

Airport Report for Chew Magna Parish Council Meeting

On 1 September 2026

PCAA request the Support of MPs for an independent aviation ombudsman to be appointed to review complaints on airport matters

The PCAA have written to Dan Norris – North East Somerset and Hanham, Sadik Al Hassan MP – North Somerset, Tessa Munt MP – Wells and Mendip Hills regarding the Civil Aviation (Consumer Protection and Regulatory Reform) Bill — request for an independent aviation ombudsman

“I am writing on behalf of the Parish Councils Airport Association which represents constituents in your area to request that you make representations to the Government in support of amendments to the Civil Aviation (Consumer Protection and Regulatory Reform) Bill [HL] to provide for the establishment of a genuinely independent aviation ombudsman for communities affected by aviation regulatory decisions, including those relating to airspace change.

The Bill contains provisions concerning consumer protection, aviation regulation and airspace change. Although measures to strengthen passenger rights are to be welcomed, it is equally important that residents and communities affected by aircraft noise, air pollution, concentrated flight paths and wider environmental impacts should have access to clear, affordable and independent redress where regulatory decisions materially affect their daily lives.

At present, affected residents and community groups have only very limited practical avenues of challenge. Judicial review is prohibitively costly for many communities and is generally confined to matters of law and procedure rather than the substantive effects of a decision. Existing complaints mechanisms, including internal Civil Aviation Authority review, the Independent Complaints Assessor and referral via a Member of Parliament to the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman, do not amount to a direct, specialist and independent route of redress for communities seeking to challenge aviation regulatory outcomes (CAP1616 CAA consultation process).

This is of particular significance because decisions concerning airspace change can alter the skies above homes, schools and local communities for many years. If existing call-in or challenge routes are removed, narrowed or rendered less accessible, affected communities may be left to bear the consequences of airspace redesign without any meaningful right of appeal other than costly litigation.

I therefore respectfully request that you urge Ministers to support amendments to the Bill establishing an independent aviation ombudsman with authority to review complaints from communities directly affected by Civil Aviation Authority regulatory decisions. This should include decisions relating to airspace redesign, the concentration of aircraft noise, environmental impact and the fairness and accessibility of consultation processes.

Such an ombudsman should be demonstrably independent of the Civil Aviation Authority and the aviation industry; accessible to residents and community organisations without prohibitive cost; empowered to consider the substance and practical impact of decisions, rather than procedure alone; and capable of making recommendations that strengthen transparency, fairness and public confidence.

I would be grateful if you would write to the Secretary of State for Transport and the Aviation Minister asking whether the Government will bring forward, or support, amendments to the Civil

Aviation Bill to create such an independent oversight mechanism. I would also ask that you seek clarification as to what direct redress will be available to communities where regulatory decisions made under the Bill result in increased aircraft noise, pollution or environmental harm.

I would welcome your response and would be grateful to know what steps you are willing to take on behalf of constituents affected by aviation policy and airspace change.

Yours sincerely,

Tony Jay
Secretary to the PCAA."

Sadik Al Hassan MP reply

Thank you for contacting me about the Civil Aviation (Consumer Protection and Regulatory Reform) Bill.

I appreciate the concerns you have raised about the impact that aviation regulatory decisions can have on local communities, particularly where these may result in increased aircraft noise, air pollution and other environmental effects. It is important that communities affected by these decisions are properly consulted and that their concerns are carefully considered.

The Civil Aviation (Consumer Protection and Regulatory Reform) Bill is intended to strengthen passenger protections and modernise aviation regulation. For example, it will strengthen the Civil Aviation Authority's consumer enforcement powers, support the modernisation of UK airspace and provide a more flexible regulatory framework to respond to technological change across the aviation sector.

I recognise aviation can have a range of impacts, including on noise and local air quality. The Government is taking action to reduce or mitigate these impacts through the airspace modernisation programme. Under the programme, the Department for Transport is providing up to £2.3 billion of funding over 10 years to support the development of low and zero emission aerospace technologies through the Aerospace Technology Institute.

Airspace change proposals must continue to follow the Civil Aviation Authority's Airspace Change Process (CAP1616), which requires engagement with affected communities before proposals are approved. The Government has also reminded airports that they are responsible for providing noise insulation and other support to communities affected by aircraft noise where appropriate. In particular, major airports are required to produce noise action plans every five years.

The Bill has completed its passage through the House of Lords and is due to begin its Commons stages in September. After the Bill receives its second reading, a committee of MPs will be appointed to consider it in detail, line-by-line. It is possible that your proposal for an independent aviation ombudsman may be discussed at this stage, as the MPs on the committee will be able to consider amendments on a range of issues.

I have shared your letter with Ministers and asked them to consider the proposal, and I will certainly bear in mind your views on community engagement and oversight as the Bill continues its progress through Parliament.

Tessa Munt's reply

Thank you for your message.

I appreciate the Parish Councils Airport Association taking the time to set out its concerns about the Civil Aviation (Consumer Protection and Regulatory Reform) Bill [HL], particularly as it represents town and parish councils around Bristol Airport, including communities in my constituency.

I understand why residents affected by aircraft noise, air pollution, concentrated flight paths and wider environmental impacts want a clearer and more accessible route of redress. Decisions about airspace change can have long-term consequences for people's homes, schools and communities, and it is not reasonable if the only practical route for challenge is complex and expensive litigation.

My Lib Dem colleagues and I have long argued that aviation policy must properly account for its climate, environmental and community impacts. We support stronger passenger rights, but that should not come at the expense of proper transparency and accountability for communities affected by aviation regulation. Our wider policy is to reduce the climate impact of flying, including through a moratorium on net airport expansion until a national capacity and emissions management framework is in place, and by ensuring new transport infrastructure supports the UK's climate targets. I have also supported parliamentary work on sustainable aviation, including votes on the Sustainable Aviation Fuel Bill, where the Lib Dems backed measures intended to help aviation decarbonise.

I agree that any regulatory framework for aviation must command public confidence. A genuinely independent mechanism able to consider the practical impact of decisions, including airspace redesign, noise, pollution, environmental harm and the fairness of consultation processes, is a reasonable request for Ministers to address. It would be bonkers for communities to be expected to live with the consequences of major changes over their homes without any meaningful, affordable and specialist route to raise concerns.

I will raise these concerns with the Department for Transport and ask what consideration the Government has given to an independent aviation ombudsman or equivalent oversight mechanism. I will also ask what direct redress will be available to communities where decisions made under the Bill lead to increased aircraft noise, pollution or environmental harm.

Planning applications

<https://planning.n-somerset.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?keyVal=TI5KTKLPMHI00&activeTab=summary>

Large removable vinyl advert displayed on the front of the airport terminal glass frontage. The advert would be stuck to the inside of the terminal glass, but on display to those outside of the terminal. A generic advertisement consent is sought to enable the adverts within the space to be replaced from time to time dependent on the commercial agreements in place between the Airport and companies. The PCAA responded no objection

Response from Natural England to the PCAA

The PCAA wrote to Natural England regarding Bristol Airport Application 26/P/0686/OU2 - growth to 15 mppa. Natural England had responded to the application on 9 July 2026 but their response did not comment on the Mendip Hills, an Area of Outstanding Beauty and a designated National Landscape.

The PCAA requested Natural England to make detailed comments within an objection to the application.

Natural England replied --- "I would not wish to raise your expectations that Natural England will object to the Airport expansion on landscape grounds, but I will ensure that our lead officer makes clear that the absence of detailed advice from Natural England does not mean that we consider there to be no effect. We have forthcoming meetings with the local planning authority and the developer with regards the Airport expansion where we will underline that."

AEF request that we respond to HENPS Counsultation

The consultation is open until 1.59pm tonight. The AEF suggestions are excellent and I am happy to reply on behalf of CMPC using the AEFs outline.

The AEF guide to answers is attached