



Farnborough Aerodrome Residents Association

Farnborough Airport - What will the Future Hold?

Introduction

1. Airports have a very significant impact upon those living in the surrounding area. The Farnborough Aerodrome Residents Association (FARA) focuses solely on the containment and mitigation of the environmental impacts of operations at Farnborough's privately owned airport.
2. TAG has launched a consultation process that will inform a Master Plan to be published early next year. The consultation document reveals TAG's 'aspirations' for the future. If this is the case, then we welcome this consultation, as we oppose the step-by-step approach to growth (commonly referred to as 'stealth') that in the past, and with very few exceptions, airport operators throughout the UK have adopted.
3. This circular sets out FARA's views. We do so in order that you may have the opportunity to weigh them in the balance with TAG's – either before you respond to TAG's consultation, or respond to the statutory consultation that Rushmoor Borough Council will conduct later this year as part of their Local Development Framework (LDF) process.

FARA's Views

4. The majority of our membership acknowledges that the establishment of the airport has secured the future of the SBAC show, and that 'The Show' has significant benefits for the local and regional economy. That said, we also recognise that this benefit is of little comfort for those who are most effected by the noise generated by TAG's day-to-day flying operations, particularly if the value of their property has been affected. On behalf of those who have demonstrably suffered from blight, FARA has strived to secure compensation, and will continue to do so.
5. In the absence of any evidence that local economic benefits of growth would outweigh the environmental harm that would be incurred, FARA will continue to oppose growth in the level of flying beyond the current annual movement limits.

Observations on TAG's Brochure

6. In the introduction to this circular we sound a note of caution as to whether we can assume the document reveals TAG's ultimate 'aspirations' for growth. TAG says that the capacity of its airport infrastructure is a 'hypothetical' 100,000 movements per year. It is important to keep in mind that all successful businesses constantly strive to maximise growth and that:

- (1) The Government's policy is to allow airports to fully utilise their capacity to meet any unsatisfied outstanding demand. This policy was established with minimal consultation after Farnborough airport had been established.
- (2) The 100,000 movement figure has been derived for TAG by the National Air Traffic Service (NATS). This figure is 'hypothetical' because the number of movements is currently constrained by the NATS third party risk statistics. These statistics, which few people can be expected to understand, can change in TAG's favour as they have in the past. We believe that Rushmoor Borough Council should establish a 'never exceed' airport capacity. This should be derived, not from the capacity of the airport infrastructure, but from a fair balance between demonstrable economic benefits and economic and environmental harm.
- (3) TAG note that their operations could increase from the current limit of 28,000 movements per annum to 55,000, and still remain within the Government's noise criteria. This seems at odds with the current planning conditions which invoke a 'noise contour' that Rushmoor's consultants had said would allow between 86,000 and 400,000 Movements (depending on the mix of aircraft types). Either the Government's criteria have been tightened without our knowledge, or Rushmoor invoked a condition that breached Government guidelines. In due course we shall be aiming to clarify the position regarding noise contour constraints.

TAG's Press Day.

- (6) We understand that TAG said that if their planning application for growth is successful, Farnborough could become the preferred UK entry point for the London Olympic games. Most local people would share the hope that Farnborough will be used for this purpose. But this special event should not require the planning approval for an overall increase in TAGs movement limit. Flying associated with specific events, or specific users, can fall outside of the planning agreement, as is clearly shown by the fact that the SBAC show activity and flights by members of the Government and foreign dignitaries fall outside Rushmoor's planning controls.

FARA's 'Aspirations'

- (7) Over the next year decisions will be taken on the future of the airport that will determine the quality of life for many of the residents in this densely populated area. We hope that everyone takes the opportunity to respond to both the TAG and the Rushmoor consultation processes.
- (8) There is clearly a gulf between what we wish to see happen, and what TAG wish to achieve. We hope that the matter can be fairly settled locally by Rushmoor, and not by the heavy hand of central Government. (The accommodation of the Olympic Games activity as proposed above might be a good example of the innovative and flexible thinking that could help.)

Feedback

- (8) Should you have any comments on this circular, positive or negative, we would be pleased to hear from you through this e mail address Chairman@fara.org.uk .