

AVIATION FORUM

26 August 2014

PRESENT: Councillors George Bathurst (Chairman), Malcolm Beer, John Lenton and Alan Mellins.

Also in attendance: Councillor Wisdom Da Costa, John Holdstock, Jamie Jamieson, Paul Jennings, Councillor Dexter Smith (Slough Borough Council), Michael Sullivan and Philip Swan.

Officers: Rob Cowan, Craig Miller, Chris Nash and Henri Rapson.

PART I

ITEM 1 – WELCOME

The Chairman welcomed the Forum. The Forum and regular attendees introduced themselves. The Chairman informed the Forum that the meeting would be audio recorded.

ITEM 2 - APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Andrew Davies.

ITEM 3 - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

ITEM 4 - MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Forum held on 11 June 2014 be approved subject to the following amendments:

- The word 'rest-bite' be changed to 'respite'.

ITEM 5 – MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

ITEM 6 – HEATHROW AIRPORT

The Forum received an update regarding Heathrow Airport from Chris Nash, Team Leader – Environmental Protection.

The Forum was informed of consultations which were taking place regarding property and noise compensation scheme, should R3 be approved. It was noted that the existing scheme accounted for blight payment equal to 25% of a property's unblighted value, payment of stamp duty and legal fees . Heathrow had not however determined what their noise compensation scheme would look like and required the results of this consultation first.

The Forum was also informed that a roadshow had been organised at which more information could be obtained by residents. These took place Windsor Leisure Centre, Datchet Village Hall and Old Windsor Day Centre. Mr Nash stated that he was meeting with a representative from Heathrow Airport to discuss this. Officers would also be speaking with the RBWM Communications Team to let residents know the dates of the roadshow. It was suggested this be circulated to other Councils such as Slough.

It was also noted that trials would run from 25 August 2014 to 26 January 2015. There would be three routes in operation. These would affect the Ascot and Sunningdale areas with greater noise overhead. The Great Park was noted as also being effected.

Councillor Malcolm Beer stated that the consultation contained loaded questions. Describing the consultation as a 'minefield', he suggested providing model answers to residents so they were not tripped up by the consultation and tricked into appearing to support the expansion of Heathrow Airport. Councillor Beer also expressed concern that the exhibits displayed on the roadshow only showed information that put expansion plans for Heathrow in a good light.

It was suggested that The Chairman draft a letter which gave a clear steer on what the Aviation Forum's view on the matter was.

Forum attendees expressed concern that residents were apathetic and shared the presumption that the expansion would go ahead. It was suggested that the Forum could recommend that residents do not respond to the consultation however the view that to do nothing would achieve nothing was also expressed.

Attending officers stated that the draft response could reference planning, make it clear that the Forum did not want Heathrow to expand and also wanted better mitigation. The Chairman was of the opinion that the mitigation for the existing situation was already adequate.

It was highlighted that the Borough needed to campaign for this. The use of a technical working group was also suggested.

ITEM 7 – RUNWAY ALTERNATION

The Forum considered the agenda item Runway Alteration. The Forum questioned what enforcement action was available regarding not abiding within HALs Noise Action Plan (primarily due to likely breach if Cranford abandonment wasn't achieved on time). It was suggested that matters should first be raised with HAL (Heathrow Airport Limited). If no response was provided then it might be appropriate to contact DFRA (Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs) and CAA (Civil Aviation Authority).

Councillor Beer noted that the Noise Action Plan was not mandatory. Therefore, as a means of monitoring it offered no bite. He noted that LAANC (Local Authorities Aircraft Noise Council) had lobbied for the Plan to be mandatory.

It was noted that the removal of the Cranford Agreement would promote a reduction of noise. It was suggested that it was the government had an obligation to drive this.

Councillor Beer stated that he had asked Adam Afriyie, Member of Parliament for Windsor, to raise the matter the relevant Minister. It was also suggested that the matter be raised with the all-party Parliamentary group was considering the expansion of Heathrow which was led by Zac Goldsmith MP.

ITEM 8 – AVAITION NOISE

The Forum considered the agenda item, Aviation Noise. The Forum questioned how to lobby more effectively. It was noted that this would require a greater role to be played by the RBWM Communications Team.

The Chairman informed the Forum that he had met with Shauna Hichens, Interim Head of Communications, to discuss the creation of a one-stop-shop website to take on the role of the now defunct noiseline, a telephone line which allowed residents to register aircraft noise complaints. It was noted by Chris Nash that an update would be forthcoming on this matter.

The Chairman stated that residents needed to be encouraged to complain more, this could be done through the Council's publication 'Around the Royal Borough'. Residents needed a name and a contact number to be provided to them to call, and advised of the existence of the website. The Forum noted that funding was being sourced for the project. It was highlighted that a professional campaign was needed to match the airport's own campaign.

Councillor Beer believed the matter shouldn't be put off until the publication of the next 'Around the Royal Borough' as it would be too late by that stage. He suggested a special addition be published early. The Chairman disagreed stating that the matter would be a decision for the next government.

It was suggested that political lobbying was required from the Borough and a larger area, thus political agreement between the neighbouring Local Authorities was needed.

The trials were described as an additional piece of aggravation. Mr Nash stated that residents could be made aware of Trials as part of the resident engagement encouraging them to complain directly to Heathrow about aviation noise.

Craig Miller noted that the Forum needed to consider where to target resources. For example, if a short Around the Royal Borough was to be produced, would this be sent to all residents in the Borough, or just those who benefit from the notification. Engagement with the residents associations as means of communicating the message was encouraged.

Councillor Beer noted the WideNoise project. The Forum noted that the Council had received the final piece of collected data at the end of June (due to the end of the project by University College London) and officers were reviewing the data and would be producing a final report to be uploaded to the website on this project.. It was noted that the amount of data collected by WideNoise was vast and RBWM did not have the resource or technology to sift through independently of UCL and that resources were better channelled to other areas of the Aviation debate.. The wide noise project was

however described as an engagement exercise and the Forum were cautioned that the reliability of the data was not as useful as had been hoped. Councillor Beer suggested the project be pursued further in a different form. The Forum noted that the wide noise project had formed part of a PhD project. As the PhD candidate had since moved onto a different stage of his studies, continuation of the project would require funding from the Borough. Craig Miller described the work as useful as for highlighting the social impact, though not in the traditional statistical sense.

The Forum noted that a report had previously been published by ANASE (Attitudes to Noise from Aviation Sources in England). The report had initially received criticism from the government because the research had not been robust enough. However the report's findings had since been found to compliment EU research.

Councillor Wisdom Da Costa stated that the information had to be presented effectively to generate a strong response. He questioned how the collection of data on wide noise would strengthen lobbying to the Davies Commission.

John Holdstock noted that studies had been conducted in Germany and France. He questioned whether LAANC (Local Authorities Aircraft Noise Council) was aware of the studies. He hoped that these studies could be referred to in submissions.

The Forum noted that thresholds had been established by WHO (World Health Organisation). It was questioned why there should be any deviation from this. It was suggested that this would send a powerful message to the public as people respected WHO.

ITEM 9 – PARTNERSHIP BODIES

The Forum received an update from Councillor Malcolm Beer regarding the recent activity of HACC (Heathrow Airport Consultative Committee). It was noted that there had been little on the last HACC agenda. HACC was to be reduced in size with a reduction in representatives from Local Authorities. This was a result of lobbying from the business community. The Noise and Track Group had been concluded. The monitoring group which served as its replacement was described as having 'no teeth'.

The Forum also received an update from Councillor Malcolm Beer regarding the recent activity of LAANC (Local Authorities Aircraft Noise Council). It was noted that LAANC were responding to the Davies Commission. It was noted that LAANC had close ties to the 2M Group. The 2M Group was described as less active and becoming almost redundant. The meetings were attended by the environmental protection officers of effected Councils. The situation was described as moribund and it was suggested that there should be three levels of involvement, Members of Parliament, Leaders of the Councils and Environmental Protection Officers. There should also be more funding to back it up.

The Forum suggested that the political angle was more important than the technical. This was suggested as an agenda item for the future. Councillor Beer stated that there was a problem in that very few Councillors were involved.

ITEM 10 – ANY OTHER BUSINESS

It was agreed that Chris Nash would organise a technical and political group in due course to discuss the Runway 3 response. Councillor John Lenton warned against the technical aspect of the group being too technical and lost in mundane detail.

Craig Miller stressed the importance of taking the time to produce a full, considered response. It was noted that officers would be looking to the Chairman for political direction. Councillor Beer noted the need for a comprehensive run down of what was going on including housing and jobs.

ITEM 11 – DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The dates of future meetings were noted as follows:

10 November 2014

16 February 2014

MEETING

The meeting, which began at 7.00pm ended at 8.40pm.