

Strand on the Green Association

please reply to:
**12A Spring Grove
London
W4 3NH**

January 2007

Heathrow Consultation
PO Box 236
Wetherby
LS23 7NB

Dear Sirs

I am writing to give you the views of the Strand on the Green Association, a local society which represents the interests of the riverside community in this conservation area in West London. Before writing, we have circulated our members and sought their views: this letter is supported by --% of those who have responded.

- 1 We strongly oppose a) the third runway, b) the suggested end to runway alternation, and c) the lifting of the existing limit of 480,000 aircraft movements per annum at Heathrow. There are many other contentious aspects of the proposals for expanding Heathrow, and we concur particularly with those who object to these plans on environmental grounds. On the other hand, because our mandate is to represent local opinion, we have concentrated on the noise problem, which is the big issue for our members.
- 2 We object to the Department of Transport's strongly partisan approach to this consultation. Government has a duty and responsibility to represent all points of view, but it is clear that they have listened to commercial interests rather than the affected population of some 2 million people who live under the flight paths in West London and around Heathrow.
- 3 In the early 70's, there was the opportunity to site a new London airport of three or more runways at Maplin, where aircraft would approach over the North Sea, against the prevailing westerlies. New York had built JFK in Jamaica Bay and the French had constructed Charles de Gaulle airport, in both cases with environmental advantages. But the government of the day did not advance its plans, nor did they produce a credible alternative for airport expansion in the south east, Stanstead being developed as a stop gap. We now face the consequences of that failure. Rather than look to safeguard the interests of local populations (who bear all the environmental cost but do not enjoy the benefits), it is now proposed to abandon all attempts at reasonable limits on Heathrow's expansion.
- 4 During the Terminal 5 enquiry, BAA asserted on a number of occasions that they had no interest in a third runway, conscious perhaps that any suggestion of such a plan would only strengthen opposition to T5. The Inspector recommended that there should be no third runway and that the 480,000 limit should stay. These recommendations were accepted as part of a quid pro quo for the decision to go ahead with the fifth terminal. No sooner had that decision been taken than BAA began their

- third runway campaign, in breach of their prior assertions and apparently with the active encouragement of the CAA and the airlines.
- 5 In the circumstances, is it any surprise that current promises about limited pollution and noise carry no credibility; no sooner is one step taken on the path to further expansion, than earlier undertakings are abandoned. To suggest that a 50% expansion is possible without any increase in the noise or emission problem because of some vague hope of better fuel economies is naïve and disingenuous, particularly from a government that has spectacularly failed to reach so many of its promised targets.
 - 6 The community which we represent is now faced with the prospect of a) no respite in the use of the existing Northern runway (28R) when runway alternation is suspended, and b) a second runway to the north (and much closer), also with no respite. For us, this is not a 50% increase in the noise burden but something far worse. No argument is given for the decision to abandon the shorter runway idea and extend the proposed third runway to take all but the largest planes. Moreover, the expansion of Heathrow in the way proposed would allow an increase towards 800,000 aircraft movements, but your document is silent on that point, and silent also on what guarantees, if any, would be offered to maintain runway alternation once the third runway was in place.
 - 7 We have not made an economic argument, but it is true that local residents would see a significant reduction in the value of their homes, and no compensation from the commercial interests that stand to gain from Heathrow's expansion. If this were different, would they still be so keen to expand Heathrow? A free motorway in the sky must be a subsidy as valuable as tax free aviation spirit.
 - 8 We have been assailed with arguments about the supposed economic need to increase runway capacity, conjuring visions no doubt of important international business executives chasing to and from London's financial centre. In reality, Heathrow is part of the cheap foreign travel phenomena that has become an attractive but environmentally expensive way of life for so many of the UK's citizens. Perhaps it is the popularity of this and its electoral appeal that is influencing government to support BAA's proposals.
 - 9 Is not the more pressing problem the need to create a world class travel centre at Heathrow in place of the present shambles, and how likely is that going to be if a massive expansion is in prospect instead?
 - 10 We were promised a second runway at Stansted before a third runway at Heathrow. There is no reference to this in the consultation document. Another inconvenient promise quickly abandoned.

Our community feels disenfranchised in this debate. Our views are continually disregarded, and will apparently be disregarded again, if we are to believe the tone of the consultation document. Past promises of limits to the growth of Heathrow and to its adverse consequences have continually been abandoned; only a partially effective control on night flights remains in place, no doubt to be abandoned when the current hurdle of opposition is surmounted. We are bitterly opposed to these plans.

Yours faithfully
For the Strand on the Green Association

Tom Broadhurst
Chairman