

Are we any closer to a global climate deal for aviation?



Tim Johnson (middle!) at the airline industry Aviation and Environment summit in Geneva; headquarters of the International Civil Aviation Organisation in Montreal, Canada

This December, governments from around the world will meet in Copenhagen to discuss a new international climate change agreement to succeed the Kyoto Protocol from 2013. The hope is for deeper cuts in carbon dioxide out to 2020 and the inclusion of the United States, and possibly China and India. But with only seven months to go, we are no clearer on how emissions from international aviation and shipping will be tackled. These sectors were excluded from commitments under the Kyoto Protocol, with developed countries instead urged to pursue their 'limitation or reduction' through the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO). ICAO has done little to respond to this challenge, spending more time ruling out potential measures than seeking a global consensus on the way forward. But with international expectation mounting ahead of Copenhagen, and the fear that a new protocol may give leadership on this issue to another UN agency, ICAO is now desperately looking for a way to demonstrate its success. In 2007 it set up a Group on International Aviation and Climate Change (GIACC) comprising high-level government officials from fifteen countries.

The AEF, together with partner organisations in the US and Brussels, was recently invited to present its views to GIACC's third meeting held in February in Montreal. Our key message was that ICAO needed to prioritise the setting of an absolute emissions reduction target for the aviation sector, showing its leadership by matching or going beyond the ambition being shown by states and parts of industry. As examples, the EU emissions trading scheme imposes a cap equivalent to a 5% reduction on 2004-6 emission levels and even IATA, the airline trade association, has called for carbon neutral growth. Achieving a target will require market-based measures: technology and bio-fuels will be unable to match the projected global demand for air travel. In our view, anything less than this will not meet global expectation. Efficiency measures alone will not deliver.

This message was reinforced when AEF was invited to speak at the industry global gathering in Geneva, the 2009 Aviation and Environment Summit bringing together 400 airlines, airports and manufacturers. During a panel session on the role of regulation, AEF told the meeting that the language of small gains in efficiency and of voluntary and aspirational targets is out of step with the current climate change negotiations that seek to put us on a pathway to significant carbon reductions by 2050.

Tim Johnson, tim@aef.org.uk

Website editor wanted

Do you have some IT skills and a few spare hours a week? The Helicopter Noise Coalition represents people affected by both civilian and military helicopter noise. HNC's chair stood down last year due to ill-health and AEF is currently handling inquiries to the organisation. We are now looking for someone to manage the website – www.helicopter-noise.or.uk, possibly working from home. Detailed knowledge of helicopter issues is not essential. Please contact cait@aef.org.uk

Airports and public safety



[Private aircraft crash, Biggin Hill, Farnborough;
Guardian: Gareth Fuller/PA]

In March 2008, a Cessna Citation crashed into a residential area near Biggin Hill Airport, ripping open a house and then gutting it in the ensuing fire. Fortunately, a holiday saved the lives of its owners: both were abroad when the crash happened. Next time, residents may not be so lucky. While safety is the industry's mantra and accidents are few and far between, around 80 per cent of jet aircraft accidents occur during take-off and landing, so people on the ground near the ends of airport runways – often there for reasons unrelated to aviation – are at a heightened risk.

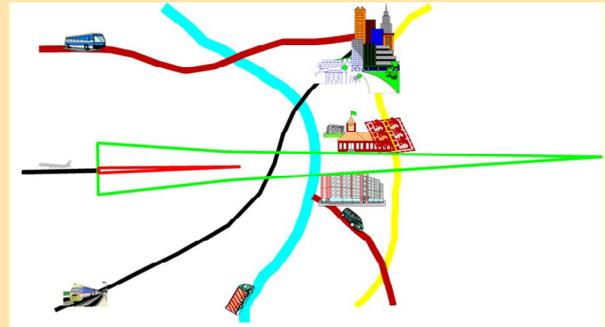
The government's policy for tackling this risk – public safety zone (PSZ) policy – aims to reduce the number of people living in high risk areas. But the approach has a number of shortcomings, not least of which is the fact that PSZs tend to be drawn up only after planning permission for airport activity has been granted. In spite of the policy, therefore, more people become exposed to both risk and housing blight (see box opposite).

AEF took this up as a campaign issue in direct response to members' concerns. We will this month have our second meeting with government officials to discuss our views. And at the local level, positive changes may be afoot. Geoff Marks, of Farnborough Area Residents' Association, said: "Being able to talk to local councillors about AEF's work on this issue does seem to be making a difference. At last, the council have commissioned a review of the public safety implications of the proposed expansion of Farnborough aerodrome."

Cait Weston (cait@aef.org.uk) with advice from Executive Council members Geoff Marks and Roger Wood

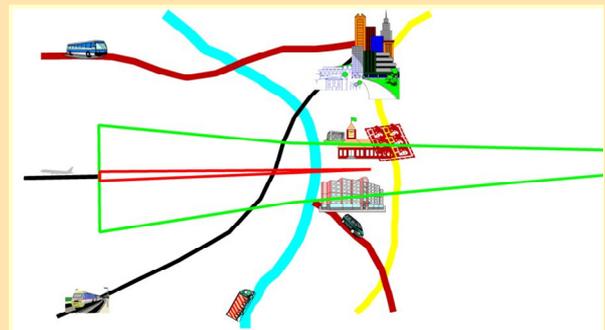
PSZs in operation

Welcome to Anytown. The airport runway is the black line on the left. The red triangle shows the inner PSZ. Any dwelling in this area would need to be removed. The green triangle shows the outer PSZ: the area within which no new development is permitted. Buildings have been erected along the edge of this triangle.



But just because no-one can build new houses next to the airport it doesn't mean the airport can't expand its operations next to existing houses! In the picture below an increase in airport activity or in the number of more dangerous aircraft (such as bizjets) means that the outer PSZ has expanded. People in the buildings now within the green triangle face higher levels of risk and are restricted in what they can do with their homes.

The long-term objective will be to reduce the number of people in them but no compensation will necessarily be offered. Residents often play down these disadvantages to avoid devaluing their homes.



[Slides from a presentation by Roger Wood for AirportWatch; contact info@ladacan.org for the full presentation]

Noise policy update

AEF has for many years been communicating the need for central Government to regulate aircraft noise rather than simply relying on the good will of airports to respond to the needs of the local community. Though progress is slow, regulation at European level is now starting to fill this gap. The requirement to ‘map’ noise will at least mean that it must be monitored. But here in England the Government is still trying to wriggle out of any responsibility for standard setting.

GUIDANCE FOR AIRPORT OPERATORS ON NOISE ACTION PLANS

In our last newsletter we reported that the draft guidance for airport operators to produce noise action plans was out for consultation, and that we were concerned that it failed to specify any Lden or Lnight limit values and that the competent authority for the drawing up of noise ‘action plans’ was to be the airports themselves. The final guidance has now been published. Unsurprisingly, there has been no change in the guidance concerning limit values and no change to the competent authority. We will continue to pursue our concerns about these issues. Questions remain to be resolved about whether it is even legal for the role of competent authority to be given to the very entities that the authority must regulate.

The final version of the guidance does, however, incorporate some minor changes. One of AEF’s comments on the draft version was that the requirement for airport operators to engage with the consultative committee, (where one exists) when drawing up the Draft Noise Action Plan, was inadequate. Operators should, we argued, consult other interested parties who may have been excluded from the consultative committee on grounds of size or ‘balanced’ representation. The final guidance has been amended to encourage wider consultation and to extend the minimum consultation period from 12 weeks to 16.

NEW CONSULTATION ON THE ENVIRONMENTAL NOISE REGULATIONS

Meanwhile, the Regulations themselves, which these guidance notes help to implement, are up for negotiation. A consultation is open until 11th May on ‘on proposed amendments to the Environmental Noise (England) Regulations 2006’ (available on the Defra website). It is proposed that three of the Secretary of State’s responsibilities regarding noise management be weakened: first, that deadlines (which have been missed) for the Secretary of State to identify ‘quiet areas’ be removed; second, that the duty on the Secretary of State to produce consolidated noise maps (overlying information about noise from different sources) be dropped; and third that the requirement that “No later than 18th July 2007 [a deadline which has been missed] the Secretary of State must publish guidance setting out limit values or other criteria for the identification of priorities for action plans” be replaced by a general power that the Secretary of State *may* produce this guidance!

We encourage members to respond to the consultation opposing these suggested changes, which would greatly undermine the credibility of this legislation. The fact that the Secretary of State has failed to comply with the current Regulations should not be a reason to simply remove those duties from him. Please contact us if you would like to see our draft response.

Cait Weston (cait@aef.org.uk)

Airport jobs: false hopes, cruel hoax

“Like ‘sex’, the word ‘jobs’ makes an excellent tabloid headline: short, sharp and emotive.... The suggestion that a new or expanded airport will create more jobs is a sure way to attract support from the public and a fair wind from the planners.” So begins this latest publication from former Treasury economist Brendon Sewill. And yet, he goes on to argue, false hopes can prove a cruel hoax.

In this accessible booklet, published in March by AEF, Sewill takes apart claims that airports bring ‘indirect’, ‘induced’ and ‘catalytic’ jobs; compares aviation forecasts with employment forecasts (and finds that the shift towards low cost models means the ratio of jobs to passengers is set to decrease) and looks at how claims for job creation associated with airport expansion match up (or not) with experience.

For free hard copies of the report, contact cait@aef.org.uk; it is also in electronic form on our website.

AEF behind the scenes

A glimpse at we've been doing over the last few months...

▶ **Laura** has been working primarily on AEF fundraising. Members will have received a letter about short-term funding needs from the Chairman. We are very grateful to those who have responded. Laura has been looking at our longer-term strategy to diversify our funding sources.

▶ **Tim J**, in addition to his work in international climate talks (see front page), has presented to, among others, the Institute of Travel Management conference, the parliamentary transport select committee (on airspace issues), the overview conference for Omega (the academic partnership studying aviation and environment), and BAA employees responsible for environmental matters.

▶ **Cait** appeared on BBC News 24 to give AEF comment on the Heathrow expansion announcement and, back in the office, has been focusing on responding to various Government consultations.

▶ **Jeff**, an AEF Executive Council member, presented at a European Commission dialogue with African States in Namibia.

▶ **Nic** has given advice on Heathrow noise and has been analysing the Government's latest aviation CO2 forecasts.

▶ **Tim T** has been working mainly on our IT needs (our hand-built computers have started letting us down) and has been responding to inquiries from the Helicopter Noise Coalition site.

▶ And our interns **Priya** and **Alex** have been monitoring parliamentary news, researching carbon budgets and conducting background research into the environmental impacts of different transport modes.

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.

And finally...

In case you ever feared that we were getting nowhere in persuading regulators that general and business aviation needs to be brought under effective environmental controls, we thought we'd share with you a snippet from the British Business and General Aviation Association's *Value for Money* report, sent to us, we assume, in error. It's a reminder of why your AEF membership matters! (And our membership is better value for money than theirs, by the way.)

“Our industry continues to be targeted for increased costs as well as operational and environmental controls.... Not the least of these issues has been the environmental lobby where it is evident that without the diligence of BBGA the industry would be continuously labelled as a major ‘non-contributing’ polluter. ... There remains absolutely no doubt that if BBGA was not there to monitor proposals and fight the cause, the industry would be overwhelmed by the authorities - particularly with the onward advance of European involvement in the regulation of our industry.”

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