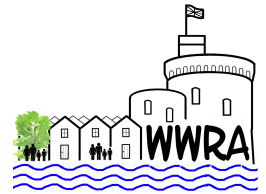


West Windsor Residents Association

To promote the interests and well-being of West Windsor residents



24th May 2017

Freepost RUNWAY CONSULTATION

Mr Kevin Chapman,
Chair,
West Windsor Residents Association,
17 Whitely,
Windsor,
SL4 5PJ

Dear Sir or Madam,

Response to DFT Consultation regarding additional runway capacity in the South East of England from the West Windsor Residents Association (WWRA)

Preamble

This is a written response on behalf of the West Windsor Residents Association, an organisation with 1,000 member households, whose aim is to promote the interests and well being of West Windsor residents whom we have been serving for more than 50 years.

Introduction

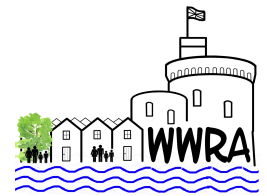
Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the consultation regarding runway capacity and infrastructure in the south east of England. That said we are left with considerable doubt regarding the degree of commitment to this consultation. The inability of some of our members to get answers to relatively simple questions at the recent exhibition in Windsor is a concern. Also, the questions to be answered in this response are somewhat confusing. The first two give the impression that this is a genuine attempt to address the need to seek the most viable option to address any shortfall in meeting an increasing demand for air travel. The remainder indicate an irrevocable commitment to building a third runway at Heathrow albeit allowing for some minor tinkering.

Many of us consider that Heathrow is the wrong site for further expansion and that better use could be made of its current capacity without a further deterioration in the environment, whilst providing a service of greater benefit to the U.K. economy. Any expansion of runway capacity in the South East should, it is felt should be in Gatwick with the airport working in competition with Heathrow to provide a more competitive and sustainable service to the U.K

Question 1) The Government believes there is the need for additional airport capacity in the South East of England of England by 2030, Please tell us your views.

Based on the current level of aircraft activity and the rate of additional demand there is undoubtedly a need for further capacity by 2030. What is in doubt is whether the best use is made of the current capacity and whether the Government`s

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proposal to further increase the dominance of the Heathrow Hub would improve or cause a further deterioration in the long term utilisation of such additional capacity as is made available.

As we understand less than 50pc of the aircraft seats provided out of Heathrow are occupied by passengers originating and/or terminating their journey in London. Including passengers originating and/or terminating their journey in the U.K. barely takes that figure above 50pc. The rest of the seats are occupied by passengers transferring/transitting from other countries, or they are empty. While this type of excessive hub operation may be profitable for some airlines it appears to do little for the U.K economy and exacerbates the level of peak activity in order the connecting passengers do nor have an excessive waiting time. This makes for an unnecessarily complex operation.

A study of the recent extensive disruptions to the Delta Airline service in the United States that resulted from adverse weather conditions at their dominant hub on Atlanta and affected the journeys of thousands of passengers might be well worthwhile.

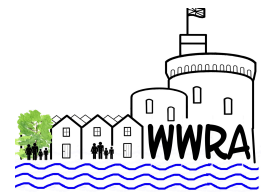
Additionally, to use Heathrow, an airport that has long been recognised as poorly sited for expansion due to environmental concerns, for such domination appears the height of folly. This was recognised in the sixties but short term thinking meant that unlike other countries who took long term strategic action the U.K. simply lengthened the runways at Heathrow. New York and Tokyo, for example developed second airports to work in tandem with the original airport while Washington, Paris, Dallas Fort Worth and more recently Hong Kong developed new airports better suited for long term viability to develop as their main airport. This was often done in spite of original opposition from airlines and other business lobby groups. Why does it appear beyond the capability of the U.K. to show similar initiative?

Question 2) Please tell us your views on how best to address the issue of airport capacity in the South East of England by 2030.

BAA were required to sell airports in order to improve competition since this had been previously held back by the overall control of BAA. What is currently unexplained in the current government proposals is how single runway operations at other airports is expected to provide adequate competition to a multiple runway operation at Heathrow?

The current “grandfather rights” granted to airlines to maintain the operation of slots which are of little benefit to the U.K economy needs to be reviewed. The apparently excessive schedules between Heathrow and New York, for example, although clearly profitable to airlines, clearly exceeds the demand from the U.K.

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Hence the need for the considerable number of transfer/transit passengers. Such excessive service should be limited in granting and/or maintaining slots. Instead, airlines should be encouraged to open up new routes of more benefit to the U.K. economy. Such routes may be immediately less profitable but in time they can be developed to great benefit as other countries have found.

Allow a second runway at Gatwick with the express intention of providing a service parallel to Heathrow. To do this would appear to need a major improvement in surface access to London. This would appear to be both a cheaper solution that currently proposed and more immediately deliverable. According to previous government information it is anticipated to have considerably less environmental impact. There appears to be no reason for anticipating that it would be any less successful than the Kennedy/ Newark operation in New York.

Question 3) The Secretary of State will use a range of assessment principles when considering any application for a Northwest Runway at Heathrow. Please tell us your views.

There have been so many assurances previously given but not attained that there is little reason to have confidence in those currently offered particularly in view of the vague terminology used.

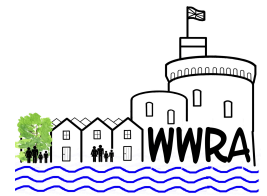
When the Fifth Terminal was being considered we were assured there would be no third runway.

David Cameron, when prime minister, gave categorical assurances there would be no third runway. In this case, the assurance was unequivocal but apparently had no more meaning than any other such assurances.

When the Fifth Terminal Inspector expressed doubts about the ability of the Leq system to properly reflect disturbance related to aircraft noise we were promised a new study in which we could all have confidence. In a statement to Parliament it was indicated that this new study would inform future aviation policy. This study became known as the Anase Report and one of its findings was that the number of aircraft movements was more relevant than had been previously thought. No such report appears to have been considered in arriving at the decision to opt for a third runway at Heathrow.

Little, if any, improvement has been made in improving air quality in spite of previous assurances. Arguably the situation has got worse and recent revelations regarding the impact of diesel fuel add to the sense of ineffectiveness of achieving any control.

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The Davies Commission recommended no night flying. All that has been offered so far is a one hour reduction in the period of night flying with no comment regarding the number of night flights.

To date the significant issue that has received totally inadequate consideration is the wellbeing of the people that will be affected by a third runway, whether it is those who will need to give up their homes or those whose health is likely to be adversely affected

In view of the above how can we have any confidence in any promised assessment?

Question 4) The Government has set out its approach to surface access for a Heathrow Northwest Runway Scheme. Please tell us your views,

It is difficult to adequately respond to this question. Too little information is available regarding the conflict with the M25. Tunnel or Bridge? What will be the impact on A4? Which rail access scheme is favoured and what are the potential adverse impacts?

Certainly it can be said that too little consideration has been given to housing requirements and the services to support them. Even without considering the third runway local councils appear to be having extreme difficulty in meeting current government requirements. The additional needs related to a third runway will simply exacerbate that problem and, it would appear, add to the number of people living in areas affected by aircraft noise or add to those using transport on already overcrowded roads.

Question 5) The draft Airports National Policy Statement sets out a package of supporting to mitigate negative impacts of a Northwest Heathrow Runway scheme. Please tell us your views.

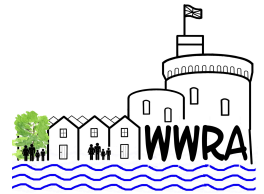
Air Quality

From the information available at the recent exhibition in Windsor it would appear that the Government is relying totally on a considerably increased use of public transport to cope with a major increase in both employees at the airport as well as a fifty percent increase in the number of passengers using the airport.

There has, to date, been no practical demonstration that this can be achieved so we are relying entirely on speculative estimates. Relying on forecasts related to Heathrow has, thus far, been totally unreliable. Thus, a major concern is about NO₂ emissions related to additional traffic on already overcrowded roads and their serious impact on the health of people living in the vicinity of the airport.

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Noise

The propose scheme will ultimately increase the number of aircraft movements from 480000 to approximately 740000 per annum. In spite of this it is claimed that the noise impact will be reduced. This appears to many of us to be fatuous nonsense, and the question itself seems to recognise that in asking how to reduce the negative impact.

As mentioned earlier the Government appear to have made no real effort to understand noise disturbance. Although the findings of the Anase Report were rejected because of perceived failures in the data collection it should have been reasonably easy to correct those failings with plenty of time to do so. Lastly, with three runways there will, of necessity, be a reduction in the amount of the very important respite periods. Additionally, there will be even more residents situated between the flight paths of two runways and therefore getting little or no respite. This will be particularly critical to West North West of the airport with the new runway having the absolute minimum separation from the current North runway as well as aircraft being considerably lower because of being positioned further west.

Such mitigation procedures as have been considered, higher approaches and displaced thresholds will, in our opinion, have minimal impact.

Summary

This appears to be a system of sticking plaster approaches to resolve problems related to a scheme that is itself little more than an attempt to paper over problems that need a more considered long term solution.

Yours faithfully,

For and on behalf of the 1,000 household members of the WWRA

Mr Kevin Chapman Eng Tech, MICE, MCMi, MIHIE, MCIWM
Chair, West Windsor Residents Association