

AVIATION FORUM

TUESDAY, 1 NOVEMBER 2016

PRESENT: Councillors John Bowden (Chairman), Malcolm Beer, Simon Dudley, David Hilton and John Lenton

Also in attendance: Councillor Dr Lilly Evans

Officers: Andy Carswell, Chris Nash and Victoria Gibson

WELCOME

The Chairman welcomed people to the meeting and asked the Panel to introduce themselves. The fire evacuation procedures were explained and the Chairman reminded people that the meeting was being audio recorded, and that a member of the public had requested to video the proceedings.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence were recorded.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Lenton suggested that all Members should declare an interest on the item relating to the third runway at Heathrow Airport because, as residents of the Royal Borough, they were interested parties. The Leader said that Members should declare a personal, non pecuniary interest in item 6. All Members of the Panel agreed to declare such an interest.

MINUTES

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as an accurate record. They were signed by Cllr Hilton, who chaired the meeting.

MATTERS ARISING

It was agreed that all matters arising relating to the announcement regarding the Government's preference for a third runway at Heathrow Airport should be discussed under item 6 of the agenda. There were no further matters arising for discussion.

ACTIONS FOLLOWING DECISION ON THIRD RUNWAY

The Leader informed Members that an urgent meeting of the Cabinet Prioritisation Sub Committee was held on October 13th to discuss the Council's position in the event that the Government announced a preference for a third runway to be built at Heathrow Airport. He explained that, following lengthy debate and discussions, the Sub Committee had approved a budget of up to £50,000 on a Judicial Review of the decision.

The Leader reminded Members that the Royal Borough had a long-standing opposition to the possibility of Heathrow expansion. He explained that since 2008 there had been two manifesto pledges to oppose expansion and that at the last local election all 57 Councillors, irrespective of their political party, were elected to the Council after making the same pledge.

Members were reminded that the Council had instructed Ipsos Mori to conduct a research poll of Royal Borough residents in 2015 to gauge views on proposed airport expansion in the south east. The interviews had been weighted to survey residents from each council ward and of all different age categories, among other criteria. The survey results showed a net opposition of 4 per cent for construction of a north-west runway at Heathrow Airport, compared to a net 50 per cent approval rating for Gatwick expansion. Following the most recent General Election and the EU Referendum it was decided to re-run the survey, with the results being broadly the same.

The Leader said the Cabinet Prioritisation Sub Committee unanimously agreed to delegate to a working group to build a robust Judicial Review case, if required should the Government announce that their preferred option was to expand Heathrow.

Subsequent to the Sub Committee meeting, the Government announced that its preferred choice was to build a third runway at Heathrow.

The Leader said the Royal Borough was working on its review into a possible Judicial Review alongside the local authorities of Wandsworth, Richmond and Hillingdon, in addition to Greenpeace. He said that immediately after the Government's announcement was one of three opportunities when a legal challenge could be made; the others being after the publication of the National Policy Statement, and at the time of any planning decision.

The Leader said that the Royal Borough was, along with the other local authorities, involved with analysing the evidence the Government used to make its judgement and scrutinising the decision. The Royal Borough would also be exploring the possibility of establishing a Memorandum of Understanding with the other local authorities as to the manner in which any Judicial Review is undertaken. He said that a meeting with the Royal Borough's partners was planned within the next two weeks, where the strength of the case would be assessed. The Royal Borough would not be making any decisions by itself.

The Leader informed Members that the main issues to be assessed ahead of any legal challenge included air quality, noise pollution and possible breaches of human rights. He added that the Department for Transport had queried the economic value provided in the Davies Report.

Cllr Beer stated that the Department for Transport report was not published until after the Government's announcement of its decision on a third runway, and suggested that the Parliamentary Cabinet Sub Committee therefore did not have chance to consider it before making any recommendations.

A member of the public asked for clarification if the Council had agreed a budget of £50,000 for the legal challenge. The Leader confirmed this, and stated that the three local authorities that the Royal Borough was working in partnership with had agreed similar budgets. He added that the budget was modest, when the £120,000 recently spent on the legal case relating to the unauthorised traveller encampment in Waltham St Lawrence was taken into consideration. The Leader reiterated that money would only be spent if it was felt that the Council had a strong case.

A member of the public asked if any expansion of Heathrow would have any impact on the Royal Borough's Local Plan. The Leader said that it would not affect the current Local Plan process. He added that, should current timescales be kept to, any construction work at Heathrow Airport would not begin until 2022, by which time The Royal Borough's Local Plan would have been formally adopted.

Cllr Beer suggested that an Aviation Forum working group should be set up to feed information back to the Council, in the same way that problems relating to the construction of Terminal 5 were discussed previously. The Chairman said that this suggestion would be considered by the Council in due course, but added that a working group had already been

established amongst the relevant lead members for consideration of the potential Judicial Review content.

Members were asked when the public consultation on the proposals would begin. The Leader stated that he believed that would take place at the time of the National Policy Statement being made. The Acting Head of Community Protection & Enforcement Services said that a vote on airport expansion would likely take place in the House of Commons in either winter 2017 or the first quarter of 2018. He said that a planning process would then be commenced, to which the Council would likely comment.

COMMUNITY NOISE FORUM UPDATE

Cllr Hilton reminded Members that the Community Noise Forum was set up in 2014 following a number of complaints about aircraft noise. He explained the meeting process and Sub Committee arrangements of the group.

Cllr Hilton told Members that he raised the issue of noise over the Royal Borough at the most recent Forum meeting, specifically mentioning that air traffic was now flying, on average, 300ft lower than it had been after changes in operations had been made. Cllr Hilton had asked if this change could be reversed but was told that there was no mechanism for doing so.

Members were told that the Chief Executive Officer of the CAA had been invited to the next Community Noise Forum meeting to explain the organisation's position. Cllr Hilton explained that there was a feeling amongst Forum members that tackling noise pollution was not a priority for airlines or NATS. A website was set up to monitor the flying height and positions of air traffic but concerns were raised over its veracity. An independent group from the Netherlands had monitored the information provided and found it to be correct.

Cllr Hilton said that monitors were in place at the end of airport runways to register noise levels. He said that community campaign groups were able to ask to use noise monitors in areas where aircraft noise was a major issue; however a suitable location away from other background noise would need to be found to install the monitors, in order to ensure they provided accurate information. Members were told that a presentation on night flights, and the noise levels that they create, had been given at the most recent Forum meeting.

Cllr Hilton said the Forum had made representations to the CAA on its consultation relating to the Air Space Change Policy. These included asking for a right of appeal, and for there to be a scrutiny panel to challenge the CAA's actions.

PARTNERSHIP BODIES

SASIG

The Acting Head of Community Protection & Enforcement Services informed Members that a consultation on the Airports Policy Framework is expected to take place next year. It was explained that the consultation addressed, amongst other matters, the balance between CO2 emissions and noise levels from aircraft that were taking off.

HACC

The Chairman informed Members that the most recent HACC meeting had been attended by representatives from the CAA and NATS. The Chairman stated that during the meeting he had raised the question of air traffic taking off from Heathrow's northern runway and heading west interfering with eastbound landing traffic over the Royal Borough. The Chairman informed Members that the CAA and NATS representatives said that their organisations had not taken this into consideration while producing their future airspace strategy.

The Chairman said that Heathrow had announced plans for a 'Brexit boost' of an additional 25,000 air traffic movements. These would start later than at present, at 5.30am, but it was not clear what impact this would have on air traffic heading east towards Heathrow. However it is

likely that the amount of air traffic over Windsor would reduce. The Chairman stated that Heathrow would require planning permission before being able to implement this proposal.

The Chairman said that representatives from the Council were among those to be invited to a briefing on the proposed third runway by Heathrow's CEO John Holland-Kaye. Information on the briefing would be published in due course.

LAANC

Cllr Beer told Members that the group's most recent meeting had had to be cancelled as it clashed with one being held by SASIG. LAANC's next meeting was being held at Staines Town Hall on November 17th.

Cllr Beer said that LAANC was currently focusing on issues relating to the potential Judicial Review of the third runway announcement and hoped to keep community groups informed of its progress.

The Chairman asked if anyone had any other matters that they wished to raise. Cllr Dr Evans queried an assertion that Heathrow was the fourth largest cargo handling airport in Europe. The Chairman explained that figures relating to cargo handling referred to the value of the cargo, not the weight or amount of it, and that Heathrow receives a large amount of valuable goods due to its location as a major distribution point.

A member of the public raised the Prime Minister's previous stance of being opposed to a third runway at Heathrow. The Leader said that this was a matter that should be dealt with by the Maidenhead Conservative Association.

DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The Chairman stated that, following discussions with the Leader, it was felt the next meeting should be brought forward from the scheduled date of February 27th 2017. The meeting date was revised to January 25th 2017.

The meeting, which began at 7.00 pm, finished at 8.39 pm

CHAIRMAN.....

DATE.....