

**STATEMENT OF REPRESENTATION BY CLLR ALAN DEAN, STANSTED NORTH
ON JANUARY 17TH 2020 ON BEHALF OF CONSTITUENTS REGARDING
PLANNING APPLICATION UTT/18/0460/FUL: AIRFIELD WORKS TO ENABLE 274,000
AIRCRAFT MOVEMENTS AND A PASSENGER THROUGHPUT OF 43,000,000
ANNUALLY.**

(NOTE: Shaded words not spoken owing to time constraint.)

Madam Chairman, Committee Members

My name is Alan Dean. I have been a Member of UDC for Stansted since the days of 8 million passengers per annum.

I have long believed that this Council should establish a mature relationship with Stansted Airport; one of equal partnership with the largest employment site in this region. It is popularly recognised that the airport provides services that are appreciated by a great many people.

Firstly, I feel obliged to say that the way in which Uttlesford District Council's Planning Committee conducts and accounts for itself in public is crucial.

The former committee's meeting 14 months ago on this same application was a disgrace; it was conducted in a way that left the public believing that the decision to approve was rigged. A majority of the committee sat in silence or near silence throughout the meeting; they failed totally to justify their vote for approval.

I raised a question about existing airport infrastructure that allegedly had not been given planning permission. I was promised by the then chairman that the issue would be addressed later in the meeting; that answers would be given. No answers were ever given. The matter was ignored. The chairman seemed so eager to get home by teatime that he forced through a vote prematurely, leaving challenges and questions unanswered. The committee left all members of the public aghast.

In my 32 years as a Member of this Council, I had never knowingly witnessed a worse charade of undemocratic unaccountability on such an important issue. The applicant deserved better. The public deserved better.

And now, 14 months later, we are here again; with a new committee, hopefully in better shape.

I wish to implore the Committee and its supporting Officers to conduct this continuing important business rigorously, transparently and in a professional way.

I do not wish to see the climate change and other issues in the officers' report taken as read and not debated. I will be angry if matters raised by consultees are ignored. All questions and challenges really must be addressed in a respectful and thorough manner.

I would like to be assured that someone on the top table is logging issues that are raised today and in correspondence to ensure that they are well and truly explained and addressed. The public must be able to see that democracy is being done; that there is some clear rationale for why decisions are reached, whatever those decisions may be.

Do not be ruled by the clock. I have referred to the way the November '18 committee seemed to be rushing to catch a plane, or at best, to avoid dinner being burned.

My second point is that this Council also has a responsibility to have regard for the negative impact that aviation has on the lives of people, on biodiversity, not only in close proximity to the airport, but on a global scale.

It matters not whether aviation emissions are produced in the vicinity of Stansted, England; close to Dubai International Airport, or at all points between the two. All carbon emissions contribute to escalating climate change.

I recently went with my wife to Amsterdam – by train; by direct Eurostar. We enjoyed a night-time canal boat trip to see their winter festival of light. What struck me most were several illuminated displays depicting roadworks signs and motor vehicles half submerged in the canal. There was a glowing model of city centre tower blocks partially submerged in the canal's cold waters. The message – THIS COULD HAPPEN IF WE FAIL TO ACT.

In this country we appear to have a government that, this very week, is bailing out a failing airline with subsidies and with tax breaks from the very tax that is meant to help restrain the public's demand for aviation, and to encourage us to use the train more and the plane less.

I sympathise with the planning committee's dilemma. Your officers are telling you that you can pay no regard to aviation's carbon emissions that are helping to destroy the planet, its human life, its wildlife, its plant-life.

Why are your advisors telling you this? Because central government at Westminster is supposed to have all the answers to sort out all the necessary carbon-reduction objectives.

Yet this week, Her Majesty's Government is doing precisely the opposite.

This Council has voted twice to take action and to promote action by others to address the Climate Emergency. So, the Planning Committee finds itself in the jaws of a moral and practical dilemma. It is up against insincere and apparently hypocritical central government that both dithers and then acts in the opposite direction from what is needed.

Only two days ago, our health minister, Matt Hancock, declared “Nope” when asked whether people should fly less to help save the planet. He said greener planes will solve the problem. He said no one should make sacrifices, but should carry on doing what they want to do. Mr Hancock said electric planes are the solution. When pressed, he hadn’t a clue when, if ever, large electric planes would become reality. I shudder to think whether there will be any space for passengers when adequately-sized batteries have been accommodated on board for a trip from Stansted to Dubai.

Will Uttlesford District Council also take the line that it is always someone else’s responsibility to save the planet and mankind from self-inflicted destruction? I hope that officers, but especially committee members, will next week discuss this matter thoroughly in public, so to satisfy local people that they are doing the right thing for the climate emergency. Please ensure, Madam Chairman, that your committee’s conclusions stand up to scrutiny.

Do not be ruled by the clock or calendar.

If business cannot be completed on January 24th, the meeting should be adjourned whilst challenges are investigated; whilst professional advice is obtained; until committee members are satisfied that they are armed with the evidence that allows them to be able to say “we did our best and we justified our decisions”.

In concluding, madam chairman, please let me say that I have been in correspondence with officers since the day before Christmas Eve on various detailed matters of procedure and policy. I have not yet received satisfactory written responses. I will pull these and other matters together into a document that I will publish and send to the committee and its officers before January 24th. I have spoken to some of them at today’s meeting.

Thank you for listening to me today.

Alan Dean

Stansted, 17th January 2020