

Minutes

Meeting of Noise & Track Sub Committee

Monday 8 June 2009 – 14.00hrs Rushton House, London Luton Airport

Attendees

Mr J Bailey	- LLACC Chairman
Mr S Bailes	- Hertfordshire County Council
Mr J Charles	- Bickerdike Allen Partners
Mr P Dawson	- NATS Luton
Mr S Earles	- LLAO (GM Planning & CSR)
Mrs K Goodman	- LLAO (Airfield Environment Officer)
Mr R Hiscock	- Aylesbury Vale District Council
Cllr B Lloyd	- Hertfordshire County Council
Mr P Hunt	- LADACAN (substitute)
Cllr M Muir	- North Hertfordshire District Council
Mr M Nidd	- LLATVCC (substitute)
Cllr Dr I Reay	- Dacorum Borough Council
Ms W Rousell	- Luton Borough Council (Planning)
Captain P Ranft	- Ryanair
Mr A Rickard	- LLAO CAD and Project Executive
Mr N Thompson	- LLAO (GM Business Compliance & Fire)
Mr S Turner	- Bureau Veritas (Consultant to LLAO)
Mr R Wood	- PAIN (substitute)

Guests

Mr P Hack	- LLACC – LLA TGWU Representative
Mr G Joy	- LLACC – Freight Representative
Mr T Lee	- LLACC – Airline Operator
Mrs C Smart	- LLACC – Chamber of Commerce Representative
Mr H Thomas	- LLACC – easyJet

1 Apologies for absence and substitution

1.1 Mr A Burke	- NATS Terminal Control
Dr J Davis	- LADACAN (substituted by Mr P Hunt)
Mr A Judge	- LLAO Operations Director
Cllr Sir B Stanier	- Aylesbury Vale District Council
Mr G Twiss	- PAIN (substituted by Mr R Wood)
Mr B Webb	- LLATVCC (substituted by Mr M Nidd)

Action

- 1.2 The Chairman welcomed Captain Paul Ranft to the meeting and for his input from an airline/pilot perspective. Captain Ranft is a Pilot and Base Captain for Ryanair and has been at Luton for 11 years.
- 1.3 The Chairman informed members that Cllr Swaisland had not been re-elected within Central Bedfordshire and it was therefore assumed he is no longer their LLACC/NTSC representative.

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- 1.4 Mr P Hack (LLA TGWU Representative); Mr G Joy (Freight Representative); Mr T Lee (Airline Representative); Mrs C Smart (Chamber of Commerce Representative) and Mr H Thomas (easyJet Representative) were welcomed to the meeting particularly to give comments on the Night Noise Policy (item 4).

2 Minutes and matters arising from NTSC meeting 9 March 2009

- 2.1 Item 1.7 – To read: There was agreement that it was important to make.....
- 2.2 Item 2.1 – The Chairman informed that NATS had confirmed that they will be re-consulting on the TCN proposals, but have not yet accepted LLACC’s invitation for a meeting.
- 2.3 Item 2.2 – To read: NATS clarified that aircraft should remain on the SID, but ATC may vector the aircraft only after 3,000ft daytime or 4000ft at night.
- 2.4 Item 6.2 – LLAO informed that to change this report on noise bands would require a modification to the Topsonic software and that they have spoken to Topsonic about potentially incorporating this in a future software release. LLAO also confirmed that any such change would not give a “web-track” style capability available in other products.
- 2.5 Item 7.1 – To read: ...regarding the definitions of aircraft being off track.....
- 2.6 The Minutes were agreed subject to the changes stated.

3. LLAO Quarterly Environment Report January, February and March 2009

- 3.1 The Committee noted that statistics within the quarterly report identified a reduction in all areas year on year. The number of aircraft movements (both day and night), passenger numbers and complaints had all decreased in comparison to the same period last year. The reduction in movements highlights the adverse effect the current economic climate is having on the aviation industry but the reduction in environmental impact on local residents.
- 3.2 Two points on the night noise contour were highlighted – the reduction in the movements has been reflected in the contours and westerly departure routes have been reviewed and gates have been adjusted to reflect the actual flown tracks.
- 3.3 It was noted that the effect of the adjustment in the tracks has made the contours slightly wider nearer the airport but shorter in length. The result of the adjustment is a very slight decrease at the higher noise contour levels and a slight increase in the area of the lower noise contour levels. Bureau Veritas stated that they were confident that the contours now reflected aircraft tracks.
- 3.4 It was questioned why, if aircraft are moving slightly further north within the departure swathe resulting in a slightly wider contour area to the north, there is also a widening to the area to the south. Bureau Veritas **agreed** to check the additional area to the south and eastern end on the climb-out and how all these changes affect the number of people within the old and new areas.

**LLAO
Noise
Advisor**

- Action**
- 3.5** NTSC asked if the re-calibrated track results are to be reflected in AMR 2008. It was confirmed that once the calibration was completed this would be reported in future AMRs but AMR 2008 may have progressed too far to allow updating. Preliminary figures show an approximate 5% change in the area.
- 3.6** It was **agreed** by members that the summary of key facts (attached as Annex A) highlighting key information should be submitted to LLACC for their consideration once JC has updated it to reflect the discussion and changes. **JC**
- 3.7** Key Facts Summary :
- Bullet 3 to read:08, and continues to be less at night than during the day.
- Bullet 4 – remove comment on the need for further investigation for LLACC members.
- Bullet 5 - Night time noise contour to mention that figures are now at previous levels.
- 3.8** It was questioned whether the quarterly volatility of the figures of the Noise Monitor Results needs to be investigated. Members were advised by LLAO that all information including band detail is given in the AMR. It was **agreed** that PH/JC would formulate a question and forward to SE/KG to be discussed at a future meeting. **PH/JC**
- 3.9** Following further discussion regarding helicopter movements transiting to and from Luton, LLAO agreed to provide members with details of the number of helicopters to and from the airport in one specified week. **LLAO (actioned)**
- 4 Night Noise Policy (taken before item 3)**
- 4.1** The Chairman informed that the LLACC meeting on 6 April agreed to refer the suggested Night Noise Policy back to the NTSC for further debate. Members from the full LLACC were invited to attend the NTSC meeting and hence the guests were invited to give their views.
- 4.2** The Airlines felt that the existing Night Noise Policy was working and that the current economic climate would need to be factored into a review. It was stated that it was far too early to consider changing the policy now and that a review should not be considered until early 2010, once the airlines had confirmed their summer 2010 flights schedules.
- 4.3** The Chairman stated that the timing of a review was not the main issue and that LLACC had decided to input into a future review of the Policy following the decision by LLAO to extend the existing Policy to March 2010. NTSC had been keen to offer advice to LLACC on aspects to be considered in the run-up to March 2010 and in the preparation of the Master Plan.
- 4.4** Members were advised that from a business perspective, anything that would deter airlines from using Luton would be devastating to the local economy.

- 4.5** Some members stated that it was not their intention to drive airlines out of Luton but were looking for a balance for the people living in the surrounding areas. The NTSC were suggesting the implementation of limits. It was suggested that the Policy being developed should be discussed with airline and other operators now so that as and when the recession ends, and there is an increase in demand at Luton, there is in place greater protection for residents in the surrounding areas.
- 4.6** The Chairman requested comments on the policy. The airlines informed that they were unable to comment and respond to the Policy in detail and reiterated that reviewing the policy should be postponed until early 2010.
- 4.7** A suggestion was made that, in light of the current economic climate and downturn in movements, the figures should be capped as at 2009, as movements are currently 22% less than 2008 and therefore it could take at least 5 or 6 years to get back pre-recession levels.
- 4.8** The Committee were advised that airlines do currently operate within the night noise policy, have done so for many years and have invested in quieter fleets to ensure they comply with the policies in place. Any changes now would have very serious implications on future scheduling and maintenance programmes. Even a slight change in policy, i.e. changing the definition of the night period to 23.00 to 07.00, could have a major impact on all airlines. If an airline cannot operate a programme commercially that programme is then in jeopardy. It was reiterated to NTSC members that any small variation can have a devastating effect on the airlines and to adopt an 8 hour night period would be detrimental to their operations.
- 4.9** The Committee were further informed that the European Parliament had also temporarily suspended the 80:20 rule due to the current poor economic climate. It was explained that this meant that if airlines did not use 80% of their slots they did not now lose them.
- 4.10** The Committee advised that having a single night period was suggested to make the policy easier to understand instead of having several definitions for different days of the week.
- 4.11** It was accepted that some LLACC members do not agree with the suggested new Night Noise Policy and although LLACC, based on advice from NTSC, can make suggestions, the Policy belongs to LLAO and they have the final decision.
- 4.12** The Committee advised that they do want LLAO to have a future but felt that if the current Night Noise Policy were to remain it would not stand up to any sort of criticism as it does not embrace the future. The Committee felt that a new policy, endorsed by LLACC, would place Luton in a good position when submitting any planning applications for the future.
- 4.13** LLAO indicated that the suggested night noise policy seemed to take best practice from a number of airports, resulting in a policy much more draconian than seen at other UK airports. It was confirmed that the suggest night noise policy did draw on best practice from a number of airports including Manchester and Birmingham but had been tailored to the local situation.

- 4.14 Comments were then taken on the individual topics covered in the suggested policy, as follows:
- 4.15 Aim and Noise Abatement Objectives – members were advised that airlines generally already use the best in class for their operations. Detailed wording should ensure that the noise abatement objectives are not counter productive.
- 4.16 Definition of the night period – was debated further as to why there should be a single period; why the period should be from 2300 to 0700hrs; and that the committee needed to consider the critical nature of the shoulder periods to airlines to make efficient usage of aircraft.
- 4.17 Concern was highlighted that by losing the shoulder period more movements could be before 0600 which could be detrimental to local communities as this offers opportunity to push back even further into the night time period and increase night movement numbers.
- 4.18 Control Methods – A suggestion was made that the night noise level limits should be lowered even further, along with higher landing charges for the noisier aircraft.
- 4.19 Other measures – It was recognised that there is a need to work with NATS to produce efficient airspace to minimise noise impact of departing aircraft.
- 4.20 LLAO informed that their current policy will run until April 2010 and will be reviewed at that time, in line with the Managing Director's previous statement. The airlines will have input into the review process.
- 4.21 NTSC members agreed to update their initial suggestions and refer back to the LLACC for it to be available for discussion with LLAOL when the current policy is reviewed and to be considered as part of the Master Plan process. The revised version is at Annex B.

5. Noise Action Plans

- 5.1 LLAO presented a programme for consideration by NTSC, which would ensure delivery against the challenging Defra timetable. Due to the late receipt of guidance and the associated pack they were only able to present an indicative process at this stage but suggested that an interim document is drafted from 2009 to 2011.
- 5.2 LLAO proposed to take the draft Noise Action Plan (NAP) to LLACC on the 13 July, subject to NTSC views, launching the 16 week consultation at the same point.
- 5.3 Members highlighted the Defra Guidelines which advise airports to 'engage with Consultative Committees in the development of the draft NAP'. It was agreed that NTSC would like a draft NAP prior to LLACC and requested that a presentation is given to LLACC before the consultation is launched.
- 5.4 It was noted that other airports were likely to be in a similar situation to Luton and therefore the suggestion was made to ask Defra for an extension of the closing date to allow the airport to engage with LLACC (or NTSC) on the

- Noise Action Plan so as to allow for a meaningful document to be put forward for consultation. It was **agreed** that SE should speak with Defra regarding an extension of time. **Action**
LLAO
- 5.5** A suggestion was made, and agreed, that a more formal process such as a workshop should be adopted to review the draft Noise Action Plan and if an extension of time is granted by Defra this would allow the process to take place.
- 5.6** The Chairman and Vice Chairman **agreed** to select a cross section of members for a NAP workshop, to take place in late July/early August. **Chairman**
/Vice
Chairman
- 6. Luton and South Beds Core Strategy**
- 6.1** The Committee was informed that, from a North Herts perspective, some of the proposals would be disastrous.
- 6.2** Members agreed that any development for planned housing and communities next to a flight path is not good practice and areas well away from the flight path should be considered. The public safety zone was not a suitable area for high levels of population density.
- 6.3** LLAO was unable to provide a full written report to NTSC, as it was still assessing the significant evidence base supporting the Core Strategy consultation. In relation to east of Luton, LLAO stated that early examination of the documentation suggested that surface access, rather than noise, needed to be carefully considered.
- 6.4** Members **agreed** that the LLACC response should be that any residential development under or near flight paths would be wrong and that the Chairman, in consultation with others, should submit a response to the consultation. **Chairman**
- 7. Stirling Place Planning Application**
- 7.1** LLAO drew members' attention to Stirling Place which LBC has now resolved to approve, subject to the Departure procedure. The current noise levels in that part of the site to be used for 400 dwellings would be category C (as defined in PPG24) and they would be subject to both air and rail noise. The developers have informed that they would be able to achieve the required levels of noise insulation.
- 7.2** Members recognised the potential for a huge number of noise complaints in a location so close to the airport. In addition the site could be in or very close to the public safety zone if the airport expands as envisaged in the Airports White Paper.
- 7.3** NTSC agreed that a separate objection from LLACC should be submitted so as to support the airport in objecting to the development. **Chairman**
- 8. Any Other Business**
- 8.1** The Chairman informed that although a pilot attends NTSC to give input from the flying fraternity perspective no official airline member has been nominated

to take up the seat allocated to the airlines when the Constitution was amended last October. Those airline representatives present (as guests) **agreed** to nominate a representative on the NTSC.

8.2 No other business was discussed and the meeting closed at 18.20hrs

9. Date of Next Meeting

9.1 Monday 14 September 2009 at 2.00pm.