

17 June 2020

Stansted Airport – Future Airspace project

The Consultation Institute (tCI) has overseen Stansted Airport's (STN) engagement on design principles, at Step 1B of CAP1616 and endorses the approach within its Future Airspace Project.

This has involved reflecting on the engagement strategy prepared by STN and the approach it has taken based on the advice the Consultation Institute (tCI) has provided to it directly and to its parent body, the Manchester Airports Group (MAG), and sister airports Manchester Airport (MAN) and East Midlands Airport (EMA).

The work previously conducted at MAN and EMA helped to ensure the engagement activities planned by STN were coherent and comprehensive. An approach to engagement was developed, stakeholders and members of the general public were recruited to participate in focus groups; an online portal sought and accepted additional submissions from a wider group of stakeholders, whether previously engaged with the Airport or not. A Stakeholder Reference Group (SRG) was appointed, briefed and inducted; it informed the Airport's approach, with recommendations for strengthening it in places, that were accepted by STN.

However, towards the end of the planned engagement with stakeholders, which incorporated tCI's recommended approach of two phases of face-to-face focus groups and workshops, the UK Government announced lockdown due to COVID-19. This resulted in STN having to adjust its planned face-to-face activities, taking an agile approach to adjust its remaining engagement approach, to permit stakeholders to continue to input to, and shape the Design Principles.

In February 2019, tCI provided guidance to the MAG team working on Future Airspace Projects across each of the three airports on the best practice approach to Step 1B at a joint workshop.

The work previously conducted at the group level at MAG has provided STN with a logical course of direction and a consistent Group approach, albeit that STN had to adapt its process, in the latter stages, to react to the lockdown due to COVID-19.

Throughout the process the main points of contact have been the Future Airspace Project Manager and Corporate Affairs team. The elements of engagement have been conducted

by a third party supplier, YouGov, whose work has been found to be of a superior quality, thorough and robust.

The reports produced are well-reasoned and written in clear and accessible language, thereby offering demonstrable evidence of the successful engagement. In addition, YouGov was able to rise to the challenge of COVID-19 and present reasonable adaptations to its planned approach to substitute face-to-face engagement with online focus groups. Eight additional telephone interviews were also arranged to replace the final phase one focus group, *inter alia* seeking younger people's views, which had to be cancelled at short notice in the second half of March 2020; three online focus groups were arranged for the second phase of engagement at Step 1B in May, facilitated by YouGov and observed by STN, tCI and some members of the SRG. Observers of these sessions reported skilled facilitation with participants having equality of opportunity to make views known and to be heard. YouGov was also commissioned to code and analyse the online submissions, which ensured quality and consistency; the SRG had suggested this safeguard which was willingly adopted by the Airport.

For STN we provided direct advice and guidance on, and endorsement of, the following elements:

- Stakeholder Identification and Mapping
- Engagement strategy of stakeholders for Step 1B
- Development of Design Principles
- Stakeholder and Public Engagement Reporting
- Establishment of a Stakeholder Reference Group (SRG), comprising local voices, reflective of varied interests, asked to concentrate on the process alone; the SRG offered valuable early advice on presentational matters that the Airport took on board, and latterly on the Covid mitigation plans
- Redesign of approach to Step 1B engagement following COVID-19 requirements

For MAG we had provided advice and guidance on the following elements; this advice and guidance was then directly applied without intervention from the Institute:

- Objectives
- Risk identification
- Brief for research agency
- Stakeholder engagement methodology
- Planning and timetabling of activity

The Institute is satisfied that the approach taken up to March 2020 aligns with our best practice standards.

Further, we believe that the redesign of the engagement approach post March 2020 took account of the COVID-19 restrictions and mitigated risk accordingly. It is the view of tCI that the approach in its entirety has been delivered with a high degree of professionalism. It should also serve to build trust and strengthen relationships which will pay dividends in the subsequent stages of this Future Airspace project. We believe that the responses and inputs from stakeholders and the general public (through carefully curated Focus Groups and other means - online and through '*business as usual*' listening) - has been successfully captured in this report and the supporting documents.

The resulting Design Principles therefore, to our satisfaction, comply with the Statement of Need and approach to engagement, and we believe are consistent with the requirements of CAP 1616.

The Consultation Institute
June 2020