Department for
Transport

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Mr P Riley
Chairman, Farnborough Aerodrome
Consultative Committee
Wincombe Cottage
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Dear Mr Riley

Farnborough Airport - Public Safety Zones

Thank you for your letter of 11 May regarding Farnborough Airport's PSZs.

The Secretary of State for Transport has a statutory role in the planning process with regard to airport-related planning applications raised on appeal. It would therefore been seen as prejudicial for officials to comment on, or discuss, matters that are subject to a planning application and may come before a planning inquiry.

The Government's Public Safety Zone (PSZ) policy for civil airports is based on objective assessments of the individual risk to people on the ground in the vicinity of airports. The risks are assessed using a computer-based model developed for the purpose. The full methodology is set out in the Green Book[1].

In March 2010, the responsibility for the day to day administration of the Public Safety Zone (PSZ) policy was transferred from the Department of Transport (DfT) to the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA). The scope of CAA's role is limited to the implementation of new PSZs and the review and update of existing PSZs. DfT retains overall policy responsibility for PSZs, including responsibility for the contract with NATS, who model PSZ contours on behalf of DfT in accordance with the methodology set out in the Green Book.

In relation to planning applications for airport development, the provision of indicative PSZs is a matter between the airport and local planning authority concerned. As previously advised, the work that NATS undertook for TAG Farnborough was on a commercial basis and we are unable to compel either company to release it. The Department had no involvement or input into this work.

[1] Third Party Risk Near Airports and Public Safety Zones" was published in October 1997. This is available on the DfT website or by contacting the address above.

The Department and the CAA will not get involved in the modelling of updated PSZs at Farnborough Airport until such time that the PSZs are formally reviewed. In relation to Farnborough airport, the current PSZs were last reviewed in 2004 and modelled on the current planning condition, which limits movements to a maximum 28,000 per year. In accordance with the policy prescribed in DfT Circular 01/2010, which states that third party individual risk contours around airports will be remodelled at intervals of about seven years, the next review of the PSZs at Farnborough is not due until 2011. However, depending on the outcome the Farnborough airport planning application, this timing may need to be reviewed.

Yours sincerely

Stuart Voller