



STRATEGIC AVIATION SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP  
of the Local Government Association

## ANNUAL REPORT FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION LEADERSHIP BOARD, APRIL 2012

### SASIG Mission Statement

SASIG works for Local Authorities in a strategic manner on national aviation policy so as to reconcile economic, social and environmental issues in a sustainable way.

### SASIG's Objectives

- To promote the need for long-term, sustainable aviation policies that lead to a reduction in the environmental impact of aviation whilst securing appropriate social and economic benefits.
- To increase understanding of the local and global impacts of aviation on the environment and communities.
- To identify and promote the changes needed to move towards sustainable aviation practices within the industry and Government.
- To work with other organisations and the Government on the formulation of policy advice.

### SASIG's Membership - April 2011 to March 2012

- 1 SASIG had 38 Local Authorities from around the country in membership in the 2011/12 year, all with an interest in strategic aviation issues (see **Annex A**, pg. 5). These Local Authorities comprise a population of 12.5 million people, around a quarter of the total population of England.
- 2 During 2011/12, the SASIG Chairman has been Cllr Jamie Macrae (Cheshire East Council), the Vice Chairmen have been Cllr Ian Lake (Surrey County Council) and Cllr Jackie Cheetham (Uttlesford DC), and the Honorary President has been Richard Worrall. All Authorities in membership of SASIG are invited to meetings and may be represented by elected Members and officers. The Chairman's Advisory Group comprises a small group of elected Members and officers who have been invited by the Chairman to help him undertake his role.
- 3 The SASIG Constitution provides for membership on an annual basis, with subscriptions for each forthcoming year presented in the preceding autumn for approval by the group.

### SASIG's Activities – April 2011 to March 2012

- 4 The Government set out a programme for the **review of national aviation policy**, beginning in Autumn 2010 and culminating in March 2013. The initial stage of the review was publication of a call for evidence guided by the department for Transport's Scoping Document (30 March 2011). SASIG had contributed to the content of the Scoping Document through prior input as a member of the **Department for Transport's Aviation External Advisory Group (EAG)**, as well as holding an Engagement Event for the SASIG membership and key players in the policy debate.
- 5 On assessment, there was found to be a good correlation between the issues raised by SASIG and those contained in the Department for Transport's Scoping Document.

- 6 The SASIG membership contributed generously to the call for evidence at the June 2011 SASIG AGM, and subsequent Technical Officer Group meeting, in order to develop the group response. The issues covered were those regarded as essential elements of the whole review, and not necessarily those that the membership felt they could, or should, supply a comprehensive answer to - issues were identified that the membership wished to hear from other stakeholders about.
- 7 During the consultation period, relevant events were attended, and collaborative meetings held, such as with 'Environmental Protection UK' (EPUK); the weekend meeting of 'AirportWatch' and the 'Aviation Environment Federation' (AEF) that the Aviation Minister, Theresa Villiers, attended; with HACAN, the residents campaign group relating to Heathrow; and the 'New Direction for Aviation Policy' conference of July 2011, organised by Waterfront.
- 8 The Government's stated intention is that the "...final aviation framework document will fulfil the role of a national planning policy for aviation".<sup>1</sup> However, questions remain about how appropriate the review process is that the Government has committed to, for producing a policy document suitable for use as a material planning consideration. This review process differs from that applied to produce National Policy Statements (NPSs) for other sectors, and a spatial element is excluded from the overarching aviation policy framework that will result from this review.
- 9 In response to the call for evidence, SASIG focussed on the following areas: strategic planning, economic evaluation, capturing economic benefits, development and application of a 'noise envelope', concentration and dispersion of flightpaths, working towards a ban on night flights where residents are overflowed, incorporation of climate change targets, integration with rail policy, and improved community involvement (20 October 2011).
- 10 The need for the resulting national aviation policy to integrate with local planning policy was also assessed in the consultation undertaken on the draft **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)**, concurrent with the Department for Transport's call for evidence.
- 11 SASIG identified key issues in the draft NPPF, looking at the practicalities of implementation, the need to retain supporting guidance - particularly for noise - and Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs), the appropriate powers and responsibilities of Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs), and transitional arrangements for production of Local Plans. SASIG highlighted the need for the national planning policy to support and comply with an acceptable national aviation policy resulting from the Government's current review. The SASIG response to the draft NPPF was submitted on 17 October 2011.
- 12 The SASIG Director gave a **presentation on the national aviation policy review and related planning implications** to a divisional meeting of 'Environmental Protection UK' (EPUK) at Manchester Airport (12 July 2011).
- 13 SASIG convened a **meeting for the SASIG membership with officials from the Department for Transport (DfT) and Department for Communities & Local Government (DCLG)**, kindly hosted by the DfT, to discuss aviation policy and planning policy (25 August 2011). SASIG highlighted the need for supporting guidance in relation to noise in particular, to ensure occupiers of new development were not subjected to unacceptable noise impacts.
- 14 SASIG also attended the **House of Commons Briefing hosted by the Town & Country Planning Association (TCPA)** on the draft NPPF (14 September 2011).

<sup>1</sup> DfT Scoping Document (Mar. 2011), par. 2.17, pg.18.

- 15 The SASIG Chairman, Vice Chairmen and Director **met with the Aviation Minister, Theresa Villiers**, on 7 September 2011. The discussion covered interaction between the Department for Transport's national aviation policy review, and the related Government agendas of localism, planning, local environmental protection, & economic growth; and the priorities as SASIG sees them, such as the value of local detail supporting overarching principles. The Minister was very generous with her time, letting the meeting continue until the issues had been covered; showed an understanding of SASIG's perspective; and recognised the complexity of reaching agreement amongst such a group.
- 16 The SASIG Director and SASIG Policy Officer **met with the new Head of the Environmental Noise Policy Team at the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra)**, Tania Plahay, and Stephen Turner, Head of Technical & Evidence Team, supporting the environmental noise, and noise & nuisance teams at Defra (19 September 2011). The meeting covered the key work areas for the Noise Team at Defra:
- attributing an economic value to noise;
  - understanding and evaluating the full costs of noise in terms of additional impacts, embedding the principles of Noise Policy Statement for England (NPSE);
  - implementing the Environmental Noise Directive (END) and Airport Noise Action Plans (NAPs); and
  - the Noise Attitude Survey;
- and the priorities from SASIG's perspective:
- the need for noise control measures in the planning system;
  - continuation of the Noise Attitude Survey (NAS);
  - the need for effective community engagement on aviation related noise issues;
  - the need for noise to be more explicitly referenced in Defra's Business Plan, in addition to reference to the 'natural environment'; and
  - thorough application of the Noise Policy Statement for England (NPSE) across other Government Departments.
- 17 SASIG continued involvement with the next phase of **aviation research collaboration between academia and aviation stakeholders – 'SIGMA'**, and supplied supporting information for the bid proposal. SASIG promoted SIGMA on the basis that a greater understanding of the interdependencies affecting aircraft design and the need to provide for noise reduction in concert with reduced emissions is particularly important given the next generation of aircraft will be in use for decades to come. An interdependencies approach has the potential to inform those policy levers necessary to bring noise and air quality management more in line with carbon management. Similarly, an interdependencies approach to the relationship between aviation operations and surface access associated with airports would be of value to address existing inadequate surface access conditions; provide for more reliable, efficient, cost-effective and 'cleaner' surface access travel; and support development of integrated transport interchanges at airports.
- 18 The SASIG Director attended a **stakeholder event held by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA)** to discuss the **regulator's environmental role** (19 March 2012). A SASIG response to the CAA's consultation on this matter was subsequently submitted, commending the CAA on its in-house expertise, and setting out the achievements needed were the CAA to have an effective environmental role.

## Membership services and collaboration

- 19 SASIG's seat on the **Department for Transport's Aviation External Advisory Group (EAG)** continues to be valuable for bringing to the Department's attention areas in which the Local Authority perspective needs to be considered. The EAG has a majority representation from the aviation industry and, as ever, that is a considerable weight to counter-balance.
- 20 The **SASIG website** - [www.sasig.org.uk](http://www.sasig.org.uk) - continues to be developed and enhanced. Alongside the public-facing elements of the website that supply information about the group's policy positions, press releases, and Authorities in membership, there is specialist provision dedicated to the SASIG membership - meeting papers, a calendar of events, library, and search facility making the site a valuable archive of aviation-related material.
- 21 SASIG continued to attend **Environmental Protection UK (EPUK) Noise Committee** meetings, alongside maintaining the information-sharing relationship between the groups.
- 22 SASIG has worked with the **Local Government Association (LGA)** throughout the year, for information-sharing and coordination purposes. Meetings of the Economy & Transport Board have been attended, and SASIG actively supplied contacts and promoted communications in support of the Board's Study Tour to Cornwall – a visit to Newquay Cornwall Airport would have bridged the Board's economy & transport brief.
- 23 The political monitoring services bought in from **DeHavilland Plc** continue to supply information for the SASIG Bulletin, details of current Parliamentary activity, assistance with lobbying MPs and Lords, and detailed support on the Parliamentary process and the progress of legislation. This service is kept under regular review, to ensure the service continues to meet SASIG's needs, ensuring value for money for the SASIG membership.
- 24 The **SASIG office team** was resourced to a greater extent during the latter part of 2011-12 than had been the case for approximately 18 months previously, enabling training and development to be undertaken in support of full service provision to the group.
- 25 **Three meetings for all SASIG member Authorities** were held during the year, having been preceded by three meetings of the **Chairman's Advisory Group (CAG)** whose role is to support the Chairman in developing the group's policy stance.
- 26 The SASIG AGM in June 2011 focussed on the group's response to the Scoping Document call for evidence, part of the **national aviation policy review**. At the group meeting in October 2011, officers from Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council gave the presentation: '**Doncaster Sheffield Airport - Integrating Planning & Transport**'. At the February 2012 SASIG meeting, the Civil Aviation Authority, and the London Heliport Consultative Group, gave presentations on **helicopter noise**.

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**SASIG Member Authorities – April 2011 to March 2012**

Aylesbury Vale District	NW Leicestershire District
Broadland District	Reigate & Banstead Borough
Bromley London Borough	Richmond upon Thames London Borough
Buckinghamshire County	Slough Borough (unitary)
Canterbury City	Southend on Sea Borough (unitary)
Cheshire East (unitary)	Spelthorne Borough
Cornwall Council (unitary)	Surrey County
Crawley Borough	Tandridge District
Doncaster Metropolitan Borough	Thanet District
Ealing London Borough	Uttlesford District
East Herts District	West Midlands Joint Committee:-
Essex County	Birmingham City
Hammersmith & Fulham London Borough	Coventry City
Hampshire County	Dudley Metropolitan Borough
Hertfordshire County	Sandwell Metropolitan Borough
Hillingdon London Borough	Solihull Metropolitan Borough
Hounslow London Borough	Walsall Metropolitan Borough
Luton Borough (unitary)	Wolverhampton City
Mole Valley District	Windsor & Maidenhead Royal Borough (unitary)
Newham London Borough	Wokingham Borough (unitary)