

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

Tuesday 4th June 2024

Date of Minutes – 12th June 2024

Attendees:

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

Local Representatives – David Duthie (Shipton & Thrupp/CPRE), Mark Turner (Kidlington), David Thurling (Kidlington PC), Andy Graham (OCC & WODC), Nik Soheil (Kidlington PC), Clive Stayt (Gosford & Water Eaton), Fiona Mackinlay (Wootton), David Knight (Wootton), Tim Sumner (WODC), Steve Smith (Yarnton PC), Nigel Simpson (OCC), Barbara King (Cassington PC), Denise Cripps (Combe PC), Ken Pelton (Noke)

Approximately three or so others appeared to be present, but did not sign in.

Chair: Anthony Kedros (Oxford Airport Users Group – OAGAG.org.uk)

Apologies: Ian Middleton (OCC, CDC Kidlington), David Richardson (Kirtlington)

Provisional date for next Meeting – Tuesday 8th October 2024 – Airport Lecture Theatre, 18:00 hrs

The meeting commenced at 18:00 hours

1. Minutes of Previous Meeting & Actions Arising

- a) No specific actions arising, aside from acknowledgement from JDG of one incorrect date and the spelling of one of the villages.

2. Planning/Development-Related Activity

JDG, DA & WC updated the meeting on ongoing or new developments anticipated in the next year or so, which included:

a. The replacement facility for Airbus Helicopters

Airbus anticipates moving into the new facility now between July and end-September.

Operational protocols for helicopters accessing the new site have been determined and approved. It was explained that no additional traffic to or from the east side of the airport is envisaged as consequence of the move, indeed it anticipated that a greater number of aircraft would be directed to the main runway or the new taxiway to the west of the new facility and then brought into the helipads in front of the hangar.

There are no definitive plans for the use of their older facilities at the time of writing. They be demolished and replaced.

The new facility will house up to 250 people initially, but ultimately may move towards 300 or so.

b. The redevelopment of the Langford Lane airport entrance zone (R&D Science Park)

The planning application (23/00517/F) for the R&D science park at the entrance to the airport to the west side of the Boulevard was submitted to Cherwell District Council late February 23. Planning permission was granted in June 2023.

The first phase (in front of Langford Lane - Building 'B') will commence from around July at time of going to print, including demolition of further structures, namely the old Vida gym building. An associated Section 106 obligation relating in part to enhanced pedestrian access in the vicinity of Langford Lane is now concluded (that wasn't at the last ACC).

When fully occupied, the science park might accommodate up to 400+ employees, but an extensive travel plan analysis and ongoing monitoring for the next five years is already a prerequisite for the development.

c. Hangar No. 16

It was highlighted that the airport had commenced a dialogue with Cherwell District Council on another hangar proposal, No.16. This is to meet ongoing demands from established tenants and to continue the planned replacement of older WWII-era facilities with modern, thermally-efficient alternatives.

d. Airspace Change Proposal (ACP)

Oxford Airport commenced an Airspace Change Process (ACP) in 2023 under [CAP1616](#); which has a 7-stage process. At the start, we produced a Statement of Need, and an assessment meeting was held with the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) on 2nd November 2023. The intent was to introduce modern Performance Based Navigation (PBN) procedures into Oxford with associated airspace. The International Civil Aviation Authority (ICAO) are mandating that older ground-based navigation systems are replaced where possible with satellite-based systems by 2030. Any airspace requirements or changes are not yet known, but all options will be considered; this could be 'Class G' (as per today), a Radio Mandatory Zone (RMZ), a Transponder Mandatory Zone (TMZ), or Regulated airspace. Where any change of airspace might be agreed, the intent would not be to deny access to users, but to make the airspace safer for all. Details of the ACP can be found at [Airspace change proposal public view](#)

[caa.co.uk](https://www.caa.co.uk)) and on the Airspace change process at [Airspace change | Civil Aviation Authority \(caa.co.uk\)](#).

Oxford is currently in Stage 1B – ‘Design Principles’. A six-week Stakeholder Engagement commenced between 13 March 2024 to 24 April 2024 which included describing the current operation at Oxford and around the local area, together with the proposed draft Design Principles. The documentation was sent to over 620 addressees, including the National Air Traffic Management Committee, local Councils, Members of Parliament, and identified aviation stakeholders. In addition, during the engagement, several additional requests to engage were made that were acknowledged and included. Responses from the engagement were reviewed and analysed. Consequently, some changes were made to the draft Design Principles. These included one additional Design Principle and a split of the environmental Design Principle into separate design principles for noise and CO2.

Feedback on the initial Stakeholder Engagement and the amended draft Design Principles were included in a second two-week Stakeholder Engagement between 24 May 2024 and 7 June 2024. The responses together with the feedback from the initial Stakeholder Engagement will be included in the Stage 1B Engagement documentation to be sent to the CAA by 14 June 2024 to meet the ‘Stage 1B Design Principle Gateway’ on 28 June 2024. Engagement would be continued with the current list of stakeholders in subsequent Stages and some workshops will be held.

The next stages were Stage 2 ‘Develop and Assess’ (Gateway planned for 29 November 2024) and Stage 3 ‘Consult’ (Gateway planned for 28 March 2025); work would commence once the outcome of the Define Gateway was known. During Stage 2, several designs would be considered, these would be reduced in number and refined during the process with each design tested against the Design Principles. At Stage 3 there would be a full public consultation.

Question:

What is the next Stage and over what period will it be conducted?

Answer:

The next Stage is Stage 2 ‘Develop and Assess’. Subject to the airport being successful in Stage 1B, we will progress immediately onto Stage 2 for which the planned Gateway is **29 November 2024**. The timeline is available on the CAA’s Airspace Portal at [Airspace change proposal public view \(caa.co.uk\)](#).

All related information can also be found on the airport website at:

<https://www.oxfordairport.co.uk/the-airport/public-consultation-2/>

3. Overview of the last five month’s airport activity since the last ACC meeting (January 24)

The accompanying slides to the ACC meeting showed the activity levels to date and historically (see the slide/data pack on the website).

Of note, school training activity levels have risen 14% over the first four months of 2024 compared with the same period in 2023. This was mainly due to the poor weather seen back in February 2023.

One of the originally dominant schools indeed once the largest in Europe, CAE (was OAA/OAT), has decided to discontinue operations at the airport and is gradually decreasing activity levels. They did have seven aircraft in recent times, but those are now for sale. Meanwhile, a new operation for TUI, the European airline, has come to Oxford, but it is of a relatively small scale with just two aircraft initially and is processing approximately 30 cadets through the next year.

Overall, for the last four months, all movements including training were up around 5% on the same period in 2023. This is despite private 'business' aviation activity, mainly jets and turboprops having declined throughout Europe in the last year.

4. Noise Issues overview and key 'hotspots'

New for this ACC meeting was the inclusion of some 'heat maps' (radar tracks/traces) of flying activity in the area which can be found in the associated slide/data pack. These show traces of actual aircraft routes on a very busy day (i.e. over 400 airport-related movements), but they also include all other traffic nearby which has nothing to do with Oxford Airport. They do help our neighbours visualise normal, expected traffic flows and can explain further why, if living in a certain village or location, you might see the volume of traffic that exists. We are happy to annotate these to identify a particular village on request, which may assist Parish Councils in particular, to understand the local airspace around them and associated 'normal' traffic flows.

Bladon – Ongoing issues with overflights. We try to encourage using the narrow gap between Hanborough and Bladon (over Worton Heath woods), but volumes coming off the south end of the runway and turning immediately west, north-west will forever mean some will clip parts of the south-end of Bladon, just a mile, or three fields, from the end of the runway.

Wootton – Ongoing issues with overflights – also the fact that the RWY 01 hold pattern is just south of the village (01 is used 30% of the time due to wind direction).

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

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

Of the limits and associated movements recorded pertaining to the Section 106, there were a handful (12) of larger jet movements over 50 tonnes in the first third of 2024 – an airport-based Boeing BBJ (737-700).

It is highlighted that anyone purchasing in the area should have an understanding of the Section 106 limits and the current activity levels of the airport. This was cited in particular to the developers of new housing in the vicinity where developers and their sales and letting agents ought to clarify to buyers the relevance of the proximity of the airport.

6. Other Concerns, Discussion Points & Questions

Key questions on nuisance/noise covered in (4) above, however also discussed were:

- a) Thrupp & Shipton-on-Cherwell villagers, having taken a look at the bund (spoil heaps) developing on the east side of the new developments (namely Hangar No.15 and the new

Airbus Helicopters facility) asked again when tree/shrub planting might be carried out upon the top of the bund, as discussed previously. WC explained that the Environment Agency had recently tabled a Regulation 61 notice/review on several UK regional airports, including Oxford. This required that investigations be undertaken into the possible ground contamination in the past (decades ago) from the use of fire tender foams that may have had specific 'forever' chemicals, no longer in use today.

Spoil used for the south end of the bund has been extracted from the vicinity of where fire training used to be undertaken many years ago and as such, we now have to hold doing anything permanent, pending review of what is required to investigate these previously used chemicals. Spoil from any other projects on the airport will continue to be deposited on the northern end of the same bund, progressively increasing the height, if none of that spoil is of relevance to the Regulation 61 investigations.

- b) A question was asked about drones (UAM – unmanned aerial vehicles) and how we were preparing to share the local airspace with them. WC elaborated that for now, we are a very long way off commercial drone services (say Amazon package deliveries) being permitted anywhere near this airport and in the local broader airspace in general. Electronic conspicuity systems and 'see and avoid' technologies for all flying objects, be they aircraft or drones, simply don't exist right now that practically facilitate the viable sharing of the airspace. At the moment, all trials hive-out segregated routes to separate 'normal' aircraft from drones rather than integrate such activities. The ultimate desire is to integrate, as cited by the UK's CAA, but we are a very long way off from that reality, whilst the economic viability of many proposed drone services, including the use of manned eVTOL (electric vertical take-off and landing vehicles) are questionable in the first instance, in our opinion. Nevertheless, we routinely have dialogue with and host companies today developing technologies in this field.

7. Date proposed for next meeting – Tuesday 8th October 2024 in the airport lecture theatre

The meeting ended approximately 19:00

Minutes collated by

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