

CRAMOND & BARNTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Incorporating Cramond, Barnton, Cammo & Quality Street (West)

Minutes of Meeting held on 21 January 2016 in Cramond Kirk Millennium Hall

Present: Andrew Mather (Chair), Ian Williamson (Secretary), Peter Scott, Jean Morley, Percy Feketey, Marion Mitchell, Bert Scott, David Belfall, Euan Pearson and Gena Wylie. A total of 30 people were in attendance including Councillors Lindsay Paterson, Alastair Shields and Norman Work.

Welcome and introductions

The Chair welcomed those attending and noted apologies from Jane Neville, Mark Whittet, Isla Browning, Grant McCulloch, Ross Wilkinson and Robin White.

Minutes of the previous meeting

Subject to an amendment which had been sought by Euan Pearson about traffic restriction measures on Gamekeepers Road the minute of the meeting held on 19 November 2015 was approved.

Police Report

Housebreakings and attempted housebreakings continued to be a feature of criminality within the CC area. Whitehouse Road, Cammo, Inveralmond and Essex Road had all seen incidents over the past month. Many were opportunistic and residents were advised to be vigilant and where they saw people who they did not recognise acting suspiciously they should consider contacting the Police.

Airport Noise

The Chair began by introducing Mr Brough and Mr Robertson and by describing the format for the discussion to follow. Mr Brough would go first setting out the concerns of those members of the local community who supported the contention that the impact of the Airport on the amenity of the locality was unreasonable and that this needed to be addressed. Mr Robertson would follow setting out the Airport's response to the concerns. The discussion would then be opened to the floor and if required a vote would be taken.

Mr Brough began by explaining that he had lived in the area on Whitehouse Road for 31 years. In making his approach to bring this matter before the CC he was however not only reflecting his concerns about the behaviours of and impact caused by the Airport but was also conveying those of many others living around Whitehouse Road and those other streets affected by being in the flightpath. He handed over a petition signed by some 124 residents who had put their names to the statement;

“We, the undersigned, hereby support the proposal to form an Airport Action Group, to represent the interests of the Community, in respect of the activities of the Edinburgh Airport”.

Edinburgh Airport gave scant regard to neighbours. Yes, it brought much to the City and to its economy but it was driven entirely by the need to increase flight turnover and profit. The focus was on selling and becoming bigger. The locality had 2 representatives on the EACC but engagement was a sham -meetings were a box-ticking exercise. Complaints seldom led to change. The pressure for more services had obliged the Airport to look to increase the frequency to which it could dispatch aircraft and that was what had prompted the ill-fated trial last summer where the Airport's desire to set off aircraft at 1 minute intervals to the west had met with such a weight of opposition that the trial had been suspended.

The impact on Cramond related to both noise and pollution. The extent depended upon the wind direction and on the exact flight path used by the pilots. Pilots were not meant to deviate from the flightpath determined by NATS but many did and it appeared without sanction by an Airport that seemed more concerned about avoiding confrontation with airline operators than it was about being a good neighbour. It was this deviation in flights taking off north-easterly that brought more flights across Cramond than should be the case. The Airport ATC seemed persuaded that there should be no reasons as to why these flights should not all go due north from take-off before banking east. Mr Brough had discussed this issue with Gordon Robertson as recently as 15 December and he had not had a response – although it was possible that the response would be forthcoming from Mr Robertson in his presentation.

The letter which the Airport's Chief Executive had sent to the local community in recent days had, if anything, fuelled the concerns. The terms were ambiguous – on the one hand it was clear there was to be a trial involving an increase in the frequency of flights being dispatched north-easterly from every 2 minutes to every minute yet there would be no increase in the number of flights – albeit the objective was about future-proofing the Airport. And if the trial was successful then the increased flight frequency north-easterly would be adopted.

Mr Brough contended that the Airport should also consider some minor adjustments to the westerly flightpath into the airport; the approach could be more above open countryside than above Cramond. He also mentioned concerns about the complaints process which failed to promote service improvement; the increase in night flights; failure to impose penalties on airlines not using flight paths; black spots on laundry; performance based reporting. He said there was widespread support for an Airport Action Group to lever better engagement with the Airport and he hoped that those present at the meetings would approve such a proposal which had the support of more than 120 people in the area.

Mr Robertson began by confirming that he had met with Mr Brough and others before Christmas and that a number of issues had been raised. The Airport and he were committed to responding to concerns from wherever these may originate – individuals, community councils, other groups. It was regrettable if there was a view that the EACC was a box-ticking group; that did not square with how it felt from Mr Robertson's

point of view. There had been a number of issues on which there had been some challenging exchanges including for example on noise, performance monitoring and on vehicle drop-off charges. The Airport was acutely aware of the need to continuously strive to achieve the right balance between the imperative of enabling growth in its business with the impact on neighbours. It recognised the concerns about noise. At present the Airport was statutorily fit for purpose; it complied with the regulations. But it was also aware that it was not fit for purpose going forward when it factored in the expected growth assumptions. The Airport was now entering a Masterplan year and it needed to review where change and improvement was necessary. For example, it was recognised that the complaints line needed to be fit for purpose. It also recognised that it needed to learn the lessons from the engagement exercise of last Summer where it had not written to communities in West Lothian most affected by the summer trials prior to them commencing.

The main issues exercising the Airport concerns the departure routes out of Edinburgh. At the moment flight departures out of Edinburgh operated broadly to a ratio of 2:1 over West Lothian against north-easterly and Cramond and the Firth of Forth. This was wind-direction dependent. The Airport needed to increase the frequency of aircraft throughput from the tarmac and hence the trials. The Airport was open to suggestions about the exact detail of flightpath directions but what it could adapt was entirely dependent on the technical assessments of what was possible and safe and that responsibility lay with NATS. Mr Robertson and colleagues from the Airport had been down at the NATS base in Southampton and had left them to work on some options including a northerly departure path that would avoid Cramond. He would report back to the community on the outcome to these considerations as soon as he could.

The Airport had been criticised for not having written to all affected residents prior to the commencement of the trial affecting West Lothian last summer. The letter to the Cramond community about the imminent trial of increased frequency of north easterly departures was to ensure Cramond residents were aware of the trial before it started. He noted that some people had commented that the letter was difficult to understand; that there were apparent inconsistencies. There was a FAQs on the website and he was happy to return to a future meeting of the CC to present the data that emerges from the trial.

The issue of aircraft residue had been one which had only recently been raised with the Airport. They had asked the Edinburgh Council to carry out an environmental impact study; tests were to be taken. The issue of penalties would be reviewed. Modern SIDS were far more tightly controlled via RNAV; their swathes are much smaller and there is very little deviation. The current SIDS are old dating from the mid-1970's and do not have this modern technology and provide pilots with a lot of leeway.

The discussion moved on to open forum. The chair began by explaining that the CC did not operate and could not operate as a management committee in relation to the operation of the Airport. But where there were issues or initiatives to which it took exception then that was made abundantly clear at the EACC meeting. There was a suggestion that perhaps not all that should have received the recent letter had done

so. Questions were raised about the criteria for the trial. It was to be a technical trial to see if the increased flight frequency could be achieved and if so, what would the impact be. It was about planning for future growth where additional capacity would be needed. The Airport was responding to actual passenger demand and also to Government encouragement. Current growth trends suggested that it may be 2042 before the level of demand would support an additional runway.

In response to a question about the outcome to the trial covering increasing the frequency of flights departing over West Lothian Mr Robertson said that the result would be released shortly. From a technical point of view, the trial had been a success; aircraft congestion on the runway had significantly reduced. There had however been a huge number of complaints from West Lothian residents. Between the end of June 2015 and mid-September when the trial was suspended there had been in excess of 8,000 complaints. Normally the Airport received of the order of 25 complaints per quarter. On the specific issue of the complaints line Mr Robertson acknowledged the past shortcomings of the service but added that all calls were now logged and received a response.

It was asserted that the alignment of the runway had been determined by the direction of the prevailing winds at the time it was constructed and that had been in the interests of flight safety. That wind direction had changed subtly over time. Aircraft on take-off were now crabbing to correct their flightpath. The alignment should be adjusted to better reflect the current direction of the winds. Mr Robertson said that he was not certain that the runway was so aligned for the reasons suggested but he would look into this and report back. A number of other issues were raised including concerns about the impact on amenity and residents' ability to enjoy their gardens in the summer, a plea for external verification of performance data and the apparent reluctance on the part of the Airport to penalise airline operators not adhering to NATS flightpaths.

The Chair drew the session to a halt with a vote which supported the call for an Airport Action Group to engage with the Airport in representing the interests of the Community. ^{*(1)}

Planning Issue Report

Peter Scott advised that the Cammo Home Farm was under offer and that it was understood that the existing construction was likely to be demolished with 2 private dwellings being built on the site. Plans for the erection of a large illuminated hoarding at the corner of Craigmock Road and the Queensferry Road had been rejected.

Peter reminded those present that the closing date for submissions in response to the latest planning application for the development of a care home behind Cramond Glebe Road was 27 January. Those who had still to submit views were asked to take into account the fact that the proposal actually involved two separate but connected applications, one concerning the proposed demolition of the existing dwelling on the site (required because of its position in the Conservation Area) and the second covering the development of the Nursing Home. Peter outlined briefly the key issues

to be covered in the submission which would be sent from the CC including scale, overdevelopment, materials, access and egress, traffic congestion etc.

Secretary' Report

Ian Williamson referred to the report which had been distributed at the beginning of the meeting the substantive part of which was a record of a recent meeting with Dave Sinclair and Audrey Primrose of the CEC West Team covering all aspects of the Action Plan. Further recent changes in personnel in the West Team was again frustrating; a follow-up presentation from Dave Sinclair and Audrey Primrose was programmed for the March meeting.

Councillors Reports

Edinburgh's budget for 2016/17 had been the subject of discussion in the City Chambers earlier in the day. Waste collection had been the subject of heated exchanges with some areas reporting they had yet to have a collection in 2016. Councillors were trying to hold officials to account for serious service shortcomings. Concerns were raised about the lack of road maintenance and the increasing problem of potholes; relative spend on road maintenance was inadequate – and a false economy.

Next meeting

- **The next meeting will be on Thursday 18 February 2016.**

Final Version Approved on Thursday 18 February 2016 but with caveat that ^{*(1)} did not adequately cover the discussion about the relationship of the AAG to the CC.