26th August 2020

CAGNE response to Decarbonising of Transport - deadline 31st August 2020

https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/creating-a-plan-to-decarbonise-transport-call-for-ideas

The Government Department for Transport have followed up the extensive consultation on the above subject with a small consultation. Below is the CAGNE response to the second stage of this consultation, in which we focus on the decarbonising of aviation and the carbon ramifications of accessing an airport.

- Aviation is a luxury industry that is a major polluter, contributing to approx. 5% of world emissions and yet policy is seeking to find short-cuts by saving small amounts of emissions to seemingly justify growth. This is unacceptable.

- Aviation currently does not account for all its emissions and this is seen as unjust. Each airport and airline should be accountable for emissions during arrivals and departures, and for the duration of each flight. This would then present a truer picture of the pollution caused by flying.

- Government policy should not mislead citizens into believing that modernisation of airspace is solely to reduce CO_2. Any CO_2 saved will undoubtably vaporise due to the unsustainable growth of aviation.

- Direct flights to save CO_2 could impact new communities who have not been consulted over NSP policy. This is fundamentally flawed, as these UK citizens have not had a fair voice in policy-making and should not be sacrificed for tiny, if any, carbon savings.

- A Government has a duty-of-care to all citizens and yet airspace changes are being pushed forward with speed throughout Covid-19, with a narrow and selective structure of consultation and engagement; decarbonising of transport is an example of lack of engagement and understanding of what modernisation of airspace to save CO_2 actually means to those on the ground.

- The Department for Transport has selected noise groups, an environmental group, and aviation to be party to ANEG as a form of community input but leaves no space for communities that could be impacted by policy. If government is only consulting those currently impacted by aircraft noise, then they will only hear one side of the story. If you only consult environmentalists, you would not allow for a balanced view to be formed, i.e. CO_2 savings and aviation profits vs. human suffering of noise and emissions.

- Aviation should be limited, even capped, until an alternative to fossil fuel can be found, so that it can truly aim to meet the crucial net-zero carbon targets. This said, an alternative fuel must be tested to ensure that it is not more polluting than fossil fuel, nor damaging to our planet, such as palm oil.

- It is unrealistic to believe that car-sharing and cycling will be the answer for low-carbon transport to an airport; our concern is Gatwick Airport. Workers, travellers and freight are not realistically going to cycle to the airport or share cars – as any parent who has participated in car-sharing schemes knows, they do not last. An airport that has no alternative to road access should be limited in growth. This is the case at Gatwick Airport, where bus services normally have to be subsidised by the local authorities, train fares are too expensive for workers, and freight cannot move to rail.

COVID-19 and carbon burn

It has been a quiet time for communities that are normally impacted by aircraft noise. We all witnessed bluer skies and more stars at night because the world saw a significant drop in emissions and pollution as a result of the Covid-19 lockdown. We are being led to believe that the aviation business should now return to business-as-usual due to unemployment figures and airlines being in trouble, but little is being said, until recently, about how they are truly to tackle their carbon emissions.

The Committee on Climate Change has long been voicing that government policy has 'gaps' when it comes to aviation growth and reducing carbon. July seems to have been the month for government to finally wake up to the fact that burning fossil fuel to fly people and goods around the world is bad news for our planet and must be addressed. A new government council, called 'Jet Zero', has been set up to tackle the issue that everyone in aviation has been wanting to ignore.

The aviation industry continues to use 'smoke and mirrors', endeavouring to prove that they can reduce carbon and become net-zero carbon through technology – cutting corners in flight whilst impacting new rural communities (as proposed in the modernisation of airspace - FASIS), while simultaneously allowing growth. One recent example is that KLM has just been found-out in court to be misleading flyers with their statement over using biofuel, which was a tiny proportion, but they claimed it was flying biofuel planes.

Airbus say they could launch a commercial airliner running on green hydrogen produced from wind and solar by the early 2030's. Tapping renewable hydrogen for aircraft propulsion is "one of the most promising" routes for the aviation sector to meet its zero-emissions goals, said Glenn Llewellyn, Vice President, Zero Emissions Technology, at Airbus [i]. Plants to produce synthetic jet-fuels could be part of a net-zero mix, but significantly, not zero-emission when burned in flight.

Short-range electric flight is already a reality, but only for the very smallest planes. Multiple firms, including UK start-ups, are developing electric vertical take-off and landing craft (E-VTOL), or flying taxis. Battery weight and range means that manufacturers currently view larger electric planes as feasible only for short-haul flights – and even then, the focus is largely on hybrid-electric, with jet-fuel needed for take-off.

These sound like significant advances and bring hope for greening-up aviation in the future. Admittedly, the industry has been hit hard by Covid-19 and it is not easy to watch unemployment figures and businesses being in trouble. However, maybe now is the time for the government to consider how its taxation (or lack of) encourages unnecessary flying and which, if increased, could bring changes to aviation regarding reducing the sector's emissions. There is also enormous potential for new "green" businesses and jobs – aviation recovery/growth is not the only solution.

Last year we saw widespread Climate Emergency marches and there is no doubt that consumers are opening their hearts and minds to the issue, aided by the clear skies and clean air as a result of the Covid-19 lockdown. Also, lobby groups such as CAGNE came up with environmental schemes – Pledge to Fly Less – seeking to educate, not demonise, the flyer and encouraging them to consider alternative forms of travel to reduce their personal carbon footprint. "Frequent flying" is the main issue – if we could just ensure that the top 1% of English residents were limited to just one flight per year, we would, at a stroke, remove the need to waste billions on the current UK-wide programme of climatically suicidal airport expansions [ii].

Specific Consultation Questions answered

Questions 5, 9 and 10
Answer: No airport growth and a reduction in planes flying whilst they continue to burn fossil fuel.

Question 6
Answer: Stop internal flights

Question 7:
Answer; There are none.

No local authorities or government take account of the emissions produced by the vehicle's airport attract in the form of workers, travellers and freight as well as aircraft arriving and departing. This should be taken into local emissions so that airports are not seen as purely an economic benefit. Airports should be limited to growth if they can't take vehicles from the road. They should also not be permitted to state they are net-zero by gimmicks such as carbon trading and buying reusable energy.

Question 8
Answer: Stop internal flights, invest in trains
Use internet instead of flying
Holiday in the UK to boost UK purse

Question 9
Answer: Use the trains not planes

Question 10
Answer: It is difficult to make informed decisions

Question 11
Answer:

- The approximate measurement of greenhouse gases emitted as a result of your journey
- A comparison of the greenhouse gases emitted as a result of your journey relative to other forms of transport
- A comparison of the greenhouse gases emitted as a result of your journey relative to other lifestyle choices

Question 12
Answer: We would suggest subsidising the rail system and removing subsidies from aviation, as trains are much greener forms of transport. We would also suggest that internal flights are stopped.

Question 13
Answer: We propose - No airport expansion; no new runways; ban night flights (arrivals/departures) to bring back dark skies and stars; and reduce the number of planes flying instead of unsustainable growth which is damaging the planet.

An introduction to CAGNE

CAGNE, Communities Against Gatwick Noise Emissions is the umbrella aviation community and environmental group for Sussex, Surrey and Kent.

CAGNE was formed on 17th February 2014 due to the ADNID trial departure route being instigated by Gatwick Airport for a PRNAV route (concentrated flight path) over rural areas not previously flown over.

CAGNE has grown and diversified since as an umbrella community group to embrace the many issues that Gatwick presents through their desire for growth including new flight paths, changes to flight paths, increases in noise, and a major campaigning/lobbying force opposing the second and third runways.

CAGNE was at the forefront in opposing the expansion of Gatwick Airport with a second runway for sound reasons and will object strongly to the emergency runway being used as an interim measure.

CAGNE has an extensive network of members covering areas to the east, west, north and south of the airport concerned with totality of aircraft noise produced by arrivals and departures, environmental issues, airspace and surface access for Sussex and Surrey and beyond.

The CAGNE committee consists of volunteers/residents to the east and west of the airport coming from many professional backgrounds, including aviation.

An Annual General Meeting open to the public takes place each year in February where the chair and committee are elected.

CAGNE sends out informative newsletters to members, consults its members to formalise responses, and is active on social media – Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

CAGNE has an environmental campaign called **Pledge to Fly Less**.

CAGNE also operates an independent forum (www.cagnepcforum.org.uk) to engage and consult with town and parish councils called the **CAGNE Town and Parish Council Aviation Forum**. This is for councillors and is run by councillors.

CAGNE is not just concerned with Gatwick Airport, but all airspace, and gets involved in other airports in the UK and overseas, the environmental damage aviation has on climate change, and air quality worldwide.

We work closely with CPRE Sussex and Surrey and other CPRE offices, as well as other bodies such as Sussex Wildlife Trust, Aviation Environment Federation, Members of Parliament, local authorities and other aviation community groups in the UK and overseas. CAGNE has a seat on Gatwick groups – Noise Management Board, NCF and attends GATCOM.

The umbrella aviation community and environment group for Sussex, Surrey and Kent –

you can trust CAGNE to be fair to all communities

Est Feb 2014
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www.cagne.org
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www.cagnepcforum.org.uk
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[i] https://www.rechargenews.com/transition/jet-zero-airbus-sees-airliner-fuelled-by-wind-and-solar-hydrogen-by-early-2030s/2-1-847144

[ii] https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/airline-industry-travel-aviation-fuel-tax-carbon-emissions-climate-emergency-a9631921.html