

SOUTHAMPTON AIRPORT IS COMMENCING THE NEW NOISE PREFERRED ROUTING TRIALS FROM 1ST JULY

GIVING YOUR FEEDBACK

ON HOW THESE NEW ROUTINGS AFFECT YOUR PROPERTY
AND THE VILLAGE OF OTTERBOURNE

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DETAILS ARE ON THE OTTERBOURNE WEBSITE:
<http://www.otterbourne.parish.hants.gov.uk/>

Report on the Airport Meeting Shawford 9th June 2005

Introduction

The meeting was called by Councillor Murray MacMillan to allow the airport management to present the proposed trials and for local council representatives to raise question on the trials and airport operations. In the future this is just planned to be a biannual event.

The meeting was attended by around 24 people, representing local parish, city and district councils. The airport was represented by Mr David Cumming CEO, Ms Jan Halliday Director of Communications and Mr Mark Gibb, Director of Operations.

Format

Councillor MacMillan opened the meeting and quickly conceded the floor to Mr David Cumming who overviewed the airport operations and some future planning issues. David passed the floor to Ms Jan Halliday who overviewed the work the airport carries out in the community. Jan Halliday conceded the floor to Mr Mark Gibb who focussed on the trails (2004 and 2005). After this, the floor was opened to questions.

Presentation packs produced by BAA on the new trial proposals were handed out.

Points arising. Not in any specific order.

- (1) The airport directs most of its presentation at Southampton and Eastleigh areas.
- (2) The maps in the literature supporting the trial are quite misleading in that the shading showing areas of population are not extended under the proposed flight paths. This gives the impression that the airport is avoiding populated areas. *(I raised this with Jan Halliday after the meeting and she said she would look at this)*
- (3) The importance of the economic and job creation contribution of the airport was acknowledged, but the airports failure to take the people north of Eastleigh with them was well put from the floor.
- (4) The rising level of disruption, particularly at weekends was put with 'some feeling'
- (5) The point was made that not everyone objected to aircraft noise and moreover that not everyone was disturbed to the same degree by a passing aircraft
- (6) The 2.5 mile to 'peel off' limit was questioned and the point that this was still over population centres was raised, but the line of questioning was halted to allow for other questions before any answers were given.

- (7) As a rule of thumb Airplanes cannot manoeuvre in less than 2 miles from the runway according to Mark Gibb (*Observation suggests some airplanes can manoeuvre in less*)
- (8) Turning aircraft loose height and create more noise.
- (9) The low level secondary radar feed that gives place and direction information will be off line until September. The fact that this meant there would be no low level tracking information for nearly 50% of the trial seemed to be of no consequence to the airport management, even after they had said how important it was for residents to give time and date so that this could be tied to tracking data?
- (10) The declared 'inconclusive' results from the last trial were put down to the readings from noise measuring equipment, which did not detect any difference in the field. There was only one of these detectors in our region and that was located in Twyford.
- (11) All local areas north of Eastleigh have recent experience of planes flying overhead. Flying over recent months has not been limited to the Itchen river valley path used in past years.
- (12) The airport is about to publish its development document for the next 5-10 years. This will be available in July and the airport will be contacting Councils at all levels over presentation of the plan (*I passed my card to Jan Halliday with a specific request to be kept informed*)
- (13) There are already plans to open a new £5m departure lounge
- (14) The airport team did say that the most noisy aircraft were being phased out and replaced by quieter aircraft (*This is probably a response to changes in the law. Aircraft that marginally meet Chapter 3 registration, which is a noise registration, are required to be withdrawn*)
- (15) The Trilander is not being included in the trial and no explanation as to why this is excluded was given. During the presentation it was said that this aircraft was slow, but it was denied that the slowness of this aircraft would block the air corridor.
- (16) Mark Gibb clarified a point first made at the meeting last year at Mr Mark Oaten's meeting that the '*airport was close to capacity*' by explaining this limitation was linked to handling planes on the ground. **There was still plenty of runway time. David Cumming pointed out that Heathrow still operates from a single runway.**

Questions asked privately after the meeting also revealed

- (17) While the airport just sneaks under the 50,000 movements that would trigger the new Airport Noise Directive, there is no intention to comply with any of the clauses of that directive. Although under pressure Mark Gibb did tell me that they were collecting data in the background. Specifically he said they had **looked at houses that may need sound insulation in the future.**
- (18) There is sensitivity about Twyford. When talking with Jan Halliday she told me that one of the Chief pilots lives there and that 'even he' had acknowledged that this may prove to be the best route. (*I hadn't asked any question that justified that response?*)

General Comment

While some significant points were drawn out of the meeting, much of the floor time was not spent gaining insight into the trial, but used to complain about existing over-flying issues and in once case for a person to reminisce about their days as a pilot.

Conclusions

- (1) While the airport management speak of wanting to work with the local people on noise, the evidence indicates that this is a best a secondary concern and this was primarily an airport driven activity. In particular, there has been little or no consultation to arrive at the proposal which was produced by an airport dominated working group and they are not looking to make changes in light of consultation now.
- (2) The airport consultation committee appears to be weak and dominated by Eastleigh Borough Council
- (3) **The trial and its outcome are probably a foregone conclusion.** (See note)
- (4) There are many questions still to be asked, but at the moment, the local community seems to be inwardly focused on individual cases and voicing complaints. This is in contrast to BAA who appear to be some way down a strategic and managed path. The local community needs to get its act together if we are to make any progress on this issue.
- (5) Some people appear to trust the warm words of BAA without analysing the motives. They seem to overlook the primacy of 'profit'.

Note: Having flown very similar paths to the trial over the last 6-9 months, it will be a simple exercise to show little or no difference to the community at the end of the trial, thus legitimising the new plan. The only potential change that could occur given the size and influence of Winchester is that Aircraft will peel more to the left and right rather than overfly Winchester which is straight ahead. This will be to the detriment of Otterbourne, Shawford, Compton and Badger Farm to the left, and Colden Common and Twyford to the right.

Key Concern

Looking at the process and how it is being executed raises concerns:

Given aircraft cannot manoeuvre in less than 2 miles a plan that allows any routing path after 2.5 miles opens up the airport approach to the maximum. In addition, the 2.5 miles straight out of Eastleigh airspace is the best Eastleigh could hope for too. However it is difficult to see this as a best option plan for the villages North of Eastleigh such as ours.

Spreading flights over multiple paths, may spread 'the pain', but this is only valid if it is linked to a capping strategy, otherwise it's a charter to just increase the pain. There is no capping plan on the table to my knowledge.

Once established as a 'modus operandi', to meet any challenge of any one community; BAA can always use the fact that this will be at the detriment of another community. Divide to stay ahead will become a valid, powerful and obvious strategy

Proposed Actions

- (1) Try to get onto the Consultation Group which is currently dominated by Eastleigh (*Sec Mr Richard Ward. Legal and Democratic Affairs at EBC*)
- (2) Arrange further meetings with Councillors MacMurray, Beckett and Bailey to discuss their thoughts on:
 - a. The possibility of moving the 2.5 mile point to 4 nautical miles followed by a break away to the right to avoid Winchester and make use of the strategic gap.
 - b. The possible outcomes and impacts of this trial
 - c. The prospect of co-ordinating efforts around the villages and evolving our strategy
 - d. The possibility of collecting evidence supporting the over-flying activities of the last 12 months which may be used to justify the trials conclusion
- (3) Arrange meeting with Mr Mark Oaten MP to discuss same plus DfT involvement
- (4) Obtain and examine the development plan due out in July (*if this shows expansion and particularly if it shows ground development for more aircraft, then I believe the concerns of this report will be fully vindicated*)