

**MINUTES
OF THE MEETING OF THE
COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY GROUP
THURSDAY, 18 JANUARY 2024**

Held at 7.00 pm in the Council Chamber, Rushcliffe Arena, Rugby Road, West
Bridgford

and live streamed on Rushcliffe Borough Council's YouTube channel

PRESENT:

Councillors G Williams (Chair), L Plant (Vice-Chair), M Barney, S Ellis,
G Fletcher, R Mallender, H Parekh, A Phillips and C Thomas

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Mr N Robinson – Airspace Change Director – EMA
Mr Y Reed-Aspley – Head of Corporate Affairs - EMA
Councillor A Brown – Member of ICC Committee

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

D Burch	Service Manager - Neighbourhoods
G Carpenter	Service Manager - Public Protection
T Coop	Democratic Services Officer

APOLOGIES:

Councillors J Billin

12 Declarations of Interest

Councillor M Barney declared a non-pecuniary interest as a Nottinghamshire County Council representative of the East Midlands Airport Independent Consultative Committee (ICC).

13 Minutes of the Meeting held on 5 October 2023

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 October 2023 were approved as an accurate record and were signed by the Chair.

14 East Midlands Airport - impacts of future flight path changes and aircraft noise in general

Councillor A Brown, Ward Councillor for Gotham and the Borough Council representative on the East Midlands Airport Independent Consultative Committee (ICC) addressed the Group to explain the role and remit of the ICC.

Councillor Brown informed the Group the ICC is a formal body who liaise between the East Midlands Airport and neighbouring communities, including local authorities, airport user groups and local interest groups and stakeholders. The ICC meet three times a year to enable frequent dialogue and engagement between the ICC and the airport. The Group were advised that there are also two sub-committees known as Monitoring, Environment, Noise

and Track (MENT) and Transport, Economic Development and Passenger Service (TEP), each of which meet three times a year also.

The Group noted that Councillor Brown had been a member of the ICC for eight years as the Nottinghamshire County Council representative and more recently the Borough Council representative.

Mr Reed-Aspley, Head of Corporate Affairs at East Midlands Airport delivered a presentation to inform the Group of the Airports Corporate Social Responsibility and Community Fund providing valuable contributions to the local economy.

The Group were provided with an airport update since the spiked increase in air freight during the pandemic. The Group were informed that passenger numbers in summer 2023 had returned to 95% of pre-pandemic levels, but the airport had seen a drop in air freight volumes due to changes in the economy and the war in Ukraine. However, Mr Reed-Aspley was confident that demand would begin to increase again.

Mr Reed-Aspley informed the Group that the airport was investing in passenger facilities with improvements to passenger and colleague security systems in line with new UK security regulations to be introduced in 2024 and improvements to the retail units, bars and restaurants and external improvements to the drop off area, short stay car parking and the surrounding roads to make it easier to navigate and safer for pedestrians.

Mr Robinson, Airspace Change Manager at East Midlands Airport provided a summary of the airports Corporate Responsibility including the airports approach to:

Zero Carbon Airports - supporting decarbonisation of the entire aviation industry – targeting net zero carbon no later than 2038.

Opportunity for All – supporting career and employment opportunities, including training and skills opportunities – airport academy creating jobs within the airport community.

Local Voices – East Midlands Airport Community Fund - Providing funding and support to community groups and community projects.

Mr Robinson highlighted the airports draft Noise Action Plan which sets out the actions committed to by the airport to mitigate the impact of aircraft noise between 2024-2028 and reviewed every 5 years thereafter.

The Group were informed of the airports noise and track monitoring system which enables the monitoring and compliance of noise from aircraft which checks and records the path of every aircraft arriving or taking off from the airport. These monitoring systems helps the airport to understand trends, compares performance and provides robust data for noise modelling. It was noted that aircraft operations and noise levels can be accessed and monitored through a public WebTrak tool.

The Group were informed of 6 fixed noise monitors positioned around the airport boundary and Councillors were given the opportunity to request mobile noise monitoring equipment for summer 2024.

In addition to the noise monitoring, Mr Robinson informed the Group of some new actions, including:

- A ban on the noisiest rated aircraft at night.
- Noise charges that incentivise quieter aircraft and a Noisy Aircraft Penalty Scheme.
- A reduction of jet aircraft training flight hours to between 08.00-12.00 and 14.00-18.00.
- Sound insulation Grant Scheme re-opened to residents who received a grant more than 20 years ago.
- To reflect recent inflationary pressures, the airport is increasing:
 - The Sound Insulation Grant Scheme grant levels,
 - The contribution they make the EMA Community Fund

In concluding, Mr Robinson provided a brief outline of the national and future picture for UK airspace and highlighted the Airspace Modernization Strategy (AMS) which forms part of the Governments Jet Zero Strategy. The Group noted that as part of the AMS, all UK airports are required to redesign their airspace under 7,000ft and modernising the network above to coordinate a national programme and create a coordinated masterplan for airspace change, to deliver quicker, quieter and cleaner journeys.

The Group were informed of the EMA 7 stage process, Stage 1 (Define) and Stage 2 (Develop and Access) already completed and stage 3 (Consult/Engage), a local communities consultation expected in spring 2025. Further information of the process can be found on the EMA website: www.eastmidlandsairport.com/community/future-airspace

Councillor Thomas, Ward Member for East Leake, expressed some concerns in respect of some of the options being proposed by EMA which could lead to more noise disturbance for East Leake residents. Councillor Thomas highlighted that there had been, and still is significant housing development around East Leake and neighbouring parishes and asked whether the Council could influence the standards of buildings for any new development near the airport, adding that as a local Councillor she regularly receives complaints regarding aircraft noise with many complainants taking to social media for comment. Mr Robinson explained that EMA have to provide a comprehensive list of options and welcomed Councillors feedback and engagement in the consultation process and reminded Councillors of the public portal on the EMA website. Mr Robinson explained that it is unavoidable not to fly over East Leake as this is the established corridor which is closely monitored to encourage a safe decent for incoming aircraft, expressing that the airport authority is doing all it can to bring aircraft noise down and meet customer and local community expectations.

The Group were advised that in respect of building standards, as the planning authority, the Council can only provide planning guidance.

With regards to complaints Mr Robinson advised that complaints received at the airport had stabilised and advised there have been very few complaints from East Leake. In addition, Mr Robinson informed the Group that complaints are the driving force for the action plan, adding that everyone benefits from transparency, and it is EMA's policy to share information with the public and Mr Robinson asked Councillors to direct resident complaints directly to the EMA website.

The Service Manager – Neighbourhoods confirmed that the Council receives very few complaints, and the Group were reminded that aircraft noise is not currently a statutory nuisance in the UK. Therefore, it is not covered by the Environmental Protection Act 1990 or the Noise Act 1996, which means that local authorities do not have the legal power to take action on matters of aircraft noise.

The Chairman asked a specific question relating to the mobile equipment the airport can offer to communities to monitor noise and asked how residents would request this. Councillor Brown advised that a request is more commonly made by a Parish Council and can be found on the EMA website. Mr Robinson added that a community outreach representative from the EMA regularly attend local Town and Parishes and some local events where mobile monitoring requests can be addressed.

The Group asked specific questions relating to the timescale for phasing out the noisier aircraft and how would this effect the community funding generated from the fines and penalty charges if quieter aircraft are not breaching the Noisy Aircraft Penalty Scheme. Mr Robinson explained that EMA takes its obligations seriously which is why they have introduced bans on noisier aircraft, but highlighted that they cannot enforce airlines to change, and a better outcome for all is to encourage the phasing out of noisier aircraft.

With regards to the EMA Community Fund the Group were advised this remains healthy at £250k, with an annual donation to community groups around £50k in the past few years. Mr Robinson expressed the airport were keen to publicise the Community funding to Parish Council's and local community groups who may benefit from it and the airport advertise this by way of a community flyer to over 40,000 homes as well as on their website and by the open reach events.

Members questioned the role of the local authority as highlighted in the Officers report, in respect of airport expansion and decisions about whether aircraft can operate at night, and how many aircraft are allowed to fly at on any given day. Mr Robinson explained a runway extension was last approved 10 years ago and would have been referred to the ICC for consultation and considered by the local planning authority. The Group were asked to note that the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) has the final say on where aircraft are allowed to fly and has a legal obligation to consider noise impact as well as safety and the efficiency of airspace when deciding a proposed route is acceptable.

The Group asked whether the East Midlands Freeport would have any impact on the number of freight aircraft and whether the airport has the capacity to cope with the likely increase in freight. In response, Mr Reed-Aspley advised that there is no anticipation of extra freight and explained the Freeport is designed as an inland port, the tax benefits it creates are there to attract business investment to the region and any increase in freight would be gradual.

With regards to the future aspirations of EMA, Mr Robinson explained the airport is looking to move away from a manual visual approach for arriving aircraft with the aim to introduce a more systemised approach in the future. In regard to future aircraft noise, Mr Robinson informed the Group that EMA were already seeing new quieter aircraft and predict more sustainable aviation with advances in alternative aviation fuel and fuel efficiency.

The Group thanked Mr Robinson and Mr Reed-Aspley for their detailed and informative presentation that assisted the Group with their scrutiny debate and provided a clearer understanding of the airports operations and their desire to engage and keep local communities informed.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Communities Scrutiny Group:

- a) Considered the information presented and provided feedback to the EMA representatives;
- b) the Council run's a publicity campaign to promote the EMA complaints procedure;
- c) and requested that the EMA Community Fund and Insulation Grant Fund be shared and promoted across the Council's social media channel's

15 **Work Programme**

The Chairman advised the Group that the meeting date scheduled for June would be confirmed at Annual Council on Thursday 23 May. In addition, the Chairman advised the Group that currently the June meeting had only the one scrutiny item and encouraged members to submit scrutiny matrices for the Corporate Overview Group to consider.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Group agrees the work programme as set out below:

21 March 2024

- Streetwise In-Sourcing
- Carbon Management
- Work Programme

June 2024 (date to be confirmed)

- Use of Community Facilities
- Work Programme

Actions – 18 January 2024

Min No.	Action	Officer Responsible
14	Members asked for the Link to the EMA Public Portal be shared with the Group	Geoff Carpenter – Service Manager – Public Protection and Safety

The meeting closed at 8.48 pm.

CHAIR

DRAFT