

**EXTRAORDINARY DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE held at  
COUNCIL OFFICES LONDON ROAD SAFFRON WALDEN at 2.00 PM on  
29 NOVEMBER 2006**

Present:- Councillor C A Cant – Chairman.  
Councillors E C Abrahams, P Boland, 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, M Miller and A R Thawley.

Officers in attendance:- M Cox, R Harborough, J Mitchell, M J Perry,  
C Oliva and J G Pine.

**DC117 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members declared the following personal interests:-

Councillor A R Thawley, a member of CPRE and the National Trust.  
Councillor J I Loughlin, a member of Stansted Parish Council.  
Councillor J F Cheetham a member of NWEPPA, the National Trust and the  
Hatfield Forest Management Committee.  
Councillor E J Godwin, a member of Birchanger Parish Council.  
Councillor C D Down, a member of CPRE.  
Councillor S Jones, a member of the National Trust and Saffron Walden Town  
Council.  
Councillor J E Menell, a non-executive director of the Uttlesford PCT when the  
Health Impact Assessment was submitted and a member of Littlebury Parish  
Council.  
Councillor R F Freeman a member of Saffron Walden Town Council and  
English Heritage  
Councillor C M Dean a member of the National Trust.  
Councillor C A Cant, a member of Uttlesford PCT when the Health Impact  
Assessment was submitted.

**DC118 PLANNING APPLICATION 0717/06/FUL STANSTED AIRPORT**

The Committee considered the final report and the officer recommendation in  
relation to application 0717/06/FUL to expand the use of Stansted Airport by  
means of relaxing planning conditions thereby removing a cap of 25 million  
passengers per annum and increasing the number of aircraft movements to  
264,000 per year.

**i) Officers report**

The Policy and Development Control Liaison officer provided the Committee  
with a summary of the responses that had been received to 16 November  
2006, and reported the late representations. It was noted that over 1700  
representations had been received.

Members then considered a report that outlined the implications of climate  
change for the determination of the application. It was felt that this matter  
merited consideration as an overarching issue, as it had potential implications

in respect of the need for the development, the economic benefits, health and environmental impacts. The Committee noted the conclusion that

- 1 Given the importance of climate change as a global issue and the mounting research evidence to support a policy review, there was a sound case for refusing the changes to conditions sought on climate change grounds until the Government had clarified the position through a thorough, formal process.
- 2 It was acknowledged that no climate change effects directly linked to additional movements on the existing runway could be demonstrated.

The Executive Manager Development Services said that this was a very comprehensive application with a considerable amount of supportive documentation. The Council had undertaken an exhaustive programme to determine the application. 19 special meetings had been held to consider the issues and Members had been able to give it their full attention. The supporting information had been looked at in great depth. Members had heard arguments from its own consultants, members of the public and supporters. A number of the meetings had been webcast. The process had received an unprecedented degree of openness and transparency.

The application had been considered in the context of national and regional policy, new policy considerations had emerged but neither ruled out the consideration of local environmental effects. Officers had recommended that the application be refused for 9 reasons based mainly on local environmental issues and seeking clarification on climate change considerations. The Executive Manger said that the report had been objective and thorough and the reasons for refusal had been based on sound planning reasons.

## **ii) Statement by members of the public**

### **Maggie Sutton – SSE**

Maggie Sutton said that the officer's recommendation was very welcome. The application had weighed heavily on the shoulders of SSE and the community. She said that Uttlesford was a special and beautiful place. The local community was already feeling the impact of expansion and had fought hard against any further growth. Further growth in aviation was unsustainable. She thought that Uttlesford should be the voice of no more growth and send a clear signal to BAA and the Government. She urged BAA not to appeal as 25mppa was sufficient development.

### **Councillor M A Gayler – Leader of the Council**

Councillor Gayler said that he had previously stated that this application was one of the most important issues facing the Council and it had to get it right in order to properly represent local people. He said the application had to be determined on planning grounds and the evidence pursued with careful vigour. The process had been open and transparent and involved all interested parties and therefore the decision would stand up to close scrutiny. He said the expansion would have an unacceptable impact on noise, air pollution and quality of life. BAA had not provided a robust or sustainable

response and the provisions for rail service and road traffic was inadequate. With the response to the Stern report not yet clear it was right for the climate change issue to be taken into account. He urged the Committee to support the recommendation. A unanimous decision would send a strong message about the Council's strength of resolve.

### **Councillor A J Ketteridge – Leader of the Conservative Group**

Councillor Ketteridge said that the Committee had carefully considered documents for and against the proposal and received many individual comments. He thought the issue was simple, to protect the definition of Uttlesford as a rural area. He did accept change but it had to be compatible with the environment of the district. People were fortunate in Uttlesford as they could be in the countryside in minutes. He was not opposed to the airport but its value in terms of economic benefits had already been maximised. The principle of "airport in the countryside" should be retained. If the proposed expansion was agreed urbanisation and industrialisation would inevitably follow. He thanked all members and officers who had facilitated the arrival at the recommendation.

### **Councillor J P Murphy – Member for Great Dunmow South**

Councillor Murphy thanked officers for the amount and quality of work involved in the thorough examination of the application. He thanked members of the Committee for the sacrifice they had made in attending so many meetings and SSE for the quality of the evidence provided. He felt the application should be refused on quality of life and environmental grounds. But the expansion would also lead to economic harm as the airport created a huge demand for housing, which led to the loss of affordable housing for local people. Government Policy on airport expansion had not been sufficient to approve this application.

### **Councillor A Dean – Member for Stansted Mountfitchet and Chair of Stansted Airport Policy Task Group and Advisory Panel**

Councillor Dean said that refusing this application would be no ordinary event. It would highlight the whole debate about growth in aviation at a time when the Government was reviewing its White Paper on Aviation Policy. The local reasons for refusal were, important, direct and immediate. But another consequence of more planes in the sky was less easy to quantify, but could be far more sinister than all the others combined. The Stern Review on the Economics of Climate Change has raised the debate about global warming to the top of the economic and the environmental agenda. Many experts considered that unconstrained growth in aviation would threaten to undo all other attempts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to minimise climate change. He had attended a conference yesterday and listened the Minister of State, Ian Pearson MP, and it had become clear that there was no coherent policy response from central government. He said that Uttlesford could set an example by refusing the application. Until now BAA had claimed that aviation's contributions to global emissions were insignificant, but full use of the single runway at Stansted would contribute about half the domestic carbon emissions from everyone living in the East of England. The Council could not hope that someone else would come up with a solution. The risks were too

great to give approval to BAA's planning application under such uncertainty and he asked that the application be refused.

### **Councillor K R Artus – Member for Broad Oak and the Hallingburys**

Councillor Artus said he had lived near to the airport for many years and was aware of its impact. Since expansion from 15 million it had exceeded its "airport in the countryside" description. To increase from 25 to possibly 40mppa would be doubling the existing size and would be an environmental catastrophe. He predicted noise pollution, underinvested roads and railways. He asked the Committee to refuse the application for the sake of local residents and to set an example nationally.

### **iii) Comments by Members of the Committee**

The Chairman thanked the officers for an excellent report which dealt clearly with very complex issues. She said that when the application had first been received she thought there was a strong possibility that it would be approved. After considering the evidence she had concluded that there could be no mitigating measures to outweigh the impact on the local area. The demand for air travel was driven by artificially low fares. The Government had claimed that this would give the opportunity for lower income people to obtain the same access to transport, but a recent survey had found that it was mostly people from the higher income bracket that used these flights. Only a small percentage of business flights went from Stansted and refusing this application would not affect business travel.

She had received numerous letters; the major issue of concern was noise and had she had heard many first hand accounts. The increase in flights would fill in what were at present relatively quiet periods. She said that in the past infrastructure had been built as a response to chaos, as with the A120. She had no confidence that this application would be any different. She then referred to the contradictions in the Government's policy towards climate change. Energy saving measures were being introduced whilst the aviation industry had been immune to these policies. The response to the Stern Report might signal a change. She concluded that north east Essex was a special place, it had a quiet beauty with small supportive communities, and any further disintegration of these should be avoided.

She then moved the motion that the application be refused for the reasons set out in the officer's report.

Councillor Cheetham seconded the motion. She said that for the past 6 months she had read many documents from interested parties and it had taken up her thoughts and her life. The report prepared by officers had been well balanced and clear with sound reasons for refusal. She commented that a Quality of Life Assessment should have been done. She referred to the huge impact that the airport had had on the residents of Takeley. It was becoming a transient community as workers at the airport lived in rented property and tended to work shifts. A number of local people were moving away from the village. This was shown by the 25% reduction in the school roll. The local community was being eroded.

She said that the findings of the Ranch report were worrying. Noise was a major problem, not just the loudness but the frequency, and the mitigation measures proposed were not enough. She said the Council should take note of the Stern report and it would be premature to approve the application before the Government response. She asked that pollution damage to Hatfield Forest be examined and commented that the local water supply was insufficient. She said that she had weighed up all the information, looked at local and national policies and had concluded that the application would not benefit the community that she represented.

Councillor Godwin said this was the end of a long and exhaustive process during which she had learnt a lot. The Council had made the process as open as possible. She thanked all those that had contributed to this process. She had learnt that noise also affected people that lived further away from the direct vicinity of the airport. Noise issues could not be dismissed and the effect on the quality of life of those that experienced it. The high activity in the shoulder period, resulting from the flight patterns of low cost flights, meant that the period of undisturbed sleep for many people was less than the recommended 7 hours.

She referred to the death of rural communities around the airport and said it was starting to happen in other villages. She referred to a recent document by the Strategic Health Authority which said that the rivers in the district were overused or over resourced. There was already a lot of development in this area that required a water supply and the predicted change in rainfall resulting from climate change would make matters worse.

In terms of infrastructure, traffic was already building up on roads near to the airport at peak times. Also the rail structure needed a massive improvement, but nobody was taking the responsibility to pay for it. She thought that in the light of the Stern Report, the Government should revisit the Air Transport White Paper. Any economic benefits were negated by outgoing tourism. She said that the mitigation put forward by BAA was scant and the application had become unsustainable. The economic benefits of aviation were short lived, growth in future would have serious environmental implications.

Councillor C Dean said that Uttlesford had once been proud of the airport. It was a major employer in the area, had brought prosperity and convenient travel. However, in recent years it had changed dramatically. Its negative impact affected people over a wide area. If this application was permitted it would provide 3000 extra jobs, but the nature of these had changed and the airport now had to rely on migrant workers rather than the local workforce. In terms of climate change, BAA had offered in mitigation a carbon trading scheme but there was no evidence that this would be effective. There could only be expansion if there were infrastructure improvements. There had been misery for commuters since the new timetable had been introduced and the Stansted Express was being given priority. There was no commitment from BAA to improve the rail service.

From the beginning she had tried to weigh up the benefits against the environmental impact. She had concluded that the benefits were not as attractive as they once were and they did not outweigh the impact on the local community.

Councillor Harris said that he had started the process with an open mind. The Committee now had an opportunity to force a turning point in aviation history. Members could only be guided by the knowledge they had today. He thought that the Government was confused in its policy and had refused to take meaningful measures. The residents had to suffer noise, light and air pollution to support a “live now – pay as little as possible” culture. Exploring the planet was leading to destroying the planet. A refusal of the application would send a message to the Government to stop, pause and think.

Councillor Down said she had read copious reports, weighed up evidence and considered the impact on the district and the community she represented. She had watched the quality of life erode, and experienced the effects of noise and air pollution. Expansion would exacerbate all the problems and outweigh the benefits. She said enough was enough.

Councillor Loughlin thanked officers for an excellent and knowledgeable report. She commented that noise was a real problem for residents and they couldn't ask their neighbour to turn down the noise. There had been no quality of life assessment but the importance of being part of a vibrant community should not be underestimated. She mentioned a 1991 publication, “ the story of BAA” which had said that the development of the airport was mutually beneficial. This was no longer the case, and there were now sound environmental reasons for refusal. In refusing the application she felt she was making the best decision for the quality of life of the Stour Valley residents.

Councillor Thawley said he had voted for the previous application to increase the airport capacity to 25mppa. He had now listened impartially to all the arguments. He had found the meetings with members of the public very moving, and felt they had shown the true nature of Uttlesford. Officers had shown the application to be in breach of Local Plan policies and he hoped that the Secretary of State would take note of this.

He commented that the scientific arguments in relation to climate change had pointed toward a growing catastrophe, but it had taken an economic report to focus the mind. He was pleased that officers had listened to the community and to experts.

Councillor Menell said that there had been too little information in the Health Impact Assessment. She referred to the public speaking session when two children, Charlie and Teddy Mitchell had spoken about the effect of the growing airport on their lives. Also Mrs White, a resident from Hertfordshire had described the misery of sleep deprivation. These two accounts had clearly shown the effect that the development of the airport had on local residents. She said that there was no evidence to persuade her that this application could benefit the community, it would only be detrimental.

Councillor Abrahams said that he was a farmer and had lived in the countryside all of his life. He represented Clavering, which was affected only little at this stage. He said that Uttlesford was a beautiful part of Essex and it made his heart bleed to see the damage that was being done to other parts of the district just so that people could look at different parts of the world. He said that he hadn't given climate change much thought until now, but had noticed

that the wheat in his fields was now as high it should be in April He hoped that the community would stick together to stop further development.

Councillor Freeman represented Saffron Walden, which was one of the least affected areas of the district but he appreciated the impact of the airport on the district as a whole. He said he had taken extensive notes during the various meetings with interested parties and had found BAA's arguments unconvincing. There had also been representations from Essex Police about the provision for policing at the airport and he wondered how well BAA was performing behind the scenes. He considered that the environmental arguments were irrefutable. He thanked all parties for their evidence, all had been valuable and some had been particularly interesting.

RESOLVED that Planning Application 01717/06/FUL Stansted Airport be refused for the following reasons:

### **Noise**

1. Inadequate mitigation measures are proposed to address the effects of noise on the local community, to the detriment of the amenity of the occupiers of buildings in the vicinity of the airport, and the cognitive development of primary school children, contrary to policies BIW9 of the Essex and Southend-on-Sea Structure Plan and GEN2 of the Uttlesford Local Plan.
2. The absence of a Quality Of Life assessment means that inadequate consideration has been given to the impact of air noise on the culture and leisure activities of nearby communities, although evidence from consultees suggest these impacts are significant. As a result the effect of the development on local communities is uncertain, and no proportionate mitigation measures can be put forward, to the detriment of amenity and contrary to policies BIW9 of the Essex and Southend-on-Sea Structure Plan and GEN2 of the Uttlesford Local Plan

### **Quality of Life**

3. The absence of a Quality of Life Assessment means that the effects on the cohesion of local communities caused by the pressures on the nature and character of residential accommodation arising from the presence of a rapidly-growing airport has not been given due consideration. As a result the effect on local communities is uncertain, and no proportionate mitigation measures can be put forward, to the detriment of amenity and contrary to policies BIW9 of the Essex and Southend-on-Sea Structure Plan and GEN2 of the Uttlesford Local Plan

### **Air Quality**

4. Increased pollution arising from the consequences of the proposed development could give rise to an increased risk of vegetation damage in Hatfield Forest and East End Wood. Insufficient real data is available to ensure an accurate assessment. As a consequence

inadequate contingency measures for mitigation and/or compensation measures have been made, to the detriment of biodiversity and contrary to policies NR5, NR6, NR7 and BIW9 of the Essex and Southend-on-Sea Structure Plan and ENV7 of the Uttlesford Local Plan

### **Water conservation**

- 5 Inadequate provision is made for increased efficiency in the use of water, to the detriment of water conservation strategies and contrary to policy EG4 of the Essex and Southend-on-Sea Structure Plan and GEN1 of the Uttlesford Local Plan

### **Surface Access - Road**

- 6 With the exception of the requirements of the Highways Agency the proposed obligations and conditions do not satisfy the requirements of the highway authorities. Without adequate mitigation measures there could be congestion on the local highway network to the detriment of the free flow of traffic and highway safety, contrary to policies T1 of the Essex and Southend-on-Sea Structure Plan and GEN1 of the Uttlesford Local Plan

### **Surface Access - Rail**

- 7 The mechanisms and measures proposed for rail access improvements are insufficiently clear to enable the local planning authority to have reasonable certainty that they will take place in a proportionate and timely manner, and as a result there could be increased reliance on the use of the private car to the detriment of national and local transport policies and the principles of sustainable development, contrary to policies T1 of the Essex and Southend-on-Sea Structure Plan and GEN1 of the Uttlesford Local Plan

### **Climate Change**

- 8 In the light of the Stern Review, the proposed Climate Change Bill put forward in the Queen's Speech and the increasing evidence of the adverse effects of climate change it would be premature to grant planning permission in advance of clarification by the Government as to whether its response to the Stern Review and other recent research will include direct implications for the aviation industry beyond the provisions of the Air Transport White Paper.

### **Economic Benefits**

- 9 The forecast economic benefits of the proposed development, particularly in the light of the costing of economic consequences of climate change set out in the Stern Report, have not been demonstrated strongly enough for them to be so over riding as to outweigh all other factors, with or without mitigation, to the detriment of the principles of sustainable development and contrary to policy BIW9 of the Essex and Southend-on-Sea Structure Plan.



**THANKS**

The Executive Manager (Development Services) thanked the members of the committee for their commitment throughout the application process. He paid particular tribute to the two officers who had dealt with the application, Roger Harborough, the Planning Policy and Conservation Manager and Jeremy Pine, the Policy and Development Control Liaison officer. He also thanked the planning admin staff, the stewards, who had dealt uncomplainingly with all the extra meetings and also the team that had organised the webcasting. Finally he thanked the Chairman for the professional way that she had dealt with the larger number of often complex meetings.

The Chairman in turn thanked John Mitchell for all his help during the process and in particular his patient explaining of the issues, so that members had been able to approach today with the best understanding.

The meeting ended at 3.20pm.