

AIRSPACE CHANGE

Progress since closure of Consultation period

It was anticipated that the Consultation Process (known as the Airspace Change Proposal - ACP) would have concluded in October 2018, by which time Leeds Bradford Airport would have had the opportunity to review and 'tweak' its proposal in the light of submissions made during the Consultation process, and submit it to the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA). However, last week I was advised that "A number of unforeseen issues have cropped up, all outwith our (the airport's) control, which has delayed the submission."

The Air Traffic Control Manager, Jim Wylie, and his team have been working closely with the National Air Traffic Services (NATS) and the CAA to overcome these issues, the exact nature of which has not been disclosed. Insofar as the details of the ACP (proposed changes) have been laid out in a very substantial report (available online by clicking on the following link: <https://www.leedsbradfordairport.co.uk/about-the-airport/airspace-change-proposal-consultation>.) I suspect the issues relate to the lack of orthodoxy and transparency in the way the Consultation was carried out.

The vast majority of the submission is said to be complete but LBA needs some guidance from the CAA as to how best to proceed. All being well the submission should be made later this month (November), and I will keep you posted on progress on receipt of additional information.

Once LBA is ready to present its completed Proposal, it is a CAA policy requirement that it is published in full, including all the detailed submissions from the Consultation, and the CAA then has 16 weeks to consider and comment upon it. During that period, the CAA remains open to further submissions upon that final document. It will be a major exercise to evaluate a document which already runs to 57 pages of detailed information, plus a further compilation document containing all the submissions from several hundred contributors.

Thus far, Menston's concerns about the ASC, which were submitted both by the MCA and the Parish Council (between October and December 2017 with subsequent added commentary) have been distilled by the agents for LBA to the following:

4.6.3 Menston Parish Council

Representatives of Menston Parish Council met with LBA staff on a number of occasions to discuss the proposed airspace change. Menston Parish Council members expressed concerns that LBA were not following the CAP 725 process, and were not providing sufficient opportunities for local community members to have access to applicable information or an opportunity to voice their concerns and have their questions answered. Menston Parish Council members also considered that the current Noise Preferential Routes (NPRs) were the best solution and that any change to the existing NPRs would have a negative effect on Menston and the surround area.

Clearly, that single paragraph goes nowhere towards describing the outcome of many months of detailed analysis and consideration, but it is mandatory upon LBA and their agents to disclose the full range of submissions (as received) to the CAA.

One of the principal concerns expressed by residents of both Menston and Burley was aircraft noise. The World Health Organisation has published a detailed international study of the implications of aircraft noise (as long ago as 1999) identifying the risks to human physical and mental health. LBA states that the noise emissions from aircraft departing

Runway 32 (between Menston and Burley) are below the threshold which may give rise to many such conditions, but there is no independent monitoring system by which to confirm those noise levels. LBA's Consultation Feedback Report makes the following comments:

5.2.4 Noise Impact on Local Residents

*LBA recognises that a number of local residents are concerned that the introduction of new procedures will result in an increase in noise. It should be noted that a number of these objections came from stakeholders who already consider the noise that they currently experience to be above acceptable levels. LBA has the overall aim to be "recognised as a pioneering organisation for the management and control of noise among airports of a comparable size, and demographic characteristics" and therefore the airspace change proposal has been undertaken to be consistent with this aim. The noise impact study indicates that there would be no increase in the number of residences exposed to noise at 60dB or above and a total of 600 residences would be exposed to levels below this level. Many objections came from local residents that were concerned about a perceived increase in traffic levels. **It is important to stress that this proposal concerns the introduction of new airspace and new procedures only and does not consider an increase in traffic levels.***

In other words, the current, ongoing Consultation Process considers ONLY the noise from the existing volume and type of air traffic and, although LBA has ambitious plans to increase (almost double) its passenger traffic by 2030, the current ASC has nothing to say about the future volume of traffic, types of aircraft or noise generation.

A related issue is also under consideration. Both Menston's and Burley's representatives have made observations that, following complaints about flights perceived to be off-track, the radar traces sent out by LBA do not seem to correspond with those direct observations. The question has been raised as to whether the tracking system is accurately calibrated. Thus far, LBA has responded that the same tracking system is used at other airports, including Stansted, and have not been the subject of controversy, so LBA continues to have confidence in it. However, there is to be a professional evaluation of the accuracy of the system and its recording process at LBA, and more will be available on this matter at a later date.

LBA's Air Traffic Control Manager indicates that he would be happy to work with me (and hence with MCA and the Parish Council) to organise a meeting similar to the one held in Burley on 9 October. There were, reportedly, "some very useful discussions from that event" so there is willingness to repeat it for Menston.

Dialogue is ongoing to try to hold a public meeting during January 2019, similar to that held in October 2018 in Burley, at which airport management will reveal the final Airspace Change Proposal as submitted to CAA, and clarify any issues relating to it.

Alan Elsegood, Menston's Rep. on the Airport Consultative Committee