

**Neighbourhoods and Community Services Scrutiny Panel – Meeting held on Wednesday, 30th October, 2013.**

**Present:-** Councillors Minhas (Chair), Dar, Dhillon (from 6.40 p.m.), Malik, M S Mann, Plenty, Shah (from 6.35 p.m.), Sohal, Wright (Vice-Chair)

**Non-voting Co-optees** Vivianne Royal (Customer Senate)

**Also present under Rule 30:-** Councillors Mittal, Smith (until 7.55 p.m.) and Strutton

**PART 1**

**20. Declarations of Interest**

Councillors Malik and Dar declared personal interests in Agenda Item 2, as each had a member of their family working at Heathrow.

**21. Slough's Relationship with Heathrow Airport**

Ruth Bagley, Chief Executive of Slough Borough Council, presented the findings of a recent resident survey and economic and health research which looked at the relationship between the borough of Slough and Heathrow Airport.

The Panel noted the key messages coming out of the resident survey:

- that the resident survey had received 62 responses, of which 85% were Slough residents (71% of whom had lived in the borough for more than 10 years);
- that 55% of those who responded felt Heathrow was a benefit to Slough;
- that 68% of respondents were affected by aircraft noise, 25% finding it very disruptive; and
- that a quarter of respondents were concerned about the environmental impact of Heathrow and thought steps should be taken to mitigate this, with a third feeling that the impacts were worth the price being paid.

In reviewing the results of the economic studies that had been undertaken by the Thames Valley Local Enterprise Partnerships and the consultant commissioned by Slough Borough Council to look at Slough's specific economic relationship to the airport, the Panel commented on the importance of Heathrow to the local employment market, especially when looking at a potential loss of approximately 17,000 jobs should the decision be taken to close the airport. The importance of Heathrow economically was clear when it was calculated that 32% of Slough residents' employment was either directly or indirectly linked with the borough's proximity to the airport.

However, whilst recognising the economic importance of Heathrow's proximity to Slough, the Panel were concerned that, as yet, little detailed information was available on the noise and other environmental impacts of the current

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arrangements at Heathrow, concerns that would increase should a decision be taken to expand the airport's capacity.

Members felt that regardless of the future configuration of Heathrow there were environmental impacts under the status quo arrangements which were of concern and required mitigation. Specific discussion focused on the noise levels and late night flight timetable, and the need to improve the level of aircraft noise through the continued improvements in the design of aeroplanes to limit the impact on residents in the local area.

The Panel concluded that future discussions would be based on the economic arguments versus noise and environmental arguments in order to fully understand the positive and negative impacts of Slough's proximity to Heathrow. Members discussed the likely timeframe for such a discussion, and noted that until the Davis Commission formally issued its short list of options for the future of aviation in the UK and the impact this would have on the future of Heathrow a number of options from expansion through to closure were still possibilities.

**Resolved** – that, once the Davis Commission has announced its shortlist of options for the future of aviation in the UK and specifically options for the future of Heathrow, that the Cabinet oversee the collation of all relevant data relating to the impact of Heathrow on Slough now and in the future, and that this information is then presented to the Neighbourhoods and Community Services Scrutiny Panel before consideration by Cabinet.

Chair

(Note: The Meeting opened at 6.30 pm and closed at 8.35 pm)