Environmental Information

Continuous Descent Approach (CDA)

Following research undertaken for the Government, it is now widely accepted that best practice for arriving aircraft is to adopt a Continuous Descent Approach (CDA) and we encourage pilots of all commercial aircraft to use CDA whenever possible.

It has significant benefits as it reduces noise on the ground by up to 5 decibels, and is better for the environment as it saves fuel.

When a CDA procedure is flown, the aircraft follows a smooth and continuous rate of descent. This means it stays higher for longer and makes a more gradual descent, rather than 'stepping down' from one level to the next.

There are a number of airspace users in the vicinity of our airport including Southampton Airport, military operations and light aircraft.

Aircraft operating to, or from, Bournemouth must be integrated within this complex environment and provided with safe onward direction towards international air routes.

As a result there are occasions when, in order to ensure that aircraft remain safely separated from each other, a landing aircraft may be requested to maintain level flight or descend to a lower altitude to allow another aircraft to pass safely underneath or overhead. In this situation, landing aircraft will not achieve CDA.

We continue to work with National Air Traffic Services and other stakeholders to find ways in which these constraints can be reduced and over the past year we have enjoyed some success in working with Southampton air traffic control to optimise the potential for the operation of CDA.

This remains an agenda item for the regular meetings between the two air traffic control units.