

BIGGIN HILL AIRPORT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

Minutes of Meeting held on Thursday, 14 July 2016 at 3.30pm.

Present:

Organisation:

Chairman
Deputy Chairman
Secretary
Biggin Hill Airport Limited (BHAL)

Tandridge District Council
Flying Schools
London Borough of Bromley (LBB)
Private Owners
BRF and Crofton Residents. Association
Sevenoaks District Council
London Borough of Croydon
LBB (Officer)
Tatsfield Parish Council
BRF/Leaves Green & Keston Vale Residents Association
Kent County Council
South London Business
Business & Commercial Users (Transcity Exhibitions)
LBB
Private Owners
Biggin Hill Residents Association

Representative:

Mr J. Bowden
Mr N. Kemp
Mr G. Crowe
Mr A.R. Walters, Chairman
Mr W. Curtis, Airport Managing Director (AMD)
Ms B. Russell, Policy & Ext. Affairs Coordinator
Councillor M. Allen*
Mr A. Bamrah
Councillor J. Benington*
Mr D. Field
Dr R. Hadley
Councillor R. Hogarth
Councillor T. Letts
Mrs M. Manuel
Councillor I. Mitchell
Mr P. Osborne
Councillor R. Parry
Mr D. Pannoosami
Mr R. Shirley
Councillor Mrs M. Stevens
Mr J. Willis
Mr B. Wingate

* substitute member

1. Welcome and Chairman's introductory remarks

1.1 The Chairman welcomed members to the meeting. On behalf of the members he thanked the Airport representatives for the invitation to the Festival of Flight.

2. Membership

2.01 It was noted that Councillor Keith Jecks had been appointed as the representative of Tandridge Council to replace Councillor David Weightman and that Councillor Martin Allen would be the substitute for Councillor Jecks. On behalf of the members, the Chairman welcomed Councillor Allen to his first meeting of the Committee.

3. Apologies for absence

3.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillor D. Hodge (Surrey County Council), Councillor P. Morgan (LBB), Councillor K. Jecks (substituted by Councillor Allen, Tandridge Council), Councillor S. O'Connell (Greater London Authority), Councillor R. Scoates (substituted by Councillor Benington, LBB).

4. Minutes of the previous meeting

4.01 The minutes of the meeting held on 21 April 2016 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

5. Matters arising from the minutes

5.01 There were no matters arising from the minutes that would not be dealt with during the consideration of the minutes for this meeting.

6. Airport Managing Director's report

6.01 Will Curtis presented his report on the second quarter of 2016. It provided information on the following issues:

6.02 Market conditions - the report updated the Committee on aviation activity in Europe and other parts of the world. Graphs and diagrams illustrated the summary.

6.03 Biggin Hill movement summary - the AMD's report summarised the Airport's movement summary. It was noted that, overall, the total movements for the quarter were 13,267 (6.9%) down on last year caused mainly by the drop in light aircraft movements. The AMD added that, due to a strike in France, the Airport had experienced record fuel sales.

6.04 The operational movements during the first quarter of 2016 were:

	Club Circuit	Club Other	Private Owner	ATM Schld.	ATM Charter	Corp. Jet	Twin Corp.	Helis.	Military	Total
April	1,788	790	972	0	571	286	28	205	8	4,648
May	1,628	634	1,124	0	667	344	62	204	6	4,669
June	1,020	389	1,025	0	713	402	59	330	12	3,950
Total	4,436	1,813	3,121	0	1,951	1,032	149	739	26	13,267
Change	-1,120	-395	-75	0	-21	+105	-46	-105	-6	-1,663
Year to date	9,121	3,003	4,741	0	3,626	1,833	270	1,284	48	23,926

6.05 During the same quarter of 2015 they had been:

	Club Circuit	Club Other	Private Owner	ATM Schld.	ATM Charter	Corp. Jet	Corp. Twin	Helis.	Military	Total
April	1,509	672	909	0	575	248	57	212	4	4,186
May	1,819	746	1,091	0	713	315	77	274	6	5,041
June	2,228	790	1,196	0	684	364	61	358	22	5,703
Total	5,556	2,208	3,196	0	1,972	927	195	844	32	14,930
Year to date	9,343	3,285	4,648	0	3,497	1,712	330	1,312	54	24,181

6.06 UK aviation policy and Biggin Hill Airport – the AMD believed that the UK would remain an European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) contracting state when it leaves the European Union and BHAL will be required to convert to a EASA aerodrome licence. Because most EASA regulations had already been adopted, little would change in the day-to-day operation of the Airport. However, it would change the manner in which BHAL would be able to control access to the Airport by users. In particular, airports would have to be open to all on an equivalent basis so it may be more difficult to preclude individual users on the basis of local restrictions. The AMD anticipated that this could lead to challenges by operators barred from using the Airport by the conditions set out in the current lease. BHAL was examining the implications but environmental limitations set out in the Noise Action Plan (NAP) would be expected to override other considerations. The AMD emphasised that BHAL was not interested in having scheduled airlines operating from the Airport.

- 6.07 In answer to a question members were advised that the noise limits on Chapter 3 and 4 aircraft would not be affected as it should be possible for a good environmental case can be made for their use to be controlled.
- 6.08 RAF Northolt - members were reminded that BHAL had advised the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) that by not taking any action in respect of civil aviation at RAF Northolt, it appeared to be failing in its statutory duty. The CAA had responded that it will take no further action and considers that it has fulfilled its legal obligations. BHAL was considering its position and may take the matter back to court for determination. However, BHAL may see if there would be any change of policy by the new Government before taking any action. Lobbying continued.
- 6.09 The AMD reported that the Government was proposing to provide £60m to enable the runway to be re-laid as the commercial aircraft were heavier than planes that the runway was designed to accommodate. The opportunity was to be taken to carry out works to obfuscate the actual runway length. However this would only help Northolt’s case so far as landings were concerned. He advised that BHAL would be writing to the new Government’s ministers including the Minister of State for trade, Liam Fox, MP. Councillor Mrs Letts, referring to paragraph 6.09 of the minutes of the meeting held on 21 April 2016, said that she had received a one-line response from the Minister and no reply from the former Prime Minister, David Cameron.
- 6.10 Councillor Parry proposed that a one-page letter should be sent from the Committee to the new Prime Minister, Theresa May, and also to Liam Fox, MP and Michael Fallon MP. It should include the case that the opportunities at Biggin Hill and Farnborough would outweigh any advantages that may be perceived at Northolt. The proposition was agreed by the Committee without any opposition.

Action: Secretary/Chairman

- 6.11 BHAL application to vary Airport operating hours – it was noted that, on 15 June 2016, Bromley Council had approved the lease variation that would give effect to the following revised operating hours:

Monday to Friday	0630- 2300
Saturdays	0800 - 2200
Sundays and Bank Holidays	0800 - 2200

However, before the new hours can be adopted, various elements of the NAP must be provided, including the installation and commissioning of the new Noise Monitoring and Track Keeping System. Initially, three mobile noise measuring units would be sited until the most appropriate sites for the permanent units are identified. The on-line information tracking and noise portal system would become operational when the system was able to record accurately.

- 6.12 Airport facilities - The AMD updated the meeting on the progress of the airspace change proposal. It was noted that there were currently no changes on the anticipated timing.
- 6.13 Approach lighting to serve the new runway 03 GPS approach would be installed during the summer but the grant of planning permission for the installation of the requisite approach lights had been delayed by Bromley Council.
- 6.14 Resurfacing work had recently been undertaken at the entrance of the Rizon ramp area and on the East Camp service road.
- 6.15 Tenants and businesses at Biggin Hill - information was provided in the report about Rizon Jet UK having closed down and the liquidation of its operating arm. Around 50 members of staff were made redundant but the owner had elected to retain ownership of the building and put it up for lease.
- 6.16 The Field Base Operator terminal area of the building had been occupied by an existing Biggin Hill Airport tenant, Signature Flight Support, a well-known and trusted British-owned company.
- 6.17 The maintenance end of the hangar, along with the maintenance offices, would be occupied by Bombardier Business Aircraft which, because of the variation in the operating hours, would set up a heavy maintenance facility to support its European client base. It aimed to create skilled and well-paid jobs together with back office and blue collar support jobs amounting to up to 400 new jobs. The AMD anticipated that the operation would result in an additional 36 movements per year, not including “drop in” maintenance requests. Owners of aircraft that might be persuaded to be based at the Airport due to

the presence of Bombardier so the total could be likely to be higher but would not represent a significant increase in movement numbers.

- 6.18 Economic Development/LoCATE@BigginHill - LBB had recently presented its Master Plan for the technical training college and BHAL believed that it was sensible and deliverable. The AMD advised that it would have a training hangar and that BHAL would be lending its support to progress this important facility. Consideration was being given to commencing the delivery of aviation technical courses at an offsite facility to ensure that an early supply of talent would be available to incoming employers. Councillor Benington advised that the site still had to be acquired and added that many of the buildings on it were listed. A question was asked about the existing housing on the proposed site at West Camp and the Committee was informed that it was proposed that it would be used for classrooms and for small business units where apprentices could carry out practical training. A further question received the response that the Master Plan together with the plans for the proposed heritage centre would be on display at St George's Chapel on Wednesday, 10 August 2016.
- 6.19 Later in the meeting Councillor Parry said that the average aircraft mechanic earns approximately £70k per annum. Blue-collar employment was important for the local economy and the average salary at the Airport was £48k. Employees working on the Airport tend to stay employed there.
- 6.20 The AMD's report also advised that Bromley would soon be publishing its Draft Local Plan (DLP). It advised that, whilst the draft policy adopted in respect of the Biggin Hill Airport Strategic Outer London Development Centre (SOLDC) was more positive than in the previous Local Plan, LoCATE wanted there to be no doubt about the possibility of approvals when development and investment opportunities arise. The DLP envisaged creation of 2,300 new jobs within the Biggin Hill SOLDC, but in order to deliver this the AMD believed that a clear and unambiguous policy regarding new development within the entire SOLDC needed to be adopted. Recent analysis by Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners suggested that a positive and flexible planning policy could lead to stated targets being exceeded.
- 6.21 The AMD's report questioned the rationality of the allocation of Green Belt land. LoCATE did not propose the removal of the entire Airport from the Green Belt but prospective investors would not wish to have to have fights for planning permissions. LoCATE would be responding to the upcoming DLP consultation by calling for a greater emphasis on the benefits of unimpeded development within the Biggin Hill SOLDC.
- 6.22 LoCATE continued to lobby on medium and long term issues such as the inadequate local infrastructure. Promising meetings with Kent County Council had taken place and there was improved communications between public and private stakeholders in general. LoCATE was also developing new literature to update the public message regarding job creation and the vision for the Biggin Hill SOLDC.
- 6.23 Health & Safety/security - the Airport Safety Management System continued to deliver valuable information to the Airport's management and the output had resulted in actions to improve some areas of infrastructure on the Airport. The Safety and Noise Review Board (SANARB) continued to monitor noise and safety complaints and to take action against those failing to abide by published procedures.
- 6.24 There had been no significant safety reports or incidents.
- 6.25 Environment - BHAL had begun work on a new Ground Noise Action Plan as required by the BHAL NAP. Means by which surrounding areas might be better shielded from ground noise would be considered. These would include the orientation of future new buildings so that they shield noise and additional ground noise barriers (bunds) where applicable. Restrictions on the generation of ground noise by aircraft operators would also be considered.

7. Report by the Chairman of the Noise and Safety Sub-Committee

- 7.01 The report of the Flight Evaluation Unit for the second quarter of 2016 was tabled together with a map that plotted the areas from which the comments had emanated.
- 7.02 Councillor Parry, the Chairman of the Sub-Committee, advised that the total number of complaints made in the quarter was 27, a number which was 20 fewer than in the same quarter of 2015. Anoop Bamrah

suggested that part of the reason for the fall in the number of complaints in recent years was the standard of pilots having improved. Good practice was passed onto them. The AMD responded that BHAL was grateful to the flying schools for ensuring safety and avoiding annoyance to residents as far as possible.

- 7.03 The Committee was informed that only 3 of the complaints were valid ones. He commented that, as usual, all of the complaints had been handled well and fully and he outlined the circumstances of the 3 genuine complaints. These related to 2 helicopter movements and one aircraft which had been running on its auxiliary engines. The possible repercussions were also outlined.
- 7.03 Councillor Parry also informed the Committee that there were a number of regular respondents, some of whom do not accept that movements they refer to relate to aircraft going from odd to Heathrow or Gatwick airports rather than Biggin Hill. added that he was looking forward to the Noise Monitoring and Track Keeping System being operational so that the evidence would be available to pass on to the complainants.
- 7.04 Councillor Parry added that a major safety inspection of the Airport had taken place and the AMD advised that no major issues had been raised in the resulting report.

8. Planning issues

- 8.01 Local Plan - Mary Manuel reported that the DLP had been considered at a recent meeting of Bromley Council's Development Control Committee and would be considered during the following week by the Council's Executive. It would then be subject to public consultation for a period of 6 weeks during September/October following which the Executive would consider whether it should be forwarded to the Secretary of State for the Environment with all of the responses. The Committee was informed that the areas for retention in the Green Belt were the same in the DLP as were suggested in the consultation and West camp, etc., would be taken out. Mary Manuel added that there was a need for a balance between the environment and economic development. Members noted that they could register online in order to be able to be included in the consultation.
- 8.02 It was also noted that the consultant's report on the Airport NAP was to be published shortly.
- 8.03 Hangar - it was noted that a planning application for an additional hangar had been submitted.
- 8.04 Airport hotel - in answer to a question, the AMD advised that BHAL was intending to bring forward a new design for the proposed hotel.

9. Community Relations

- 9.01 Press cuttings - The press cuttings for the last quarter had been circulated with the agenda for the meeting.

10. Any other business

- 10.01 Woodcote High School - councillor Hogarth mentioned that Woodcote High School was arranging a careers convention on Wednesday, 28 September 2016. He suggested that either bombardier or BHAL should provide brochures. The AMD undertook to look into the possibility of participating.

11. Dates of next meetings

- 11.01 Members were reminded that the dates of the next meetings had been agreed as follows:
- Thursday, 20 October 2016;
 - Thursday, 19 January 2017 (with AGM).
- 11.02 It was agreed that the further 3 meetings to be held in 2017 would take place at 3.30pm on the following dates:
- Thursday, 20 April 2017;
 - Thursday, 27 July 2017;

- Thursday, 19 October 2017.

The meeting closed at 4.45pm.