

Hawkwell Parish Council's Response to

Southend Borough Council's Airport Planning Application Reference 09/01960/FULM

Hawkwell Parish Council has considered the above application and object in the strongest possible terms to the extension of the runway. This proposal has a massive adverse effect on our residents and must be rejected.

We consider the consideration of the extension of the runway prior to the consideration and publication of responses to the Joint Area Action Plan is premature. If the consultation conducted was meaningful and planners were prepared to consider any representations made by the public this decision would be delayed until due process had been completed. The implication of the timing of the consideration of this application is that no matter what anyone says the airport will be developed as indicated.

We have studied the Stobart document 'Unlocking Potential' as the digital version is largely inaccessible to Councillors. We believe producing documents digitally under the guise of e-government is a deliberate ploy to increase the difficulty of ordinary people to access information.

Point 3 What is the key driver for these improvements?

The predicted increase in air traffic movements at Point 3 of the paper indicates a 40 fold increase in passengers and a doubling in cargo movements, with only a 30% reduction in 'other aircraft' movements but mysteriously indicates only a 28% increase in total movements. Whilst the authors will point to the increase in the size of aircraft to account for this, on their own figures there will be an average of only 82.3 passengers per flight. Clearly all of the predicted increase in movements and most of the original levels will now be larger jets that are noisier than the small aircraft currently using the airport.

Point 4 A regional airport catering for local demand.

By definition a regional airport is for a region, ie it will be used by many people from Essex and from wider areas. Why then does the report try to suggest that its prime focus will be local people. The analysis of the catchment area indicates 0.4 million people within a 30 minute drive and a further 1.4 million within an hour (presumably by driving as north Kent is not accessible by public transport within 1 hour). Of the .6 million people for whom Southend is the most convenient 70% (or 420,000) live in Essex and only 40% (or 168,000) of that from the locality. On this basis alone 252,000 people would be travelling to Southend by car or public transport. Even if 50% of them travelled by public transport (and this would be an outrageously high figure) that would still mean 126,000 people travelling to and from Southend airport by car on our already gridlocked roads. This is in addition to the 180,000 (30% of .6million) travelling from outside Essex and unless some action is taken to dissuade them the majority will come by car.

Point 5 Respecting Community Views.

The commitment made allows no further growth potential after 2019, we are sceptical that such a restriction will be sustained after a couple of years.

120 night flights per month represents an average of nearly four flights per night. It is disingenuous to imply that this is a reduction of where we are now. That which is currently allowed under the rules that exist is not achievable through either economic or practical restriction, if it were possible to achieve it would be being achieved already. Rather than make specious comparison with what is legally possible, the only honest comparison is that with what is currently happening on the ground. We do not suffer nearly 4 flights per night by large aircraft so allowing 120 per month would be a huge detriment to the local residents.

If there is a cap of 5,330 freight movements per annum how does that accord with a forecast of half of that promised at note 3. The arithmetic indicates that some 14.6 flights per night could take place if the company stick to their proposal to fly freight only at night, or does it mean the balance will be added to the daytime flying. This indicates the duplicity of the numbers being provided.

The introduction by stealth of the so called night time runway preference is outrageous and we cannot believe that Rochford District Councillors have approved it. If we interpret this correctly this means that, wherever possible, aircraft will take off and land on a north easterly trajectory. This means the residents of Rochford and its environs have to suffer the noise of bigger, heavier jet aircraft taking off over their houses whenever the weather would allow and whatever the consequence in respect of additional energy necessary to get sufficient lift with a following wind. At present we rarely have to endure aircraft take offs. We cannot understand why our Councillors saw fit to agree to this without so much as a whimper.

Noise Insulation Schemes have no impact whatsoever on the reduction in amenity value of our residents in the use of their gardens and surrounding open areas or when their windows are open in the summer.

The introduction of a noise management strategy is the first acknowledgement that noise management will be problem and we would like to see what such a strategy consists of, and how effective or otherwise it might be.

We would have thought that the introduction of an ILS is an essential for the safety of the residents at the northern end of the runway and are surprised that such is not obligatory.

We note the proposal for an Airport Surface Access Strategy, a grand title with no prospect of having any impact on the gridlocked roads and we have no doubt that the introduction of a green travel plan will be utterly useless. It analogous to a barbarian proposing to adopt a pacifist approach to quelling the rebellious people. Air travel is not green and trying to adopt a 'holier than thou' stance will not wash.

Point 6 Key Topics of interest:

We are surprised that the facilities in St Laurence's park would still be useable, this is presumably on the assumption that take offs will be on a northern trajectory thus avoiding jet blast, however what happens when the weather prevents a northern take off, will these facilities be closed during take offs as the current road is?

It is not sufficient to advise what the increase in noise levels would be, we need to see and understand the absolute levels and the consistency of the highest levels of aircraft on take off. It is said that there would be a reduction in the number of people exposed to night disturbance, this is presumably due to the switch from south to north. This glib comment seeks to hide the hugely deleterious effect of the expansion on residents in Rochford. It appears to accept that a number of people will suffer such consequences but that such is acceptable because they have reduced the number so affected.

We are surprised that the airport is able to point to only a 5% increase in traffic on our already gridlocked roads. The numbers in earlier paragraphs do not support this increase but even so 5% represents 2,500 vehicle movements per day. The weasel words used in the paragraph indicate no achievable means of limiting the impact on our roads have been identified.

Whilst the introduction of new jobs to Southend would be beneficial there is every possibility that a significant proportion would be commuting in from other areas adding to the already overloaded roads.

We request Southend Borough Councillors do all in their powers to disallow this proposal which will have a very damaging effect on the quality of life of a large number of residents in the district of Rochford.

Hawkwell Parish Council