

AVIATION FORUM

11 June 2014

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

Regular Attendees: Richard Bolt, David Lyons-Davis, Andrew Hall, John Holdstock, Paul Jennings and Duncan Reed.

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

PART I

ITEM 1 - APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Wayne Coles, Andrew Davies and Councillor John Lenton.

ITEM 2 - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Malcolm Beer declared a personal interest in matters relating to the expansion of Heathrow Airport due to its effect on Windsor where he was a resident.

ITEM 3 - MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Forum held on 16 April 2014 be approved.

ITEM 4 – MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

ITEM 5 – PRESENTATION OF HEATHROW HUB PROPOSAL FOR EXTENSION OF NORTH RUNWAY

The Forum received a presentation from Jock Lowe concerning Heathrow Hub's proposals for the expansion of Heathrow Airport.

Mr Lowe introduced himself and mentioned his own background both as a concord pilot as well as other roles at both Heathrow and Gatwick. He noted that capacity constraints had been a part of life at Heathrow throughout his career.

Mr Lowe informed the Forum that Heathrow Hub's proposal was to extend the existing runway. This would create a total of 6,600 metres of runway, which would effectively be 2 x 3000 metre runways with 600 metres in between. This would allow for 700,000 movements per year. It was submitted that the additional runway space would relieve pressure and allow for greater rest-bite.

Although noise was noted as a crucial consideration, Mr Lowe confirmed that this proposal would not reduce noise in Windsor, though he did highlight the need to minimise the impact.

The Forum noted Mr Lowe's submissions that Heathrow was crucial to success of the surrounding area. He highlighted both the jobs created directly from the airport, and also the peripheral jobs. Heathrow was described as the best placed airport for growth as 202 of the UK's top 300 companies had HQs within a 25 mile radius of Heathrow. Heathrow was also described as the most popular airport in the UK.

Mr Lowe highlighted the need to improve transport links to the airport. Heathrow Hub proposed moving the M25 which they believed would only require the motorway to close for one night. This plan would remove Junction 14 and create a large car park to the North of the airport to ease congestion. They dismissed as incorrect Boris Johnson's claims that such an undertaking would require the motorway to close for 5 years. Chris Nash, RBWM Environmental Protection Team Leader highlighted that Junction 13 of the M25 has recently been declared part of an air quality management scheme.

Heathrow Hub also proposed linking Heathrow Airport with CrossRail. Proposed changes to the rail network were described as welcomed by Network Rail.

Heathrow Hub's proposals were based on a modified version of the layout of Madrid airport. However it was noted that Heathrow Hub's proposals were an improvement on Madrid.

Mr Lowe explained to the Forum that aircrafts were reducing their noise footprint. It was stated that by 2020 the noise footprint of aeroplanes would be that of the B787 or better.

The Forum noted that the Easterly approach saw 30% of the airport's arrivals due to the Cranford Agreement. There was no rest-bite on the North runway. The Agreement was described as outdated as it was created to deal with noise of aircrafts from the 1950s which did not possess the advanced technology of newer planes.

Mr Lowe highlighted the aviation industry's focus on take-off noise when it was in fact arrival noise which now needed to be addressed. Mr Lowe made suggestions to practice which would reduce arrival noise such as performing sequencing prior to arrival. He also suggested the practice of specific arrivals whereby certain planes would arrive on a Monday or a Tuesday. A prescribed method of lowering flaps and opening the aircraft's undercarriage could also be utilised. Mr Lowe also questioned the need to approach the runway in a straight line.

Mr Lowe also noted that alternation would allow for greater rest-bite. More slots would also get rid of night quota flights. However he highlighted the distinct between night quota flights and night flights which would not be reduced by the creation of more slots.

The Forum noted that aeroplanes were able to climb at a steeper gradient than was currently utilised in practice. It was noted that pilots only used climb power and not 'take off' power. This had no effect on fuel consumption however it did reduce engine wear a small amount.

Mr Lowe encouraged neighbourhoods in proximity to the airport to create a contingency plan, in which they should set out what they though the airport should and shouldn't be able to do.

The Forum considered an independent survey carried out by Populas. The results of the survey suggested residents from the surrounding area predominantly believed Heathrow airport was of greater benefit than detriment to their local community. 70% of people from Windsor believed this. 49% of Windsor residents believed the daily impact of Heathrow was nothing. Also, only 3% of residents in Windsor believed Heathrow was an important political issue.

Regular attendees and Forum Members were given the opportunity to ask questions.

It was highlighted that the planning inspector who had considered Terminal 5 had advised against an additional runway due to the air pollution, noise pollution and the adverse impact on infrastructure such as housing and traffic. There was also the risk of a crash over London, a highly populated area. Mr Lowe highlighted the need to compete with other European nations.

The Forum raised the case for competition between UK airports, noting Scotland and other regions of England where people paid taxes but seemed to get little in return. The case of Gatwick as an alternative was also raised. Mr Lowe suggested Gatwick was unpopular and that expanding Gatwick would not work as the connectivity was in place at Heathrow, not at Gatwick. Mr Lowe stated that plans to develop Gatwick had fallen through in the past. Furthermore, Heathrow was at full capacity whereas other airports were not. Even if another airport was expanded, Heathrow would still need to grow as well.

It was noted that Heathrow Hub's definition of a 'Hub' was not that of an international hub airport such as Istanbul, Singapore or Dubai. Instead, Heathrow was an origin and destination airport. This was as a result of its placing geographically. It was noted that 30% of passengers at Heathrow were transfers from commonwealth countries. This was compared to the 10% of the same grouping of passengers at Gatwick. Furthermore, it was noted that Heathrow had £11.5 billion of regulated assets compared with Gatwick's £1.5 billion.

Mr Lowe stated that the economics of every route experienced peaks and troughs through the year. To combat this discounts were offered when trade was low. These 'flexed fares' ensured all-year business and allowed airlines to keep their slots.

It was noted that the runway should remain East/West rather than North/South as this was more efficient. Mr Lowe believed it was an asset for Heathrow that the runway ran East/West as it never had to close for wind. He explained that airports in Europe with more runways could only ever use two at a time and had to change which runways they were using to accommodate for the wind.

There were suggestions from attendees that the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) was an unresponsive organisation which was not interested in promoting better practices which would reduce the effect of airports on surrounding communities. Mr Lowe believed that the CAA had moved forward and this attitude was no longer prevailed. He described the Chief Executive of the CAA as being even more progressive than himself.

The Forum questioned public confidence in the aviation industry and raised concern that there was a risk of a crash over highly populated areas.

The Forum questioned the likelihood of Heathrow having to close should the airport not be allowed to expand. Mr Lowe answered this question in 2 parts. First he noted Boris Johnson's 'fantasy island' which he suggested would cause the Hub for the UK to close. Secondly, he suggested that if Gatwick was to be expanded instead, Heathrow would remain full but would carry on. However if Heathrow expanded, Mr Lowe believed Gatwick would not be able to carry on.

It was noted that the 700,000 movements per year at Heathrow Airport, if it was expanded, would be an increase of around 40% and would be realised over a long period of time. Furthermore, the productivity gains and actual growth would not be linear growth, only an additional 20,000 jobs would be created to cater for the increase however this did not consider construction workers. It was suggested by Mr Lowe that the catchment of staff would be accommodated by normal growth rates but by contrast this would be a bigger problem for Gatwick.

The Forum questioned why the management of Heathrow airport did not back Heathrow Hub's proposals. Mr Lowe stated that these objections were beginning to erode slightly with the management shifting from 'doesn't work' to 'might work' and that Heathrow Hub enjoyed a good dialogue with the management of Heathrow Airport. Also, he highlighted that having two 'irons in the fire' suited Heathrow Airport for the time being.

The Forum also considered the lack of trust in Heathrow, compared to Gatwick who had maintained their promises and as a result communities felt they could work with them. Mr Lowe explained that the management of Heathrow in the past had made assertions which had turned out not to be true however the current management was more realistic.

The Forum thanked Mr Lowe for giving his presentation.

ITEM 6 – SASIG NEWS BULLETIONS AND PARTY CONFERENCE SUMMARIES

The Forum received an update from Chris Nash, Team Leader – Environmental Protection, regarding SASIG (Strategic Aviation Special Interest Group). It was noted that SASIG was a group of Local Authorities all with an interest in strategic aviation issues.

The Forum noted a 20 page report had been produced by HoC which referred to the work of ANASE (Attitudes to Noise from Aviation Sources in England). However it remained to be seen how this would be utilised by the Coalition government.

The Forum suggested a technical working group be set up with the aim of understanding issues and opportunities.

ITEM 7 - HACC UPDATE

The Forum received an update from Councillor Malcolm Beer regarding the recent activity of HACC (Heathrow Airport Consultative Committee).

The Forum noted that the Noise and Track Keeping Group had been concluded. Councillor Beer highlighted his concern that the monitoring group which served as its replacement only had 6 representatives and did not have a representative from the west

side of the airport. However Rob Gibson who was a LAANC member was a representative which offered a means of influencing the monitoring group.

ITEM 8 – LAANC UPDATE

The Forum received an update from Councillor Malcolm Beer regarding the recent activity of LAANC (Local Authorities Aircraft Noise Council). It was noted that LAANC covered both noise and environmental nuisance.

There had been no LAANC since the last Aviation Forum meeting. Work was continuing on re-launching the LAANC website.

There was a desire to invite Mr Alistair McDermid, Airports Commission Executive Director, Gatwick Airport Limited, to give his presentation regarding Gatwick Airport Limited's proposals for an additional second runway to LAANC members. This was the same presentation the Forum had witnessed at their meeting of 16 April 2014. There was a general agreement to allow non-members attend as well due to the interest in Gatwick's proposals.

In the interests of fairness Heathrow would also be invited to present to LAANC.

ITEM 10 – ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Forum noted an all-party Parliamentary group was considering the expansion of Heathrow. This was led by Zac Goldsmith MP who was noted as critical of plans for Heathrow's proposed third runway. The Forum agreed the Member of Parliament for Windsor, Adam Afriyie, should be encouraged to get involved with the all-party group.

The Forum noted that RBWM were in talks with other Local Authorities however more should be done to campaign against Heathrow expansion.

ITEM 11 – DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The dates of future meetings were noted as follows:

26 August 2014
10 November 2014
16 February 2014

MEETING

The meeting, which began at 7.00pm ended at 8.15pm.