

The Future of **Our** Airspace

What's happening?

The Civil Aviation Authority has asked all airports to look at how they use airspace below 7,000 feet and suggest changes. Manchester Airport have jumped at the chance and have started a consultation period on what people want the airport to do. This short period began at the end of August and ends on the 6th of October. So by the time you read this it may already be too late for you to have your say. I only became fully aware of what was happening on the 12th of September and then only because I'm a parish councillor. I have since been trying to inform the residents of Knutsford, Ollerton and Marthall and beyond.

Everyone in a rectangular area bounding Hebden Bridge, Sheffield, Market Drayton and the Wirral have been allowed to vote for their preferences, and no weighting has been added to location. This means that not only have very few residents local to the airport been informed but that those that have, will have an equal voice to someone living 50 miles away.

Weighted questions

To compound matters the questions contained in the questionnaire are extremely leading and weighted. For example: *"Should we continue with current arrangements and ways of operating or design new routes to achieve the best possible outcomes for reducing noise and emissions while increasing the efficiency of the airport"*. That particular question has a preamble mentioning *"We already operate in a way that limits the effect of aircraft noise. This includes the early south turn before Knutsford only being used by quieter aircraft... Some of these ways of operating are voluntary... others have been written into legal agreements. As we design future flight paths, we need to consider whether we should continue operation as we have previously agreed..."*. And that's just one question in ten.

History

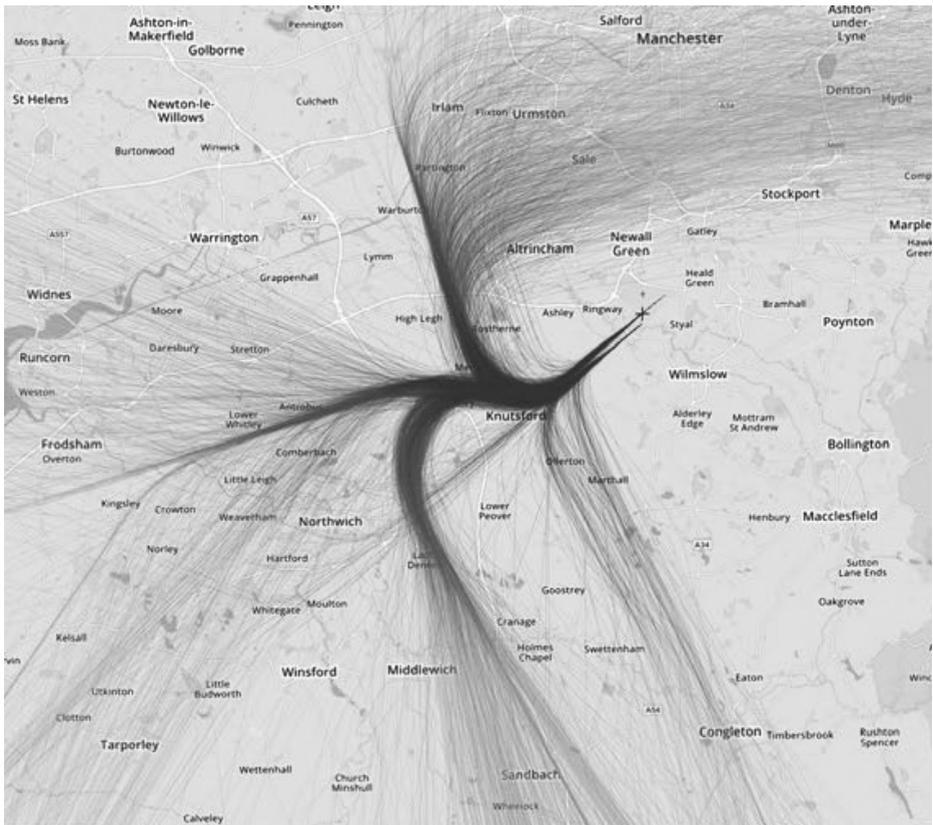
With the help of other former and current parish councillors we're trying to find details of the "106 agreement" that Manchester Airport refers to in the above text. It is our belief that when the second runway

was built, they signed a legal agreement that planes capable of seating more than 100 passengers wouldn't turn over our parish.

What could it mean for us?

On average about 80% of flights take off to the west and the diagram below which shows actual flight paths of planes. Currently planes all fly north over Tatton Park. You can see a few lines going directly over Knutsford and a few going over our parish. Planes heading south, loop around Knutsford and head over Lach Dennis, and planes heading east, head over Mere and High Legh before turning right over Greater Manchester.

Potentially if we can't protect ourselves with the legal agreement, Manchester Airport could seek to re-route all those aircraft south, directly over our parish.



What next?

Manchester Airport could decide that the existing routes are fine and that nothing needs to change, but this seems unlikely given the nature and tone of the initial questions and the money they're spending on the process.

Whilst the airport want to implement any changes in early 2022, the development of any new routes won't be complete until mid-2020. They will then have a second round of consultation from late 2020 until early 2021. By then we will have a clear idea of what we face and can organise our opposition accordingly.

Fortunately we're not on our own. Lots of areas nearby will also be affected, including Knutsford, Toft, Lower and Over Peover, Goostrey, Allstock, Lower Withington and Cranage. We're reaching out to these parishes to coordinate our opposition to any such change.

We will also have some "heavy hitters" on our side. We've contacted the office of our MP Esther McVey and have meetings arranged with her and Goostrey Parish Council have contacted their MP Fiona Bruce who in turn is speaking to the airport CEO Andrew Cohen.

Your parish council will be working hard to protect the airspace over our parish and make sure you're kept up to date with any developments in coming months.

If you read this before the 6th, you can add your comments on the following link <http://manchesterairport.co.uk/designquestions>



Question Advice

If you do get chance to answer the questions you need to make your own decisions on how to answer but please consider the following points when answering...

Question 1 - "New Areas" potentially means "Your parish" since you're not directly overflown by aircraft taking off now. Any talk of "emissions" is fallacious and deceptive. Manchester Airport couldn't care less about CO2. One flight to Beijing emits more CO2 than months of planes "going around" Knutsford. They're currently increasing flights by 7% per year and they want that to increase. That amounts to a 97% increase in flights and CO2 over the next 10 years.

Question 2 - "Spreading Out" seems like a fairer and more egalitarian choice but in this context it just means "fly more planes in more directions"

Question 3 - This is a trick question. "Fly over built-up areas" could mean "The centre of Knutsford". So you're potentially damned either way answering this.

Question 4 - "Most direct route" is possibly shorthand for "straight over Knutsford" or "quick turn south over your parish" Again they're using talk of CO2 to lure you to the answer they want.

Question 5 - Again a leading question, but clearly "current arrangements" and "legal agreements" must be honoured.

Question 6, 7 - No advice to give

Question 8 - Almost a repeat of 2. They clearly want you to vote for Option 1 because of all the talk of emissions.

Question 9 - It's almost funny that the first three examples they give are "parks, historic properties and nature reserves" It would be more honest and transparent if they just said "Tatton Park" and "Rostherne Mere