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5<sup>th</sup> November, 2006

Planning Inspectorate  
Room4/40 Kite Wing  
Temple Quay House  
2 The Square  
Temple Quay  
Bristol BS1 6PNA.

**Re: APP/P1750/A/06/20246640/NWF**

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to you to make representation to defend the decision by Rushmoor Borough Council to reject the application by TAG Farnborough Airport Ltd for a variation to the limit on weekend & Bank Holiday aircraft movements. This limit was imposed upon Farnborough Aerodrome as part of the planning permission for the business aviation operation. I am a Hart District Councillor for the Church Crookham East ward. I present myself and my comments on behalf of the electorate whom I represent.

On behalf of my residents I urge you to **dismiss** this appeal.

I have tried to distil down the core concern of the majority of Church Crookham, Ewshot & Fleet residents who have contacted me on this issue. Their primary concern is obviously the further erosion of their amenity of peace and tranquillity at weekends. This is the time of the week when most people are at home, trying to relax and recuperate; enjoying their gardens and their local environment, the time when people's susceptibility to noise annoyance is at its peak.

It is instructive to note that the majority of complaints that I receive about aircraft over flying do not come from those of us who live directly under the flight path, but from those who live elsewhere in the Fleet & Church Crookham area. It is that all too regular occurrence; a flight that is 'compliant' but has had to deviate from the recognized flight path because of conflicting traffic, that cause the most complaints.

Conflicting traffic are predominantly recreational and sporting aircraft, of which there is obviously many more at weekends and on Bank Holidays. Consequently it is reasonable to expect that there is a higher percentage of Farnborough Aircraft over flying the greater urban areas because of conflicting traffic at weekends than during the week. It is disingenuous of TAG to suggest in their amended application that there are ways to limit such occurrences, because if there are why aren't they being used now, independently of their application, to benefit local residents?

TAG argue that they require this amendment in order to be financially viable. TAG have stated that their break even point for Farnborough is at 23,000 movements per annum. With the growth rates that TAG themselves have projected (growing from 25% to 40% of the UK business aviation market) this threshold will easily be reached in the next few years. An increase in weekend flying is NOT required for Farnborough to become commercially viable.

We must not confuse the commercial viability of Farnborough Aerodrome with the soundness of TAG's business plan. If they have indeed over invested in opulent aerodrome infrastructure then that is an issue for their share holders. Local residents should not be expected to pay with the quality of their lives for any business mistake that TAG may have made.

The underlying financial viability of the aerodrome is sound and it would be a wrong to consider that the continued use of Farnborough Aerodrome as a business aviation facility would be in jeopardy if this appeal were to be dismissed. Having said all this, the Planning Inspectorate will be aware that the financial viability of any one company is not a material planning consideration. Why should the Planning Inspectorate consider the financial well being of TAG when people are regularly being told that the value of their homes is not a material consideration in planning matters?

The doubling of the number of allowed flights on Bank Holidays and at weekends is only the headline figure in this application. More subtle are the categories of exempt aircraft which TAG are still insisting should be excluded from the weekend restriction. This has the potential to allow unlimited flying at weekends, as the number of aircraft which fall into these categories and the number of movements they may make is for all practical purposes, in TAG's eyes, unbounded. This exception was limited in the local plan to 'existing levels of activity' as at October 2000. However TAG are suggesting that any escalation in such activity does not eat in to their overall allocation. They see the weekend limit as theirs alone and in this application fail to recognize that the Local Development Plan intended that the number of exempt flights would itself be limited, to October 2000 levels.

In summary;

1. Financial viability of a project is not a material planning concern.
2. TAG by their own admission will break even at 23k flights (a target that they will reach in a few years regardless of if their appeal is allowed or not).
3. If TAG have over invested in their opulent infrastructure then why should ordinary people be made to pay through extra disturbance.
4. The majority of complaints that I receive as a Cllr. come from people annoyed by flights deflected over the urban area by conflicting traffic.
5. More flights will be ordered to turn early over the urban area at weekends due to the higher number of conflicting recreational aircraft.
6. Noise annoyance disturbance is more acute and affects more people at weekends

Specifically I raise the following counter arguments to the appellant's grounds of appeal;

*1. The decision failed to take account of the Government's commitment to business aviation. The decision also failed to recognise the stated Government policy within the future of Air Transport White Paper that Farnborough should be a key entry point for business aviation aircraft for London and the South East and that the Government expected this view to be fully reflected in the Local Planning System.*

I challenge how it is possible for Rushmoor Borough Council's (RBC) decision to be considered to conflict with the "future of Air Transport White Paper". The white paper does not state that the commercial profit of the aviation industry should be put before public amenity and the public's right to peace and quiet. The appellant has failed to demonstrate that the viability of the aerodrome is materially compromised by the restriction on weekend and Bank Holiday movements.

The condition was put in place to protect local people – the appellant has known about the condition from the start and yet despite the restriction has invested heavily in aerodrome infrastructure. Hence the appellant must believe that the aerodrome is viable within the existing planning conditions.

Consequently it is not reasonable to suggest that RBC's decision was against the spirit of the white paper.

*2. The decision took no account of the statement made to Parliament by a previous Secretary of State for Transport in July 1994 that the Government attaches great importance to the provision of business aviation facilities for corporate users to assist in improving industry's competitive edge.*

It is my understanding that many weekend movements from Farnborough Aerodrome are flights that are associated with recreational pursuits and are not contributing to the UK's industrial competitive edge. If the appellant feels so strongly about this issue they should perhaps dedicate all weekend flights to those associated with promoting the UK's competitive edge. It must be possible to differentiate between a private holiday charter and a captain of industry flying in the evening before for an early Monday morning meeting. The appellant has not demonstrated that they can not fulfil demand for true business aviation within their current weekend and Bank Holiday quota.

*3. The decision failed to take into account that the restriction on the movements was a major factor in causing many customers not to base their aircraft at Farnborough since they might not be able to use them at weekends. This in turn is an inhibiting factor in achieving the total of 28000 movements per year allowed under the planning permission.*

I assert that the responsibility of the local planning authority is to provide for a viable operation. The break even (viability point) of the aerodrome is widely considered to be 23,000 mpa. It is not the responsibility of RBC to ensure that the applicant can achieve the upper boundary of the imposed planning limit of 28,000 mpa.

The appellant is not factoring in the potential revenue growth from Royal and diplomatic flights which fall outside of the current planning restrictions.

*4. The decision failed to give due weight to the additional benefits that would result from increased weekend movements. In particular the additional use of local hotels, restaurants, car hire, and taxis, and all the other suppliers who support the airport and the aircraft.*

Within the 28,000 mpa limit there will be no overall traffic growth, any increase in movements at weekends will be at the expense of weekday flying. Therefore it is difficult to see from where the suggested benefit for local businesses will arise. The appellant should give a more detailed analysis of this benefit – otherwise this point is unsubstantiated.

*5. The decision failed to take into account the potential detrimental impact on the local, regional, and national economy.*

This point requires qualitative and quantitative supporting data before it can be taken in to consideration. The appellant did not supply this information to support the application for a variance in condition 11.

Once supported with applicable data it would be only then possible to contemplate a cost benefit analysis against the impact on the amenities and quality of life of affected local residents. I maintain that it is unlikely that an argument that shows a commercial benefit that outweighs the detrimental environmental impact will be established.

*6 The Officer's report only cites 'perceived noise impact which is not a valid justification for refusal of planning permission and does not have regard to the noise tests and analysis.*

I maintain that the noise annoyance experienced by local residents is very real. Otherwise it would not annoy people to the extent that it does and gets reported both to me as a Councillor. The extensive number of objections (in excess of 3,400) which were submitted against this application is a testament to how real, acute and wide spread the experience of real noise annoyance is.

*7 The Council concentrated on the increase in the area of the 50dB noise contour without stating that most of the increase is inside the airfield boundary. In fact the 57 dB contour should be the appropriate measure and this contour is almost entirely contained within the airfield boundary.*

The noise contours are what they are and yet still very many people report experiencing noise annoyance. Nothing in this application suggests that the noise contour is going to contract. I do not understand how the appellant can offer this as a ground for appeal. It is a null point.

The averaging of noise events (the Leq methodology) is held to only be appropriate when noise events are sufficiently frequent that these events tend to blend together to give a near continuous disturbance. More infrequent events are disturbing by their unpredictable occurrence and are hence more annoying than would be suggested by time averaging to give an Leq. I believe that the Department for Transport are themselves questioning the validity of the Leq model for aerodromes with traffic patterns such as those at Farnborough.

*8. The loss of amenity was stated to include interference when residents sit in their gardens in the summer. There was no mention of the fact that current planning permission does not restrict the proportion of movements each weekend in the summer.*

Although I welcome the concession on the mix of aircraft at weekends and on Bank Holidays, this concession does not provide sufficient mitigation to allay residents concerns over the application and this appeal.

I would like to take the opportunity to point out that the correct mechanism to seek a variance in any condition that governs the operation at Farnborough Aerodrome would be through the Local Development Framework (LDF) process. This would ensure that the correct level of community involvement and consultation would take place before any change could be allowed. It would also critically ensure that the demand for any change in conditions could be correctly assessed against a detailed analysis of both economical and environmental constraints in the wider context of the LDF.

I strongly request that the Planning Inspectorate/Secretary of State dismiss this appeal.

Yours faithfully,

Cllr. James Radley.