

1. Introduction

- 1.1. TAG Farnborough Airport Ltd (TAG) own and operate Farnborough Airport in Hampshire, approximately 40 miles south-west of Westminster.
- 1.2. As Director Airport Operations I am submitting this written evidence to the Transport Select Committee Inquiry into Smaller Airports on behalf of TAG Farnborough Airport Ltd.

2. About TAG Farnborough Airport

- 2.1. In 2008, Farnborough Airport celebrated its first 100 years of continuous operation.
- 2.2. It was originally a Government airfield and declared surplus to requirements by the Ministry of Defence in April 1991. In December 1994, the Government decided that the airfield should be redeveloped as a Business Aviation centre. In 1998, TAG Aviation became the preferred operator of Farnborough Airport, following a competitive process. A CAA Aerodrome Licence was granted in 2003 and in 2007 TAG became the freehold owner of the Airport.
- 2.3. TAG Farnborough Airport is now one of the most modern, high quality and efficient Business Aviation centres in Europe. It is the pre-eminent Business Aviation airport in the UK and rivals the best in the World.
- 2.4. The current use of the Airport is legally restricted to Business Aviation and use for bulk freight services, scheduled passenger services and 'inclusive tour' charter flying is specifically prohibited. TAG has no intention to seek to vary this position.
- 2.5. TAG remains committed, now and in the future, to supporting the biennial Farnborough International Airshow, a showcase for global aviation and aerospace. In 2014, the Farnborough International Airshow attracted record orders of £200 billion.
- 2.6. The Airport is a significant local employer.

3. Economics and Forecasts

- 3.1. Business Aviation is a distinct and important segment of the air transport market..
- 3.2. The Airport is specifically chosen by those seeking the highest quality of Business Aviation services and easy access to London and the South East. These businesses and individuals are responsible for substantial inward investment in the UK as well as overseas trade and, as such, is of significant importance to the national economy.
- 3.3. According to the European Business Aviation Association (EBAA), the Business Aviation industry generates over 4.2 billion Euros of the Gross Value Added in the UK, representing slightly over 0.2% of the country's economy. There are almost 50,000 UK jobs linked to the industry and together they generate approximately 1.5 billion Euros in wages and salaries, (*"The economic impact of business aviation in Europe"* – PwC Economics Macro Consulting 2008).

4. Making Best Use of Infrastructure

- 4.1. TAG Farnborough Airport has been designed and constructed with the highest standards of infrastructure to meet the very demanding expectations of its customers.
- 4.2. At the Airport's current level of operation, the infrastructure is significantly underutilised. Whilst the physical capacity of the Airport could accommodate up to approximately 100,000 Air Traffic Movements (ATM), TAG was granted 50,000 ATM to 2019 in 2011 and is currently operating at 25,000 ATM per year.
- 4.3. TAG is confident that the current runway, taxiways, aprons, passenger terminal, hangars and car parking facilities are entirely sufficient to meet this level of future growth.

5. Noise

- 5.1. Aircraft operating at the Airport are required to comply with noise abatement procedures as published in the UK Aeronautical Information Publication (AIP). NATS Air Traffic Controllers, operating from the Airport control tower, instruct aircraft to follow these noise abatement procedures.
- 5.2. A real-time radar data feed is continuously fed into the noise monitoring system. This provides information from equipment on board aircraft in the Farnborough radar zone. The noise and track system records a plot of each aircraft's movement relative to its location, direction, speed and altitude. The aircraft radar tracks for Farnborough aircraft are reviewed continuously.
- 5.3. Each movement is checked for compliance with the published noise abatement procedures.
- 5.4. In January 2013 TAG became the first UK airport to only allow aircraft that meet ICAO Chapter IV noise standards to operate at the Airport.

6. Air Quality

- 6.1. TAG has placed numerous air quality monitors around the Airport. Current measurements show that NO₂ levels are well within national objectives.
- 6.2. At the Airport the level of NO_x emissions is not likely to exceed levels set by relevant standards and objectives. This would remain the case even with growth to 100,000 ATM.

7. Surface Access

- 7.1. The Airport is well served by major road and mainline rail connections.

8. Sustainability and Climate Change

- 8.1. TAG is committed to adopting a sustainable approach to the future management and development of the Airport and has set the objective of becoming a leader in sustainability within the airport industry.
- 8.2. A key element of the Airport's sustainability strategy is to become a low carbon airport and to achieve carbon neutrality as soon as reasonably possible.

9. Community Engagement

9.1. TAG is committed to continuing and increasing its involvement with the local community. At present, this takes place at a number of levels including:

- Farnborough Aerodrome Consultative Committee;
- local business;
- involvement in local education;
- media; and
- sponsorship of local events and charities.

10. Airspace Change

10.1. TAG is currently engaged in preparing an Airspace Change Proposal for submission to the CAA in 2015.

10.2. Consultation was carried out in the first half of 2014

10.3. The consultation was conducted under the CAA's CAP725 Airspace Change Process and presented a number of proposed changes to airspace, procedures and aircraft routings in relation to TAG Farnborough Airport. The proposed changes were developed to:

10.3.1. Improve the overall efficiency of the airspace

10.3.2. Increase safety

10.3.3. Reduce environmental impact

10.4. The consultation generated over **13,000** comments from more than **2,500** stakeholders. In addition, more than **700** documents were submitted in support of responses.

11. Issues

11.1. TAG believes that although bracketed amongst the smaller UK airports, mainly as a reflection of the small numbers of passengers that use the airport, Farnborough has an important role in current debate on airport capacity particularly in the South East.

11.2. Business Aviation is a specialist sector that brings benefits to business from using business airports. In addition to speed and flexibility, bespoke service, location and good transport links, business aviation generally, and TAG Farnborough Airport in particular:

- provides exceptional connectivity with the rest of the world:
- gives business leaders a competitive edge in emerging markets:
- increases its users' business competitiveness:
- facilitates business deal-making:
- offers total flexibility:

11.3. The major London airports are predicted to reach capacity by 2030. Today, almost 50 per cent of current business aviation traffic in and out of London goes through airports that predominantly provide scheduled airline services. These airports are experiencing increasing pressure on capacity and this, inevitably, squeezes out the less lucrative business aviation market. However, the current policy appears to be 'fit in where you can and let the market sort it out', a non-strategy that will be detrimental to economic activity in London. The need to designate peripheral airports, such as TAG Farnborough Airport, to relieve congestion at commercial airports is clear:

- to minimise public objections at major airports:

- to meet expected increased demand for, and maximise the potential of, business aviation without reducing capacity at large commercial airports:
 - to show that London is open for business and competes with the best as a World City:
 - to contribute to solving some of the wider capacity problems facing London over the next 15 years or more:
- 11.4. TAG Farnborough Airport is already geographically and organisationally well-placed to be the designated business aviation airport for west London. At its current level of operation, the airport's infrastructure is underutilised. The current runway, taxiways, aprons, hangars, passenger terminal, public safety zones and car parking facilities are entirely sufficient to meet the predicted level of growth.
- 11.5. However, the 'one size fits all' approach of regulators means that rules that apply to large commercial airports are often enforced at Farnborough, which in some cases is not proportionate to the need. This is particularly apparent with some security regulation.
- 11.6. In the last 10 years TAG has undertaken 2 lengthy and expensive Planning Inquiries after the local councillors refused to grant planning permission. Both were granted on appeal by Ministers of State and a review of the planning permission system would be welcomed, particularly when applications are supported by the Local Authority Officers.
- 11.7. This also has a bearing on a recent Government decision to increase the annual movement limit for Business Aviation aircraft at Northolt airfield. As a military airfield, the decision was taken that no planning application was required to increase the limit from 7,000 to 12,000.
- 11.8. Despite attracting the same market aircraft that could use Farnborough the Northolt operator now benefits from increase movements and therefore revenue without having to go through the expensive planning system that TAG had to undergo for an increase in movements at Farnborough. This decision does seem to be contrary to the rules of competition in a free market economy.

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