

Correspondence:

The Parish Clerk
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Hatfield, Herts.
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COLNBROOK with POYLE PARISH COUNCIL



Our Ref: RLNH/JSB/100477

26th September 2013

Sir Howard Davies,
Chair, Airports Commission
Sanctuary Buildings
20 Great Smith Street
London
SW1P 3BT

Dear Sir Howard,

Submission re Heathrow Runways Proposals

The Parish Council of Colnbrook with Poyle strongly objects to the proposals of Heathrow Airport Limited for a third or possibly fourth runway, as outlined in its "New Approach" document of July 2013. The parish lies immediately to the west of Heathrow Airport; a sizable part of its residential area falls directly under the flight path of the Airport's present northern runway for aircraft on final approach or take-off, with some residences in the area of maximum noise nuisance, and some also in the flight safety zone. Option 1 of the "New Approach", for a Third Runway to the North West of Heathrow, would take between 5 and 10% of the land within our parish boundaries, most of which is greenbelt, greenfield land within the Colne Valley Park, identified by several public inquiries as a vital and vulnerable "strategic gap" between the urban areas of Greater London and Slough that must be preserved. All of the options in Heathrow's "New Approach" for which explanatory maps have been provided would have a devastating impact on our parish area and community – its residences, amenities and industrial estates providing thousands of jobs of a very diverse nature – encircling and enclosing Colnbrook with the confines of the Airport, congesting its roads, polluting its already poor air quality, creating even more noise disturbance, driving out higher skilled and varied employment with factories and offices converting to airport-related warehousing, and traffic-generating couriers and distribution centres.

Colnbrook was the first major stop on the old coaching route from London to Bath; several old coaching inns remain amongst our 27 listed buildings, including the third oldest pub in England; so important was the village of Colnbrook that it twice was granted borough status, and its Burgesses (the forebears of the present parish council) ran a Turnpike Trust responsible for 7 miles of highway from Cranford Bridge to Maidenhead Bridge. Colnbrook's fertile lands were where Richard Cox cultivated the first (Cox's) Orange Pippin Apple. We remain a semi-rural community and yet host the European headquarters of Honda, and its (separate) development centre, having a strong historic connection with the motor industry, being where McLaren built James Hunt's 1974 world-beating F1 racing car, and where the British Motor Sports Association still have their headquarters. Colnbrook also hosts the headquarters of the UK's largest private waste management operator, Grundons.

CHAIRMAN:	Mr. Peter R. Hood	Tel: 01753 682395
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CLERK & FINANCE OFFICER:	Mr. Roland Hewson	Tel: 01707 267958

The parish council is not anti-Heathrow and wants the Airport to thrive and provide employment opportunities to local people but it has long argued that Heathrow Airport is at or has exceeded its optimum size, with local infrastructure stretched to full capacity and no room for external expansion without encroaching on greenfield, greenbelt, amenity lands or crowding out other businesses. The parish council, therefore, has a history of opposing the un-restrained expansion of Heathrow Airport because of its negative impacts on neighbours, including ourselves.

The parish council objected to BAA's proposals for a fifth terminal at Heathrow (T5) which was finally allowed a decade ago with the promise of BAA that with T5 it could double the capacity of the Airport, then handling about 70million passengers-a-year, without any operational need for a third runway. We note that Heathrow Airport Limited are now claiming (page 31 of the "New Approach") that only with a full-length third runway of the type in their options 1 and 2 could the Airport handle 130million passengers-a-year, contradicting the evidence they gave at the T5 Inquiry. The granting of a fifth terminal at Heathrow resulted in massive incursions into Greenfield, greenbelt and amenity lands in our parish, with a temporary, 10-year permission for the Colnbrook Logistics Centre assembling the building materials for T5, (still operating today more than 10-years after opening , and long after T5 was built). It also resulted in a sewage sludge dewatering works (the Iver South SDW) being built within the parish as a replacement for the Perry Oaks Sewage Works (originally on the site of T5). Interestingly, both of these facilities would be built over by the proposed Third Runway to the North West of Heathrow, (Option 1), and presumably would have to be replaced nearby, probably on another bit of our greenfield, greenbelt, amenity lands.

We note that previous proposals for a Third Runway at Heathrow, advanced by British Airways, were killed off by the 2010 General Election and the Conservative Party's pledge to refuse this on grounds of CO2 air pollution, where present levels of CO2 in the air at several locations around the north of Heathrow exceeded UK air quality standards and EU Directive targets, including at an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) in our parish. The "New Approach" proposals just assume away this air quality issue as if efforts to reduce CO2 emissions from cars and lorries and aircraft engines will remove the pollution problem that ruled out their previous proposal; no evidence to support this idea has been put forward. Likewise, we can note that self-evidently, aircraft noise and noise nuisance in localities adjacent will increase with any and all of these proposals but no meaningful evaluation of this impact is possible since BAA/Heathrow Airport Limited have not put forward any new noise contour maps to go with their proposal options.

We believe that all the proposed options for a Third Runway at Heathrow will impact on the Colnbrook area adversely, having an enclosing/encircling effect, particularly Options 1 and 2, (to the north and to the south of the parish). This would be even more so following the argument advanced by Heathrow Airport Limited that they really need not only a third but a fourth runway to guarantee continued profitable growth, necessitating a combination of new runways to both north and south. All the options advanced by Heathrow Airport Limited will generate more noise and air pollution (already at unbearable levels), more surface traffic congestion, and likelihood of an accelerated takeover of our business areas by airport-related freight and catering operations, which is already a pronounced trend that the parish council is alarmed by, repeatedly expressing its concerns to the planning authority responsible – Slough Borough Council – who maintain there is nothing in their power they can do about it.

All the proposals would also have a damaging or devastating impact on substantial areas of greenfield and amenity lands within the Colne Valley Park, which extends from Rickmansworth in the north to Staines in the south and is at its narrowest point as it passes through Colnbrook and Harmondsworth. The parish council greatly values the amenity of the Colne Valley Park and is a founder member of Colne Valley Park Community Interest Company.

Option 1, a Third Runway to the North West of Heathrow, is the nearest of the three proposed development sites to large numbers of our Colnbrook area residences; this full-size runway proposal extends into lands enclosed by our parish, running north of the (present) A4 and south of the M4. The runway, and such supporting infrastructure as is shown on accompanying maps, would be located where the villages of Harmondsworth and Longford presently stand (removing these villages and joining up with the current Airport area). It would extend west through British Airway's Waterside headquarters and through the park lands of Harmondsworth Moor. The runway would then have to be built over the top of the M25 motorway to the west, before carrying on through the temporary but still present Colnbrook Logistics Centre, and the permanent plant of the London Concrete/Aggregate Industries/Foster Yeoman site. It would extend west on through the Lakeside industrial estates and take out Grundons waste to energy incinerator (which actually emits from its chimneys lower levels of CO₂ than are found in the ambient air outside the plant). The proposed Option 1 runway would then carry on over a number of man-made balancing lakes left over from previous mineral extractions that link to our "County Ditch" watercourse which are all incorporated into a recent Environment Agency flood alleviation scheme implemented in response to the flooding of residential and commercial properties in Poyle in 2000 and 2001; the removal of these balancing lakes and the concreting over of vast areas of open wetlands here and adjacent, will appreciably raise the flood risk for thousands of people living and working in our parish and nearby. The runway extending westward would next remove the Iver South Sludge Dewatering Works that was put in a decade ago to replace the Perry Oaks Sewage Plant freeing the site for Heathrow Terminal 5. The runway would next extend onto greenfield land north of the A4 by-pass where the Slough International Freight Exchange (SIFE) has been proposed and turned down, and where a proposal for the London International Freight Exchange (LIFE) was previously lost at Appeal; at this point the runway would break the Colne Valley Way, (the one and only public footpath that runs through the entire length of the Colne Valley Park) and, at the same time, it would remove a network of circular walks and bridleways and cycle routes across this land – land that has been recognised by the Planning Inspectorate and the Secretary of State as forming a "strategic gap" essential for the continuance of the greenbelt and the protection it affords.

Though the Option 1 runway would not extend along the entire length of the A4 Colnbrook By-Pass, the requirement for a soft overshoot area at western end of the runway would mean that all the greenfield land up to the junction of Sutton Lane with A4 Colnbrook By-Pass would need to be taken. The fate of housing on the east side of Sutton Lane is unclear, as is the siting of a Terminal or terminal buildings to service this runway, not included in these proposals, which will (from past experience) have a huge landtake requirement in and of itself. The noise impact on Brands Hill, especially the Westfield Estate immediately at the western end of the runway, would be severe; this area, and the residential area around Vicarage Way in the centre of Colnbrook village, will undoubtedly be added to those areas in Poyle that are subject to the worst noise impacts of Heathrow Airport at present.

Additionally, under these proposals, the A4 would be diverted south through the Galleymead industrial estate to then run down the eastern side of the Poyle industrial estates, (doubtless leading to their expansion as ancillary business facilities supporting an enlarged and expanding airport, as greenbelt designation on the fringe of this development will become meaningless). The re-routing of the A4 would also go through the residential area of Elbow Meadow in our parish, presumably leaving some of these residential properties on either side. The Elbow Meadow residences are our nearest ones to Heathrow at present, and they experience the worst levels of aircraft noise nuisance being right under the flight path of the present Northern Runway; they are also within a few meters of the M25, which generates further noise and air pollution. Having the A4 run through there would add to this already heavy burden and would, in our opinions, be likely to make their lives intolerable.

Just as further impacts need to be considered for supporting infrastructure such as terminal buildings, we note that the resultant increased need for rail connectivity to the airport, will also doubtless mean that residential areas in our parish could easily succumb to these associated developments, especially as we have greenfield open space, potentially available, and because a western rail route to Heathrow passing through our parish has already been safeguarded in local authority development plans.

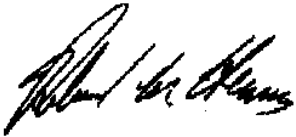
Regarding Option 2, a Third Runway to the South West; this would destroy the neighbouring village of Stanwell Moor and part of Wraysbury (850 residential properties), which would have a significant negative impact on our local community and prosperity. It would force part of the M25 underground, and require the concreting over of some reservoirs and lakes; this would all cause disruption, congestion and increased risk of flooding, including in our parish, which is connected to these areas by many watercourses, including the Colne Brook and the Wraysbury River. The centre of historic Wraysbury village, (where the Magna Carta was signed 800 years ago) would be half a mile from the end of the new runway, as would be 3 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), partially lost – priceless historical and environmental treasures would be destroyed or damaged, having an adverse affect on local amenities enjoyed by our residents. This is another full length runway, with commensurate levels of noise and air pollution associated; it will draw considerable road (and possibly rail) traffic down through Colnbrook, especially from the M4. Again it will have a damaging impact on the Colne Valley Park.

Option 3, a Third Runway North (Northeast) of Heathrow, would be constructed over the villages of Sipson, Harlington and Cranford Cross. If it is a short runway, as proposed, it will stop short of the Harmondsworth conservation area, however, its effects will be little different to the original Third Runway proposal, who's noise contour maps showed an increase in the number of residences within our parish that would fall into areas where aircraft noise is greatest or is at least deemed to be a significant nuisance, including at the Brands Hill end of the parish. Indeed, the recent practice adopted by Heathrow Airport of shortening the intervals between aircraft arriving and taking off, has resulted in a noticeable fanning out of flightpaths to put greater space between aircraft in flight; if this practice continues, even more of this parish will be subject to worsening noise nuisance and air pollution.

It is self-evident that all these proposals are designed to result in more flights to and from Heathrow Airport, and this will necessarily result in more noise nuisance and air pollution that is bound to affect us because of our close proximity. Airport expansion of this kind will generate more surface traffic, leading to more congestion and further noise nuisance and air pollution.

As our parish is one of only a few areas remaining around Heathrow Airport with significant amounts of green open space, we feel it is inevitable that further airport expansion at Heathrow will require additional land-takes from within our parish, over and above those outlined in the Option 1 proposals, for terminal buildings for example; this will be a further erosion of the amenities in our area, and we believe its adverse impacts go beyond those in the immediate area but also strike at important strategic considerations such as the Colne Valley Park and even the continuance of Greenbelt policy protection of the environment.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Roland L.N. Hewson', written in a cursive style.

Roland L.N. Hewson
Clerk and Finance Officer