

TAG Farnborough Class D proposal.

By Peter Marshall, Spitfire Flying Club Popham and Mayor of Petersfield

Notes following a general meeting held at Lasham Gliding Club on Sunday 23rd March 2014

On Sunday March 23rd I attended this meeting which was chaired by Patrick Naegeli, the Chairman of the Royal Aero Club.

The meeting was called to inform those attending about the submission to the CAA by TAG Farnborough to make some major changes to the airspace of southern England and particularly between Southampton and Brighton and to Reading in the north of the region.

The presentation was an excellent interpretation of the facts behind the TAG proposal and was received by an audience of about 300 people, mainly pilots from surrounding clubs.

What became very clear was that the facts presented by TAG, which on an initial view may look reasonable to many people do not stand up to scrutiny once looked at carefully.

To me, the key facts were as follows:-

1. Aircraft movements at Farnborough have been averaging about 23000 pa for the last few years and the latest projection for 2019 is 32000 pa. Previous projections have been woefully overstated and therefore the 32000 pa may be questionable.
2. In contrast, GA movements in the area, excluding transit flights, are currently 252000 pa, more than 10 times those at Farnborough.
3. The average occupancy per flight from Farnborough is 1.5-2.5 persons per flight plus crew.
4. TAG are targeting the very rich and are trying to establish a priority for Farnborough flights at the expense, not only of General Aviation, but also local businesses in the Aviation Industry, particularly flying clubs, aircraft maintenance and support businesses. Goodwood appears to feel that it will be particularly hit hard.
5. Currently business jet flights into and out of Farnborough at usually at or above 6000 ft over Petersfield and Midhurst. New proposals will bring this traffic down to between 2500 and 4500 ft over Petersfield which will inevitably create a higher level of noise and pollution. There does not appear to be any logical evidence to support the need for this.
6. The current corridor between the Southampton Control Area, and the Farnborough Control Area, for GA VFR traffic, is 15 miles wide. This is already a congested area and, in marginal weather, flights tend to the centre of this corridor. The proposed new corridor is just 4.5 miles wide and this fact alone will cause a significant increase in the risk of a close proximity event.
7. The proposed air corridor will drop to 2500 ft over Petersfield and is of particular concern as it will cause an increase in GA traffic flying at between 2500 and 3500 ft and seeking to remain outside of controlled air space. This traffic will divert around

the airspace boundary over Petersfield and the additional congestion in this relatively narrow corridor is of major concern.

8. Advice from the meeting is for as many people as possible to respond to the TAG consultation process. It is not essential to use the “tick box” system on the web site but do use the opportunity at E17 to append a written submission.
(there is also the postal address for Objections on Popham website)
9. Submissions must be “personal” and not “cut and paste” and must be addressed to TAG and not, at this stage, to the CAA.
(though CAA are happy to be copied in via airspace.policy@caa.co.uk)
10. Copies of submissions should be emailed to the RAeC website at Farnborough@gliding.co.uk. The RAeC will pick these up, collate them and ensure that any response from TAG to the CAA is “honest”.
11. Write to your local MP. I intend to write to my local MP for East Hampshire, Damien Hinds, and others should do likewise.
12. We all need to make clear in our submissions that we oppose the ACP and TAG’s actions.
13. We must not give the impression of “anti-change”. We must be open to change and offer any ideas we have which will be helpful.
14. The intent of submissions must be that, despite what TAG say, there will be a serious impact on safety, there will be additional noise and pollution in many areas, and there will be an adverse impact on many aviation businesses in the region.
15. The clear message must be that the ACP is out of all proportion to the needs of the many and seems to serve the needs of a (very) few wealthy individuals, and of course TAG itself.

I emphasise these notes are my interpretation of the information disseminated at the Lasham meeting yesterday but I am happy to share my views if they should be of interest.