

London City Airport Consultative Committee

From: **Stuart Innes**
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Future Development of Air Transport – South East
Department of Transport
Room 1/28c
Freepost LON 17806
London
SW1P 4YS

Dear Sirs

Future Development of Air Transport in the United Kingdom: South East

I write on behalf on the London City Airport Consultative Committee in response to the Government's Consultation on the Future Development of Air Transport in the United Kingdom.

The Consultation Document for the South East of England was considered by the Committee at its meeting on 2nd October 2002. At the meeting the Managing Director of London City Airport, Richard Gooding, gave a presentation highlighting the key issues and summarised the Airport's views on them. A copy of his presentation has been posted on the Committee's web site at www.lcacc.org

Runway Capacity

The South East and East of England Regional Air Services Study (SERAS) forecasts indicate that if demand is to be met, an additional 3 runways will be required by 2030. It is the Committee's view on economic and employment grounds that the 'do nothing' option is neither sensible nor viable and that the proposed aviation policy should provide for growth in runway capacity in the South-East in a measured and sustainable way.

SE Runway Options

SERAS examined alternatives for additional runways in the South East of England. In relation to the substantial options contained within the Consultation Document, the Consultative Committee broadly shares London City Airport's views:

- *An additional 2000 metre runway at Heathrow* – Heathrow remains the first choice for passengers and airlines and the Committee does not oppose in principle the development of an additional runway.
- *Up to 3 additional runways at Stansted* – The Committee does not object to this proposal providing there are no airspace implications for London

City Airport. It remains to be seen whether airlines and passengers using Heathrow would ever be prepared to relocate elsewhere although continued growth in the 'no frills' sector is likely to support at least some expansion at Stansted.

- *A new airport at Cliffe, North Kent* – The Committee opposes the development of a new airport at Cliffe. The SERAS report on airspace interactions concluded that the redesign required to accommodate an airport at Cliffe would be likely to "impact severely on the airports adjacent to the new site, most notably, London City". The Committee questions the deliverability and viability of such an expensive piece of airport infrastructure within the private sector and is very concerned with the significant damage that would be caused to an internationally protected nature reserve.

In addition to the airspace conflicts, a Government policy decision in favour of Cliffe would blight further infrastructure development at London City Airport and other airports in the South East in the interim period before an airport at Cliffe opens.

- *No new Runway at Gatwick* – while the Committee accepts it is important to preserve the integrity of the agreement with the West Sussex County Council prohibiting further runways at Gatwick until 2019, there seems to be no reason why a 30-year policy could not contemplate a further runway after that time.

London City Airport

In relation to London City Airport SERAS envisages that the Airport will continue to play a relatively small but important niche role as a mainly business airport serving the local market. The Committee agrees with this view. There are no suggestions in SERAS for growth at LCY beyond that already permitted within the present limit of 73,000 air transport movements (ATMs) which the Study calculates, would mean a passenger throughput of circa 5 mppa by the end of the 30 year period. The rate at which this growth occurs will depend on what capacity is provided elsewhere. SERAS envisaged that the provision of runways elsewhere mid-term might produce a temporary fall in the demand for travel from LCY although the Airport thinks, and the Committee agrees, a temporary levelling-out in demand would be more likely.

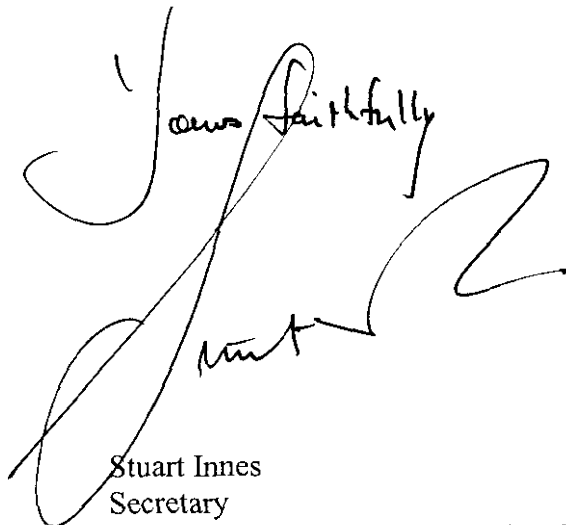
Although SERAS envisages growth at LCY within 73,000 ATMs currently permitted, the consultation process, together with discussions about Crossrail, the London Plan and the future growth of the Thames Gateway, has nonetheless given rise to the question whether the Airport should plan for growth beyond 5mppa. The London Plan indicates there will be substantial growth in the population of the eastern part of London and the Thames Gateway. A large proportion of all new jobs likely to be created over the next 15 years in London will be in the finance and business service sectors and concentrated in the City of London and Canary Wharf, both in LCY's catchment area. In the light of these factors, the Airport told the Committee it is beginning to think there may be more growth in the market for business air travel than had previously been assumed, growth in which LCY and the local area might share.

Any such growth at LCY would need to be environmentally sustainable and would require, for example, the extra surface access capacity offered by the routing of the Ebbsfleet branch of Crossrail through the Royal Docks with a single station in the vicinity of the Connaught Crossing. It would also require a raising in due course of the present 73,000 limit on the permitted number of ATMs and there would be a need for investment in new Airport facilities over and above those already implemented or planned which are thought to be adequate for 3.5-4 mppa.

But the Committee was assured such growth would *not* require a longer runway or aircraft larger than those already permitted to use the Airport. The obstacle clearance requirements for the Airport rule out any question of a longer runway, as does the siting of two bridges at either end of the runway. The Airport said it could be expected over time that the use currently made of the smaller permitted types (e.g. 30 seats) would diminish in favour of those at the higher end of the list (e.g. those offering 80-100 seats) and that more of the seats would be filled. For example, the present throughput of passengers of 1.6 mppa, involved 200 ATMs per day. When passengers numbers rose to 4-5 mppa it was expected (under SERAS assumptions) that the number of ATMs would rise to only about 240-250 per day

The Airport has not yet examined these ideas in any detail and it told the Consultative Committee it was unwilling to incur the substantial expense involved in doing so unless the local authority and the Airport's neighbours in the community were prepared in principle to contemplate further growth. The Airport will be having discussions with the London Borough of Newham and it said it was happy to talk to the local Community Forums and other local bodies.

The Consultative Committee decided it was prepared in principal to contemplate and discuss growth at London City Airport in excess of that already permitted but on the understanding that such an increase would not involve any increase in the present length of the runway or any significant variation of the current rules as to the permitted types of aircraft. I was asked to advise the Department accordingly

Yours faithfully


Stuart Innes
Secretary
London City Airport Consultative Committee