



HILLINGDON

LONDON

Sir Howard Davies
6th Floor
Airports Commission
Sanctuary Buildings
20 Great Smith Street
London
SW1P 3BT

Air.quality@airports.gsi.gov.uk

Ref: JT/05/15 Davies

28th May 2015

Dear Sir Howard

2M RESPONSE TO THE AIRPORT COMMISSION'S CONSULTATION ON THE AIR QUALITY ASSESSMENT, MAY 2015

We would like to welcome and thank you for the opportunity to respond to your Consultation on Air Quality Assessment. We consider poor air quality to be one of the key adverse environmental impacts which would be inflicted on our local communities if either of the two Heathrow options were to be progressed.

It is unfortunate that despite our previous responses to you, that yet again we are in a position where we have to raise our concerns again. It is our opinion that, given that these concerns have still not been adequately addressed, that there remain serious flaws in the appraisal process.

We have detailed our concerns in our response below and we ask that the entirety of this letter is taken as our formal response to this consultation. You will note that the two Heathrow options are understandably the focus of our response.



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

COUNCILLOR RAY PUDDIFOOT MBE
LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

T.01895 250316 F.01895 250765

E.rpuddifoot@hillington.gov.uk www.hillingdon.gov.uk
Conservative Group Office, Civic Centre, High Street,
Uxbridge, UB8 1UW

Background

As background information, on the 28th February 2014, we responded to your original consultation in relation to the Appraisal Framework. Our concerns at that time included:

- Lack of information about the trade off issues between objectives;
- A call for the inclusion of a specific health module.

In terms of the individual appraisal modules, our concerns included:

- There should be a full detailed assessment of the impacts on local air quality with suitable sensitivity tests and scrutiny built into the process to ensure there is confidence in the results that health limits will be met and maintained.
- There was no satisfactory level of scrutiny for all the surface access delivery elements.

We emphasised again in our letter to you dated 3rd February 2015, in response to your Consultation on the Appraisal of the Shortlisted Options, that in our opinion, these previous concerns had not been addressed and that they remained serious flaws in the appraisal process. You may recall that in February we stated that it is not acceptable to have a quality of life assessment which:

- does not include health and wellbeing impacts on children;
- states that air quality impacts are limited when there is clear evidence of air pollution affecting people's health, which reduces their capacity to lead full lives and hence impacts on their quality of life.

We made it clear that there must be absolute confidence that the health limits can be met and thereafter maintained. If the promoters' assumptions, such as cleaner aircraft; cleaner road vehicles; and no more airport related traffic on the roads, do not materialise in reality, it will be the local communities who will suffer the adverse impacts. If these improvements in air quality do not occur in reality, and if the runway were to be built but then not legally allowed to operate at a satisfactory capacity, this could become a constraint to the operation of the airport and therefore have a huge negative economic impact.

1 Inadequate consultation period

We regard a short three week period for such an important, highly technical consultation as totally unacceptable in terms of a timescale to establish fully informed views. For local communities attempting to work out the likely impacts on their health and local environment, three weeks, one of which is a school half term holiday, is an inappropriate and inadequate timescale in which to properly engage and consult with these stakeholders.

As local councils we have tried to work within your tight time constraints and we have outlined below our initial concerns about the air quality assessment and highlighted what we regard as substantially adverse impacts which will be inflicted upon our local communities.

Question 5

Do you have any comments on how the Commission has carried out its appraisal of specific topics (as defined by the Commission's 16 appraisal modules), including methodology and results?

Question 6

Do you have any comments on the Commission's sustainability assessment, including methodology and results?

2 The local air quality model assessment

The assessment has provided a snapshot of the expansion position in 2030 with the airport accommodating 125 million passengers per annum (mppa). This is not an appropriate approach given that the Carbon Traded, Global Growth scenario for Heathrow indicates by 2040 the passenger capacity will have increased to 138mppa and by 2050 to 148mppa (ref p number in Strategic fit document). In addition, the chosen principal study area is inadequate, excluding much of impacted boroughs such as the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead which includes a declared AQMA encompassing junction 13 of the M25.

There has been no additional work presented to indicate that the air quality assessment has been updated to include the impacts on the local road network or that there has been accompanying quantification for the predicted increases in freight associated with the schemes, including taking into account the position in 2040 and 2050.

- **The assessment does not present the full implications that the options to expand Heathrow could bring and it therefore potentially under-estimates the air quality impacts of the expansion proposals.**

There is a reliance on the impact of future vehicle technologies and predicted reductions in emissions to help solve the air quality issues in 2030. The over-reliance on technology to address the air quality issues to date have been misplaced as indicated in the 2011 Air Quality Plan submitted to Europe, which promised compliance in with European legislation in this area by 2020. The predictions were updated in 2014 by Defra to suggest that compliance would now be post-2030. The reason for the delay in compliance stated as:

This is largely due to the failure of the European vehicle emission standards for diesel cars to deliver the expected emission reductions of NOx". (Updated projections for Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂) compliance, Defra 2014)

- **As history to date has shown, over-reliance on predicted reductions in emissions from, as yet unproven, future vehicle technologies, should be treated with caution. It will be the local communities who suffer the adverse impacts of the failure to meet the air quality objectives set to protect health and the ensuing consequences and costs of the need for further mitigation measures to ensure the health limits are met.**

3 Assessment against the EU limit values

The national model assessment shows that in 2030, the Heathrow area, even without further expansion, will still be non-compliant in terms of the EU limit value (page 66 of the Consultation document). The additional pollution from the expansion of the airport simply exacerbates this situation and entails the imposition of even more stringent mitigation measures in the surrounding area in order to secure compliance.

The recent Supreme Court Judgement has highlighted the importance of securing air quality compliance as soon as possible.

The CJEU judgment leaves no doubt as to the seriousness of the breach, which has been continuing for more than five years, nor as to the responsibility on the national court to secure compliance. Further, during those five years the prospects of early compliance have become worse (2014 projections predicting non-compliance in some zones after 2030). The Secretary of State accepted that a new plan has to be prepared. The new government should be left in no doubt as to the need for immediate action, which is achieved by an order that new plans must be delivered to the Commission not later than 31 December 2015. (R (on the application of ClientEarth) (Appellant) v Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Respondent), [2015] UKSC 28).

- **There should be plans in place to address the current poor air quality situation experienced by the local communities and ensure that the zone is fully compliant with European legislation as soon as possible. Until this is done, and the emission reductions fully secured, expansion at Heathrow should not be considered.**
- **We do not consider it is equitable for local communities to be subjected to ever more stringent mitigation measures, which may impinge further on their quality of life, simply to be able to account for the expansion of Heathrow airport.**

4 Health

Given the concerns about the likely impacts on health, Hillingdon Council commissioned Public Health by Design (PhD) to review the Consultation documents. The report by PhD, 'Equity Focused Review Report of the Airports Commission's Air Quality Local Assessment', dated May 2015 is attached to this response. The report confirms that the health impacts have been underestimated because it highlights that the Airports Commission Air Quality Assessment:

- has only provided a partial impact pathway assessment and presents estimates only for a snapshot in 2030, not the 60 year assessment period;
- there is no discussion of health impacts such as air quality impacts on children, other chronic effects or other additional morbidity effects of short term exposure;
- does not present the actual estimates of health impacts eg years of life lost, respiratory hospital admissions and cardiovascular hospital admissions;

- underestimates the total effected population as it confines the assessment to the principal study area as opposed to assessing the wider study area. This in turn underestimates the quantification and monetisation of the population health impacts as presented in the partial impact pathway;
- there is no consideration or discussion of the potential for widening inequalities in health from impacts on residents already facing significant environmental and socio-economic disadvantage.

Given the above, we consider that the Commission's assessment methodology is flawed.

- **The assessment does not present the full implications that the options to expand Heathrow could bring, therefore potentially under-estimating the adverse health impacts of the expansion proposals**

As we highlighted in our previous consultation response, the existing health burden of the populations surrounding Heathrow is already distinctly disadvantaged. The Airports Commission's recent assessment shows that, even taking into account reductions in emissions from future vehicle technologies, which are as yet untested, expansion at Heathrow will lead to the exposure of around 49,000 properties (over 121,000 people) being subjected to increases in pollution concentrations.

The monetised health impacts are far greater for the Heathrow options, with the Heathrow North West option the highest, including up to £10.8m in relation to extra hospital admissions (ref App G). In addition, the assessment highlights that the latest scientific evidence indicates adverse health impacts are associated with nitrogen dioxide levels far below the current EU limit value level. For the area around Heathrow this would indicate that many more communities would have a potentially harmful level of exposure than was previously thought.

- **It is not acceptable to knowingly give a recommendation to expand a pollution source which would lead to the exposure of over 121,000 people to increases in nitrogen dioxide. With the health evidence suggesting caution on health grounds for levels even lower than the current limit value, additional exposure on an area where the current population are already disadvantaged, in terms of health, cannot be supported.**

Of additional concern is the comment made in the Consultation documents in relation to the provision of a more detailed Impact Pathway Assessment which it is stated would accompany: "*a more detailed air quality analysis which is anticipated for any chosen scheme*". (App G, p 171).

- **The Airports Commission appraisal process is meant to be assessing each scheme equally in order to inform a final recommendation. Any further "detailed air quality analysis" and full Impact Pathway Assessment must be done now before final recommendations on location are made.**

Question 7

Do you have any comments on the Commission's business case, including methodology and results?

In terms of the business case the following comments are made for your consideration.

5 Legal implications:

The report makes clear that the expansion of Heathrow by either option would delay compliance with the EU Limit Value. This could have legal and financial implications as the European legislation states compliance should be reached as soon as possible and it should be noted that the EU have the ability to pass down fines to failing Member States.

6 Constrained use of new infrastructure.

If the assumptions used to mitigate the air quality issues to do not prove to be adequate, the use of the new runway could be heavily constrained in terms of its use and its ability to realise full capacity. This will have knock on impacts for Heathrow's wider economic business case.

7 Adequate surface access

As has been stated above, the surface access appraisal is inadequate and has not properly assessed the full requirements needed to mitigate the impacts of the airport at full passenger capacity on both roads and public transport.

The Consultation documents cast doubt as to whether the HAL vision, which is for an increase to over 50% modal shift in public transport access to ensure total airport-related road vehicle trips to and from the airport do not increase relative to the baseline, is actually deliverable. The report goes on to highlight the potential need for two further mitigation measures; one aimed at reducing traffic volumes and the other at reducing emissions, namely a congestion charge and the implementation of an ultra low emission zone.

- **The mitigation measures in respect of local roads and public transport have not been appropriately addressed in terms of their implementation and their costs and other potential impacts such as on the local economy. These should be evaluated and costed before any decision is made as to the appropriate location for airport expansion.**

8 Health Impacts

The impacts on health of the full airport expansion have not been properly assessed. Recent scientific evidence suggests that health impacts could be apparent at lower levels than EU current limits and a full Impact Pathway analysis has yet to be undertaken.

- **Additional costs in terms of monetised health impacts have not been assessed and therefore have not factored into the business case. The Public**

Health by Design advice on this matter, as presented as part of the London Borough of Hillingdon response, is attached for your information.

Question 8

Do you have any further comments?

9 Wrong location

This assessment cannot be read in isolation from the previous appraisal modules. We firmly believe that there remain serious flaws in the appraisal process and that the implications of the air quality assessment, even as they have been assessed, simply add weight to the argument that this part of west London is not the right place for airport expansion.

Given the above, and together with the consultation documents that the Airports Commission published in November 2014, it is clear that the Heathrow options should be rejected on the grounds of the severe environmental impacts arising from both options which will:

- put 100,000-121,000 people, already at a distinct health disadvantage, at further risk from increased air pollution;
- escalate hospital costs by up to £10m which may prove, given the emerging health evidence, to be an under-estimate;
- potentially cost the UK Government in fines for non-compliance with EU air quality legislation;
- expose 580,500 people to aviation noise, increasing to 637,700 by 2050, along with the additional health costs this brings including impacts on children and their educational attainment, which, to date, have also not been properly assessed;
- put further pressures on the surrounding local authorities to provide for up to an extra 70,800 houses, 50 new primary schools, and 6 new secondary schools in areas; and
- for Hillingdon, the NWR option destroys three local villages at a cost of over 1,000 houses and associated community buildings such as schools.

Once again we would like to thank you for the opportunity to submit our views to you and we would be happy to discuss these issues further if you feel that would be helpful. Should you have any queries on this, please do contact me.

Yours sincerely



**Councillor Ray Puddifoot MBE
Leader of Hillingdon Council**

On behalf of the Leaders of Hillingdon, Richmond, Wandsworth, Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea and Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead

Enc: 'Equity Focused Review Report of the Airports Commission's Air Quality Local Assessment' dated May 2015 by Public Health by Design