

**EXTRAORDINARY DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE held at
COUNCIL OFFICES LONDON ROAD SAFFRON WALDEN at 2.30 pm on
7 JULY 2006**

Present:- Councillor C A Cant – Chairman.
Councillors E C Abrahams, J F Cheetham, C M Dean,
C D Down, R F Freeman, E J Godwin, R T Harris, S C Jones,
J I Loughlin, J E Menell and A R Thawley.

Also present:- Councillors A Dean, M L Foley, M A Gayler, B M Hughes, R M
Lemon, D J Morson, G Sell, A M Wattebot and P A Wilcock.

Officers in attendance:- R Harborough, J Mitchell, C Oliva, J Pine and
M T Purkiss.

DC55 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors P Boland, M J Miller,
J P Murphy and E Tealby-Watson.

DC56 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Cheetham declared a personal interest as a member of the
National Trust, the Hatfield Forest Management Committee and NWHEEPA.

Councillor Down declared a personal interest as a member of the CPRE.

Councillor Loughlin declared a personal interest as a member of Stansted
Mountfitchet Parish Council.

Councillor Menell declared a personal interest as a non executive director of
the Uttlesford PCT.

Councillor C M Dean declared a personal interest as a member of the
National Trust.

Councillor Thawley declared a personal interest as a member of the CPRE
and the National Trust.

Councillor Cant declared a personal interest as the Council's representative
on the Uttlesford PCT.

DC57 REPRESENTATIONS BY DISTRICT COUNCILLORS

(i) Statement by Councillor G Sell

Councillor G Sell said that he was Chairman of the South West Area Panel and the ward member for Stansted North. He said that the Panel included most of the areas affected by the airport. He said that one of the tests that the Committee had to examine was what effect the airport was having at the moment. He said that it was already having an adverse effect on residents and this had to be balanced against the benefits of employment and being the gateway to Europe. He said that if the adverse effects were not properly addressed, the proposals would not be sustainable.

He referred to light and noise pollution and said that the effects of light pollution were particularly noticeable from Birchanger Lane. He said that noise pollution affected many areas and hamlets such as Burton End were now under threat. He also referred to fly parking which was affecting many areas and was becoming an increasing problem and the problems were spreading further out from the airport.

He also referred to commuting by rail and said that the new timetable by One Railway had been discussed at the last Area Panel meeting and there was a feeling that commuters were losing out to airport bound traffic. He said that the B1383 was also getting near saturation point. He added that existing communities were changing and there was an increase in rented property to airport workers and many people were looking to leave the area resulting in a displacement of existing communities.

He said that the Development Control Committee needed to consider if the application was sustainable and quoted from Andrew Duff MEP as follows:-

“With Luton and Stansted, our region risks becoming one of the biggest polluters in Europe. By placing fair and realistic costs on air travel, we will do something to ensure that the continued inevitable growth in air travel is not at the expense of future generations or the poor across the world”.

He concluded that residents would be looking for the Council to properly test the application. He referred to the survey in 2001 which said that Uttlesford had the best quality of life in England and said that this application would affect the present and future quality of life in the area.

Members of the Committee then questioned Councillor Sell and Councillor Loughlin asked whether any parishes in the South West Area Panel area favoured the application. He said that to his knowledge there were none. Councillor Godwin said that she concurred with Councillor Sell's comments about the views of the airport from Birchanger and shared his fears about existing communities being broken up.

Councillor Cheetham asked whether he had any evidence to show that commuters were losing out to users of the airport. Councillor Sell said that the Stansted Express did stop at Stansted Mountfitchet, but stations further up the line did not have this benefit. Trains from Cambridge that previously ran non stop to Tottenham Hale after Bishop's Stortford now served intermediate stations. He added that the car park at Stansted Mountfitchet was often full most mornings and there was no capacity for passengers to drive to Stansted Mountfitchet to join a Stansted Express train. There was limited capacity to

enable services to recover after incidents. Commuters were being treated as second class. Councillor Cant asked whether he considered the present service would be adequate for the future. Councillor Sell said that it would not and trains were already packed. Councillor C Dean said that the Elsenham News carried an article from “travelling man” which claimed that there was a poor service and rolling stock. Councillor Sell said that the quality had improved but the service was unpredictable and there was a distinct difference with the quality of the Stansted Express trains. Councillor Thawley asked whether Councillor Sell considered the airport was sustainable and whether it could be made sustainable. Councillor Sell said it would not be sustainable if it expanded and this would also increase the pressures for a second runway and the increase development pressures would be difficult to resist. He said that he was also concerned at the changes to the character of the District which would result from expansion.

Councillor Menell said that it had been suggested that some of the fly parking could be ordinary commuters. Councillor Sell disagreed and said that most of the cars were left for long periods and in one instance a road had to be resurfaced around cars which had been left for two weeks or more. Councillor Freeman said that it had been claimed that BAA could not influence the railways and asked if this was the case why did the Stansted Express get priority. Councillor Sell said that this was mainly down to Department of Transport policy and the response of the train operating company to the franchise requirements. He confirmed that there was also a large premium on Stansted Express tickets. Councillor Jones said that some commuters drove to Stansted Airport to commute into London. Councillor C Dean said that BAA had contended that it would not need extra capacity on the railways as airport travellers did not travel at the same time as commuters. Councillor Sell acknowledged that large numbers of commuters alighted at Bishop’s Stortford from Stansted Express trains in the evening peak but lots of passengers continued to the airport. In response to a further question from Councillor Thawley, Councillor Sell agreed that there was a lot of new development along the rail line and this was adding to the pressure along this route.

(ii) Statement by Councillor M A Gayler

Councillor Gayler, Leader of the Council said that the application being considered here was probably the most important issue to be considered by this council in the current four year term. It is therefore of vital importance that we get it right. We are here to represent local people, and we need to ensure that the decision taken is the right one for our community. We also need to examine and judge the application with the utmost vigour, to ensure that the decision taken is defensible.

If part of the policy context against which this application is to be judged is Government aviation policy, then it is clear that that policy would advocate maximum use of the current runway. However, even should we accept that, then maximum use cannot be allowed under just any circumstances. We must examine the application and ask ourselves could it be better. Does the application address and deal with the issues that concern us in a way that is best practice and acceptable?

Turning to the issues in question:

Firstly noise. An increase in the number of flights will inevitably lead to an increase in noise, both on the ground and in the air. The question we have to tackle is have the effects of increased noise been fully detailed and evidenced, are they within the boundaries that we consider acceptable, and could there be a better regime to manage the impact of noise?

Are the noise contours that have been measured the correct ones? The World Health Organisation suggests that the 57leq contour is too high and we should be measuring at a lower level of noise. We need to examine the real impact of noise, and ensuring that those measurements are addressed, not just the impact of the 57leq contour. If that then suggests that there will be a greater impact of noise on a wider area, then that is the criteria on which we should make our judgement.

Is the spread of the noise regime being proposed the best available for dealing with the number of flights proposed. How does it compare with best practice at other airports? Is the balance between flights during the day and night flights the best achievable to reduce the impact on our community? Should there be better noise controls in place to ensure maximum use of the quietest aircraft?

We must ensure that this application delivers the best possible practice to ensure the minimum noise impact on our community. If it does not, then it should be refused.

Moving on from noise, we all know that aviation is the fastest growing sector of the economy for producing CO2 emissions. The European Union is proposing to push ahead with policies to tackle the impact of aviation on our environment. Our own Government also has policies that call for reductions in CO2 emissions, albeit they have failed to address this in their aviation policies. The call from national government and from Europe to bring CO2 emissions, and indeed other forms of pollution, under control must be seen as a policy context for this application.

Again we must ask ourselves does this application demonstrate a will to seek to minimise the impact of CO2 emissions and air pollution, or does it fail to do what could be done, even within the context of full use of the runway?

We need to test the application's assumptions fully, not just rely on them and see how we can mitigate them. We need to address whether all forms of pollution are being adequately monitored and addressed. If they are not, then we must demand that they are. One issue that seems to be emitted is pollution from aviation fuel. We need to examine that, and ensure that effective controls are in place. If the regime to reduce the airport's impact on air quality is not best practice, and exceeds the limits we consider are acceptable, then we should refuse the application.

As well as the impact of the aeroplanes, we also need to look at the impact of the buildings, and how their impact on the environment can be controlled. It appears that more passengers means more energy consumption, means

more CO2 emissions. But should it? As a council we now have policies which dictate that those extending their houses must improve the energy efficiency of the whole house. We should impose the same constraints on the airport. I believe that we should insist on no increase in CO2 emissions stemming from any increase in passenger numbers. They need to put in energy saving measures to ensure better efficiency of the building, and generate more of their own electricity through solar panels and wind turbines, in order to prevent an increase in energy consumption. If they cannot demonstrate through their application that they have put such measures in place, then the application should be refused.

In some places it is difficult to monitor the impact of the airport on air quality, because we are also picking up pollution from the M11, and probably the A120, and it is difficult to separate the pollution from road traffic from the pollution from the Airport. But given that increased passengers = increased cars = increased pollution from the motorway, then the readings from the M11 must also be relevant considerations? Additional traffic generated by the airport also impacts on CO2 emissions.

What does this application do to address the impact of an increased number passengers travelling to the airport? Does it meet the standards we would expect, in which case it gives us reason to approve the application, or does it fall short, in which case it gives us reason to refuse the application?

To meet our demands the airport must do all it can to ensure a higher proportion of passengers coming to the airport by public transport, such that the use of the car is minimised. They must also ensure that increased use of public transport to get to the airport does not reduce the availability of public transport to members of our local community going about their daily business. Improved rail services are a key to this. I believe that a major investment in rail infrastructure and rolling stock is required to not only meet the demand that the Airport has highlighted, but also to encourage greater use of rail, which means improving the quality, in order to reduce car use. It does not appear to me that this has been adequately addressed.

What is the overall impact of the application on the health of local residents? We have yet to receive full analysis of this, but this data must also be scrutinised fully. There is a great deal of evidence of the impact of airports around the world on the health of those that live round them. We need to assure ourselves that the evidence has been used to establish best practice to reduce the impacts of noise and pollution, and to provide solutions to the threat that they pose to health. Do the airport's proposals ensure that best practice is being applied to this issue. If not, then we must insist that they do.

Moving on more briefly to some other issues:

Has the airport produced sufficient proposals to reduce its water consumption? Could it do more to recycle and capture its own water?

Has the airport got a strategy to reduce waste and increase recycling. If the Airport adopts recycling targets similar to the Council, then by doubling its

recycling it could reduce what it sends to landfill, even with a 40% increase in passenger numbers. We need to insist on a commitment to do this.

The application also addresses issues around construction details, and the number of workers who would be involved in construction. Yet this is only an application to remove conditions, not a full planning application. If they are suggesting that additional facilities, for which they do not currently have planning permission, may be required, then surely we cannot agree the lifting of conditions until they also seek planning permission for the addition facilities they need to support the increase in passenger numbers?

To conclude, this application cannot and must not be refused on a whim, without full and proper consideration, or just out of a desire to court public approval. It must be determined on proper planning grounds, in order to ensure that the decision will stand up to close scrutiny. But it also cannot be granted without full understanding of the impacts, and the committee being sure that the application includes measures to do everything that can be done to reduce its impact on the environment and ensure future sustainability, and being sure that the controls are in place to ensure that those measures can be rigorously enforced. If the application has fulfilled those criteria then it can be approved, but if it has not, and my view, on balance, is that it has not, then the committee should have the courage of its convictions and refuse the application.

Councillor Thawley asked whether the Council had put in place the resources to deal with this application and its consequences. Councillor Gayler replied that resources were available in the District Character earmarked reserve, but if more were needed, these would be identified.

(iii) Statement by Councillor D J Morson

Councillor Morson said that he was Deputy Leader and Chairman of the Community Committee. He said that he appreciated the tremendous responsibilities of the Development Control Members and welcomed the extensive range of meetings which had involved a wide range of audiences. He said that the argument for expansion was deeply flawed. Government figures for projected growth were questionable and the present provision was under used. He said that the environmental and social concerns about pollution had been dealt with very well by public speakers. He was pleased that Dr Banatvala from Henham had done research into the effects of air and noise pollution on children's health.

He also said that the infrastructure was already overloaded. He said that the Council previously had a policy of no expansion and he was disappointed at the previous decision to allow passenger numbers to increase to 25 mppa. He said that residents would be willing to fight any appeal from their Council Tax, but felt that the argument against expansion had been lost because of the previous decision. He concluded that if the current application was approved, it would result in an airport three times its original size. The Executive Manager Development Services clarified that the referendum undertaken on behalf of the Council was on "no more runways" rather than airport expansion.

(iv) Presentation by Councillor P A Wilcock

Councillor Wilcock said that he was the Councillor for Newport which included Widdington which was under the flight path and he was aware of many noise complaints. He said that he was a member of STACC, the noise tracking working group, SASIG and the Chair of the advisory group. He said that the issue of freedom to fly had to be measured against the effects of freedom to fly. He said that Government policy had been to use existing runway capacity and this had forced the decision on Stansted. However, there was a conflict of interest between Government departments which resulted in a conflict between the environment and transport. He added that the DTI had, at the last moment, said that a new runway in the south east was not financially viable and this had increased the pressure on Stansted. He said that in 1995 he had prepared his own tabulation of forecasts for passenger movements and this had predicted 21,246,178 in 2006 and 42.5 million by 2010/11. He said that the proposals affected the whole region and areas such as Bishop's Stortford, Ware and Clacton all had concerns. He felt that the key issues were infrastructure, the environment and noise and air pollution. However, the proposals would also be another step towards global warming. He referred to the impact on jobs and housing and said that the airport currently could not find enough people to satisfy requirements and it was becoming increasingly difficult for young people to find affordable housing in the area. He referred to the proposed take over of BAA and said that any new owner would want to maximise use of Stansted to increase income. He said that if the application was granted, it was essential that stringent conditions were imposed which addressed the concerns of people in the area. He suggested that if the application went to appeal, the concerns of local people would be ignored. He stressed that conditions needed to be absolute on numbers of flights, passengers and noise and the Section 106 Agreement should get the maximum benefit for the people of Uttlesford. He also suggested that such an agreement could relate to a local charge per passenger and should include night restrictions. He also suggested that an agreement similar to that at Gatwick for no second runway should be pursued.

Councillor Cheetham asked if prices on low cost airlines increased, it would affect his forecast. Councillor Wilcock said that the low cost model was unlikely to change and added that fuel surcharges had not dramatically affected demand for BAA flights. Councillor Loughlin asked whether he considered that residents would prefer the application to be approved with a stringent Section 106 Agreement or for it to be refused and Councillor Wilcock said that residents of Newport would expect the application to be refused. Councillor Jones said that areas such as Colchester were having housing imposed on them and Councillor Wilcock agreed that locating housing away from the job area increased travel. Councillor Thawley questioned the statement concerning the DTI statement and Councillor Wilcock said that at a late stage the DTI had stated that options for a new airport in the south east were not viable and it followed that demand would be spread across existing airports. Councillor Thawley added that there was evidence that BAA was using parking to keep the prices it charged to airlines down. Councillor Wilcock said that BAA made £2 per passenger on parking, £2 on retail and lost £2 on passenger charges. In answer to a further question, he suggested

that if Gatwick had succeeded in having an agreement for no further runways, this should be given proper consideration.

(v) Presentation by Councillor A Dean

I have been a member of this council representing Stansted for some 20 years, during which time I have seen significant changes at the airport and to the surrounding area. Much of it has been a creeping change. Not all has been bad. Not all has been good. That is the nature of change.

The big question for me and the difficult decision I know all members of this committee have to conclude later this year is whether the benefits of further growth in their broadest sense justify the negatives. Whether the debate has moved on in the past three years from buildings, car parks and noise contours to wider issues, in particular climate change.

Whether the applicant, BAA, can reasonably justify lifting constraints on aircraft movements and passenger numbers.

I have been watching and listening to the representations made since the start of this week. I was here on Monday and Tuesday. Then I spent time watching your proceedings on the internet until this very morning whilst I was at the Local Government Conference in Bournemouth.

The webcast is just one useful step towards demystifying the planning process. It should also be of great help to show local residents that this council is not a soft touch for the persuasive arguments of BAA's skilful wordsmiths. In fact, I phoned several participants yesterday and all of them were complimentary of the open approach that the council is taking.

Yesterday I had chance to speak with Angela Smith, the Under Secretary of State for local government public engagement and climate change at the Department for Communities and Local Government. That is an interesting combination of responsibilities to which I will return. She wanted to know about innovation by councils in engaging with their communities. I told her about these meeting and the webcast. She was impressed.

I have been impressed by the range and quality of arguments put forward by many people and by the questioning from the committee. One person said the committee was showing great fortitude and interest in what is a complex matter.

The big question that needs to be answered is whether this is the time to lift completely the lid over passenger volumes and plane numbers at Stansted Airport. I am far from convinced that BAA should be given unfettered freedom to do what it wants at Stansted on the runway. I emphasise **the runway**. Though we are not discussing the merits of more runways – against which there is near universal opposition – members must not lose sight of the fact that the way they handle this application on **the runway** cannot be divorced from any future application or applications for more runways.

It is no secret that the decision to approve 25 million passengers three years ago has proved, with the benefit of hindsight, not to be as watertight as it seemed at the time. BAA managed to convince this planning authority to approve facilities that will handle more passengers than was said at the time. Now they are asking for no new buildings; only passengers and aeroplanes.

This is creeping expansion by stealth. I am reminded of the careless drinker. Add a measure of gin to ones glass. Dilute it too much with tonic. Strengthen the mix with more gin.....and so it goes on until half the bottle of gin has been drunk. By good planning, liver disease can be avoided.

Poor measurement techniques and a shaky hand may not be good for any of us – apart from shareholders of gin and tonic manufacturers. The same goes for aviation companies and their shareholders.

This application is not about buildings and tarmac. It is about the wisdom of the use of what exists and the impact of that use. It is about licensing people to travel and managing their unintentional consequences.

But the council must beware that giving permission for more passengers may then be followed by a plea for more facilities. In fact, I heard BAA say that on the webcast. These could turn out to be underused and the next request may then be made for more passengers. Beware of ratchet growth!

I would urge the committee to continue to challenge all data used to justify this application and to accept nothing at face value. Forecasts of passenger growth are no more than forecasts. I think it would be wise to continue to scrutinise claims of economic benefits. Net benefits and to whom? Shareholders? Ordinary people living in Broxton and Stansted Mountfitchet?

I heard on Monday a plea that small parish councils are never listened to. What about the poor who live on low-lying coast lines in far off and not so far off countries? Does this council have a responsibility to all of them? I think we do and I would like to say why.

Yesterday the Conservative Party leader, Dave Cameron, took up a considerable part of his speech at the Local Government Conference on climate change. On Tuesday the new Labour environment minister, David Miliband, did the same. He has decreed that climate change has to be at the centre of all his department's policy. This week the Lib Dem environment shadow, Chris Huhne, wrote in the national press about the need for tougher environmental taxation.

The challenge to Uttlesford District Council over the coming months is to respond to Angela Smith's expectation for councils to be innovative and responsive to their communities. What Uttlesford allows at Stansted will not only impact on our immediate communities but on the wider global community through carbon emissions and climate change.

In its Environmental Statement BAA acknowledges that greenhouse gas emissions from aviation are not good for the planet. They say that Stansted Airport related emissions are being addressed by the 'UK's national CO2

reduction strategies' and by BAA's support for an emissions trading regime. They also claim that changing to low energy light bulbs at the airport itself will help.

That last point is true – on the extreme margins. But it is only part of the story. For instance, it is also likely that BAA's ultimate plans for Stansted would require all our homes and cars in the six counties of the East of England to become carbon neutral for this region's carbon emissions just to stand still. There would be no significant progress towards overall carbon reductions of 60% targeted by the UK government if some forecasts of aviation growth came about.

It will not do to accept the plea that one airport is insignificant in the global scale of things, as BAA has tried to do. If no one takes responsibility for their own actions and relies on others to make sacrifices, we are on the road to environmental disaster, leading to gargantuan economic failure and to social disorder as populations move to avoid drought, flood and starvation.

Why should I bother about the current hosepipe ban when I use so little water after I heard this week the spokesman from Three Valleys Water say that as Stansted Airport consumed only 3% of the water supply, it was small and manageable. You can add a few decimal places to my own consumption but I am not claiming exemption from constraint on water. Nor should BAA on its carbon emissions that result from its airport at Stansted.

We have heard grand words from senior national politicians. Now is the time for action. So far central government has avoided clear rules to control carbon emissions from aviation. We have heard that an emission-trading scheme is of dubious benefit. Experience so far suggests it will be a chaotic but cheap license to continue to pollute – more greenhouse gases, not less!

The recent report of the East of England Plan has called for a framework of guidance within which all sectors of the economy can set limits on their carbon emissions. I urge the council to engage with that debate and to influence it. Without rules, everyone is confused. Industry is crying out for rules. They just need to be effective and not camouflage for carrying on as before.

I am not a technical expert on emissions and climate change. I am going to avoid quoting tonnages, parts per million, degrees Celsius and metres of sea level. I do urge the committee to call for this information. Speak directly to the Tyndall Centre for Climate Change. It is based in our region at the University of East Anglia at Norwich. Speak also to the East of England Regional Assembly staff who are addressing climate change. Matthew Chell is the lead officer.

Until there is much greater clarity, caution must be the byword. It would be perverse and reckless to grant BAA all it has asked for until there is greater clarity. There may be alternative variations on the existing planning permission that will serve as a holding position. I am not going to suggest numbers today, as more work is needed on what these might be.

You heard on Monday from your officers that the Kyoto Climate Change agreement is a material consideration. A synonym for 'material' is 'significant'. So the question for the committee to answer is 'how significant is this material'?

If BAA is committed to climate change control and cannot deliver reductions itself, it is putting the burden on us at home to become carbon neutral. Will the aviation industry trade with all of us who live in this region and neither want drought nor inundation from the North Sea to disrupt our lives and the quality of life of succeeding generations?

Will BAA and its partners in the industry commit to go beyond paying for double and triple glazing to keep out sound? Will they commit to pay for solar panels and wind turbines on all of our homes? Will they commit to energy insulation as well as sound insulation? The precedent is there. This council just needs to bring that precedent and their commitment up to date. It is no longer good enough for senior management at the airport to brush off this matter, as they did last year when I was asked whether I blamed them personally for the melting of the polar ice cap.

Further, will BAA and its partners pay for the other costs to the locality and region of their activities? The full cost of policing at the airport itself? The cost of getting the road and rail infrastructure into a fit state to cope with airport pressures whilst leaving enough capacity for local residents. The cost of being able properly to patrol and catch fly parkers and seek out illegal parking schemes for airport users?

The list is long. How much will BAA hand over to local authorities for each passenger that uses the airport to stop yet more subsidy by local taxpayers of this cosseted industry? I won't name my price today, but I expect we are talking about several pounds per passenger up to 25 million - even before consideration is given to passengers beyond 25 million.

There are alternatives to air travel to the continent. Recently I went to the Spanish Pyrenees by night train. Similar price. More comfortable. I am investigating a trip to Morocco via Paris and Madrid. All legs by night train with interesting stopovers en route. So don't be put off by pleas about cheap holidays for the low paid.

Climate change and the knock on costs of airport growth may be the most significant matters. They are certainly not ones to be shrugged off by the applicant as someone else's problem; to be tackled in the distant future. Once a new license to expand and pollute has been granted it will be too late.

Refusal has to be the ultimate choice if the applicant is not prepared to negotiate on a holding position well short of maximum use of the one runway and to pay the true cost of his proposals.

Councillor Freeman said that if the Committee threw out the application, it would go to a public inquiry where evidence would be taken and a decision would be taken by an inspector. The only way to avoid this was to approve the application with stringent conditions, and he asked Councillor Dean what

he thought the Committee could do in practical terms. Councillor Dean advised against refusing the application without good reasons and said that the Committee should develop a rationale for saying at the present time it is premature to give complete approval. He suggested that modifications should be sought to bring limits down to give breathing space pending further guidance.

Councillor Godwin said that since the white paper, there seemed to have been a sea change in favour of the environmental case against the economic case. Councillor Dean agreed that the global environment had shot to the top of the political agenda. However, he referred to an article by Kate Barker suggesting that the planning process should be simplified to benefit the economy. He said that an article in the Guardian had criticised this statement and suggested that the planning process needed to balance needs of the quality of life of residents as well as the needs of industry.

Councillor Menell agreed that a decision on the application must be made with the benefit of much more knowledge. Councillor Thawley asked what the Minister had said about the climate change and what criteria was required to assess when it was the right time to make a decision on the application. Councillor Dean said that he was not an expert on figures and statistics, but advised that there should be a dialogue with a number of people and organisations in the area. He also criticised the problems of grandfather rights on emissions.

Councillor Jones asked whether it was practical to involve BAA in emission negotiations. Councillor Dean replied that BAA knew that emissions trading would mitigate the impact on them as they could pay their way out of the problem. He said that there was a need for a fresh approach to limit capacity through caps and not building more runways.

(vi) Presentation by Councillor A M Wattebot

I am here to representing the inhabitants of Thaxted and the neighbouring villages, where I am a ward councillor.

The current proposal impacts on their lives in a number of ways. Some of these are peculiarly local and others are more general and of importance to anyone living in Uttlesford, the East of England or indeed the furthest corners of the earth.

1. In Uttlesford, and in Thaxted in particular, we are privileged to live in a charming and largely unspoilt part of Britain, a little enclave of peace and civilization in an increasingly crowded, noisy and polluted part of the country. We have inherited a wonderful historic townscape of timber-framed houses and tiled roofs, surrounded by gently rolling countryside, and we are glad to be able to share our delightful surroundings with the many visitors we receive.

The continuing existence of this enclave, and the health and quality of life of its inhabitants, are threatened in a number of ways by the proposed expanded use of the airport. Put briefly, a good quality of life depends on adequate sleep and a daytime environment in which everyone can live and go about their

daily business safely and comfortably combined with a quiet enjoyment of normal social encounters.

The proposed increased use of Stansted Airport threatens the local quality of life in a number of ways:

- **Aircraft noise** in Thaxted is already greater than many people find tolerable, and the Government's forthcoming relaxation on restrictions of night flights will make this worse, for more people. Lack of sleep leads to poor performance at work, social disharmony and ill health.
- In particular, the projections for future noise presented by BAA do not give a clear and consistent indication of the levels of sound disturbance likely to be experienced on the ground. Both the current noise maps and the projections presented by BAA are misleading – and here I must declare an interest as I live under the current flight path. Aircraft noise is much more intrusive in the residential areas around Thaxted church, which lie just outside the current 57leq contour, than is the case in the rural areas just on the 60leq contour. **Actual experience of noise in built up areas can be much worse than the maps suggest.**
- Day time aircraft noise already **disrupts business, education and social life** and the proposed increase in flight and passenger movements will turn an intermittent nuisance into a permanent obstacle to normal life.
- More flights means **more road traffic** as passengers, airport workers and supply vehicles access the airport through our narrow winding road system. It is already **scarcely possible to walk or cycle safely** on even the smallest of local roads, and expansion of movements at the airport can only increase the volume of fast moving and dangerous traffic. According to the County Council a bypass or even a weight restriction through Thaxted is out of the question, and its ancient buildings are increasingly shaken and damaged by lorries and trucks which also mount the pavements when it suits them, risking the lives of pedestrians. Expansion of the airport can only increase this problem.
- **Public bus transport is distorted** by the presence of the airport and more passengers and flights can only make this worse. It is relatively easy to get to the airport by bus from Thaxted but it is now almost impossible to travel from Thaxted to Chelmsford, except via Stansted. Bus routes are responsive to the needs of air passengers, not those of local residents going about their everyday business.
- It is hard for young people with their roots in this small part of the world to set up home near their work, families and friends because the presence of a major employer in the area makes **even modest housing unaffordable**. More passenger numbers will mean an increased labour force coming in from outside and competing for those same houses.

2. An increase in airborne traffic has wider and graver implications for the environment, and these are also a major concern to residents of Thaxted and its surroundings. They, and I, are aware, as BAA appears not to be, of the need to bring a halt to the increase in concentrations of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere.

It is now accepted that because of the height at which they discharge CO and other gases, aircraft flights have a **disproportionately damaging effect on the atmosphere** and that it will be impossible for the **UK to reach its agreed emission** reduction targets if the number of flights is allowed to increase as projected and proposed.

The consequences of uncontrolled global warming are unquantifiable and potentially catastrophic but at the very least they will **be destructive of the way of life of many millions** of people. It's a cliché but still worth restating. What kind of global and local environment do we want to bequeath to future generations?

Councillor Menell asked whether she had any feed back from local schools. Councillor Wattebot said that there were some concerns about disruption to activities, but Councillor Foley had more information to report. Councillor Thawley asked if she could explain the difference in the noise levels between Stanbrook and the area around Thaxted church. Councillor Wattebot said that whilst she was not certain, she felt it could be explained by the difference in the topography and the difference between the impact on a rural and urban area.

(vii) Presentation by Councillor M L Foley

Councillor Foley said that there were ongoing surveys on the impact on Thaxted church but it was difficult to assess whether any damage was caused by air or road traffic. He said that residents were “mad as hell” about the prospect of more noise and pollution. He said that he was also worried about the impact on children’s health and said that his daughter had just returned from university and had found the night noise to be a problem which illustrated that people living in the area had got used to a situation. He said that there was also an impact on children being disturbed at night. He concluded that Thaxted felt on the front line and considered that now is the time to make a stand.

Councillor Freeman said Gatwick had less night flights and asked whether it would be possible to severely restrict night flights at Stansted. He also asked whether the cortisol levels of people under the flight path had been looked at compared to similar people elsewhere. Councillor Foley said that people cared more about their quality of life than extra jobs and he was worried that long term growth at the airport was not sustainable. He was particularly concerned that any downturn in aviation could lead to unemployment in the area causing similar problems which were experienced with the oil boom in Scotland. Councillor Thawley asked whether the impact on people to the south west of the airport was from landing craft and extra stacking. Councillor Foley said that most of the problem was from landing aircraft and this was a particular problem at night. Councillor Down added that taking off noise was a problem nearer to Duton Hill. Councillor Menell asked whether Dr Pinchen could be asked for a view on stress and Councillor Cant said that studies on this would be fed into the process.

(viii) Statement by Councillor B M Hughes

Councillor Hughes said that she was the member for the Castle Ward of Saffron Walden. She said that there was a view that Saffron Walden was not greatly affected by the proposals and people supported an expansion. She said that she was concerned at this statement and felt that it was a minority view. She said that Saffron Walden was a commuter town and was affected by trains going to Stansted Airport as the condition of rolling stock on the Audley End line had deteriorated. The roads were also becoming more congested and there were more accidents on the M11. There was also anecdotal evidence of flights being delayed in the evening resulting in planes coming in later at night. She said that more flights would lead to more delays and more night flights. She continued that jobs at the airport were mostly low paid and concluded that over flying of Saffron Walden had increased substantially, although she accepted that many of these flights were from Luton Airport. She hoped that the Committee would mitigate the impact of the proposals if they had to approve the application.

Councillor Jones said that Audley End station car park was now full at a much earlier time and the lack of space was becoming an issue. Councillor Hughes agreed and said that although it had been expanded, there were still problems and the bus service was inadequate. Councillor Down said that Great Easton School was under the flight path and suffered from noise. Councillor Abrahams said that aircraft noise in Clavering was not a big problem, but when he went around the area, he felt sorry for those affected by noise and particularly mentioned the problems of increased traffic in Saffron Walden. Councillor Loughlin asked whether the increase in noise was a recent phenomenon. Councillor Hughes said she had lived in the town since 1971 and much of the air traffic went to the north of the town. However, she said that there was now much more to the south. Councillor Menell confirmed that flights over Littlebury Green and Wendens Ambo had greatly increased.

(ix) Presentation by Councillor R M Lemon

Councillor Lemon said that he was the Member for Hatfield Heath which was under the flight path. He said that public opinion in Hatfield Heath was very much against the airport and whilst he accepted that the proposals must be judged on strict criteria, public opinion must be part of this. He said that Hatfield Heath was shocked when the last application had been approved and he had campaigned against no more runways at Stansted. He considered that there should be an up to date referendum and whilst he accepted that the webcam was a positive step, it could not enable people to give feedback in the same way that a referendum would. He questioned how the Council could justify signing the Nottingham Declaration whilst at the same time considering approving the expansion of the airport.

The Executive Manager Development Services said that a referendum could not be carried out in the context of a planning application. He said it was a snap shot of public opinion and was not binding on the Committee. He said that the letters of representation had raised many issues which could be discussed, whereas a referendum was a single issue and would not inform Members as much as the consultation process and the series of recent meetings had done. However, Councillor Lemon said that a referendum had the advantage of reaching all people in Uttlesford. Councillor Cheatham

asked whether there was any feedback on the levels of concentration of children at the Hatfield Heath School. Councillor Lemon said that as Chairman of Governors, he had no evidence of lack of concentration by pupils. The school had, however, been forced to double glaze the whole building due to road traffic noise. In response to a further question from Councillor Thawley, he said that most of the community's problems were caused by aircraft taking off. Problems from landing in easterlies were less significant.

Councillor Menell asked whether it would be possible to have details of the flight paths from Luton which went over this District and also asked whether site visits could be made to problem areas such as Broxton. The Executive Manager Development Services said that these matters were being addressed.

(x) Presentation by Stop Stansted Expansion

Brian Ross of Stop Stansted Expansion (SSE) introduced the presentation which would be made by representatives of that organisation.

In his introduction, he stated:-

- BAA planning application is in conflict with many aspects of national/regional/local planning policy.
- Environmental Statement is unreliable/inadequate. Omits key information including input data used to support its many dubious assertions/assumptions.
- Even on the basis of the basis of the information we presently have available, the impacts are wholly unacceptable.
- If BAA provides the information it has so far avoided providing – the reasons for refusing this application become even more apparent.

Information shortcomings largely arise as a result of BAA's disregard of much of Council's Scoping Opinion.

- No overall masterplan – material omission.
- Key projections only to 2014 but RSS planning horizon = 2021 and ATWP horizon = 2030.
- No quality of life assessment.
- BAA's refusal to quantify carbon emissions impact.

BAA's assessment of the environmental impacts is superficial – gilding the lily and hiding the skeletons.

BAA has manipulated data to suit its arguments, including misquoting official sources (simple errors?) and has added 'unhelpful' data.

BAA overstates its 25mppa baseline and understates projections beyond that so as to minimise difference between the two.

Presents impacts as 'one extra cornflake for breakfast' but don't lose sight of real impacts of:-

- Extra 80,000 ATM's a year compared to now.
- Potential capacity to handle 40mppa in 2014; 45mppa in 2021 and 50mppa in 2030.

BAA has a poor track record on forecasting – just refer back to data provided for last planning application.

Ken McDonald of SSE then made a presentation on the surface access impacts entitled Grinding to a Halt.

He concluded that:-

- ES incomplete, misleading and unreliable.
- Fails to adequately test the full impacts.
- Fails to address reduction of car travel.
- Minimal proposals for mitigation.
- Unacceptable impacts.

Councillor Cheetham asked if the implications of increased cargo flights for gridlock on M11 junction 8 had been taken into account. It was confirmed that commercial vehicles has been considered.

Chris Bennett of SSE then made a presentation on noise entitled Revealing the Real Impacts. He concluded with the statement in RPG9 which said that year on year improvements in noise pollution should be a strategic goal.

Councillor Cant questioned whether noise events would be more frequent on the shoulder periods and Chris Bennett said that they were. She also sought confirmation that the 16 hour N65 contours were also based on average data. Chris Bennett agreed that as these contours were based on the same data as that used to calculate the 16 hour LAeq contours, this was the case. Councillor Thawley asked Chris Bennett to expand on the statement that landing noise was more significant. Chris Bennett said that take off noise was concentrated close to the airport because of the rapid rate of climb. Landing noise was also an issue further from the airport for complex reasons. Particular problems were caused from noise from deploying landing gear and aircraft banking. He also confirmed that the threshold of 65dB for interference with speech was as measured outdoors. The degree of attenuation provided by a building varied. In response to a question from Councillor Freeman, Chris Bennett agreed that the issue was whether LEQ was a poor measurement

of noise, but whether it was the best way of presenting information on noise energy. All systems relied on gathering noise energy in one way or another. The problem was depicting what had been measured in an intelligible way. In answer to a further question from Councillor Cheetham, he also said that SSE would be responding on the issue of ground noise. Councillor Loughlin referred to landing aircraft and asked whether continuous descent approaches resulted in noise being experienced over a more extensive area. Chris Bennett said that continuous descent was quieter for most people, but not for all. Councillor Dean asked about the noise levels that caused residents of Ware annoyance. Chris Bennet estimated that these would be about 48 to 50 Leq. He added that for Leq less than 57, there was a high dependency on accurate data about flight paths. The CAA model used assumptions about aircraft tracks for arriving aircraft. For meaningful contours below 51dB, actual track data was required. In response to a question from Councillor Cant, Chris Bennett confirmed that atmospheric were taken into account and in answer to a question from Councillor Thawley concerning the impact of noise to the south west of Thaxted and around the church, he confirmed that the measurements took account of topography through terrain adjusted contours.

Carol Barbone then made a presentation on climate change entitled Cheap Flights Cost the Earth. She stated that:-

- Distant and uncertain prospect of a partial ETS is a wholly inadequate mitigation proposal.
- Sustainable Development is defined (by DEFRA) as: *“Development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”*.
- Does this planning proposal have sufficient other merits to justify compromising our climate change and sustainability objectives?

In conclusion she said that:-

- 1 Mitigation proposals are wholly inadequate, especially reliance on a partial ETS. The bottom line is that Stansted expansion would add to emissions.
- 2 Sustainable development must be a key consideration for you when assessing the application. To date, there is absolutely no evidence that on the climate change front, sustainable development could actually be achieved.
- 3 Finally, asking whether the application has sufficient other merits to justify compromising our climate change and sustainability objectives, overview is that it doesn't and never could be worth compromising the global environment on the basis on which this application is presented.

Brian Ross of SSE then made a presentation on economics and employment entitled Environmental Pain for No Economic Gain. He concluded that:-

- BAA has failed to provide economic and employment analysis requested by UDC and quality of information provided is very poor – unsupported by evidence and full of inaccuracies.
- Economic and employment impacts are likely to be negative – locally, regionally and probably also nationally.
- Over-dependency on airport jobs would run directly counter to objective of achieving sustainable economic development.

Regional Policy E14 states: “It is vital that the future growth of airports in the region achieves an acceptable balance between economic, employment and other benefits and environmental and other considerations”.

- If economic and employment impacts are negative then a “balance” with environmental damage is unachievable.

Brain Ross then wound up the presentation and said that the Committee had listened to 89 presentations and he thanked the Council for giving SSE the opportunity to participate and hearing arguments from every direction possible. He concluded that the Committee had one hell of a task in front of it and thanked Members again.

The Executive Manager Development Services thanked the Committee and congratulated Members for their stamina. He said that it had been a good week and the use of the webcam had been a new departure for the Council. He was pleased that the matter had been discussed in a non confrontational way. He said that “this is not the end, it is not even the beginning of the end, but it is, perhaps, the end of the beginning”.

The next phase was to look at formulating the decision from 18 July onwards. He confirmed that there would be further scope for public involvement in August.

Councillor Cant also thanked the Committee. She said that whilst the meetings had been long, they had been very useful and informative and Members now had a lot more information. She said that the website was available for comments.

The meeting ended at 7.10 pm.