

AVIATION FORUM

TUESDAY, 1 MAY 2018

PRESENT: Councillors John Bowden (Chairman), David Hilton, Malcolm Beer and Derek Wilson

Also in attendance: Councillor Lilly Evans, John Holdstock, Andrew Hall and Nigel Davies

Officers: Andy Carswell, Chris Nash, Jenifer Jackson and David Scott

WELCOME

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Duncan Reed.

Cllr Beer informed the Forum that Mike Sullivan, a long-standing member, had been taken to hospital as he was seriously ill.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None received.

MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on February 12th 2018 were agreed as an accurate record.

MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising for discussion.

HEATHROW STRATEGIC PLANNING GROUP

The Head of Planning explained the background to the Heathrow Strategic Planning Group, informing members that it was established in 2015 with the aim of providing a means of dealing efficiently with the demands that would come when Heathrow Airport Limited submitted a Development Consent Order to expand the airport. Members were reminded that the DCO would go straight to government. The Head of Planning stated that the HSPG had been useful in establishing a dialogue between Heathrow Airport Limited and the local authorities, as the two entities were dealt with in different ways.

The Forum was told that RBWM was considered part of HSPG when it was first established, but it had held observer status since 2017 when it was decided not to join the group. The Greater London Authority also attended as observers until this year, before withdrawing due to the Mayor of London's opposition to the airport expansion

Regarding the governance of the group, the Head of Planning explained that a Leaders Board, which would facilitate political discussions with Heathrow Airport and government, was established following a summit in July 2017, as it had been recognised that there was a need for political leadership of HSPG. Detailed technical work was carried out by sub groups, which

allowed councils the opportunity to feed in information, matters of local concern, and reaction/critique of policy to Heathrow Airport Limited, in order for them to be better informed with regard to the development of future plans. RBWM has officers attending the Spatial Planning and Transport sub groups. The Forum was told that the Environment Public Health sub group was about to reform and it was felt desirable to have RBWM representation at these meetings in order to represent the Council's concerns over noise and air quality/pollution. The work of the sub groups was pulled together at monthly Officer Group meetings. Group responses to documents, such as the HSPG response to the draft National Policy Statements and the first consultation exercise by Heathrow Airport Limited, were formulated by the Officer Group.

The Head of Planning explained that the governance structure was based on a voluntary agreement, known as the Accord, which acknowledged that there are a range of attitudes and policy positions relating to the expansion of Heathrow Airport amongst the local authorities represented. The Accord sets out that group members will work in a co-ordinated way, resulting in better spatial planning and management of impacts from the development of the airport, together with maximising the benefits. The Forum was told that Slough Borough Council was the accountable body for the HSPG and administered the money paid by Heathrow Airport Limited to local authorities through the group, in order to provide the information necessary to underpin the Development Consent Order. Without this, councils would be expected to source their own funding. The Head of Planning explained that this mechanism is similar to the pre application process that RBWM operates to provide advice to applicants. The Forum was told that as the accountable body, Slough Borough Council employ the core HSPG team of officers, including the secretariat.

The Head of Planning outlined the work carried out by the HSPG to date, including giving evidence to the Transport Select Committee, collating responses to the National Policy Statement and the first Heathrow Airport Limited consultation, and holding three summits to bring together local authority Leaders.

The Head of Planning explained that the Development Consent Order would only consider the development within the 'red line' shown on plans, rather than wider impacts on road and rail infrastructure and the effects on surrounding communities. It was therefore considered prudent for the Council to consider the impact on the Royal Borough of potential growth at Heathrow.

Cllr Beer expressed his surprise that the Council was only an observer at the HSPG, given the potential impact on transport infrastructure in the Royal Borough as a result of enabling works. He also noted that Runnymede Council was a full member of the HSPG. The Head of Planning stated that the possibility of joining as a full member had been discussed, and that briefings with the Council's Corporate Leadership Team regarding signing the Accord with a view to becoming a member were planned.

The Community Protection Principal reminded members of the Non-Disclosure Agreement that had previously been deemed necessary for potential HSPG members to sign, which had been discussed at a previous Forum; this Agreement had now been dispensed with, and it was felt the group was improving its transparency. John Holdstock asked if was possible for any group deliberations or minutes to be made public. Cllr Hilton noted that as the secretariat, Slough Borough Council would be responsible for controlling the minutes. The Head of Planning stated she would ask the HSPG about obtaining the minutes of meetings.

Cllr Wilson reminded the Forum that the Airport Consultative Committee had originally said that each of the 14 local authorities surrounding Heathrow, including the Royal Borough, would need to build 5,000 additional dwellings to meet housing needs as a result of expansion. This was in addition to new dwellings that had been mentioned in the Borough Local Plan, which had recently been submitted. Cllr Wilson stated that the Council would be entitled to a share of funding needed to enable the appropriate infrastructure work to be carried, and expressed concerns that more of the funding may go to Slough Borough Council

as the appointed accountable body. Cllr Beer stated the subject of additional housing had been overlooked in group discussions around Heathrow, and stated his belief that more of the 70,000 houses needed across the 14 local authorities would naturally be built in the council areas immediately surrounding Heathrow, which included the Royal Borough. He felt that the Royal Borough would therefore need to build more than 5,000 additional dwellings, and stated his concerns that the Royal Borough's position would not be adequately explained to the HSPG if the Council did not become a full member. The Head of Planning stated that the Borough Local Plan would be reviewed at a later stage if additional housing capacity caused by airport expansion became an issue. She stated that the Council would have the opportunity to present as much additional evidence relating to the implications for housing and transport infrastructure to government as was deemed necessary.

A discussion followed where it was agreed there was a lack of information available relating to the future of the Cranford Agreement.

TRANSPORT SELECT COMMITTEE FINDINGS

The Community Protection Principal informed members that the draft National Policy Statement was likely to be put before Parliament in late July. This would open up a six-week window in which a legal challenge could be made, subject to agreement. The Forum was told that the Four Boroughs group, of which the Royal Borough was a member, were of the opinion that the draft NPS in its current guise could not be delivered as it would be in contravention of legislation relating to air quality.

The Community Protection Principal told members that the Transport Select Committee had published its findings on the draft NPS on March 23, which confirmed their belief that expansion of Heathrow was the preferred option. However this was reliant on evidence being provided to confirm that 29 conditions could be met, including noise and air pollution. The Community Protection Principal informed members that it was believed that some of these conditions could not be met. These included a guarantee that more slots for domestic flights would become available; however it was for the airlines to dictate flying destinations and slot allocations, rather than government or Heathrow. Another condition referred to 'no more airport-related traffic on the roads', which could not be quantified.

Arguments to be put forward by the Council to support any legal challenge were still in the process of being formulated. The Community Protection Principal proposed that a technical group meeting of the Aviation Forum may be required in advance of the NPS going before Parliament, in order to discuss matters further.

Cllr Hilton told the Forum that although the Transport Select Committee supported the findings of the NPS, it had also raised concerns that more work needed to be done and there was the possibility of successful legal challenges against the NPS if this did not happen. Cllr Hilton stated that the issue of housing needs, which had been raised earlier in the meeting, was not covered in the Committee's findings. He also informed the Forum that in order to reduce road traffic coming to Heathrow and to encourage greater use of public transport, a congestion charge of £15 had been proposed. Cllr Hilton stated his belief that the proposed modal shift towards increased public transport use would not work. The Chairman noted there was no reference to changes to the rail network mentioned in the Scheme Development Plan as these fell outside the 'red line' remit of Heathrow expansion. Cllr Beer noted that a reduction in the number of flights had been suggested in order to ease air quality issues, which he felt would not be acceptable to airlines using Heathrow.

PARTNERSHIP BODIES

Heathrow Community Engagement Board

The Chairman stated he accepted an invitation to meet the new chairman before the first meeting of the group, which had been cordial. However the Chairman stated that the meeting

itself had not been well conducted and there had been speculation that the Board's chairman was already reconsidering her position on account of the irregularity of meetings and the lack of up to date information. There was a recognition that the Board was simply a talking shop, which would be driven by Heathrow Airport themselves. The next meeting had been rescheduled for July 18, around the time when it was expected the NPS would go before Parliament. Cllr Beer stated that the Board had been set up as it had been acknowledged that Heathrow required greater engagement with the public; however it had not been determined precisely what role the Board would play.

LAANC

Cllr Beer informed members that the group's administrator had unfortunately died recently and a replacement had not been found. Someone had been proposed, but he fell ill and was unable to fulfil the role.

Community Noise Forum

Cllr Hilton stated that a request had been made for a Technical Advisor from Heathrow to attend the Forum. The Forum had raised the issue of Performance Based Navigation as an area of concern.

The Chairman opened up the Forum for any other items of business. Cllr Beer stated that he had attended some meetings of the No Third Runway Coalition, who had been actively lobbying MPs and working on promoting their cause.

The Chairman stated that the Heathrow Community Relations Team had responded to a recent complaint of his and apologised for the late take-off of an aircraft. It was revealed that the aircraft in question was transporting freight rather than passengers.

Andrew Hall informed the Forum that safety concerns over aborted landings had been raised. Recent statistics showed that on one day there were ten aborted landings, and a further six during a two hour period on another. It was generally accepted that airports could take between one and three aborted landings per thousand; Andrew Hall stated that Heathrow was currently running at 12 aborted landings per thousand; Cllr Beer said he had seen statistics that suggested there were an average of 40 aborted landings at Heathrow each month. Andrew Hall noted that Heathrow was already running at 98 per cent capacity.

DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The clerk informed members that the programme of meetings for the next municipal year had not yet been agreed, as it had been delayed by the Constitution Review. Members were informed that the programme would be agreed at Annual Council on May 22, the agenda for which would be published on May 14.

The meeting, which began at 7.00 pm, finished at 8.40 pm

CHAIRMAN.....

DATE.....