

Overview & Scrutiny Committee – Meeting held on Thursday, 12th September, 2019.

Present:- Councillors Dhaliwal (Chair), Sarfraz (Vice-Chair), Basra (from 6.50pm), Hulme, D Parmar and S Parmar

Also present under Rule 30:- Councillor Strutton

Apologies for Absence:- Councillors Gahir and R Sandhu

PART I

17. Declarations of Interest

In relation to Minute No.21 (Agenda Item 5 – Heathrow Expansion) Councillor Dhaliwal declared that he received a pension from Heathrow Airport. He remained in the Council Chamber during the discussion on the item.

In relation to Minute No.21 (Agenda Item 5 – Heathrow Expansion) Councillor Hulme declared that her place of work was Heathrow; however she was not employed by Heathrow Airport. She remained in the Council Chamber during the discussion on the item.

18. Minutes of the Last Meeting held on 11th July 2019

Resolved - That the minutes of the meeting held on 11th July 2019 be approved as a correct record.

19. Member Questions

None were received.

20. Slough Gymnastics Club

The Leisure Services Manager introduced a report that provided an update on the current situation in regard to Slough Gymnastics Club finding suitable accommodation within Slough.

Members were reminded that a petition had been presented to the Council meeting on 23 April 2019 asking the Council to provide a suitable premises or location to house Slough Gymnastics Club. At the meeting the petition organiser had been informed that there were no affordable or suitable sites within the Borough to accommodate the Club. It was agreed by Council that officers should continue to assist Slough Gymnastics Club to search for new premises, and that the matter be referred to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to consider the options available.

The Leisure Service Manager reported that since the Council meeting, it remained the case that there were no suitable sites within Slough to

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accommodate the Club. Officers from the Council's Leisure and Assets teams had been in liaison with the Club proprietor since 2017 in the search to find a new premises; however, the Club's requirements could not easily be met due to the size of the building required to meet British Gymnastics Association standards.

The Chair invited Ms Amy Jones, the petition organiser, to address the Committee. She began by explaining that she had considered all options, nonetheless, she had been unable to secure a new premises. She highlighted the importance of the Club being inclusive and ensuring the sessions were provided at a reasonable cost. She asked if the Council would be able to provide reduced Business Rates or land to enable her to build a bespoke facility.

The Chair thanked Ms Jones for her statement and invited Members to comment and ask questions.

Members expressed sympathy with Ms Jones' efforts to secure suitable premises, however it was acknowledged that the Council was unable to fund or subsidise provision for the Gymnastics Club and had no responsibility to provide a facility.

A discussion took place regarding the possibility of using a warehouse building to accommodate the Club. Members noted that this would require planning consent. During the course of the discussion the Leisure Service Manager agreed to assist Ms Jones to obtain pre-planning application advice from the Council's planning department to establish if this was a viable option.

Resolved –

- (a) That the report be noted.
- (b) That the Leisure Services Manager be requested to liaise with the Council's planning department and Ms Jones regarding planning permission to operate Slough Gymnastics Club from a warehouse building.

21. Heathrow Expansion

The Chair welcomed the Heathrow Airport representatives in attendance and invited Andrew Bird (Noise Strategy Lead), Chris Casey (Road Strategy Lead), Rupert Waters (Head of Economic Development) and James Holmes (Senior Stakeholder Engagement Manager – Expansion) to introduce themselves.

Members were provided with a presentation regarding the Heathrow Airport expansion programme, focusing on the economic development framework, surface access proposals and the measures to manage aircraft noise.

(Councillor Basra joined the meeting)

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In concluding the presentation, the Senior Stakeholder Engagement Manager thanked Members for the opportunity to share some of the expansion plans, and undertook to attend a future Committee meeting to provide a further briefing.

The Chair thanked the Heathrow representatives for the presentation and invited comments and questions from the Committee.

Members had a wide-ranging discussion, during which the following points were raised:

Surface Access Strategy

- Heathrow had undertaken a pledge not to increase airport related traffic. To achieve this it was proposed to encourage a modal shift to public transport of at least 50% by 2030 for passengers and a reduction of employee car trips by 25% by 2030. Concerns were raised regarding the proposed road network designs, in particular the lack of direct access for buses from Langley and Slough. It was noted that the proposed designs and layout would reduce bus accessibility and reliability and increase journey times to the airport from Slough. The construction of the third runway would cut off the current routes, meaning buses and cyclist would have to follow the diverted A4, resulting in a longer route that did not serve Colnbrook or Poyle.
- Concern was raised regarding the lack of cycle route provision from Colnbrook and Poyle to the airport. The modelling for the expansion anticipated an increase in cycle journeys to the airport. However, this was considered to be unrealistic unless a direct and convenient cycle network was established. It was requested that suitable cycle provision was included in the Masterplan design.
- In relation to cycle provision the Committee was informed that the 'Green Loop' proposed to create a network of new footpaths, cycle routes and upgrades to the existing paths. Members were advised that the Council had been working with Colne Valley Park, South Bucks and Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead (RBWM) to establish a connectivity statement to deliver routes linking the north of the M4 and south to RBWM to extend and connect to the Active Travel route.
- A Member requested that the Masterplan include design options to improve the travel infrastructure. It was noted that Slough residents currently working at Terminal 5 were able to travel on a direct bus service from the west and cyclists were able to directly access into Terminal 5. The Masterplan currently suggested that all access to Terminal 5 would come via the south, meaning buses and cyclists would have to travel via Junction 14 of the M25 to get to the airport. This would make journey times longer and less reliable. Slough residents would be at a disadvantage to access jobs at the airport compared to neighbouring residents travelling from the east able to access better public transport. A Member stressed that it was crucial that bus services to Heathrow were reliable and affordable to encourage airport workers to use them. It was requested that a direct route for cyclists and allocated lanes for buses be provided.

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- Concern was raised regarding the movement of construction freight vehicles causing severe problems on already congested roads in Colnbrook, Poyle and Langley. It was requested that sufficient mitigation measures and clear construction route plans be established.
- It was highlighted that the proposed road changes to the A3044 could create a 'rat run' route between the M25 Junction 14 and M4 Junction 5 which could result in increased congestion on Slough roads. Concerns were raised about the impact an increase in traffic would have on the environment and amenity of residents.
- A Member noted that Heathrow would not be providing a Park and Ride scheme. However, a scheme was necessary to meet the targets set for modal travel shift. It was requested that the Heathrow Masterplan document identify land that could be developed by the Council for this purpose.
- With regard to air quality, concern was raised that the construction phase would contribute to a worsening of the air quality, particularly in Colnbrook and Poyle, as parts of these areas had been designated as Construction Support Sites. Members were assured that Heathrow officers were aware of the air quality issues and suitable mitigation measures would be put in place. It was explained that the modelling process was iterative and officers would continue to refine the proposals.
- A Member raised concern that the Community Fund may be used for mitigation rather than compensation or investment in neighbouring communities. It was highlighted that the Community Fund should be used to bring additional benefits to local residents rather than mitigating direct impacts of the expansion. A Heathrow representative agreed to seek further information and provide a written response to the Committee via email.
- In relation to the purchase of properties in the worst affected areas, a Member asked what level of financial compensation owners would receive above the market value of their properties. A Heathrow representative agreed to seek further information and provide a response to the Committee via email.
- A query was raised regarding flooding in the Colnbrook and Poyle areas and what mitigation measures would be provided. Members were informed that the river would be re-aligned and the design would meet the required standards. A Heathrow representative agreed to seek further information and provide a full written response to the Committee via email.

Noise

- The Committee noted the package of mitigation measures proposed, which included respite through alternated flight paths, quieter aircraft design, noise insulation and more stringent night flight restrictions to minimise impact. As part of the expansion application proposal, a Noise Envelope (a set of legally binding and enforceable limits to manage noise) would be submitted.
- A Member asked which residents would be eligible to receive noise insulation under the Quieter Homes Scheme. In response, it was explained that Slough had been identified in the 'Lowest Observed Adverse Effect Level' area where aircraft noise may have an adverse impact depending on airspace design. Affected residents would be eligible to apply to the scheme.
- It was noted that aircraft would be descending from a steeper approach; a Member asked what noise impact this might have on Slough residents. In

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response, the Committee was informed that due to the improved design of aircraft, less noise would be generated, therefore existing residents would benefit from a slightly improved environment.

- Clarification was sought regarding the use of runway alternation. The Committee was informed that the use of a 'mixed mode' meant a runway would be used by both landing and departing aircraft over the same period. Therefore, residents would experience fewer aircraft overhead. The introduction of 'reflective alternation' meant that predictable respite periods could be offered to residents, regardless of the direction of operation.

Economic Development

- A Member asked what plans the airport had to automate jobs and the impact this might have on the availability of jobs for Slough residents. In response, it was reported that the policy research unit Centres for Cities undertook studies in relation to automation and the impact on the labour market. Research indicated that elementary level employment was more vulnerable to automation than knowledge based industries. It was not anticipated that the airport expansion would result in any significant increase in automation. It was highlighted that Slough had a number of high-skill industries and would therefore be more resilient to automation than other areas in the country.
- A recent study regarding economic growth predicted expansion without policy intervention would create an additional 31,000 jobs in the nine boroughs around the airport. At present it was indicated that only 100 jobs would be created within Slough. It was highlighted that to increase the number of Slough residents working at the airport, it was essential that public transport connections were improved.
- A Member asked what training and apprenticeship opportunities would be provided by Heathrow. It was explained that labour market intelligence was being used to ensure the skills of the local workforce could meet the job roles created by the airport expansion. Heathrow had committed to providing an Economic Development Strategy to maximise economic benefits, through skills, employment, training and education for existing and new members of the labour market.
- It was explained that currently it was estimated that 100 additional jobs would be created within Slough, however this would be in the context of good economic growth and improved connectivity. Heathrow officers would be undertaking further discussions with the economic modellers and it was suggested that a report focussing on economic development could be presented to the Committee at a future date. A Member requested that jobs and skills for Slough residents both during the construction period and operation be prioritised.

Councillor Strutton was then invited by the Chair to address the Committee under Rule 30.

Councillor Strutton sought clarification regarding a number of issues relating to noise, pollution, vibration and impact on Slough residents. He stated that the steeper approaches by aircraft would generate additional noise causing a greater disturbance. He said the expansion would generate additional

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pollution, noise and ground vibrations and asked what measures would be put in place to mitigate the impact on Slough residents. In addition, he asked what measures would be taken to protect the Colne Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. He highlighted that noise insulation had a 10-year life expectancy and asked if residents would receive a one-off payment under the Quieter Homes Scheme or if funding would be provided in perpetuity. Further concern was raised in relation to the impact on nearby schools and hospitals, he asked what measures would be taken to ensure buildings were designed or adapted to minimise the impact of the expansion. In addition, he queried the arrangements for taxi and private hire pick up zones and asked if the revenue generated by the Vehicle Access Charge would be invested in measures to offset the adverse impacts on nearby residents. He requested that improved cycle routes be incorporated into the Masterplan proposals.

In response, a Heathrow representative explained that a number of noise mitigation measures would be put in place to minimise any noise impact. Insulation provided to residents under the Quieter Homes Scheme would be provided as a one-off payment. In relation to the revenue generated from the Vehicle Access Charge, it was explained that the income would not be ring-fenced and all income generated was pooled centrally. Members were assured that Heathrow was committed to providing investment to fund new measures to improve sustainable transport modes at the airport and public transport access as part of the expansion plans.

On behalf of the Committee, the Chair thanked the Heathrow representatives for their presentation and welcomed the offer of attending a future meeting.

Resolved –

- (a) That the presentation provided be noted.
- (b) That the comments and concerns raised by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee be submitted to Heathrow as part of the consultation process.
- (c) That the Heathrow representatives in attendance be requested to feed back the comments and concerns raised by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to their relevant Heathrow colleagues as part of the consultation process.
- (d) That the Heathrow representatives be requested to provide written responses to the outstanding questions raised during the discussion.

22. Forward Work Programme 2019/20

The Committee considered the Forward Work Programme and agreed to add the following items:

9th January 2020
Localities Strategy Update

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30 January 2020

Adult Social Care Transformation Programme

Resolved – That, subject to the inclusion of the items detailed above, the Forward Work Programme 2019/20 be approved, as set out in Appendix A of the report.

23. Members' Attendance Record 2019/20

Resolved – That the details of the Members' Attendance Record be noted.

24. Date of Next Meeting - 14th November 2019

Resolved – The date of the next meeting was confirmed as 14th November 2019.

Chair

(Note: The meeting opened at 6.30 pm and closed at 9.00 pm)

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