

SPELTHORNE JOINT COMMITTEE – 23 July 2018

AGENDA ITEM 7

WRITTEN PUBLIC QUESTIONS

1. Mr Andrew McLuskey re. Heathrow expansion

“Given the competence of the Joint Committee to pronounce on planning matters can the Chair indicate his and his colleagues reaction to the implications for Spelthorne of the recent parliamentary vote allowing a 3rd Heathrow runway , implications which we are reliably informed will involve -

- A new (sic) exceedance of the Critical level of NOx in large parts of the Borough (with the greatest incremental change - 51% - being on Staines Moor).
- Increased noise pollution.
- A ‘takeover’ by the airport of Stanwell and Stanwell Moor’s Green Lungs with possible uses for the land in question including – it has been suggested – a multi storey car park and an immigrants removal centre.”

Officer response

The references made to air quality by Mr McLuskey relate to the Air Quality Assessment produced by Jacobs on behalf of the Airports Commission in 2015. This report looked at the environmental impacts of the three schemes proposed for Heathrow at the time, namely a North West Runway, a South West Runway and the pre-existing Northern Runway option (i.e. before the Airports Commission selected the NW Runway as their preferred option). Within the report for the Airports Commission, the Heathrow NW Runway scheme is given to “worsen air quality (in terms of annual mean NO2 concentrations) at about 47,000 properties”, but the sentence picked out of the report by Mr McLuskey refers to nitrogen deposition at sensitive ecosystems. This relates to potential harm by poor air quality on certain ecosystems, i.e. air pollution impacting on land or water. Air quality NOx target levels for vegetation and ecosystems are more stringent than human health limits. So pollutant concentrations under the national Air Quality Objectives for human health have the potential for harmful effects to vegetation and ecosystems where pollutants are deposited to land or water.

The scheme currently proposed by Heathrow Airport Ltd (HAL) for the new NW runway is not the same as that put before the Airports Commission in 2015 so the impacts discussed in the Jacobs report will not be those of the current scheme. The Development Consent Order process involves the requirement for an Environmental Impact Assessment and the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) will oversee the process. PINS have recently published their response to HAL's scoping report, which identifies what matters the Environmental Statement will need to address. Spelthorne Council produced its own response to PINS, which was taken into account by PINS and includes consideration of impacts to air quality levels, biodiversity and ecology, and this is available to view on our website here:

https://www.spelthorne.gov.uk/media/18438/Spelthorne-Heathrow-EIA-Scoping-Response-for-PINs/pdf/Spelthorne_Heathrow_EIA_Scoping_Response_for_PINs_6_.pdf

It is known from Consultation 1 on the new runway that HAL has identified potential sites around Heathrow for 'airport related development' to support its expansion proposals. Sites within Stanwell and Stanwell Moor could be developed for car parking, hotels, offices and cargo uses. Spelthorne is responding to these proposals both direct with HAL and as part of its membership of the Heathrow Strategic Planning Group, comprising those local authorities most affected by expansion. It is Spelthorne's aim to maximise the economic benefits to the borough whilst minimising the impacts to our communities. We have to take account that a certain amount of development in our borough is inevitable due to the scale of this nationally important infrastructure project and its proximity to Spelthorne but this needs to be planned and managed in a sustainable way to ensure the amount of green space lost is kept to a minimum.

Heathrow will be consulting on more detailed proposals (known as Con 2) early next year. Whilst Spelthorne will be producing its own response to that consultation, it will be public for anyone to make comments. Spelthorne Council will publicise this on the Heathrow section of its website:

<https://www.spelthorne.gov.uk/heathrow>.