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AVIATION FORUM TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP

Notes of meeting held on 2nd April 2012, Guildhall, Windsor

Present;

Cllr Lenton (chairman); Cllrs. Beer, Muir,
Messrs. Michael Sullivan; Jamie Jamieson; Peter Hooper; Andrew Davies;
Terry Gould,
Mrs Sally Hayes

Introduction

The chairman explained the purpose of the meeting was to 'Re-think Heathrow' in terms of the Borough's future strategy and policy stance in light of recent government announcements in relation to national aviation policy and more locally, Heathrow airport 'expansion and capacity' proposals that might impact upon Borough residents. He advised the Leader of the Council had requested the Aviation Forum (AF) consider the matter.

'Re-thinking Heathrow'

TG tabled a series of slides that summarised a number of issues and options suggesting these could form the basis of future considerations (attached).

A significant debate ensued. Matters that were raised included:

- Heathrow capacity and trends in aircraft movements – it was pointed out that movements were down at some airports since 2007, although Heathrow had continued to grow with increased numbers.
- Aircraft Passenger loads – noting the need for increased occupancy rates and the likely impact of Air Passenger Duty (APD) in the future – need for expansion and maximising carrying efficiency per plane.
- Overriding RBWM priorities – aim should be maximum benefit with minimum inconvenience for RBWM residents.
- Recognition that newer aircraft were 'less noisy';
- A380/900 carries up to 960 passengers;
- Objections to R3:
 - Noise evaluation
 - Not economic
 - Security concerns
 - TG reminded the meeting that Cabinet had considered the original proposals for R3/T6 in depth – a report was available. Unlikely the key arguments had changed.
- ANASE Report – several members expressed strong concerns over the government's lack of action on this issues and that it appeared to have been 'swept under the carpet'. There was a recognised need to conduct a refreshed study into community reactions to aircraft noise as this was pivotal to government policies. Some members felt this should be the Borough's first priority. TG confirmed he had copies of the Peer Review conducted into the ANASE Study and would circulate on request.
- Runway capacity issues;

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- Recognised need for another runway in the SE, citing 2nd runway at Gatwick
- Debate around 'hub' airports
- Northolt Aerodrome – future use as an alternative for some of the traffic; realignment of runways required; length of runways could be an issue
- The meeting were reminded and signposted to a number of previous in depth studies e.g. RUCATSE/SERAS that contained detailed summaries of the characteristics of all the airports considered in the previous examination in 2003 and even prior to that. All details contained in the AIP for each airport if further information was required.
- The potential for a future role for Lynham in Wiltshire given the surface access links and location. N.B. This was flagged up by the Borough in its response in 2011 to the Scoping Report
- A proposal was tabled suggesting that airport strategy i.e. runways, should be categorised: Short term; medium term (e.g. Gatwick 2nd runway post 2019) and long term (e.g. new purpose built airport)
- Economic arguments in support of R3. Identified need to revisit the Study commissioned a few years ago (who commissioned it? – tbc)
- Public Relations – a need to have something prepared for the press based on a sensible response – not anti-Heathrow – positive proposals to include options to include Regional opportunities
- The chairman requested copy of Heathrow Site plan. TG agreed to supply.

Abandonment of Cranford Agreement

- Significant concern was expressed regarding the government's apparent inactivity on this issue. It was agreed a further letter would be sent to the Windsor MP requesting the matter be raised, clarity sought from the minister for aviation as to anticipated timetables for the abandonment of the current arrangements.

The chairman agreed that he would seek to draft a report setting out the key concerns of the AF