

FACC Questions – February 2023

Question from Cathy Murrell, BVFoE, and Farnborough Resident put forward by Jules Crossley.

Dear Secretary,

I received the question below from a member of Blackwater Valley Friends of the Earth who lives in Farnborough this morning. They are going to be out of the country when we have the meeting, so they can't attend this one in person or virtually - but I will report back and they can read the minutes of course.

The question is:

Having attended meetings of the FACC over the past 2 - 3 years I have become increasingly concerned about its ability to remain objective and to represent the views and concerns of the local community.

I am particularly concerned about air quality around the airport, for example, and I don't feel this matter has been sufficiently covered by FAL or the FACC. Can the Chair and members of the committee assure me, and other concerned residents, that they are able to represent the general public as effectively as they seem to represent the operator and users?

I hope the issue of the public being able to watch the meetings has also been resolved, and we will be able to attend the meetings virtually going forward?

Many thanks

JC - February 2023

Not mentioned at the meeting - FAL operates air quality monitoring as per the UK government guidelines and reports on this biannually to RBC. Reports can be found on RBC's website.

**Put forward by Jules Crossley – Black Water Valley Friends of the Earth**

Dear Secretary,

I received the two articles below from a member of the public who is a member of a local environmental group, who is concerned about the potential lack of value of offsetting. They would like me to ask FAL to respond to the criticism that offsetting is largely valueless and therefore not an effective tool in achieving net-zero?

As you will see from the article regarding EasyJet's change of approach on this, many large airlines are moving away from using offsetting as part of their net-zero policy, or as a tool to help passengers offset the CO2 they're producing by flying.

I feel that the person who asked the question doesn't just want a response - they would appreciate some discussion, as I suspect would many members of the FACC. I think offsetting is something that we need more information about - and vitally, information from an independent source. Opinions around this seem to be evolving. I'm sure FAL will be able to give some specifics around the detail of how and where they offset. I also thought that information and further discussion about offsetting

could potentially be covered in the talk on sustainable aviation.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/aerospace-defense/easyjet-shifts-focus-cut-own-emissions-rather-than-off-setting-2022-09-26/#:~:text=LUTON%2C%20England%2C%20Sept%2026%20%28Reuters%29%20-%20EasyJet%20%28EJ.L%29,efficient%20aircraft%2C%20sustainable%20aviation%20fuel%20and%20operating%20improvements.>

Could I please ask: **In light of recent investigations and press coverage about the potential worthlessness of offsetting, could FAL please give details to explain how offsetting can realistically remain an effective part of their net-zero strategy?**

Jules Crossley.

**FAL Response:**

You are likely aware the Guardian article criticising offsetting was one side of the story. I have attached an article ([Verra Response to Guardian Article on Carbon Offsets - Verra](#)) in which is a link to the other side of the story from Verra, the world's leading standards for climate action and sustainable development.

Nevertheless, offsetting is not the focus of the FAL Net Zero Roadmap. FAL is actively investing in infrastructure/new technologies to ensure it meets its targets. As you are aware, Net Zero is about reducing your own emissions to as close to zero as possible, as opposed to just offsetting.

In response to your question, the UK Government and aviation industry do not currently feel offsetting is a *worthless* element. FAL will keep up to date with how a multitude of issues like these progress over time and make adjustments to its strategy where applicable.

Hopefully this is helpful in answering your question, do let me know if you need any additional information.

Mark Sanderson - Group Corporate Responsibility Manager.

**Additional Question:**

As I understand it, the questioner would like an answer from FAL at the FACC meeting about how much they are relying on offsetting as part of their net-zero strategy.

FAL respond at the Meeting - FAL 's Net Zero pathway as outlined in our Roadmap to Net Zero by 2030 we will reduce our Scope 1 and 2 emissions (owned emissions) by 91%, leaving residual emissions of less than 200 tonnes of carbon equivalent (inclusive of the Aviator Hotel). Offsetting will be used to address these residual emissions.

Mark Sanderson - FAL – Responded – FAL 's Net Zero pathway as outlined in its Roadmap to Net Zero by 2030. FAL will reduce our Scope 1 and 2 emissions (owned emissions) by 91%, leaving residual emissions of less than 200 tonnes of carbon equivalent (inclusive of the Aviator Hotel). Offsetting will be used to address these residual emissions.

Question from Hugh Sheppard – CPRE

Farnborough Airport and Net Zero FAL's 'Roadmap to Net Zero by 2030' represents a staging post on Government's path towards its legal climate change objective of national 'Net Zero by 2050'.

In common with all other airports, the Roadmap sets out to show how FAL intends to decarbonise Farnborough's ground-based emissions, while acknowledging but not addressing, the associated in-flight emissions that represent more than 10 times the problem. With climate change as the biggest global pollution issue, I feel that this forum should discuss how FAL and the FACC deal with the responsibility.

Ten days ago, DEFRA published a policy paper on 'Environmental Principles' that will become binding on all Government departments later this year. It's a very important report that I hope FACC will circulate, embodying 5 principles that have already been adopted into government policy. The 4th principle is particularly relevant:

**'The polluter pays principle.'**

Description: The polluter pays principle means that, where possible, the costs of pollution should be borne by those causing it, rather than the person who suffers the effects of the resulting environmental damage, or the wider community'.

The implication is that it is the users of Farnborough Airport who bear responsibility for the totality of the related emissions, ground-based and in-flight. It is their choice to use private aviation and the associated resources, among which even the Aviator hotel has already been incorporated into the Roadmap's tables.

Also, thanks to the 2019 Roadmap tables and a statement of passenger numbers for the same year by FAL's CEO, evidence is to hand in the public domain that offers the FACC and the Local Authority the opportunity to break down Farnborough Airport's emissions on a user per capita basis, including their Scope 3c in-flight emissions.

An outline of the basis for this has already been made available to FAL and could also be appended to the minutes. My own calculations suggest that the shared per capita responsibility of each private jet passenger taking a Farnborough Airport return flight in 2019, on the basis of all related emissions (including ground - based and positioning movements), had averaged CO2 emissions on a par with the annual emissions per capita of the average member of the UK population.

**My question + supplementary is:**

'In order that Farnborough Airport can be seen to progress decarbonisation in line with government's Net Zero strategy, does the FACC agree it would be helpful to establish a benchmark for the per capita emissions of airport users? If so, will FAL contribute to the analysis or prefer to leave it to others?

This appendix represents a digest of information from the public domain to support the following question + supplementary:

**'In order that Farnborough Airport can be seen to progress decarbonisation in line with government's Net Zero strategy, does the FACC agree it would be helpful to establish a**

**benchmark for the per capita emissions of airport users? If so, will FAL contribute to the analysis or prefer to leave it to others?**

FAL's Roadmap to Net Zero by 2030 policy paper as published in June 2022. **Website report may be downloaded from:** <https://netzero.farnboroughairport.com/>

**Government Policy Paper 'Environmental Principles' was updated on 31 January '23:**  
[www.gov.uk/government/publications/environmental-principles-policy-statement/](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/environmental-principles-policy-statement/)

'The 5 principles in this statement play an important role to support Environmental Improvement Plans and to delivering on our net zero commitment to tackle climate change.' These include the Polluter Pays Principle.

**FAL's Roadmap pages incorporate 2019 data and include:**

P5. Mention of the Aviator hotel, calculation on basis of CO<sub>2</sub>e and categorisation of emissions, including those of FAL 'Limited Influence' on aircraft in-flight above 3,000 ft. referenced as Scope 3c.

P6. Under 'Controllable emissions' FAL reports airports 'increasingly' estimate Scope 3c emissions of airlines and operators. Their omission from Airport calculations is explained.

P8. 'Relative Emissions Performance' tables set out such Scope 3c emissions as per P6, comparing F'boro's 119,000 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e with a Hub Airport (H'row) at 20 m. tonnes. Proportionately, the airport-based emissions are similar; 9% (F'boro) 10% (H'row).

From the P8 tables, the total of airport-related emissions can be assessed from the sum of Scopes 1, 2 & 3b (airport-based) and Scope 3c (in-flight) emissions.

P14. Roadmap words 'our absolute carbon emissions impact' are misplaced as this relates only to Airport emissions of 10,856 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e. However, the data offers the true total impact, enabling per capita emissions to be derived from the number of passengers.

Passenger numbers, quoted by FAL's CEO Simon Geere in Tempus Magazine, June 2021:  
<https://tempusmagazine.co.uk/news/interview-simon-geere-on-paving-the-way-for-sustainable-private-jet-travel-as-new-ceo-of-farnborough-airport>

*'Being the largest private jet airport in the UK, Farnborough saw 32,000 movements and 62,000 travellers in 2019'.*

Hence, from FAL's own data, the total emissions of private aviation at Farnborough can be assessed on a per capita basis in line with Government's Environmental Principles. Subject to corrections, caveats and confirmation, the 'Question' stands.

Hugh Sheppard (CPRE Hampshire) 2 Feb 2023.

Mark Sanderson - FAL responded –FAL uses tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> per MTOW (maximum take-off weight) of the aircraft flown as the most relevant metric for measuring its carbon emissions. Per passenger metrics do not quantify absolute levels of carbon and are easily distorted by the introduction of larger aircraft carrying more passengers and emitting more carbon overall.

Simon Geere – Stated for the record, that the Tempus magazine article had not given correct passenger numbers as background information. FAL holds the view that such a metric was not relevant for managing performance because larger flights with more passengers could be encouraged which would improve the measure but would result in more emissions. FAL instead uses carbon emissions per flown tonne (based upon the MTOW (maximum take-off weight) of the aircraft) which it believes is a more relevant metric for managing emissions performance.

Hugh Sheppard - Said no-one was suggesting larger aircraft or scheduled services to reduce per capita emissions, but users of the airport have no idea of their individual carbon footprint, while FAL does have that data but chooses not to use it. Such collective data could show future improvements from hydrogen or electric powered aircraft, etc. but instead these emissions are treated as nothing to do with FAL - and they are.

Simon Geere - Said FAL's Roadmap shows MTOW as the most appropriate metric. The metric will more accurately reflect future improvements in aircraft technology without the distortion caused by varying passenger loads.

Hugh Sheppard - Asked if he was running a train, would the weight of the train be most relevant or the passenger numbers.

Simon Geere – If the target was to reduce the per passenger emissions of the train then he would sell more tickets cheaply to more people. The emissions per passenger would improve but the absolute emissions would increase, as the train would have a heavier weight to pull.

Hugh Sheppard - Said individual emissions would then go down, and FAL could do the same by investing in alternative means of propulsion. Instead FAL just says 'nothing to do with us'.

Simon Geere - Refuted that because the Roadmap says a lot about it. The Roadmap assumes aircraft technology improves over time.

Hugh Sheppard - Said that was only for the 9% of airport-based emissions when it is the individual users who are responsible for all the airport and in-flight emissions.

James Radley - Reminded the meeting of Hart & Rushmoor Councils' 'Carbon Emergency' policies and the seriousness of these matters. Both Hart and Rushmoor and many other local councils, because climate change is a subject we all have to take very seriously. He said that as a global society we care about whether we can have individuals unfairly contributing to our carbon footprint and Mr. Sheppard makes a very legitimate point. He concluded by saying while this was a serious matter he did not think it was an issue for the FACC.

The Chairman - Said this was an important discussion that had made some valid points.

Simon Geere - Said that FAL is committed to leading in aviation sustainability.

Hugh Sheppard - Said he wished to see the information in FAL's possession more in the open between FAL and the FACC, also referring SG to the 'Polluter Pays principle'.

Simon Geere - Reiterated his earlier quote from a Government policy directive, that a balance must be sought. He didn't see that as for the FACC, since the business need to travel is covered as a UK national matter.

Hugh Sheppard - Asked if Simon Geere would correct the passenger figure from Tempus Magazine.

Simon Geere - Understood the reason, but instead quoted TAG's CEO from the 2009 Planning Application that put 2.5 persons per flight into the public domain, which he had no reason to change.

Geoff Marks - Asked if FAL would agree to this number being used by the Committee, together with the data Hugh Sheppard had put forward.

Simon Geere - Said this would serve no purpose to FAL which would not be using it, but agreed the Committee was free to use it.

The Chairman thanked Hugh Sheppard for his question, saying this would have to be discussed in the future and the FACC would have to keep looking at it.