

AVIATION FORUM

MONDAY, 7 AUGUST 2017

PRESENT: Councillors John Bowden (Chairman), David Hilton, John Lenton, Adam Smith and Malcolm Beer

Officers: Andy Carswell and Chris Nash

WELCOME

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked those attending to introduce themselves. The Chairman explained that the meeting was being audio recorded.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

MINUTES

The Minutes of the meetings held on January 25th and April 19th were both unanimously agreed as an accurate record.

MATTERS ARISING

It was asked if the final version of the Council's response to the Department for Transport's consultations on the Aviation National Policy Statement and the UK Airspace Policy Framework would be made available. The Community Protection Principal confirmed that the responses could be circulated amongst members.

CONSIDERATION OF CAA CONSULTATION

The Community Protection Principal informed members that a new consultation regarding future airspace policy, entitled 'Beyond the Horizon', had been launched by the Department for Transport on July 21st, with a deadline for responses of October 13th. This is publicised as a call for evidence for the UK's new aviation strategy. He suggested that it was likely to advocate an increase in aviation activity, with three further consultations to take place before the end of 2018. It was suggested that a technical working group could be convened to further discuss the Council's response to the appropriate further consultations in 2018, with a draft response to the current consultation to be circulated ahead of the consultation deadline of October 13th.

The Community Protection Principal also informed members that the UK Air Quality Plan had been published in July 2017; which aims to reduce the effects of nitrogen dioxide in the UK; but does not make specific reference to a potential third runway. Members were informed that this related in the main to increases all forms of road traffic – which would of course be made worse as a result of any expansion of the airport.

Members were informed that the CAA's recent consultation 'Core elements of the regulatory framework to support capacity expansion at London Heathrow Airport' (due 22nd Sept) had

identified seven key areas for consultation; however not all of these were directly relevant to the Royal Borough. The Community Protection Principal informed members that the key issue of most relevance to the Royal Borough concerned surface access costs, and in particular the modal share that Heathrow needed to meet (however unachievable this may be). Members were informed that Heathrow was expected to meet a 55 per cent modal share; however it was felt that in order to achieve this there needed to be investment in improving the public transport and road systems around Heathrow. The Community Protection Principal stated that he believed the Council should respond on this point, and to state the belief that Heathrow should take their fair share of infrastructure costs and not the simple £1billion that had been proposed by the airport.

Cllr Hilton stated that the issue of which airports Heathrow would take additional capacity from in the event of expansion had not been clarified. He stated his belief that if costs were to increase as a result, this should be passed on to the airlines wishing to use Heathrow rather than the taxpayer. It was agreed that fairness to taxpayers should be considered as part of the new consultation, as should balancing the commercial needs of Heathrow against environmental factors such as pollution and noise. It was noted that these issues had been covered in the Council's response to a previous CAA consultation.

It was noted that Heathrow was not proposing any increased reliance on transit passengers.

It was agreed that the issue of capital expenditure and the asset base, relating to the risks associated with the project becoming financially unviable, would also be referred to in the Council's response to the consultation.

Cllr Beer queried the modal share, saying that this related to pollution by vehicles and it was generally regarded that the polluter should pay any compensation ('polluter pays principle'). The Community Protection Principal confirmed that this was the case with most environmental legislation and that this was a point that had been raised by the Council previously. He stated that this was a principle that would be worth repeating in future consultation responses.

The Community Protection Principal informed members that it was still to be decided if the Council would submit its own response to the consultation, or jointly with the London Boroughs that it was in partnership with.

CONSIDERATION OF THE NIGHT FLIGHT REPORT CONCLUSIONS

The Community Protection Principal informed members that no changes to the objectives and proposals made in the draft night flight consultation had been made following representations received by the DfT. This included the environmental objectives, which were of greatest significance to the Royal Borough.

The Community Protection Principal stated that the report's environmental objectives related to limiting or reducing the number of people significantly affected by aircraft noise at night through encouraging using quieter aircraft whilst continuing the existing benefits of night flights. However the Community Protection Principal also stated that Heathrow/Gov had not outlined what the existing benefits of night flights were. He stated that it was believed the benefits were commercial rather than environmental and as such had no place being included in an environmental policy. The Community Protection Principal stated that this point had been raised in the Council's response to the consultation in February. The Community Protection Principal stated that although a 40 per cent decrease in the Night Quota Count had been announced by Heathrow, this did not mean a decrease, in real terms, of the number of aircraft flying over the Royal Borough. The night flight regime is now in place until 2022.

Members were informed there is currently a five-hour shoulder period of no night flights between 11.30pm and 4.30am, with a gradual, spaced-out increase in flights from 4.30am-6.30am. However it was anticipated that in future there would instead be a large spike in flight activity from 6am onwards.

Cllr Hilton stated that increased aircraft movements, combined with larger aircraft being used, were creating a bigger noise footprint as the angle of take-off had altered. However Cllr Hilton stated that lower noise quotients were also being used, and that these were ineffective due to the quotients not taking into account the way aircraft were flown. Cllr Hilton said this, along with references to exempted aircraft, had been omitted from the report.

The Chairman informed members that an independent company, Avgen, had been monitoring noise levels using different data sets to those used by Heathrow, and come to different conclusions as to which airlines were considered to be the quietest. The Chairman also said that there was confusion relating to which routes were considered long haul and which were short haul, with differences being noted in routes that were of a similar length. He explained that different noise criteria related to short and long haul flights. The Chairman also stated that some flights, particularly to the Far East, were consistently departing Heathrow beyond the 11.30pm cut-off for night flights. Cllr Beer added that the number of aircraft movements increased during the shoulder period when Tactically Enhanced Approach Mode was in operation.

CRANFORD AGREEMENT UPDATE

The Chairman informed the Forum that he had received an email the day before the most recent HACC meeting from Heathrow Ltd, stating that the Cranford Agreement would not be used in its current form as revised plans relating to moving Heathrow's taxiways needed to be submitted, as the current proposals were no longer suitable. The Chairman stated that the current scheme would become obsolete in the event of the third runway being built and require the current taxiways to be dug up. He explained that the revised scheme would then be submitted under Development Consent Order and it was anticipated that the Cranford Agreement would not become active until 2023 at the earliest, although Heathrow had submitted that this would have little affect on the timescale of the project.

The Chairman explained to members that he responded to this announcement at length at the HACC meeting, stating his belief that these actions amounted to an abuse of Government process. The Chairman stated that the Council had put out a press release outlining the Council's opposition to the suspension of the Cranford Agreement, and expressed his disappointment that it had not received much media coverage.

It was agreed that the Community Protection Principal should draft a letter, for the Chairman to approve, on the non-delivery of the Cranford Agreement and to raise concerns regarding claims that moving the runway 150 metres would constitute a new planning application and not a minor variation. Members were told that a minor variation would speed up the process and alleviate the concerns of uncertainty amongst Royal Borough residents. It was agreed that the letter would be sent to the Transport Secretary, Environment Secretary and the Undersecretary of State for Aviation, International and Security.

PARTNERSHIP BODY UPDATES

HACC

Cllr Beer informed members that changes to HACC's setup had been proposed in a verbal presentation at the last meeting by Heathrow's Director of Community Relations, and that feedback on the proposals within three weeks of the meeting had been requested. Cllr Beer stated that many present at the meeting were of the opinion that the proposals would lead to a reduction in community involvement, and that three weeks was not a long enough timeframe to formulate a response as many member organisations would not meet within that period. It had therefore been agreed to have a three-month period to formulate responses, and that the proposals would be circulated in a written report.

The Chairman added that a Community Engagement Board of HACC members had also been proposed, and that members were lobbying for those appointed to the Board to be allowed to

take part in negotiating the planning process for the proposed new runway. HACC members were in agreement that the Board needed to be set up as soon as possible. The Chairman stated that the Board would be set up as it was a requirement set out by the Government. He added that he would ask for a place on the Community Engagement Board.

Cllr Hilton spoke about the Community Noise Forum, stating that monitoring exercises showed that aircraft were flying lower and the Forum had asked for larger aircraft to take off at a higher angle. Noise monitoring was to continue in a number of locations. Cllr Hilton explained that the CAA had stated that a higher angle of climb would lead to aircraft noise affecting a larger number of people; however this had been disputed by the Community Noise Forum.

LAANC

Cllr Beer informed members that the most recent meeting had been attended by the CAA's Community Relations Manager. Cllr Beer stated his belief that he was a useful person to have at the LAANC meetings. The Chairman requested that he be invited to attend a future meeting of the Aviation Forum. Cllr Beer also stated that representatives from Elmbridge Borough Council and the Englefield Green Action Group had recently joined LAANC.

SASIG

Members were informed that there were no updates in relation to SASIG. Cllr Beer stated his belief that the group looked in general terms at national airspace strategy and did not take into account local issues from community groups.

Members were invited to raise any other matters. The Chairman stated that he would be attending the Westminster Energy, Environment and Transport Forum on September 14th.

Cllr Beer raised the topic of the Stop the Third Runway Coalition, stating that several members were already involved with it but that he would like to see the group promoted more within the Royal Borough. Cllr Beer informed members that 16 organisations were involved in the Coalition; this included four groups based outside the M25 and included groups from Englefield Green and near Windsor. He added that the group had raised awareness of the impact of Heathrow expansion on Maidenhead at the Maidenhead Festival, in addition to national publicity campaigns.

Members were informed that the Parliamentary vote on the third runway was now likely to take place at some point within the first six months of 2018.

DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The date of the next meeting was noted.

The meeting, which began at 7.00 pm, finished at 9.08 pm

CHAIRMAN.....

DATE.....