

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.

Have you thought of making a tax-free donation or a bequest in your will to the AEF's main funders, the Airfields Environment Trust? More details available from the office.

NATS launches "biggest ever airspace consultation"



Tim Johnson, Director
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The Government's expansion of airports depends on effective airspace management and in response to increasing traffic levels, NATS has launched what it describes as the "biggest ever airspace consultation" covering an area described as TC North (in fact, a large section of South-East and East England). While the plans have been designed to deal with additional aircraft traffic, NATS focuses on the net environmental benefit, claiming that they will reduce "by some 20% the number of people affected by noise from departing aircraft flying below 4,000ft". But alongside the winners, there will also be large number of losers.

The four main objectives of the proposal are to:

- reduce congestion over Brookmans Park in Hertfordshire caused by converging departure routes from Heathrow, Luton, London City and Northolt,
- relocate and separate the holding facilities for Luton and Stansted to accommodate their growth (the airports currently share two holds; under these proposals each would have a dedicated hold and Stansted an additional hold),
- introduce continuous descent approaches (CDA), reducing fuel burn and noise by keeping aircraft higher for longer, for Stansted's easterly runway, and
- formalise arrival and departure routes for London City to reflect the growing number of jet aircraft using the airport, and to provide a new hold.

If approved, the changes could be operational from Spring 2009.

The consultation raises many important issues. Is it right to concentrate solely on reducing the number of people affected by noise? This approach leads to more traffic over our countryside where background noise levels are lower and aircraft can appear more intrusive. Protecting tranquillity is gaining prominence in noise policy – you don't solve noise problems by simply shifting it elsewhere. And what constitutes a low population density? Some of the routes appear to miss major settlements today but fail to take planned developments into account, so may create problems in the future.

The consultation runs until 22 May 2008 and details can be found at:
www.consultation.nats.co.uk/

Airport planning and noise: tell us your story



Laura Simpson, policy coordinator; laura@aef.org.uk

Noise disturbance is a fact of life for many of those living close to aerodromes, and, as many AEF members have found, the solutions available are frequently inadequate. The publication of the 'ANASE' study of noise and annoyance (discussed in our last newsletter) and of the 'HYENA' report on Hypertension and Exposure to Noise near Airports, put the issue of noise, its mitigation, and the damage it causes to health very much on the agenda.

To confront this issue, the AEF is launching a study covering all the aerodromes under the AEF's remit for a nationwide picture on how communities and aerodromes have interacted over aircraft noise issues during the past few decades. We will include spokespeople from key AirportWatch local membership groups, and some former AEF members, as they can provide a wealth of archived information from past campaigns/applications.

Surveys asking members to detail their experiences with their local aerodrome are being sent out with this newsletter and the results will be collated by early autumn. You can either fill out the hard copy enclosed and post it back to us at AEF, 2nd Floor, Broken Wharf House, 2 Broken Wharf, London, EC4V 3DT, or fill out an electronic copy on our website <http://www.aef.org.uk/> and return it via email to info@aef.org.uk. If you have any questions about filling in the survey, or would like extra copies, call us on 0207 248 2223.

The study, we hope, will allow us to identify any inconsistencies or inadequacies in current planning arrangements and suggest ways to improve accountability at all stages of the planning procedure. By the end of the project we plan to produce proposals for a national framework of quality assessment and guidance for airport planning, and a 'best practice' manual for airports, based on positive examples of community engagement.

Government predicts huge increase in emissions by 2030



Nic Ferriday, civil aviation caseworker; nic@aef.org.uk

Blink and you might have missed it, but on the day the Heathrow consultation was launched the government also quietly published a 140-page report titled *UK Air Passenger Demand and CO2 forecasts*. This is a dense but important document setting out the Government's forecasts for increasing demand for air travel, and in the accompanying carbon emissions, up to 2050.

While the correlation between passenger growth and emissions growth seems fairly accurate (and it's not good news) we have a number of concerns about other aspects of the report. Four are particularly notable:

1. Oil prices (in real terms) are assumed to fall from around \$100 per barrel, the price at the time of writing, to about \$65 per barrel in 2006 to \$53 per barrel in 2030. Given the soaring demand from India and China, and uncertainty about future supply, this assumption seems totally unrealistic.
2. The figure used for the damage cost of increasing carbon emissions is around £90 per tonne of carbon – too low to drive the behaviour changes we need to see in order to avoid disastrous climate change and inadequate since it fails to reflect other environmental costs of aviation, such as noise and air pollution.
3. There is a sudden drop in the growth rate for both passengers and emissions from 2030 on the basis that capacity constraints will start to bite. In other words, the Government's 'predict and provide' policies, that underpin the 2003 White Paper, will suddenly be abandoned - a startling policy about-face! Is it coincidence that long-term climate targets are set for 2050 while the aviation policy only extends to 2030?
4. By 2050, it is claimed, aviation will represent 29% of UK carbon emissions, a calculation based on a 60% cut on 1990 levels of all emissions *excluding* aviation. But if all our emissions, including aviation, are cut by 80% by 2050, as is now recommended by scientists, aviation's proportion will look very much higher than 29%.

AEF argues that the government needs to be bolder in managing demand for aviation sector which is growing at an unsustainable rate. At present, aviation policy is still very badly aligned with climate policy.

Time for some government action on helicopter noise



David Shufflebotham, Helicopter Noise Coalition
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Millions of words have been written on the subject of helicopter noise over the last quarter of a century. Numerous studies have been commissioned by the British government, the American FAA and others, and guidance documents such as British Helicopter Advisory Board Code of Conduct for Pilots have been drawn up in an effort to minimise noise impact. The CAA is charged with ensuring that the conditions related to safety and low flying set out in the most recent Air Navigation Order are met, with offenders successfully prosecuted.

But despite all of this, non-essential helicopter movements continue to disturb residents in their tens, if not hundreds, of thousands, if the responses to the Helicopter Noise Coalition's website are any guide. Many studies have concluded that airfields and local residents should agree on helicopter circuits and routes, via Joint Consultative Committees (JCCs), in order to minimise noise disturbance. But while manufacturers love this result (since it has no effect of equipment sales), those affected by noise feel fobbed off. Department for Transport studies in the 1990s argued that city sounds effectively mask helicopter noise such that they had little additional impact on city-dwellers. But the folk of Wandsworth, Fulham & Hammersmith, Sutton and Harpenden have quite a different story to tell.

Early in 2007, a group calling itself the Helicopter Noise Coalition (HNC) established a website designed to coordinating residents badly affected by helicopter noise (www.helicopter-noise.org.uk). The site has acted as a lightning rod for complaints from people at heli-noise hotspots around the country, with antisocial helicopter overflights being recorded from Battersea, Derby East Midlands, Luton, Wycombe Air Park, Biggin Hill, Edinburgh, sporting venues, and elsewhere. HNC wanted to identify more effective options than JCCs, so joined AEF to benefit from its advice and guidance on noise issues.

In May 2007 AEF organised a meeting on helicopter noise, which was attended, among others, by a Green Party representative from the GLA. One outcome of the meeting was that HNC was commissioned by the Green Party to undertake an online noise audit over London's boroughs. This led to meetings at City Hall, with HNC putting forward detailed proposals about how to quantify the growing body of affected residents. A key goal was to identify people who would be willing to be named on the survey, in an effort to counter any government dismissal of there being only "anecdotal evidence" of problems with helicopter noise. Coincidentally or not, it then emerged that the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) had commissioned a study, being undertaken by Salford University, into helicopter noise, which seemed to share our research objectives. It was decided that HNC's study should be subsumed into this, with HNC remaining a key stakeholder.

It will be interesting to see the results. But the basic issues around helicopter noise are already well understood. What is not yet understood by either local or national politicians is that there are votes in this issue. Our leaders in Parish Hall, Town Hall and Whitehall need to know how many people are badly overflown, and those people are becoming more and more active. We urge central and local government to engage with reality and accept that heli-noise disturbs, offends and undermines tranquillity. We need flight-free time slots at weekends, curfews, and training circuits away from population centres.

Until helicopter noise becomes a nuisance *in law*, with sanctions against offending operators, the aviation industry will continue to take care of its own. It is sometimes argued that since the UK has to comply with EU policies and practices, these aims are out of the question. This is nonsense. Paris has a no-helicopter-overflight policy. The Municipalities of Cannes, Monaco, St Tropez have all banned non-essential helicopter flights over their populations. Unlike these outright bans, all we want are good-neighbour policies with severe sanctions against offenders. Along with AEF we will continue to work towards this goal and will keep you posted as we progress.

Recent AEF events

The planning system retains a key role in identifying and managing the environmental impacts of aviation. On 19th March 2008, as a follow-up event to the launch of our online planning handbook, AEF held a successful one-day workshop for councillors and planners on **planning and the impacts of airport expansion**. The speakers addressed a range of topics, including the implications of the Planning Bill, the relevance of new forms of environmental assessment for airports, the latest on public safety zones, and how to present climate change arguments at planning enquiries. More information, including slides to download, is available from the planning section of our website.

The event had been coordinated by Titilayo, who has now left us to take up a post with KPMG in Nigeria. We wish her all the best in her new married life! Riki Therivel continues to head up AEF's planning work and to deal with member queries on planning issues.

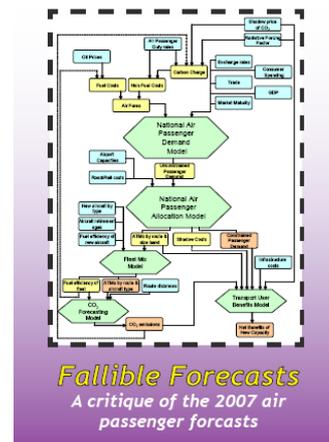
Part of AEF's work focuses on promoting alternatives to air travel where they have environmental benefits. **'Trains not planes – why rail is the clear business and environmental winner'** was the title of an event hosted at the House of Lords on 27th March by the All-Party Parliamentary Sustainable Aviation Group for which AEF provides the secretariat, with Jeff Gazzard acting as policy adviser for the Group. Chris Austin of the Association of Train Operating Companies presented figures suggesting that trains not only emit 4 times less carbon per passenger kilometre but are also, challenging a common misperception, cheaper. Paul Tetlaw of *Transform Scotland* stressed the benefits of rail travel in terms of productive time for business travellers, while Allan McLean of Virgin Trains talked about the benefits of using overnight trains for travel to and from Scotland.

News from our networks

AEF administers or supports several national and international networks, working closely with other NGOs and local groups worldwide. This section provides an update on recent activities.



The AirportWatch Economics Group (chaired by Brendon Sewill) has published two new reports. *Fallible Forecasts* assesses the Department for Transport's 2007 air passenger forecasts (see Nic's article in this newsletter), identifying serious deficiencies in the air traffic forecasts, the emissions estimates and the economic benefits of new runways at Heathrow and Stansted.



Fallible Forecasts
A critique of the 2007 air passenger forecasts

A second report, *Flaws Galore*, lists over twenty serious flaws in the Government's economic case for expanding Heathrow airport. It assesses the assumptions on future oil price, taxes on aviation, and the economic benefit of transfer passengers, and backs up many of the findings of a major new report from the independent Dutch consultant CE Delft.

Both reports are available from the publications page of the AirportWatch website. Hard copies are kept at the AEF office and can be posted on request; please contact Cait: cait@aef.org.uk.

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