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AIRPORT WORKING PARTY

22 APRIL 2009 – ITEM 3

NIGHT-TIME NOISE POLICY (CRITERIA)

Report by; Brian White, Director of Regeneration

Summary; On the basis of discussion at previous Airport Working Party meetings this report sets out the criteria on which a potential Night-time Flying Policy should be based

1.0 Introduction and background

- 1.1 Kent International Airport (KIA) has a history of approaching 100 years. For much of that period the airport was a military installation. But a decade ago it became a civil airport.
- 1.2 Total aircraft movement remains low. But rising demand for air transport (slowed during the current recession) coupled with the finite capacity of London's main three airports indicates that business will grow.
- 1.3 Despite the long history of overflying from aircraft using Manston (Kent International) Airport environmental concern is evident within the local community. Particularly amongst those parts of the community living beneath the flight-path. This includes the Herne Bay area, located within Canterbury City Council's district. Estimated sound pressure levels in Herne Bay are lower than those experienced in Ramsgate, and the villages of St. Nicholas and Cliffsend. But it is the case that noise is a subject of some complaint. And the problem is held by some to be much more acute during night-time hours.
- 1.4 Members are familiar with the S.106 Agreement between Thanet District Council and the Airport Owner. It describes night-time hours as 23:00 – 07:00. And it states that regular (scheduled) night-time aircraft movements are only possible if there is an agreed night-time noise policy in place.
- 1.5 When seeking to introduce a Night-time Noise Policy, the Airport Owner is required to submit a proposal to the Council at least six months before the scheduled flights are due to commence. The intention being that the Council may consult the local community about the acceptability of a proposal.
- 1.6 At its meeting in March the Working Party discussed the advantages of the Airport Owner seeking a generic Night-time Noise Policy before it has a scheduled flights operator in place. This would ensure that the Council , general public, and other key stakeholder organisations like the KIACC or adjoining districts all have sufficient time to make their views known.

2.0 Criteria for a Future Night-time Noise Policy

- 2.1 Members were mindful of the purpose of the S.106 Agreement. It being to enable the Airport to operate successfully, and on an equal basis in competition against other regional airports. After all, the presumption in both local and regional planning policy is that the Airport should grow.
- 2.2 It is understood that scheduled daytime aircraft movements will occasionally be late. Especially from based aircraft making several rotations each day. If delayed they will inevitably be late returning at the end of the day and this raises the question of whether or not it is appropriate to invoke penalties at all. For example the aircraft might be bringing passengers home to Thanet.
- 2.3 On the other hand some residents will be concerned about night-time noise. And the existing system of penalties for any night-time aircraft movement of QC greater than 4 does make a link between adverse environmental impact and contribution to the Airport Community Fund. The question is whether such a system is appropriate for the Airport as it gets busier, in line with the step changes set out in the draft Airport Masterplan.
- 2.4 From discussion at previous Working Party meetings, as reflected in minutes of those meetings, it has been possible to compile the following criteria for consideration when a new Night-time Noise Policy is drafted.
- Preferred runway usage should be included, and monitored/reported into public domain. Seeking to avoid so far as possible overflying Ramsgate.
 - The issue of noise abatement routes during night-time hours to be addressed.
 - Noise abatement routes can only be monitored if secondary radar capacity is provided. This represents a considerable investment which cannot be justified by current aircraft usage. A threshold of aircraft usage should be set for its introduction.
 - At the current low number of aircraft movements the existing penalty system is understood by the local community. But the doubling of penalties within any single calendar year is prohibitive to expansion of business, and does not reflect practice at any other airport.
 - To acknowledge late arrivals and early morning departures as being normal within the shoulder periods (i.e 23:00 to 23:30 and 06:30 to 07:00).
 - In anticipation of based aircraft being attracted to the Airport the subject of attenuation of noise from aircraft maintenance and engine testing during the night-time period be addressed.
 - Improved noise monitoring and reporting of night-time noise, including a threshold of aircraft movement numbers at which a night-time period contour becomes appropriate.

- The noise levels of aircraft movements may be captured in both peak levels or 'average' levels usually reported as leq and as noise contours. As aircraft movement at KIA increases these measurements, and trend lines will become more useful. At the present aircraft movements are low and
- If, and as total number of aircraft movement increases consideration can be given to the type of controls applied at other regional airports, perhaps including a night-time quota count.
- Humanitarianism flights need to be redefined.
- Differentiation between any scheduled night-time aircraft movements from pre night-time (and/or shoulder period) scheduled aircraft which arrive late.
- Re-visit the criteria of greater than QC 4 as set out in the current S.106 to reflect the fact that modern aircraft are capable of quieter performance.
- As aircraft movement numbers increase, a link between overall volume of air traffic and the Community Fund be established to replace the system of penalties. A threshold needs to be established . In this way the amount of money in the Fund will grow proportionate to overall number of aircraft movements. Perhaps with weighting towards night-time.

2.5 Members are invited to consider these, and any other criteria, for inclusion in the Working Party's recommendation to the Overview and Scrutiny Panel and thence to Cabinet.

2.6 At the meeting Members will also hear from Mr. M. Clarke the KIA Chief Executive. He can assist on technical questions.

3.0 Recommendations

3.1 That the Airport Working Party establishes its criteria for inclusion in a potential night-time noise policy for Kent International, and recommends those criteria to the Overview and Scrutiny Panel, and thence Cabinet.

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