



London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham

Transport, Environment and Residents Services Select Committee Minutes

Tuesday 6 November 2012

PRESENT

Committee members: Councillors Rachel Ford (Chairman), Robert Iggulden, Wesley Harcourt (Vice-Chairman), Lisa Homan, Jane Law, Matt Thorley and Gavin Donovan

Other Councillors: Victoria Brocklebank-Fowler (Cabinet Member for Transport and Technical Services) and Greg Smith (Cabinet Member for Residents Services)

Officers: Nick Boyle (Transportation and Development Manager), Ullash Karia (Bi-Borough Head of Leisure and Parks) and Gary Marson (Principal Committee Coordinator)

22. MINUTES AND ACTIONS

RESOLVED that –

- a) the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 10 September 2012 be confirmed and signed as a correct record; and
- b) progress with the acceptance and implementation of recommendations be noted.

23. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Ali de Lisle and for lateness from Councillor Jane Law.

24. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

**25. HEATHROW AIRPORT OPERATIONAL FREEDOMS TRIAL -
PRESENTATION BY BAA**

Representatives of BAA attended the meeting to provide a presentation on the progress of Phase 2 of the Operational Freedoms Trial at Heathrow Airport and answer questions on the topic from Members of the Committee and the public.

Simon Baugh, BAA Director of Public Affairs, Tim Hardy, Director of Airside, and Cheryl Monk, Head of Community Engagement, set out the background to the trial, the changes in operating arrangements at the airport, the way in which Hammersmith & Fulham was affected and the public response to date.

Members noted that the trial, developed in consultation with the Department for Transport (DfT) and the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA), was designed to gather data to establish whether a series of new departures and arrivals procedures could be applied to help reduce delays and disruption to flights and to assess the impact of the changes on the airport, passengers, the environment and the local community. Phase 1 of the trial had taken place between 1st November 2011 and 29 February 2012. Phase 2 had commenced at the beginning of July 2012 and would continue until 31 March 2013, at which point a final report would be submitted to the DfT and CAA. The CAA and DfT would assess the results and any permanent changes to operating procedures arising from the trial would be the subject of full consultation.

The Committee was informed that the trial broadened the circumstances in which Heathrow was able to operate with arrivals on both runways. A system of runway alternation had been in use since the 1970's with the airport's arrivals and departures runways being switched in the middle of each day. This ensured that people living under the respective flight paths for the two runways had predictable daily periods of respite from aircraft noise. The trial, however, permitted the use of both runways for arrivals if operational problems occurred such as aircraft being held in stacks for 10 minutes or more or schedules were running late due to bad weather. In the first three months of the trial an average of 38 flights per day landed on the designated departure runway out of the alternation arrangements, thereby intruding on the respite periods. This represented an increase of around 16 on the pre trial figures. Total arrivals at the airport were unchanged, numbering around 650 daily. BAA suggested that of the 16 additional out of alternation arrivals the numbers that affected Hammersmith & Fulham were in the low single figures. They concluded that the impact on the borough was marginal.

Despite this conclusion there had been a very significant increase in complaints received from members of the public, with around 1,800 recorded in August 2012 compared with 400 a year earlier. One of the explanations for the surge in resident dissatisfaction was the coincidence of an increase in westerly operations with the start of the trial. Aircraft normally landed and took off into the wind for safety reasons and the prevailing winds in the South East meant that they generally made their final approach to Heathrow from a westerly direction, which took flights across the borough. An unusually high

proportion of westerly winds during the summer meant that this western approach had been used for 89% of flights against a more typical figure of 60%. Changes to operating procedures due to the unusual wind direction rather than the freedoms trial were therefore considered to be responsible for the increased disturbance to Hammersmith and Fulham residents. This was borne out by the fact that there was no correlation between the days when the complaints spiked and those when the freedom measures were in operation.

Members noted that other planned features of the trial, including the use of both runways for departing aircraft and changes to the management of inbound flights between 4.30-6am were not now going to be implemented during this phase. A further trial would need to be arranged if they were to be taken forward.

The Committee and members of the public took the opportunity to ask BAA a series of questions about the trial and related matters.

Members and the public emphasised that noise levels from aircraft had increased significantly in recent months and posed a number of questions in respect of the noise monitoring arrangements. It was noted that noise contours were measured by the CAA at a series of fixed and mobile locations. Members were of the view that noise monitoring units should be installed in the borough in order to collect local data which could then be published on the Council's website. BAA was happy to support such a request to the CAA.

The meeting addressed the issue of the height of incoming aircraft and continuous descent arrangements. There was a perception that planes were now flying over the borough at lower altitudes. BAA confirmed that there had been no change in the height of arrivals. Continuous descent was part of the arrivals code of practice and attained high levels of compliance with more than 80% of incoming flights using the technique. Members enquired whether there was an alternative to the continuous descent which might mitigate the noise nuisance. The Committee was informed that steeper descent angles were being explored but it was a complex issue and greater height would not necessarily reduce noise.

Members also urged BAA to press airlines to use quieter aircraft. BAA responded that it could not ban certain types of aircraft but it had some of the toughest noise regulations in the world. The use of quieter planes were incentivised through differential landing fees and league tables of airlines would be published to 'name and shame' those with the worst noise performance. Arrivals and departures codes of practice were also in place. In response to further questions it was explained that differential charging applied only to noisy aircraft and not landing times. The noisiest flights were, however, prohibited between 11pm and 7am and quotas applied to total flight numbers between 11.30pm and 6am.

The adverse impact of night flights on residents' health and wellbeing was highlighted by members of the audience. BAA's representatives acknowledged that it aroused strong emotions and emphasised that one of the purposes of the trial was to try to minimise the disruption by improving

punctuality and reducing the number of late flights caused by delays. A separate consultation on the night flight arrangements for the next five years was due to commence in 2013.

The differences in public perception of the number and height of flights and the data recorded by BAA was noted and the robustness of the BAA figures challenged. BAA defended the accuracy of its flight data and observed that it was difficult to judge the precise location of a flight from the ground. There was an acknowledgment, however, of a public lack of trust in BAA and it was attempting to address the issue through open and transparent dialogue with the local community.

BAA's representatives were asked about the arrangements for the assessment of the impact of the trial on residents and the weighting that would be applied to community dissatisfaction. It was noted that the community was to be engaged in a series of focus groups with representatives from local authorities and complaints and polling data would also be evaluated. The decision on whether to implement the trial arrangements on a permanent basis would be made by the DfT following consultation and not by BAA. In the event of the issue going to consultation the Committee would consider the matter again and stage another public meeting to enable the views of the local community to be properly heard.

BAA acknowledged that the CAA's noise measurement techniques would not be capable of properly recording the intensity of a short term increase in flights over a particular flight path. If all of the additional out of alternation arrivals were concentrated in a short period of time the statistical impact would be largely minimised in daily average figures.

There was concern expressed that the prevalence of westerly winds during the trial period, and the consequential need for increased use of westerly operations, would make meaningful evaluation of the trial impossible. It was suggested that it would not be possible to statistically differentiate between the impact of the two aspects. Further, it was suggested that BAA should take account of the possibility of 90% westerly winds in its evaluation and future modelling since the effect on the local community was so detrimental.

By way of response, the Committee heard that experts from Cambridge University were auditing the trial data, including focus group and resident responses and BAA was confident that the evaluation safeguards were robust. The DfT would not give approval to the permanent implementation of any aspects of the trial if the data presented was insufficient. BAA felt that it was not possible to predict future wind patterns.

Responding to questions on the independence of the evaluation arrangements, BAA reported that it was funding the Cambridge University studies but emphasised that the process was completely independent.

Concern was expressed at the adequacy of BAA's engagement exercise. It was suggested that they were not adequately reaching local communities and the public did not know how to make complaints. BAA emphasised that formal

consultation would not commence until after the trial, and then only if the DfT was minded to proceed with any changes. Feedback from the Phase 1 trial suggested that leaflet drops were ineffective so it had relied upon local media advertising to deliver its key messages.

Finally, in response to public comments on the issue of a third runway, the Chairman emphasised that the Council opposed expansion of Heathrow and would be responding firmly to any consultation proposals that might be developed by the Commission on the matter. The Committee would play a role in assisting the Council to develop its response.

RESOLVED that –

- i) the Civil Aviation Authority be requested to install aircraft noise recording devices at various locations throughout Hammersmith and Fulham in order to be able to generate accurate data on the noise levels experienced in the borough and make such data available to the Council for publication; and
- ii) in the event of a formal consultation on the implementation of operational changes at Heathrow Airport as a consequence of the Freedoms Trial, a further report be presented to the Committee.

26. GET H&F MOVING - ONE YEAR ON

The Committee received a detailed report which summarised the 'Get H&F Moving' campaign to improve local transportation run between February 2011 and March 2012 and the comments received in response to the initiative. Members also reviewed progress made with the Drivers Charter which was launched at the beginning of the campaign in order to deliver practical measures to improve the experience of driving in the borough and noted the links between the campaign and Borough's adopted Transport Plan for 2011-2031. Details of the integrated transport projects which were due to be delivered in 2013/14 with Transport for London (TfL) funding were also noted.

In response to questions on the proposals to relieve congestion on Fulham Palace Road, the Committee was informed that firm data was not yet available on the success of the first phase slip road works but the initial anecdotal evidence was positive. An additional £2m of funds had been obtained to upgrade the whole length of the route over the next two years.

Members enquired about the position in respect of the lane rental proposals previously considered by a Scrutiny Task Group. It was noted that TfL was currently undertaking a trial scheme on the main routes but Hammersmith & Fulham, Westminster and Kensington & Chelsea were expected to become the first local authorities in the country to introduce borough-wide schemes as the second phase of the pilot.

The Committee requested that ward members be consulted at an early stage in the development of the proposed integrated transport projects.

27. SPORTS PARTICIPATION IN PARKS AND OPEN SPACES

The Committee received a report which set out details of sports participation in the borough's parks, open spaces and leisure facilities in the light of recent pricing reviews.

Members noted details of sports booking policies and procedures, local sports facilities and current usage and pricing levels. The general trends pointed towards an increase in participation for most sports and at most venues. This was due to competitive and regularly benchmarked pricing, improvements in the grounds maintenance contract which improved playing surfaces and allowed more usage, enhanced floodlight provision and the impact of the Olympic Games.

There had also been a significant increase in the amount of school usage with many local schools dependant upon public parks and open spaces. Members observed that demand at Ravenscourt Park in particular was reaching challenging levels and enquired about measures to protect general public access. It was noted that all schools had been surveyed in connection with their sporting requirements in order to identify areas of conflict across each term. This had highlighted extremely high demand for all weather pitches in the afternoons and few gaps for other users. Two new netball courts had been marked out on the existing Ravenscourt Park tennis courts to relieve demand, with potential to provide additional facilities at Wormholt Park and Hammersmith Park.

Efforts were also being made to relocate school activities to currently underused locations such as Lillie Road Recreation Ground, although it was recognised that the cost and time of transportation would be obstacles. It was noted that the Linford Christie Outdoor Sports Centre also had capacity to accommodate higher levels of usage although some schools were put off by the conditions of the facility and travel costs. In response to questions from Members it was reported that differential pricing in the form of peak and off peak charges were already used to manage demand but there was scope to see if more could be done to encourage use during quiet periods. Attempts had been made to encourage schools with playing fields to share their facilities with some limited success.

The Committee expressed some concern at the possibility of incremental development on parks and open spaces in response to school demands for changing rooms and other associated facilities. Councillor Greg Smith, Cabinet Member for Residents Services, emphasised that there was no intention to lose utilised open space for these purposes. It was expected that existing structures or dead space would be used.

Officers reported that a greater emphasis was now being placed on addressing schools which currently refused to book and pay for their usage of the parks and open spaces. Sports Officers and the Parks Constabulary were now recording and reporting unbooked usage.

The Committee requested that a more detailed report be brought forward on the schools use of parks, containing data on the position at each individual park and the charges applied.

Members noted the barriers to sports participation which included work commitments, financial constraints, the lack of family based activities and limited awareness of the opportunities and facilities. A number of potential improvements had been identified with a view to improving the service and customer experience including the introduction of an online booking system and additional floodlighting to improve participation in the darker winter months.

Finally, the Committee received details of the Olympic legacy projects intended to encourage greater sporting participation and regular physical activity amongst priority groups and in those wards with the highest level of lifestyle related illnesses and the lowest levels of participation. These included redevelopment of the hard court facility at Ravenscourt Park, the delivery of a Sportivate programme targeted at 14-25 year olds who did little sport and work with charities to attract funding for new sport opportunities for residents with disabilities.

RESOLVED that -

a report be submitted to a future meeting setting out details of the usage of parks and open spaces by schools.

28. LEISURE CARD - REVIEW OF REVISED ARRANGEMENTS

The Committee reviewed the revised concessionary leisure card arrangements for borough residents in receipt of a range of benefits and full time students.

The Council's former Lifestyle Plus Scheme had been withdrawn early in 2012 and replaced with concessionary offers from the Council's private sector leisure providers, Greenwich Leisure Limited (GLL) and Virgin Active. Members noted details of the transitional arrangements, charging structure and early scheme usage. It was reported that there appeared to have been minimal impact on participation rates with usage of the various leisure facilities continuing to grow, although the annual increase had slowed slightly, from 14.1% in 2011/12 to 12.4% in 2012/13. Further analysis would be undertaken when data covering a complete 12 month period was available. It was noted that conversations were ongoing with GLL regarding open book accounting arrangements and income splits.

29. FLOODING SCRUTINY TASK GROUP - EXECUTIVE RESPONSE

Members welcomed the Executive response by the Cabinet to the report and recommendations of the Flooding Scrutiny Task Group. It was noted that all of the Group's 19 recommendations had been either approved or approved in

principle. The response of the other key stakeholder, Thames Water, was currently being sought.

30. WORK PROGRAMME AND FORWARD PLAN

The Committee gave consideration to its work programme for the remainder of the 2012/13 Municipal Year. It was noted that as a consequence of changes in the contractual arrangements for the provision of the Community Payback scheme the offender management item would now be received at the April meeting rather than January as originally scheduled. Members agreed that a brief report on the impact of the Westfield Shopping Centre on the community in Shepherds Bush should be submitted to the February meeting with a view to more in depth examination of specific issues at a later date if it was considered necessary. It was also agreed that the same meeting should receive reports on fly tipping and schools usage of parks and the issue of the preservation of local public houses should be added to the longer term work programme.

Members also noted details of forthcoming relevant key decisions which were to be taken by the Cabinet and would be open to scrutiny by the Committee.

31. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Committee noted that its next meeting was scheduled to be held on 15th January 2013

Meeting started: 7.00 pm
Meeting ended: 9.52 pm

Chairman

Contact officer: Gary Marson
Principal Committee Co-ordinator
Governance and Scrutiny
☎: 020 8753 2278
E-mail: gary.marson@lbhf.gov.uk