

Minutes of the London Oxford Airport Consultative Committee (ACC) Meeting

Tuesday 12th October 2021

Date of Minutes – 01 November 2021

Attendees:

For the Airport - Will Curtis-WSC (MD), James Dillon-Godfray-JDG (Head of Business Development), David Austen (Air Traffic Services Manager),

Local Representatives – John Broad (CPRE Oxon), Sarah Champneys (Leading Edge Aviation), Dom Knight (Wootton), Mark Turner (Independent), Andrew Morgan (Wootton) Clive Stayt (Gosford & Water Eaton), David Duthie (Shipton on Cherwell), Don Street (Bladon), Lindsay Gregory (Begbroke), Davidid Thurling (Kidlington), Timothy Hallchurch (Cherwell DC), Duke of Marlborough (Woodstock PC), Nigel Simpson (Oxfordshire CC), Ian Middleton (Oxfordshire CC + Kidlington/Yarnton) - (*all as signed-in on evening, a few others were present, but didn't sign-in*)

Chair: Anthony Kedros (Oxford Airport Users Group)

Apologies – Kris Black – Airport Operations Manager, Duke of Marlborough - had to depart early due to concurrent Woodstock Town Council meeting that evening.

Provisional date for next Meeting – Tuesday 8th February – Airport Terminal, 18:00 hrs

The meeting commenced at 18:00 hours

1. Minutes of Previous Meeting

- a. *Action* – JDG to post the Airport Consultative Committee Constitution on the dedicated ACC webpage

2. Planning/Development-Related Activity

- a. **New Hangar No.15**

This facility is finished and was put into service 1st week of November. Further consideration will be made into shielding on the eastern side with bunding and tree planting (note comments below on visual screening)

b. Proposed new facility for Airbus Helicopters

The background on the proposed maintenance facility and the new location were given. The airport originally sought a Screening Opinion as to whether an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) was required from the local authority earlier in the year. Having received the opinion from CDC with concerns on the originally-proposed position, the airport had addressed the issues raised by CDC, proposed a new site, amended the request for a second Screening Opinion and re-submitted. The 2nd screening opinion position from CDC was that it still considered the development warranted an EIA, contrary to advice from the airport's consultants. In accordance with advice given to the airport, the airport referred the matter for a Screening Direction from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. Subsequent to the ACC meeting on the 12th October, the government has now concluded that the proposed development *did not* warrant the need for an EIA on the 19th October.

There was a comment raised that at the last ACC meeting in June the airport had committed to consult on major development projects at the planning application phase. Clarification was given by the airport that seeking a screening opinion is not a planning application, it is arguably a pre-planning exercise. WC said the airport was following the UK's planning regulations to the letter in the context of the airport's Permitted Development Rights - the airport ought not to be criticised for following the UK's planning regulations. The airport would naturally consult on larger developments when a project moves into a formal planning application as part of any due process. JDG highlighted that everything relating to the screening opinion consultation on the proposed Airbus facility was in the public domain on the Cherwell planning website, including the 314-page assessment of the proposed development.

c. Visual Impact Screening

On the matter of the visual screening of buildings, the airport would be looking for types of tree that would not attract birds, as the airport, like all airports, has to mitigate against attracting birds in the vicinity of the runway and approaches.

3. Overview of the last four month's airport activity since the last ACC meeting

WC noted that pilot training was still catching up following the pandemic. Business flights were increasing due to pent-up demand and the fact that there were reduced numbers of public flights; passengers were finding that flights from private airports were more convenient and were becoming more popular. Flying training next year will likely reduce as CAE, formally the largest professional school at Oxford, had downsized considerably with some moves of aircraft to Belgium.

Overview of the last four month's airport activity since the last ACC meeting (Cont.)

With Leading Edge Aviation (now the largest professional training school at the airport) looking to relocate some of their aircraft also to a 'fair-weather' base overseas sometime in 2022, a further reduction in training activity levels was anticipated next year.

WC reiterated that the longer-term strategy is not to entice any further professional training schools, but was more focused on growing the engineering and maintenance support businesses at the airport (called MROs in the aviation world – 'Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul'). MROs bring in good income to the airport for fewer flights and create high value jobs and income to the local community.

A comment was made that maintenance activity would bring increased noise due to engine testing. WC made the point that modern engines were more computer-based like modern cars and the computer diagnosed most of the faults these days without the need for long engine runs.

A comment was made about jet exhaust fumes around Begbroke. For clarity, any emissions on the approach or departure to the south would be carried in a particular direction on any given day by the wind direction. 70% of the time the aircraft arrive from the north onto runway 19 and 30% approximately to the south – on those days, any residencies in Begbroke would be more likely to be affected. Modern engines are progressively producing fewer emissions and older engines are increasingly costly to maintain, so the general direction on this front is positive.

JDG highlighted those facts, figures and data relating to the airport's activity levels was available as a slide pack that will accompany the minutes when distributed.

4. Noise Issues overview and 'hotspots'

Wootton

A resident reported that it had got better with Leading Edge now flying left and right of village. CAE however were still overflying and did not reply to emails.

It was explained that sometimes aircraft inbound for a visual approach might be told by ATC to orbit owing to either a busy circuit of other inbound instrument traffic – that orbiting can bring the aircraft over Wootton

Thrupp

Residents were requested to send date and time of any overflight of concern (usually helicopters) and the airport would try to investigate the reason.

5. Section 106 limitations – any breaches (last 4 months)

No breaches of limits (activity levels and hours of operation) were observed in the period

It was highlighted that anyone purchasing in the area should have an understanding of the Section 106 limits and the current activity levels of the airport. Activity levels for the last few years should not be considered the ‘norm’ when historically activity levels were in fact very much higher.

6. Other Concerns & Questions

Airprox Risk. General concern of airprox risk (two aircraft colliding) – raised by a Wootton resident, with increased activity levels. It was pointed out that Oxford has one of the more comprehensive Air Traffic Control set-ups in the country for a general aviation airport, indeed probably the most comprehensive of any peer, employing some 26 air traffic staff full-time.

Airspace control. Oxford applied for some controlled airspace to the north of the airport (beyond the ATZ – 2nm radius of the centre of the main runway) but it was refused. If the airport had more controlled airspace, they could control the air traffic to a greater degree. At the moment, outside of the Air Traffic Zone (ATZ), in Class G airspace it was ‘see and avoid’ and not all aircraft contacted Oxford Air Traffic Control such that ATC had to vector Instrument Flight Rules inbound traffic away from those ‘unknown’ aircraft causing more unnecessary movement across the airspace. Also, there is no guarantee that an ATZ provides protection (WC made the point that the CAA would not prosecute a serial infringer of the Biggin Hill ATZ).

Overflight of Villages. A point was made as to whether it was acceptable to overfly villages. It has always been this way and in Class G airspace. In Class G, a pilot has to maintain at least 500 ft from any object and 1,500 ft over ‘substantially built-up areas’.

3 Strikes and Out. This was deemed to be applicable for Oxford-based aircraft or visitors to Oxford (the pilots of the aircraft, not the operator) who could be identified, spoken to and warned. Where there was a genuine error made, then some leniency would be applied.

Noise Complaints. The airport ideally needs accurate information including date and time and where and what. A complaints form is now on the airport website. The airport tries to investigate/identify and where possible will speak to the individual pilot where they are flying in contravention of procedures. If it is Class G airspace outside the ATZ, there is little the airport can actually do other than consistently raise awareness of the need to not overfly local villages (other than those in proximity to the circuit)

Noisy Shorts Skyvan aircraft. This is operating around Weston on the Green for parachute drops. The aircraft is based at Brize Norton and whilst it will occasionally operate out of Oxford (if the Brize runway was unavailable), it is following agreed published procedures and has been doing so for many years.

Public Meeting. Cllr Ian Middleton suggested that Mr Dillon-Godfray host a public meeting, in particular for Yarnton/Kidlington residents to update on the current practices and activity levels of the airport, along with the future aspirations. Mr Dillon-Godfray committed to try and fix a date for such a briefing before the end of the year, at the airport in a school lecture theatre the airport now has access to. That will be coordinated through the respective Parish Councils.

7. Date set for next meeting – Tuesday 8th February 2022, Airport Terminal

The meeting ended approximately 19:15

Addendum

A revision of the Noise Abatement Scheme is now available to all to review on the airport's website at the Noise Abatement page - www.oxfordairport.co.uk/noise-abatement/

Also on this web page are diagrams (downloadable) of the aircraft circuit pattern and the recommended helicopter access routes in and out of the airport.

Another PDF file is available elaborating on the airport's local airspace format and design.

UK National Aircraft Movement Data for the main UK airports including Oxford can be found here for each month and for several decades:

<https://www.caa.co.uk/Data-and-analysis/UK-aviation-market/Airports/Datasets/UK-airport-data/>

Lastly, a complete data set of information relating to the airport's historic activity levels up to the date of the associated ACC meeting will be promulgated along with the minutes, as a separate PDF file.

Minutes collated by

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