

APPROACH TO ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING

The palpably superior French approach to resolving planning applications - giving effect to the solution that represents the greater public good, if not perfect, is, self evidently, superior to our own. It is an efficient system that works.

The U K system allows every man and his dog to have their day in court - regardless of expense. It does not work.

If anyone has doubts as to the absurdity of the U K system, the time spent on the Heathrow Terminal Five *hearing* plus the preparation time (before the hearing began) plus consideration time (after the hearing had ended and before a decision was published) adds up to more than twice the time that it took to wage the First World War.

There must be a better way.

In the case of an airport planning application, the ACC should be elevated to the status of being perfectly capable of presenting the views of its members even if this may entail listing the pros and cons and the balance of the views of its members.

NOISE

Look through the window as your train rattles through a City or indeed any built-up area. Houses are often within 50 Metres of the track. So, where are the noise measuring devices so beloved of the (Airport) anti noise brigade?

As you are trapped behind an 18 wheeler juggernaut belching smoke labouring up a hill in a built-up area anywhere in the land, there are houses within 4 Metres of the vehicles. Where are the noise measuring devices?

It has always seemed to me delightfully eccentric that the attitude to aircraft engine noise and its impact upon an individual has attracted draconian restrictions whereas noise from trains or juggernauts attracts no such restrictions.

I submit that an *integrated* transport policy involves imposing a degree of standardisation/consistency in planning regulations as regards all noise not just aircraft engine noise.

The noise produced by aircraft engines has, certainly from the time passenger aircraft were invented up to the present day, led to a piecemeal raft of restrictions imposed by the individual planning authority encompassing each airport location.

Because there is no standardisation, each airport-related planning application involves an infinite amount of "reinventing the wheel". As regards any application, the work that the local planning authority has to undertake is, in a great many respects, precisely the same as that which has already been undertaken in each similar application by each other airport over the last decades.

For the largest airports, the growth of aircraft movements may trigger another planning application involving a fresh look at pre-existing conditions in the light of the increased number of take-offs. A vast army of advisers/ specialists/ experts and knockers progresses from one enquiry to another. And so the inefficiency is perpetuated.

Areas of standardisation/ consistency might include , for example:

- a) noise footprint parameters
- b) Acceptable Leq/Db (or equivalent) levels
- c) The width of track-keeping corridors (on take-off)
- d) The height above which such corridors can be ignored

MCG - 22 April 2002