**Response from Damian Hinds MP to the Farnborough Airport Post Implementation Review (PIR) to the Civil Aviation Authority**

**Monday 26th June 2023**

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to comment on the Post Implementation Review of the recent airspace changes made at Farnborough Airport. I have followed the process closely as some parts of East Hampshire, as you know, are currently overflown by air transport movements (ATMs) from Farnborough.

Despite this, I’m afraid I am not in a position to evaluate, or even comment on, whether the anticipated impacts and benefits in the original airspace change proposal and published decision are as expected. I am not entirely convinced that you will find many individuals outside of the aviation industry who would be able to make this assessment. Rather than comment on the PIR process per se, I am therefore going to limit my comments to the broader themes of engagement and communication. I will leave the technical evaluation to those that have the expertise to do so.

**Accessibility**

This is an incredibly long and complex document, with six supporting annexes, and relies on a certain understanding of aviation, ATMs and how noise levels are calculated and assessed. I think it would have been helpful to provide a short summary of the PIR or an easy read version alongside the main document. If you want stakeholders and members of the public to understand and comment on documents that you publish; documents related to issues that directly impact them, you should be doing as much as you possibly can to facilitate this. I have previously seen a commitment by the CAA to make ‘sure that our published information on the Farnborough Airport PIR is as clear as possible.’ It is disappointing to see that this commitment has not been met.

**Communications and transparency**

The PIR documents are two thirds of the way down your webpage on Farnborough Airport and are not easily identifiable, even now.

I am aware that my office spoke to your communications team about making it easier to locate the PIR documents on your website. Positioning them at the bottom of a long page of technical information, without including a date as a reference point, does not give the impression of transparency. I am sure this is just standard practice, but it certainly doesn’t help people wanting to genuinely engage in the process. I did make this point about better engaging the community in our most recent stakeholder meeting, but I am not sure my concerns have been taken on board.

**Substance of the PIR**

I do not profess to be an aviation expert so am not able to respond to the many points and observations highlighted in Farnborough Airport’s PIR document and its annexes. The only point I would make is in relation to air quality assessments. In the main document, Farnborough Airport states that: *“There is no requirement to assess local air quality as there are no designated air quality management areas (AQMAs) located within an area where the change would impact aircraft below 1,000ft. Therefore it is concluded that the implementation has not led to a breach or worsening of legal air quality limits.”* It simply does not follow that because monitoring is not in place, air quality has not worsened under this airspace change. It only means that Farnborough Airport (or yourselves) haven’t assessed it. These are two separate points. I would ask you to encourage Farnborough Airport to look again at air quality monitoring in this area.

**Constituent comments**

I have provided below a summary of concerns flagged to me by constituents who are currently affected by ATMs out of Farnborough. Whilst these are not specific comments on the PIR, I think it is important that you are aware of the strength of feeling about the operations of Farnborough in the surrounding villages:

*It is Sunday afternoon and we have had low flying Farnborough traffic almost all day, much of I would suspect above the permissible loudness level. This is a disgrace of course.*

*I want to know how the development of Farnborough fits in to the government strategy for new zero. I suspect it doesn’t and if you were held to account by the electorate you would fail to get their support for this venture.*

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*Some time ago I wrote to you about the proposed further expansion of activities at Farnborough.*

*Let alone any discussions of further expansion at Farnborough, the existing newly approved expansion is already blighting the lives of thousands of residents on the flight paths. The noise is every day and often continuous, with one aircraft landing as one takes off. The noise is quite intolerable.*

*And for what? To support the executive jet industry. An industry that, by definition, must have a limited life if we are to believe the predictions about global warming and the need for net zero. Executive jets, those that use them and those that facilitate their use are a disgrace. Generally considered the most wasteful form of transport per passenger of any. How any government could allow its expansion at this time is unbelievable. The claims by Geere and Macquarie is typical of the worst sort of “greenwashing” we get today. The sole purpose of their efforts is to maximise their activities and profits with no regard to the discomfort they cause.*

*Farnborough needs to reduce its traffic now. I don't expect the CAA to intervene but I do expect the government to do so. This government needs to invest in high value R&D and associated manufacturing, not low paid service industries which, quite frankly, are here today, gone tomorrow.*

*And it needs to respect and uphold the quality of life of many thousands of its population.*

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*“Premium air travel connectivity” is one of the worst examples of obfuscation I have heard in a while; it is simply providing executive jets to a very small number of rich, selfish, self-important people who have no regard for the effect their activities have small communities like mine and the environment in general. Executive jets are one of the worst, maybe the worst, example of noise pollution, energy usage and environmental damage per passer of any form of transport.*

*I am sure you are not naive enough to believe that Macquarie have any interest environmental issues. They are venture capitalists whose sole aim is to make money. As I think is generally accepted VCs are the new “unacceptable face of capitalism”.*

*The jobs at Farnborough are relatively low paid service jobs, with no long term future. When Macquaries can make more money by switching “premium air connectivity” to another European hub, as will surely happen, the jobs will go. What should have been developed in Farnborough, given its history, are high grade engineering jobs in sectors like the nuclear industry.*