

CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEES

THE WAY FORWARD

Starting point

Aviation provides important economic and social benefits

- But
- impact on communities living around airports or under flight paths
- Need effective and informed local engagement with airport to ensure local interests considered

Section 35 of the 1982 Civil Aviation Act, 51 airports designated to provide

- *“adequate facilities for consultation with respect to any matter concerning the management or administration of the aerodrome which affects their interests”*

For three specified categories

- Users of the aerodrome
- Any local authority in whose area the aerodrome is located or in the neighbourhood of the aerodrome
- For any other organisation representing the interests of persons concerned in the locality in which the aerodrome is situated

What does this all mean?

2002 Guidelines for Airport Consultative Committees

- Replaced earlier guidance (1987-88)
- Although directed to section 35 designated airports, guidance also stated that it should be applicable to any aerodrome with a consultation process and others with an interest in consultative procedures.
- Guidance was non prescriptive recognising that airports vary enormously in their size and type of operations.
- What may be appropriate at one airport may not be appropriate for another.
- Important that the aerodrome and the committee retain the flexibility to adapt to local circumstances

However time moved on

- Need to review role of Consultative Committees and Government guidance
- Government welcomes valuable role played by Consultative Committee.
- Scoping Document makes clear that Government wishes Committees to continue to play this role.
- Scoping Document confirmed the intention to review guidance this year

What needs to change

- Shift in focus?
- Initial main purpose of committees was on local environmental issues. Whilst this remains a key issue, Committees now are involved in a wide range of issues affecting airports. passenger interests and climate change impacts are particular examples
- Role broadened – not confined to local issues. An increasing role is responding to public consultations on national policy issues. Powerful voice in representing local communities

Scoping Document confirmed the intention to review guidance this year

Poses a number of questions

- Do you think that current arrangements for local engagement on aviation issues, e.g. through airport consultative committees and the development of airport master plans, are effective?
- Could more be done to improve community engagement on issues such as noise and air quality?
- If so, what and by whom

- Earlier discussion helpful in identifying a number of areas where there appeared to be some consensus of view

Scope

- Guidance should continue to be non prescriptive but perhaps two tiered approach
- Lighter touch for airports below a certain threshold
- What threshold should apply?

Passenger interests

- More guidance on the role of consultative committees and Passenger Advisory Sub Groups where they exist
- (Jackie Knight's earlier presentation referred to establishing best practice guidelines)
- Plan to have annex to guidelines dealing with passenger interests
- Important to be flexible to reflect different circumstances at each airport

Technical advice

- Increasing need for committees to have technical advice available to consider issues
- However important that such advice should be independent i.e. not by the airport or any local amenity group
- However who pays?

Role of UKACCS

- Also seemed to be support for UKACCs to develop its “ corporate” role (representing 23 airports)
- make representations/respond more to Government and other national consultations as Liaison Group
- However scope may be limited by differing views and resource implications

Appointments

- Some difference of views
- Some ACCs felt that if Chair appointed by airport and secretariat provided by the airport, run the risk of committee being seen as too close to airport and question perceived independence
- Practice also varies as to status of airport management representation at ACCs. At some airports, they are full members of the committee at others they are “in attendance” or “observers.”

Access of public to meetings

Again practice varies across committees

3 main variants

- Closed meeting with public not admitted
- Public allowed to attend but not ask questions .
- Public allowed to submit questions in advance.

Some committees have underlying concerns about disruption and hindrance to effective running of committee

Number of considerations

ACCs are seen as key means of facilitating local engagement,

Consultative committee process should be effective but

Important that members of the public know how to pursue issues

However ACCs should not be dispute forum for resolving individual complaints

What's the solution?

- Prescriptive or non prescriptive guidance?
- Guidance on how complaints should be pursued
- More information on airports' websites about complaint handling
- Other solutions?

What next

- Reflect on views expressed today
- Work up draft revised guidance but
- Need to await consultation responses (end September)
- Consult on revised guidance ? November

The Challenge

- “ ... want to move beyond the sterile debate of recent years, where the arguments for and against aviation became increasingly polarised, towards a broader consensus which honestly recognises both the value of air transport and its negative impacts and is prepared to agree the framework within which aviation can develop” (Philip Hammond March 2011)
- Consultative Committees can play a key role in fostering constructive debate in the role of critical friend

Thank You

Questions