

AVIATION FORUM

24 APRIL 2009

Present: Councillors Bicknell (Chairman), Adams, Beer, Lenton, Muir and Thompson.

Also Present: Adam Afriyie (Windsor MP), Councillor Burbage (Leader of the Council) and Theresa May (Maidenhead MP).

Officers: Terry Gould, Frances Hewitt, Tanya Leftwich and Philip Turner.

PART I

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence were received.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

ITEMS

MP's Positions on the Third Runway

The Chairman welcomed the local MP's, Adam Afriyie and Theresa May, to the meeting and explained that the meeting had been convened in order to present Members of the Aviation Forum the opportunity to ask questions of the two local MP's in relation to their views on the third runway, and look at how concerns of the Royal Borough could be taken forward.

The Chairman went on to explain that all questions which had been submitted in advance of the meeting (by both Members of the Forum and the general public) had been considered and would be answered today; copies of these questions had been distributed to all attendees at the start of the meeting. Members noted that once all the pre-submitted questions had been answered, they would be asked if they had any further questions they would like to ask the MP's and then finally, time permitting, the general public would be asked if they had any additional questions.

The Chairman requested confirmation as to who would be answering the first question / section which looked at the Cranford Agreement / Easterly Alternation to which Adam Afriyie volunteered. Members noted that Adam Afriyie felt this area of concern was an important one and as an MP and resident of Windsor was very sympathetic to it and explained that he was very happy to represent his residents in this matter. He went on to explain that this was a cross party / cross-area campaign run by Labour MP's and he was very worried it would open the floodgates for the Third Runway. Adam Afriyie went on to explain that he was concerned about the danger of the National unity of the campaign being undermined and felt that a fairer distribution of flights in Windsor was necessary.

Theresa May addressed the questions that related to night flights and explained that from discussions that had previously taken place in November 2008 and February 2009 BAA had reportedly predicted a 30% increase in night flights. She explained to the Forum that some airports in the Far East had curfews, however if flights were not able to land earlier

during the day they were in danger of causing stacking problems. She concluded by saying that she felt the Night Flight Regulations did not bring residents any significant benefits.

Adam Afriyie went on to answer the section on the ANASE Study by explaining that he was also the Shadow Minister for Science and Innovation. He went on to say that the Government had commissioned the ANASE Study, which had been a positive factor, however had then completely undermined the experts on the Panel and swept everything to one side. Some of the effects caused were noted as noise, economic factors and road traffic noise. Members noted that 2M were co-ordinating an approach and that legal challenge were due to come forward. Adam Afriyie agreed to continue to press forward with this.

Theresa May addressed the questions with regard to the alternatives to expansion at Heathrow Airport and explained that two issues had been raised. The first with regard to Boris Johnson, the third runway at the Thames Estuary and the potential problem it could cause locally with regard to its love / hate relationship with Heathrow. Theresa May went on to explain that if Heathrow were shut problems would occur which would need to be balanced out. The second issue was whether this type of expansion was needed with regard to aircraft capacity. Members noted that currently all projections showed an increasing reduction in flights over the next ten years and that a reduction in domestic flights would occur if a high speed rail line was introduced. If a significant number of flights were taken out of Heathrow then a third runway might not be needed. However, Theresa May explained that due to the current state of finances it was very difficult to predict what could be done over the next decade. Adam Afriyie explained that it would be necessary to look at the Heathrow experience more closely and felt that a decision with regard to High Speed rail would need to be made.

Theresa May addressed the section with regard to the rejection of the third runway and explained that at the time of the white paper in 2003 she had been the Shadow Secretary of State for Transport. It was noted that this paper now provided a basis for a third runway and that a lot of support was given by Parliament on this subject. Members noted that in 2003 the Government were refusing to remove items such as White Waltham airfield from plans, which would have directly affected Maidenhead residents. Adam Afriyie concluded by stating that if the Conservative Party were elected into Government the plans for the third runway would be null and void.

Adam Afriyie looked at the capacity constraints with regard to ATM limits and said that he felt this subject was a curious one. He explained that the Oxford economic forecasting had considered five billion people over thirty years but he felt that some elements had been forgotten, such as British tourists that go abroad that tended to spend more money than tourists visiting the UK. It was also stated that only green aircraft could use the third Runway, which would leave the noisier, dirtier aircraft to use the other runways. It was also noted that this runway would not operate to its full capacity, which the Forum agreed would not be very efficient. Adam Afriyie concluded by saying that he was glad this subject had been raised.

Theresa May addressed the Climate Change Policy section by saying that she felt everyone needed to be realistic for the future and needed to ensure that there was not a dramatic increase in air flights. She informed the Forum that the Climate Change targets were set at 46% and that carbon emissions needed to be cut. She felt that this subject was not really about the airport emissions but more about those from the motorway and main road infrastructure and thought the secret was in the technology of cars and planes. It was

noted that the Government were reliant on technology that was not currently present, which meant it was key for car companies to identify ways of reducing damaging environmental factors. Theresa May concluded by saying that a natural reduction in flights would occur due to the current state of the economy but that it would be difficult to get a dramatic reduction.

Transport Issues were addressed by Adam Afriyie who said that today he did not know which option he favoured. Members noted that Adam Afriyie looked forward to input from the Royal Borough along with local residents, he would then attempt to make an informed decision. He assured Members of the Forum and the general public that as local MP's he and Theresa May would look after local residents and put forward their views even if they did not match the Governments overall view.

Finally, Theresa May looked into the question on competition and explained that airport expansion at Gatwick and Stanstead seemed to have been ruled out. She went on to say that it had been requested that BAA's monopoly over the three airports be broken down and each airport be looked at individually, in order to ensure competition between airports. The Chairman asked Members of the Forum if they had any further questions for the two MP's. Councillor Beer felt that the decision made with regard to the Cranford Agreement should be pushed through as soon as possible as this was the easiest option available. He went on to say that he felt that fairly dramatic amendments to flight patterns would need to be made and that there was no viable reason as to why this should be delayed. He felt that this was the biggest, single factor the Forum were looking for right now and that BAA and other operators were not doing anything about it. The question Councillor Beer wanted to ask was why this was not being taken on board, to which Adam Afriyie answered that he understood what Councillor Beer was saying but that he was talking about a National Campaign. Adam Afriyie went on to explain that the third runway was so big that even if flights were distributed in a different way they would still face huge problems. He concluded by assuring the Forum and local residents that he would continue to make representations and work with the Royal Borough and hoped that a review could take place locally in the near future. Theresa May added that her personal view was that it would be difficult to define if the Cranford Agreement ever existed (as a proper document) and that she did not want to split campaigners against the third runway. Theresa May felt that the way forward was to put pressure on the CAA with regard to the agreement.

Councillor Beer commented on the fact that he felt the third runway and the Cranford Agreement were totally separate issues and that the Cranford Agreement should be dealt with immediately. Adam Afriyie responded by saying that he felt it was a deliberate trap to encourage arguments between each other and that it seemed to be a beautiful unity, which was made up of the Government, verses everyone else.

Councillor Thompson felt that the Labour Government had already decided on the third runway but that if the present Government were to lose power then the third runway would not be built, if this were the case why could the Cranford Agreement not be stopped immediately. Adam Afriyie responded by saying that he agreed with Councillor Thompson's views but that the Cranford Agreement had already gone; he felt it was now down to BAA and the CAA. He went on to say that pressure must be applied so that it worked in the interest of the Windsor residents. The Chairman added that if and when we got a new Conservative Government would it be fair to ask them to force BAA to fly in a correct manner. Theresa May felt that pressure could well be put on BAA and the CAA and that she would work with the Royal Borough to help achieve this.

Councillor Beer felt that it was important to ensure that segregated mode was used rather than mixed mode which was one of his biggest concerns, he went on to say that he felt this would be a very difficult message to get through. Sally Hayes, a Windsor resident, explained that there did not seem to be unity here and that she felt the Government wanted to retain the Cranford Agreement. She went on to say that she would like it ended now as it was causing seventeen hours of noise a day. Sally concluded by saying that Adam Afriyie, as her representative, should be pushing for this to happen, to which Adam Afriyie agreed.

The Chairman opened up questioning to members of the general public, which was made up of many concerned residents of the Royal Borough.

Sally Hayes commented on the 2M website and felt it was lacking information with regard to the unfair amount of noise that Mr Hoon had recognised. Val Mason, a Maidenhead resident, felt that the third runway along with mixed mode would affect the Royal Borough in a very negative way. Sally Hayes stated that she agreed Maidenhead would also be affected but felt that the planes in Maidenhead flew much higher than those in Windsor.

Jamie Jamieson, from the West Windsor Residents Association, explained to the Forum and local MP's that the Cranford Agreement had been fought against for the last twelve years or more but that the Government stated that they could not do anything about it until a full consultation had taken place. Jamie Jamieson went on to say that Mr Hoon had concluded that the Cranford Agreement had to stop and it was now time that people to the right of the runway received an equality of treatment. He felt that Mr Hoon's conclusion should be backed up by pressure being applied to BAA. Theresa May responded by saying that she felt Mr Hoon had done the easy bit by standing up and making the announcement. Theresa May agreed with Val Mason's comment about mixed mode as it was potentially seen as the worst option that could be brought into the Borough. She went on to say that a tentative agreement had been given by the Government that mixed mode would not happen although she was unsure how long this agreement would last.

Michael Sullivan, from the West Windsor Residents Association, requested support from the two local MP's with regard to finding out a target date for the third runway along with confirmation of the departure routes. Adam Afriyie confirmed that he had already written to BAA requesting this information.

Mr Hooper brought up the subject of the Budget and wondered if the Conservatives felt that in the current economic situation a high-speed rail link could be funded publicly. Theresa May responded by saying that this could not be completely funded by the public and that it would need to have private funding too to encourage economic recovery.

Dave Nicholson, a Windsor resident, also wondered why a third runway was required, to which Theresa May responded by saying that a lot of issues and questions had been raised as to how the debate on the third runway was being handled.

The Leader of the Council wondered if it would be possible to have a curfew on night flights as Theresa May had mentioned earlier in the meeting with regard to Far East airports. Theresa May responded by saying that she would need to take advice on this as the attempt would be to limit the number of flights into the airport which could then potentially cause them to stack locally. Alternative locations for stacking flights would need to be investigated,

The Leader also commented that Mr Hoon had stated that night flights had nothing to do with the third runway. Theresa May responded by saying that she would like to look into where night flight measurements were taken as she felt they were taken close to airports. She went on to explain that complaints were made with regard to noise as far out as Henley, not just in the immediate surrounding areas of the Royal Borough. Theresa May concluded by informing the Forum that sleep pattern research had not taken place locally but actually in Manchester.

The Chairman explained that night flight quotas were very complicated and that he sometimes felt that airlines did as they pleased at night. Councillor Thompson explained to the Forum that in Australia, Sydney in particular, flights were not allowed to arrive until 6am and in which case felt that time restrictions were not beyond the capacity of BAA.

Michael Sullivan, from the West Windsor Residents Association, brought up the subject of runway capacity and referred back to the comment Theresa May made about Gatwick and Stanstead having being ruled out for further expansion. Adam Afriyie responded by saying that he did not understand why Gatwick had been excluded and that this option should possibly be revisited as it could take place with a tenth of the impact it would cause if it were to be built at Heathrow. He concluded by saying that he felt the recession had bought us all another five years in which to investigate further but felt that the Government should definitely reconsider Gatwick as an alternative location.

The Chairman thanked both Theresa May and Adam Afriyie for taking time out of their busy schedules to attend, along with the Leader of the Council, Members of the Forum and the general public (many of which were local residents) for attending, which Members echoed.

DATES OF FUTURE FORUM MEETINGS

It was noted that the Forum would next meet on Tuesday 23 June 2009 at 9.30am in the Maidenhead Room, Guildhall, Windsor.

MEETING

The meeting, which opened at 10.25am, ended at 11.25am.