

AIRPORT POLICY TASK GROUP held at the COUNCIL OFFICES GREAT DUNMOW at 8.30 am on 31 AUGUST 2007

Present:- Councillor A J Ketteridge – Chairman.
Councillors K R Artus, S Barker, C Cant, J Cheetham, A Dean,
E J Godwin and P A Wilcock.

Officers in attendance:- J Mitchell and M T Purkiss.

AP17 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from A Bovaird, R Harborough and M Perry.

AP18 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 29 June 2007 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

AP19 ECONOMIC ASSUMPTIONS

Councillor A Dean questioned whether the Government's economic assumptions had been dealt with satisfactorily. John Mitchell replied that the absence of local economic benefits were part of the reasons for refusal and remained as part of the Council's case and would be part of the closing submission. However, he added that the Council did not have the basis on which to challenge the Government's assumptions.

AP20 REFUSAL OF APPLICATION

Councillor A Dean referred to the suggestion that Uttlesford Members had elections in mind when they refused the application. He said that it was clear that Members of the Development Control Committee had looked at the application objectively and BAA's claim should be challenged robustly. He suggested that the transcript of the officer's response should be looked at carefully to see whether further action was required.

Councillor Cant, who had been Chairman of the Committee at the time the application was considered, said that Members had viewed the application with an open mind but had found that the weight of evidence had persuaded them to refuse the application.

Councillor Wilcock suggested that the best course of action would be for Councillors Cant, Cheetham and Godwin to refute the claims in writing.

AP21 MEMBERSHIP OF SSE

Councillor A Dean said that BAA had raised the question of how many Members of the Development Control Committee had been members of SSE before the application was submitted. John Mitchell felt that this was irrelevant and should make no difference to the material facts.

AP22

OBLIGATIONS AND CONDITIONS

Councillor A Dean suggested that, bearing in mind the problems with the previous Section 106 Agreement, BAA should be pursued rigorously to ensure that it complied with its obligations and conditions. John Mitchell said that a full report would be considered at the meeting of the Development Control Committee on 5 September and said that mitigation measures were not adequate to make the application acceptable and with the exception of water efficiency, the reasons for refusal still stood. Discussions would continue on conditions and obligations and their relevance.

Councillor Cheetham said that there had been criticism that BAA had not met its obligations from the 2003 Section 106 Agreement and asked how the Council could ensure that the obligations from any new agreement were met. It was generally agreed that there needed to be a move away from physical development triggers towards triggers activated by numbers of passengers.

Councillor Cheetham raised the issue of whether the community trust was an acceptable mitigation factor to address community cohesion, local leisure and quality of life. It was generally agreed that the benefits from the trust needed to be more locally based.

Councillor A Dean said that the Council needed to ensure that, if the inspector was minded to allow the appeal, there was a package of measures on the table which would mitigate the impact of expansion and achieve the best outcome for the community.

Councillor Barker said that a proactive approach was needed to deal with offsite airport parking which was becoming a problem both in Uttlesford and in neighbouring districts. John Mitchell confirmed that BAA were amenable to providing a fund to help deal with parking enforcement.

AP23

EMISSIONS COST ASSESSMENT

John Mitchell reported that the recent consultation paper had made it clear that emissions cost assessment was not part of the planning process.

AP24

MEMBERS SPEAKING AT THE INQUIRY

Councillor A Dean confirmed that he would discuss his draft statement with officers.

AP25 RELATIONSHIP WITH SSE AND BAA

Councillor Cheetham said that it was important that the Council returned to a situation where it had good working relationships both with SSE and BAA. John Mitchell felt that constructive relationships had been maintained, but it was important for the Council to be objective during the Inquiry period. It was suggested that an officer/Member meeting be held with SSE following the Inquiry and that BAA should be invited to a future STAAP meeting.

AP26 RUNWAY 2 PLANNING APPLICATION

John Mitchell reported that the planning application for Runway 2 was expected to arrive in November and this would have considerable resource implications. Discussions had been held with neighbouring authorities and it was likely that they would assist with the provision of resources. A meeting would also be held with Go-East to discuss the likelihood of the application being called in.

He concluded that the Secretary of State's decision on the current application was likely to be published in February 2008.

AP27 PUBLIC RELATIONS

Councillor Artus said that at the last meeting of STAAP, it had been suggested that the press strategy had not truly reflected the activities of the Council. He suggested that there was a need for a more formal and flexible strategy. Councillor Cheetham added that the Leader had sent a letter to the press which clearly set out the situation.

Councillor A Dean considered that there was a need for more constructive communication including advising Members of key milestones which were coming up. Councillor Cheetham added that Members had previously been told that they would be provided with a briefing note on a weekly basis and this had not happened.

AP28 NEXT MEETING

It was agreed that the next meeting would be held at 9.00 am on 5 October 2007.

The meeting ended at 10.30 am.