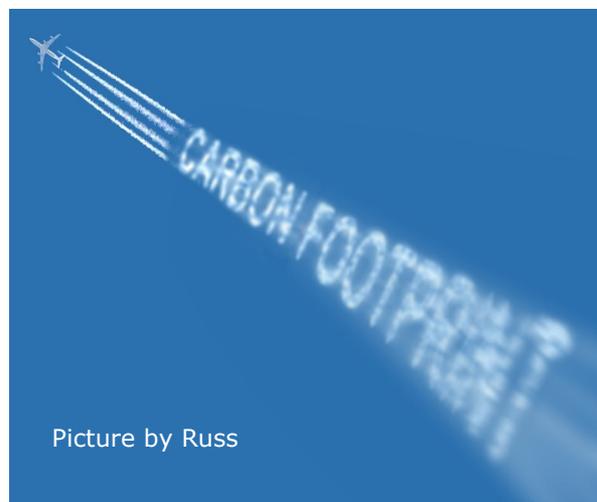
On 2, having established emissions data for typical bizjets, thanks to source material from AEF, and finding that passenger numbers for each outgoing Farnborough flight average between 2 and 3, we had enough information to compare TAG's projected greenhouse gas emissions with those for other airports as set out by the Department for Transport.

It came as a shock to find that Environmental Statements in support of TAG's proposal had apparently exaggerated the impact of operational emissions by a factor of at least two; yet this had not been recognised by TAG, Rushmoor Council or anyone else - despite having been in the public domain for more than three months.

Using the media to your advantage

In due course, the error was admitted; engines had been counted rather than aircraft (!) Through contact with local newspapers, we had headlines questioning the competence of

both the consultants and the applicant, and readers started asking whether similar errors might have been made in the proposed job creation figures.



Picture by Russ

Even so, using TAG's preferred radiative forcing factor of 4 (for the effect of aircraft emissions on the upper atmosphere), Farnborough figures still amount to a total impact approaching 1 million tonnes of CO₂ p.a. Setting aside non-CO₂ impacts so as to compare DfT data for civil airports, the implication of a grant of permission is that some 25,000 departures with a total of well under 100,000 passengers would account for almost the emissions of London City and Liverpool airports taken together in 2005, on behalf of some 3 million departing passengers.

Taking the right perspective

To date, no one has challenged CPRE Hampshire's assessment that each outgoing passenger from Farnborough is, on average, responsible for what would be ground-based emissions of 12 tonnes CO₂. That's similar to the UK average per person per annum. Isn't it time that the climate change radar began to home in on that?

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A lesson in airport excuses from a Surrey campaigner

When our local airfield, Fair Oaks (near Woking in Surrey), won its appeal in 1978 to build a hard runway, we believed we had stopped potential nuisance with a series of operating limitations, one of which was no flying after 10pm. So in January 1995 after 10pm local residents were shocked by a noisy helicopter slowly circling the airfield and using a powerful searchlight. They formed a committee of seven local associations to ask questions and raise concerns to the airport.

The airport's view was that the 'No flying after 10pm' rule applied only to aircraft that used the new runway and therefore not to helicopters. They argued that as the helicopter belonged to the London police and was shared with Surrey police, it provided a tool for fighting modern crime and finding missing persons. "Surely", they asked, "you wouldn't wish to stop us doing that, would you?"

We suggested alternative locations for the base. They responded that nowhere else was suitable and that any changes to existing practices would be compromise their ability to serve the public.

We were initially told the police helicopter would normally cease flying at 2am but were later advised that from 2006 it would change to 24-hour service. As one of our members was night-noise sensitive and found that a brief night-time disturbance could mean many hours subsequent loss of sleep, he kept a log of being woken up. When he presented this to the police they were, for a while, sympathetic and began flying more quietly. It seemed as though we were at last making progress. But after the Inspector in charge

was promoted, the incoming flight crew flew with far less consideration.

We asked the Consultative Committee if we could become members to try to negotiate a solution. That request was refused with no explanation given. Eventually we realised we had been labelled as 'always complaining' and 'should be ignored'.

Then one day during this year someone made our police helicopter go away. It was not us, and it had nothing to do with the noise problem. Three men armed with axes destroyed the helicopter's glass and a bit more. Two policemen looked on. This was the second time in six months that the helicopter had been trashed. Within a month it had fled to a secure Royal Air Force airfield at Odiham in Hampshire. No one has been prosecuted.

A local newspaper, Get Hampshire, wrote:

A spokesman for Surrey Police said ... the helicopter's relocation ... is likely to be made permanent. He added that the move had overwhelming benefits, saying: 'As well as providing a much-enhanced level of security, the new site will result in substantial savings for the force through lower rent and fuel costs. Response times have been tested and despite the new location being just outside the county, there is no impact on operational capabilities.'

Finally, we can get a peaceful night's sleep!

Richard. K. Roads.

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Pricing for aviation navigation back off the radar



AEF often highlights the benefits the aviation sector enjoys not only from legal exemptions such as its protection against noise nuisance claims, but also financial perks including tax free fuel, exemption from VAT and various subsidies. A further benefit has been brought to our attention by James Page, an Industry Policy Advisor for the Green Party, namely free access to radar spectrum for navigation.

As radio spectrum is a finite resource, Ofcom operates a pricing system for most users of spectrum, including not only mobile phone companies and other private companies but also the emergency services, with the aim of stimulating competition and increasing efficiency. The suggestion that radar for aeronautical navigation should be charged for has arisen several times, though the most recent consultation from Ofcom considers only VHF charging, and even that, they say, will be delayed pending further discussion with the CAA.

James says: "Ofcom have been saying for years that they want to charge for radar spectrum, but have now decided they'd rather the Department for Transport make this decision. No prizes for guessing what they will think."

AEF behind the scenes

- **Cait** represented AEF at a meeting with the Committee on Climate Change, which will, on 8th December, be presenting its advice to Government on how to reach the target to reduce aviation emissions to 2005 levels by 2050 – more in your next *Flying Green*. She has also been involved with some academic work on emissions reductions pathways in the North West and wrote a response to the European Commission's consultation on the future of transport
- **Tim T** attended a National Air Traffic Management Advisory Committee meeting where a document setting out the CAA's first thoughts on its Future Airspace Strategy was distributed (available to the public from 4th November)
- **Laura** has spent her final months with AEF (see box below) concentrating on fundraising and has made some useful contacts for us; she also had a letter published in the Evening Standard on carbon targets, and completed some work on noise complaints
- **Tim J** has had meetings with the Department for Transport on the CAA's future environmental remit and with the CAA and NGOs such as the National Parks Authority on how to make progress on tranquillity issues. He has also been working closely with the UN's ICAO as the organisation prepares for the Copenhagen climate conference in December.
- **Nic** has been making some changes to the AEF website, to help users find our documents more easily, has written a detailed critique of the Government's passenger forecasts, and represented AEF at a conference on tranquillity issues organised by the London Mayor
- **Jeff** – an AEF board member – has been preparing for to present to the 41 member states of the European Civil Aviation Conference, and has represented AEF in the media including in the Guardian letters page and on radio 4's Today programme, and
- **Richard** – our Chairman - has been coming to the office weekly to help progress our work on fundraising

Aims and Objectives

The objectives of the Federation are as follows:

- 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.

HNC update

Thanks to those who have expressed an interest in supporting the Helicopter Noise Coalition. We look forward to drawing on your expertise over the coming months.

We are now looking for a volunteer coordinator to manage the HNC website and, with support, handle inquiries. The work would take around half a day per week and could be done at home or in AEF's central London office. Do you know anyone who may be interested? Please contact cait@aef.org.uk



Farewell Laura!

At the end of October we bid a fond farewell to our policy coordinator Laura Simpson, who, after two years with AEF, will be taking up a full time post at Christian Aid. She wanted to pass on this message:

"I've really enjoyed my campaigns work at AEF, putting your views across to Parliament. And I have been truly inspired by the tireless, knowledgeable and vibrant campaigners I have met during my time here. Keep up the good work, especially in supporting the AEF. You give us the mandate to push for action at the highest levels of government. Thank you!"



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