

Farnborough Airport Consultative Committee

R Lucas has attended 3 FACC meetings: 2 private, and one public hearing as the APC representative. Also participated in one of the public information sessions – useful side discussions with an aircraft noise expert.

Aircraft Traffic Movements (ATM)

Key metric used to monitor flight traffic. This is not a measure of all air traffic in the area. Movements overhead originating/concluding at different airports (e.g. Heathrow traffic overhead) do not count. Certain categories of air traffic into/out of Farnborough do not count (e.g. Police helicopter)

Factors Affecting Noise Complaints

* Traffic used to be routed along relatively wide corridors guided by ground beacons. More and more traffic guided by more accurate technology, satellite positioning etc, which results in much tighter air corridors, fewer people affected by overflights, but these people get much more.

* Analysis of complaints shows a degree of 'vexatious complaints'. Approx 1/3 of all FACC complaints originate from one complainant in Castel ward in Guildford.

* Class and Size of aeroplane also affect noise. More modern classes of aircraft are significantly quieter. Chapters 2&3 stopped operating in 2012. The chapters allowed to operate are Chapter 4 (introduced 2005/6, approximately 10dB noise reduction on Ch3), and Chapter 14 (introduced 2016-19, approximately 7dB below Ch4).

Change In South East England Air Traffic

Traffic into/out of Farnborough routed in complex patterns to avoid /fly under Heathrow and Gatwick traffic. Also has to be above a minimum height over army live firing areas.

Whole pattern of South East England traffic being reviewed to shorten flight routes, make more direct and reduce wasted fuel etc.

Other Externalities Imposed On Residents

In addition to noise, the main burden imposed on residents is that of pollution.

Nox pollution falls off very fast from direct flight line at low altitude. Probably less of an issue than a busy road.

Very fine particulates are a much more serious issue, and over a much greater area of approach path and take off.

Proposed Changes In Planning Restrictions

FA are consulting on changes to the limits of Aircraft Traffic Movement defined within their planning permission. This is a process that they are looking to do to cover the next few decades. They are looking to:

Increase the overall number of ATMs

Increase within this the % of ATMs allowed on 'non weekday' (weekends and public holidays)

Increase the allowed times of operation on non-weekday flights.

Increase the size of aeroplane (measured by gross take-off weight). This last is less of a problem that it seems – mostly down to more modern aircraft with a bigger fuel load to operate longer range. More modern aircraft tend to be much quieter, and more fuel efficient (less polluting).

The most concerning of these is the increase of 'non weekday' flights, and more importantly for residents, expansion of non-weekday operating hours.

Public Consultations

The public meeting attended was very defensive and polarised. On the one hand FA are trying to push their new proposed limits, and talking about money they can offer local communities.

On the other hand, there are local groups primarily focused on the issue of noise who do not want any expansion. Certain individuals within the local Noise Abatement movement have been barred from attending.

There is also a vocal minority who feel strongly that executive jets are the antisocial planet killing activities of the very rich, and it should all be stopped immediately.

Role Representing APC On FACC

While this has been a useful education on the background to the whole issue, I am not sure that the whole process serves much purpose beyond FA having demonstrated that they are going through the motions of consultation.

This will be decided in the planning process run by Rushmoor Borough Council.

Not sure how I can add value.

Quite happy to give up my seat on FACC to someone who is more optimistic that they could make a difference.

Cllr Richard Lucas