

AVIATION FORUM

THURSDAY, 22 AUGUST 2019

PRESENT: Councillors John Bowden (Chairman), David Hilton (Vice-Chairman) and Andrew Johnson

Also in attendance: Councillor John Baldwin, Councillor Lynne Jones and Councillor Helen Price

Officers: Andy Carswell and Chris Joyce

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllrs Davies and Knowles, and from Chris Nash.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

MINUTES

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That the minutes of the meeting held on February 14th be agreed as an accurate record.

DRAFT HEATHROW CONSULTATION RESPONSE

Chris Joyce, Infrastructure and CIL Manager, introduced the item and reminded members that the final response to the consultation was due on September 13th. The Forum was reminded that the Council's policy was to oppose Heathrow expansion on the grounds of impacts on communities; noise pollution; reduction in air quality; increase in traffic on roads within the Royal Borough; and the risk to the Council not being able to deliver some of its strategic objectives, such as the Local Plan. There was a desire to engage with the Development Consent Order process to ensure residents' views were conveyed and to secure the best possible outcome for residents.

Chris Joyce stated that projections showed that the Royal Borough would be one of the worst affected areas in relation to an increase in noise levels caused by expansion of Heathrow, with a projected 9dB increase over areas such as Datchet. Concerns had also been raised over the six and a half hour night flight ban not achieving its aim, and the preliminary environmental assessments that had been undertaken did not show any specific detail that would enable the impacts on communities in the Royal Borough to be properly understood. The levels of information on the impact at a local level were lacking. Heathrow had stated that there would be compensation/mitigation but there was no detail or commitment as to what this would be. Chris Joyce stated it was important for residents and local authorities to understand the detail of what was proposed in order to make comments

The Forum was told that the assessment showed there would be a traffic impact on the A308 corridor. Chris Joyce confirmed that documents provided by Heathrow Airport stated this, after Cllr Price informed members that she had been told information to the contrary by Heathrow. Construction traffic on the strategic road network could also push other traffic to use the local roads, meaning there would be greater use of 'rat runs' in the event of major congestion on the M25 and/or M4. The additional traffic would also have an impact on air quality. LEP funding for a traffic study was available, although the scope of this would need to be agreed

along with Surrey and Bucks County Councils as the road continued into those local authority areas. It had been agreed that arranging this would be a priority.

As there was no commitment to improved rail access to the south and west of Heathrow, an increased car access charge of £25-30 would be required to enable the airport to meet its surface access targets. There did not appear to be any commitment to funding to alleviate this. It was noted that, as a result, it was more likely that the economic benefits of expansion would be felt to the east and north but not the west and south, and therefore the Royal Borough would have all of the impacts and none of the benefits.

Members agreed that the message needed to be put forward that local mitigation, as opposed to global, was required; it was no good offsetting air pollution somewhere else if the impacts of any expansion work were local. It was noted that the Council had recently declared a climate emergency and a strategy on reducing carbon emissions to zero was being developed. Members agreed that a good way of providing local mitigation was to ask for the Development Consent Order to explicitly state that additional capacity should be released only when Heathrow had been able to demonstrate the desired reduction in carbon emissions.

Chris Joyce stated that he was happy for the Council's response set out in the presentation slides to be circulated to Members to help inform individual responses. The Council was working with strategic partners in order to ensure consistency in responses. Chris Joyce summarised that the consultation was premature and insufficient. The impacts of Heathrow expansion were not clear or granular enough to specific communities, and there was limited detail or commitment on mitigation. A Community Compensation Fund had been mentioned, but Chris Joyce stated his belief that this should be in addition to, and not be a substitute for, mitigating the impacts of expansion at a local level.

The four key areas of concern regarding Heathrow expansion were:

- A comprehensive package of mitigation and compensation was necessary
- There was a lack of certainty and evidence for surface access
- The economic benefits put forward could not be delivered to the west
- There needed to be a more comprehensive framework for monitoring (including noise) and enforcement, with greater democratic accountability.

NOISE MONITORING OPTIONS

The Chairman informed members that the Council had leased two pieces of aircraft noise monitoring equipment. One of these was installed at Old Windsor Memorial Hall and the other had been on the roof of York House prior to its redevelopment and had not been used since. The contract for the leases for the equipment was shortly due to expire and a paper relating to the cost implications would soon be going to Cabinet.

It was noted that there were a number of noise monitors that were the property of Heathrow Airport that had been strategically placed around the Royal Borough. Members asked if it would be possible to request information from specific noise monitors from Heathrow.

PARTNERSHIP BODIES

Heathrow Community Noise Forum

Cllr Hilton reminded members that a Study of Noise Annoyance (SONA) published by the Department for Transport in 2016 had stated that noise from aircraft starts to cause disruption at 51dB; however a subsequent report from the World Health Authority stated it was lower. Individual community groups had been conducting their own reviews of the SONA, and this was now gaining traction following the implementation of the HCNF.

Local Authority Aircraft Noise Council

Malcolm Beer stated that he had not been present at the most recent meeting. However he informed members that there had been disquiet amongst its membership about how the Heathrow Community Engagement Board was being run.

Heathrow Community Engagement Board

The Chairman informed members that there was a widely-held belief that the Board had served its purpose and there had been a change in emphasis. Previously, Board meetings had enabled attendees to hold Heathrow to account but the focus of meetings had changed and this was now no longer possible. For a recent 'Question Time' style event questions were submitted in advance of the meeting and the pre-prepared answers given at the meeting.

It was asked how likely Adam Afriyie would be to engage in discussions on Heathrow expansion. Cllr Hilton stated he had engaged previously following a high volume of complaints, and stated his belief that he thought he would do so again now.

DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The dates of forthcoming meetings were noted by members.

The meeting, which began at 7.00 pm, finished at 8.52 pm

CHAIRMAN.....

DATE.....