



SOUTHEAST AIRPORT EXPANSION MEETING

OPENING REMARKS: LOCAL AUTHORITIES MEETING 26.6.2012 in London

Good afternoon everyone.

My name is **Jean Leston. I am Senior Transport Policy Advisor with WWF** and would like to welcome you today to discuss a subject that is uppermost in everyone's minds: Southeast airport expansion.

Before we get started, a few words about today—which is divided into two parts. The first part you hear from your 3 hosts (WWF, AEF and AirportWatch) followed by lovely tea and cakes. The second part we hear from you. And you can feel free to make comments or ask questions at any time. Other things to note are exits and toilets which are...

With the Government about to launch its two consultations on draft aviation policy and airport hubs, possibly next month, the media is full of speculation about where—not if—expansion will occur. And lobbyists of course are having a field day with every interest group proposing its own solution, from BAA (who want a third runway) to Boris Johnson (who wants an estuary airport) to Paul Kehoe of Birmingham International Airport (who wants to create a virtual hub alongside Heathrow) to Stewart Wingate of Gatwick (who wants a second runway there). And not to forget yesterday's Parsons Brinckerhoff report, commissioned by some of the councils here today, which comes out firmly against a Thames Estuary airport but recommends expansion at Heathrow and mixed mode operation—an idea which has been rejected by the DfT and could be subject to a legal challenge as it will make West London even more in breach of EU air pollution limits than it is now.

With so many loud voices disagreeing with each other, it's hardly surprising that Justine Greening, Secretary of State for Transport, considers aviation to be her most difficult portfolio as a minister.

So why have WWF, AEF and AirportWatch brought you here today? Because we think we share some common ground with you—in that we oppose airport expansion **IN YOUR AREA**. And we think that, were we to work together to oppose airport expansion at Heathrow and Thames Estuary, we could have a real win:win situation that will help us all. But that's our view—we need to know what you think!

NGOs have worked successfully with local councils before, for example the West London 3M group represented local councils, citizen's groups and several NGOs, to oppose the previous Government's decision to seek planning permission for a third runway at Heathrow. This led to the judicial review of 2010 which ruled that the Government's position on Heathrow gave inadequate consideration to developments in climate change legislation and was therefore 'untenable in law and common sense'.

Perhaps its time for NGOs and local councils to be working together again and later on you will have the chance to let us know if you are interested in this idea and what suggestions you might have.

But the main thing that we want to explore with you today is whether it is possible to agree some common messaging to communicate in our respective consultation submissions and to the press—that we would prefer to see better use of existing airport capacity than expansion IN YOUR AREA. Again you'll have the chance to give us your feedback.

I appreciate that many people here today may believe that Southeast airport expansion is necessary—but somewhere else. The problem with that position is that it can lead to accusations of Nimbyism. And, worse, it could increase the likelihood that expansion will happen where you don't want it! The press also like nothing better than to pit councils and local communities against each other.

Clearly anywhere there is major airport expansion there is going to be significant social and environmental impacts. But what is often conveniently forgotten is the impact of airport expansion on climate change. The UK's Climate Change Act requires us to reduce our emissions by 80% by 2050 so we are all facing a carbon constrained future.

It's also worth remembering that the previous Government wanted to reduce aviation emissions to 2005 levels by 2050 which the Committee on Climate Change, the Government's advisors on climate change, continues to endorse in order to have the best chance of meeting our UK climate targets. Major airport expansion at Thames Estuary or Heathrow is simply not compatible with the UK Climate Change Act or returning aviation emissions to 2005 levels—and would create the single biggest source of CO2 production in the country.

The position of WWF, AEF and Airport Watch is that major airport expansion in the Southeast isn't needed—anywhere. The evidence for this, that we would like to share with you today, has independent credibility as it is based on the logic of the Climate Change Act as well as the recommendations of the Committee on Climate Change. What our analysis shows is that there is already more than sufficient capacity to achieve aviation growth within environmental limits (defined by the CCC as a 60% growth in passengers and 55% increase in flights by 2050)—without having to build new runways or airports in the Southeast. Tim Johnson of AEF will be talking more about this shortly.

We'd also like to share our evidence regarding the strength of London's international connectivity to key business destinations. Unlike some of the scaremongering you hear, London's airports are not about to lose their number one slot, as John Stewart of AirportWatch will tell you—especially if we can use existing capacity better to ensure more routes to emerging markets.

But first a few words on WWF's perspective on Southeast airport expansion. SLIDE WWF is working on this issue because aviation is the fastest growing source of CO2 contributing to climate change, which threatens the natural world. That is why it is so important to include aviation emissions in the UK Climate Change Act, which the Government must decide on by the end of this year.

Flying is also the most carbon intensive form of transport with 4x the carbon footprint of rail travel and 50x the footprint of a videoconference. SLIDE WWF tries to encourage alternatives to flying where possible, for example, through our One in Five Challenge we are helping some

of the UK's leading companies to cut their flights by 20% within five years. Our latest results show that companies who have been members of this scheme for two years have cut their flights by an average 41% and saved £2.4 million and 3,600 tonnes of CO2. They have done this by permanently changing the way they meet and travel—relying far more on rail and conferencing technologies to replace flights and stay connected. With such significant cost and carbon savings possible, we think far more companies will want to be working this way in future. Another reason for questioning the business case for airport expansion!

Despite what the airlines will tell you, there is relatively little you can do to decarbonise aviation. Of course, planes are getting more efficient all the time and this is welcomed. But the sad fact of the matter is that these efficiency gains are swamped by aviation growth. **SLIDE** This graph clearly shows that if passenger numbers go up, so do aviation emissions. So if you keep on building new airports or runways, you will be vastly increasing UK emissions.

If you believe the lobbyists, we need more airport expansion in order to lift the UK out of recession. But proposed expansion at either Heathrow or the Thames Estuary would take at least 10 years—and be deeply unpopular with your constituents.

Economically, the case for expansion at Heathrow and Thames Estuary is deeply flawed. When the previous Government first proposed a third runway at Heathrow, they claimed that it would contribute £5 billion a year to the economy. But this was based on a very incomplete and optimistic assessment of costs. According to WWF's analysis, allowing for a realistic price of oil (which could double in the next decade, according to the IMF), a third runway could actually cost the UK economy £5 billion a year. So the economics of a new Thames Estuary Airport, which would be twice the size of Heathrow, is likely to be even dodgier!

Even the managing director of Deutsche Bank recently queried the economic benefits of a Thames Estuary airport, saying that he doesn't think private investors will back it as it's too risky.

And as for BAA's argument that we get 20x more trade from countries we have a direct flight route too, then why don't we add routes that go absolutely everywhere? Brazzaville or Timbuktu anyone? It's crazy logic and a fallacious argument as more flights to more places don't in themselves create trade. Perhaps more routes are needed to key emerging markets where the UK has products and services to export but trying to reach them all from the UK would be neither financially viable nor sensible.

SLIDE In summary, I'd like to leave you with 3 key messages.

Firstly, major expansion at either Thames Estuary or Heathrow is incompatible with the UK's climate targets.

Secondly, we have more than enough capacity already if we are to stay within the environmental limits compatible with the UK Climate Change Act.

SLIDE

And thirdly, there is good reason to doubt the claims from the aviation industry and other lobbyists that unconstrained aviation growth is essential for the UK economy to prosper.

I'd now like to hand over to **Tim Johnson Director of the Aviation Environment Federation**, who is going to tell you more about how we have more than enough existing capacity to grow without needing more runways or airports...

