

BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL

FROM: Head of Natural and Built Environment

REPORT NUMBER **H14**

TO: STRATEGY COMMITTEE

DATE OF MEETING: 1 May 2008

NATS: (FORMERLY NATIONAL AIR TRAFFIC SERVICES) PROPOSED CHANGES TO AIRSPACE OVER BABERGH AND EAST ANGLIA

1. **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To advise Members of the proposed changes to airspace use over Babergh District and to seek agreement to a representation to NATS before the closing date of 22 May.

2. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 That the Deputy Chief Executive be authorised to send a letter of objection on behalf of the Council to NATS for the reasons outlined in paragraph 5.6 of the report.

3. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1 There are no direct financial implications of the representation.

4. **RISK MANAGEMENT**

This report is most closely linked with the Councils Significant Business Risk No.4 Political Leadership and Governance

Risk Description	Likelihood	Seriousness or Impact	Mitigation Measures
The Council will not be seen to be taking a lead and using its influence on an important issue	C. Significant	3. Marginal	Make a formal representation on behalf of the Council

5. **KEY INFORMATION**

- 5.1 NATS who provide air traffic control services for 15 major airports and enroute services for commercial aircraft flying across the U.K. have proposed changes to the use and operation of the airspace over Suffolk. The key changes are for Stansted, Luton and Cambridge arrivals. There are many other air movements over Suffolk which will not be changed.
- 5.2 The main reason given for the changes is to cope with increased air traffic and reduce congestion in the air. According to NATS this should also have environmental benefits. These proposed changes are not the result of a new runway at Stansted or the outcome of an appeal relating to the alteration of conditions restricting passenger numbers and flights at Stansted. If either of these changes occur then further alterations will be needed to airspace arrangements.

- 5.3 Currently there are 2 stacks 1 partly over Sudbury and partly in Essex and 1 near Royston, which are used both for Stansted and Luton Airports. This is not considered ideal and three new stacks are proposed: one for Luton (over Cambridgeshire) and two for Stansted over Suffolk, one between Newmarket and Haverhill and the other over the countryside between Lavenham and Ipswich and between Hadleigh and Stowmarket. The majority of the second stack called the proposed Stansted Eastern Hold is over Babergh District.
- 5.4 NATS have stated that one of their aims for these proposals is to minimise the number of people affected by the revised stack locations and show that these proposals will reduce the numbers of people affected. This means that they are now relocated to areas which are relatively sparsely populated, the area proposed in Babergh is also currently tranquil. Some people around Sudbury will benefit from the proposed changes and should experience less overflying and the Dedham Vale AONB is also protected.
- 5.5 The majority of the flights to Stansted over Suffolk will be directed via the new hold area over the district but not all will be stacked. At less busy times more direct routes will be used. The maps included in the consultation show that most of the flights over the district will be above 6,000 ft. The stack will be from 7,000 ft to 14,000 ft, with 1,000 ft spacing between aircraft. Air movements will be funnelled from East Suffolk to an area from which covers the western boundary of the district.
- 5.6 As flight numbers increase the stack will be used and a specific flight path from the stack to Stansted will be flown. Aircraft would leave the lowest level of the stack and head in a continuous descent towards Stansted. The route would be approximately over Hitcham, Monks Eleigh and Newton, then it loops around the south of Sudbury. The proposed stack passes close to Lavenham, which is an important tourist centre with a nationally important historic environment. Only a limited amount of information is provided in the consultation and so it is not easy to evaluate the alternatives or propose a better solution.
- 5.7 The noise impact on one of the quieter parts of the district will be noticeable and people living in these areas will experience disturbance from the flights when they are outside but this will be at a level lower than a statutory nuisance, but perceived as significant because of the area's existing relative tranquillity. The noise and visual impact of aircraft movements could have an adverse impact on Lavenham as a tourist destination. The full consultation document is available in the Members' Room. It is therefore proposed that a response be sent to NATS to object to these proposals that addresses the following matters:
- A statement that the consultation information makes it difficult to understand the full impact of the proposed changes.
 - A reiteration of the previous grounds of concern expressed by Babergh in response to overall expansion of flying activity via Stansted airport.
 - Opposition to increased noise affecting Babergh, together with increased climate change impacts.
 - Opposition to impacts affecting Lavenham.

6. **APPENDIX**

(A) Summary of noise information affecting the Babergh area.

It was intended that pages E33 to E38 of the NATS consultation document would be attached as the appendix, but NATS did not want them viewed in isolation and so Members can read these pages in the Members' Room in the complete document, or via the web link <http://www.consultation.nats.co.uk/uploads/TCN-PartE-CAMBS-SUFFOLK-and-NE-ESSEX.pdf>. Pages E33 to E38 relate to noise effects of the proposed airspace changes.

7. **BACKGROUND PAPERS REFERRED TO:**

NATS: Terminal Control North Consultation Document on Proposed Changes to Airspace.

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