

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

Tuesday 30th January 2024

Date of Minutes – 31st January 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), Barbara King (Cassington), Colin Hessey (OAGAG), David Thurling (Kidlington), Clive Stayt (Gosford & water Eaton), Penny Wainwright (Thrupp), Martin Wainwright (Thrupp), Steve Smith (Yarton), Lindsay Gregory (Begbroke), David Coterill (Combe), Mark Taylor (Bletchingdon), Denise Cripps (Combe), Nigel Simpson (Kidlington & Cherwell)

Approximately five 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), Mark Turner, John Broad (CPRE & Cherwell), James Marlborough (Woodstock), David Richardson (Kirtlington)

Provisional date for next Meeting – Tuesday June 4th 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 a commitment to review the prospective tree-planting on the east side bund

2. Planning/Development-Related Activity

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

a. The replacement facility for Airbus Helicopters

This is now virtually complete with internal works being finished off by the spring. Completion is expected at the start of the summer with Airbus Helicopters commencing migration into the facility from July and to be fully occupied by September 2024. A launch event for the formal opening of the facility is anticipated around the 18th/19th of September. Accordingly, operations are likely to commence from the area from mid-summer. With the establishment of the new site, we will be looking at reducing the number of helicopters accessing the airport from the east side (i.e. across the fields south of Thrupp, close to the Jolly Boatman pub). The level of activity at the new facility will be much the same as the existing levels, with similar numbers of employees.

b. The redevelopment of the Langford Lane airport entrance zone (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 April 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 pedestrian access in the vicinity of Langford Lane is near completion at the time of writing.

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. Intent to table another Airspace Change Proposal (ACP)

WC elaborated on this matter. Several years ago, the airport, alongside a separate application by RAF Brize Norton, applied for an Airspace Change Proposal (ACP) to add new satellite-based (GPS guided) approaches to both ends of the runway and to change the airspace in the immediate vicinity to have greater control for aircraft on those 'precision' approaches. That application was ultimately rejected, in part through objections from airspace users who didn't want any more controlled airspace in this part of the country. The need for a precision approach on the south end (Runway 01) has never gone away and accordingly the airport is preparing for a new ACP. By 2030 we will need new precision approaches regardless.

Intent to table another Airspace Change Proposal (ACP) – Cont.

The new approaches would essentially be GPS-based/guided overlays on top of established ground-based navigation system patterns, so no real change. What may change is if the airport was given any new controlled airspace in conjunction with that, up to typically 2,300 feet above ground level in the immediate vicinity. Aircraft within that zone would need to have a transponder (for identification) and would be compelled to talk to the airport if passing through. The intent is to create a 'known environment' which adds further to the situational awareness for all parties concerned and safety in particular. This should add benefits to the local aircraft-related noise footprint beyond our current 2nm ATZ as we would have greater control of a larger zone, in particular to the north and south. We may end up with the new approaches but not the additional controlled airspace, but we wish for both.

The new ACP application is in its infancy and could take some years to go through numerous consultations with all stakeholders. Progress and related links will be posted on an 'ACP' page on the airport's website in due course after first consultations with the CAA. Thereafter, the CAA will also post all details periodically as each stage is undertaken. The process is defined under UK CAA CAP 1616 procedures. We are currently at Stage 1 in which we must decide what design principles we will use and that requires further engagement with all stakeholders. There are seven formal stages and there will be an 'engagement list' produced early on which will include the Airport Consultative Committee. The whole exercise might take a good three years or more based on UK/CAA precedent and will likely cost several hundred thousand pounds to undertake.

3. Overview of the last five month's airport activity since the last ACC meeting (April 23)

The accompanying slides to the ACC meeting showed the activity levels to date and historically.

Of note, school training activity levels have declined 29% in 2023 compared with 2022, in part due to the migration of some of the Leading Edge Aviation activity overseas which was anticipated a year or so ago. CAE also only now train their UK CAA students at Oxford where pre-Brexit they were doing both EASA and CAA qualifications, however, both their Brussels and Norway operations have closed. CAE's primary presence is now in Phoenix and Oxford with ground school training in Gatwick. CAE's fleet at Oxford has stabilised at around five or six aircraft. Overall, in 2023 flights reduced 21% compared with 2022. JDG explained that this was really a settling down of activity after the post-pandemic peaks seen in 2022, which was our busiest year for 16 years.

4. Noise Issues overview and key ‘hotspots’

Bladon – Ongoing issues with overflights. We try to encourage using the gap between Hanborough and Bladon

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)

Thrupp/Hampton Gay/Shipston – helicopter overflights in particular

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 last third of 2023 – an airport-based Boeing BBJ (737-700)

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. 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) Consultation has been had on the **Botley West solar farm** project in close proximity to the airport which does have some implications for the airport in the immediate vicinity. The airport has engaged with the land-owner(s) and the developer, Photovolt Development Partners (www.pvdp.eu). We would require the land immediately to the south of the runway safeguarded for future approach lighting (extending some 450m from the runway threshold typically) and understand plans are amended to reflect this already. We would be concerned in particular with matters such as glare, ground turbulence, activity of birds, electro-magnetic interference with navigation and other systems. Any details from due technical safeguarding studies on this front will not have been in the public domain at this stage of the consultation process. The latest draft of the Cherwell Local Plan Review 2040, including core policy No.77, elaborates on safeguarded areas for the airport, in particular sections - 6.49, 6.60. Steve Smith (Yarnton) asked if we were objecting to the whole project to which WC responded that we did not have a position on the project in its entirety, merely the initial and ongoing concern over safeguarding our own approaches, in particular on the southern end of the airport.

- b) Part of the government's drive for businesses to meet their GHG Protocols – i.e. 'Scope, 1, 2 & 3' environmental standards, means the airport itself is looking at our own solar farm options on our own land, or on other properties belonging to the parent company's group of property businesses which also includes several horse racecourses. Battery storage solutions will also be considered.
- c) Thrupp & Shipton 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) last year, asked again when planting might be carried out upon the bund as discussed previously. WC committed to pursue that as an action on his part and hopefully will be able to elaborate on what could be done before the next ACC meeting. Spoil from any other projects on the airport continue to be deposited in that vicinity, progressively increasing the height, in particular at the northern end of the access road to the new Airbus facility.
- d) The Cherwell District Council Local Plan Review 2040 has undertaken the Regulation 18 consultation last year. The airport made representations to this consultation by the November deadline. As per previous Local Plan consultations, we sought again to have greenbelt boundary considerations reassessed, in particular on the eastern side, where pre-existing development is already established. New on this occasion, was the support and desire to have the County Council-proposed 'Transport Hub' on the western side in the vicinity of the Bladon roundabout. Our representation should be in the public domain on the Cherwell DC website in due course (if not already), but we will place a copy on our website.
- e) A representative from Combe noted that flights over the village appeared to have reduced, but wondered if there was a way of comparing flight tracks between two different periods. JDG commented that NATS were able to produce 'heat maps' showing densities of flight tracks over a particular area on request, albeit this is a charged-for service.
- f) WC commented that two of the older hangars are likely to come down as part of the Science Park development second phase, however, government policy on building efficiency regulations may force the airport to have to remove others were they to fail to comply with such regulations in the future. EPC compliance constraints are going to stop older industrial/commercial properties from being able to be re-let, in particular from 2030 and the costs of retrofitting measures to meet compliance can be prohibitive. Accordingly, the airport is assessing further options to take down other buildings and replace with new alternatives.
- g) One attendee asked if we had concerns about potential glare issues relating to the new football stadium site. Having already met with the developers, we have assurances about lighting being essentially directed downwards, minimising such glare – we will review further in any detailed design stage. Such developments do tend to give this appropriate attention.

7. Date proposed for next meeting – Tuesday 4th June 2024 in the airport lecture theatre

The meeting ended approximately 19:00

Minutes collated by

J D Dillon-Godfray / 01865 290 710 / jdg@londonoxfordairport.com