



nightflights: the need for a balanced approach

"The speed of delivery that air freight can offer is an increasingly important factor for many modern businesses, especially where just-in-time practices and high value commodities are concerned...specialist express carriers could account for over 50 per cent of the air freight market by 2030. The ability to meet the world-wide rapid delivery and logistics requirements of modern businesses is an important factor in assuring the future competitiveness of both the UK and regional economies."

Government Aviation White Paper, 2003

Practically every organisation relies on fast and efficient transportation of goods, components and documents in order to ensure their commercial competitiveness and success.

The express industry specialises in time-definite, reliable transportation services for documents, parcels and freight. It has allowed British business to rely on predictable, expeditious delivery of supplies, thereby enabling them to attain and maintain global competitiveness.

This usually requires goods to be picked up at the end of the working day for delivery early the following day. The only way to achieve such a delivery schedule is by the operation of aircraft outside of normal business hours, including those defined as night, between 11pm and 6am. **Night flights are only used when no other alternatives are available.**

Typically, the types of goods transported by express services are high-value items such as electronic components, automotive spares, product samples and pharmaceutical products. With e-commerce becoming a major driver for the UK economy, the express industry will play an increasingly important role in the supply chain ensuring business efficiency and consumer satisfaction. The ability to fly at night is therefore particularly important for express operators to meet the "next day" needs of customers.

AICES is the trade organisation in the United Kingdom for companies handling international express documents and package shipments.

AICES membership includes household names such as DHL, FedEx, TNT and UPS and employs tens of thousands of people and is responsible for over 95% of the international courier and express shipments moved through the UK every day. Our members' services provide the "just-in-time" information and goods that organisations from hospitals to financial institutions rely upon.

Striking a balance

AICES members accept that aircraft operating at night may be perceived by communities close to airports as a disturbance and nuisance. The express courier industry takes this issue of noise extremely seriously. AICES members have taken numerous voluntary initiatives to reduce the impact of night operations as much as possible. These include, investment in new aircraft; the adaptation of operational and



flight procedures to minimise noise impact and, wherever possible, diverting the transport of shipments from air to road.

As the Government recognised in its aviation white paper, the demand for express industry services is growing. A **balanced approach** must therefore be struck between providing businesses with vital modern transportation and logistics and the needs of the communities living nearby airports.

BUSINESS VIEWS ON THE IMPORTANCE OF EXPRESS

- **64% of firms consider next-day express delivery services to be very important**
- **87% of companies require their suppliers to deliver certain shipments to them by express**
- **Around 40% frequently require either sub-components or spare parts next-day**
- **32% of SMEs expect that they would lose orders if next-day international delivery services were no longer available.**
- **56% of all companies surveyed said they would be "very badly affected" by the cessation of next day deliveries.**
- **16% of firms would probably or possibly have to relocate from the UK to overseas if next day delivery services ceased**

CBI/OEF Survey 2002

Failure to find a balance could result in severe consequences. If restrictions or even bans on night flights are imposed, carriers may be forced to move to more favourable locations within the European Union. With them will go considerable national and local economic benefits.

The loss of a next day delivery service would damage UK business considerably, particularly the hard pressed manufacturing sector. In a recent CBI and Oxford Economic Forecasting survey, over 90% of firms in the computer and office equipment, electrical engineering, motor vehicles, printing & publishing and precision & optical instruments sectors reported that they would be very badly affected by the cessation of nightflights and next day delivery services.

Achieving a balance

The express industry welcomed the "balanced approach" on aviation noise, agreed in October 2001 at the International Civil Aviation Organisation General Assembly and implemented by EU Directive 2002/30/EC on the establishment on rules and procedures

with regard to the introduction of noise-related operating restrictions at Community Airports.

The "balanced approach", if effectively implemented by Member States, should provide legal certainty to the express industry whilst at the same time ensure a reduction in the number of people affected by noise.

AICES supports and advocates sensible noise regulation, but believes that such regulation is best achieved within an international framework. AICES is of the opinion that ICAO is the most appropriate organisation responsible for managing the environmental effects of the global aviation system.

The demand for express delivery services is growing. We are proud of our contribution to the UK economy – local and national – and the efforts we have made to adapt our operations to address environmental concerns. We look forward to working with decision makers at all levels to ensure we are able to do so in the future.