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From John Stewart, Chair of AirportWatch

The little village of Warnham in rural Sussex is an unlikely place for a revolution to start. But the current protests by the villagers could be the harbinger of what is to come. As detailed in the bulletin, a new flight path to Gatwick Airport has been routed over the village as part of new air space changes which are being trialled.

These changes are part of an EU programme called SESAR to modernize Europe's airspace. By 2020 the UK expects to have remodelled the airspace around every major airport in the country. It could mean many more Warnhams – places getting aircraft overhead for the first time.

There will be uproar.

Heathrow will be *the* big test case. Done badly and it will generate much more opposition, due to aircraft noise, than a third runway. Heathrow Airport is well aware of this and meets regularly with the airlines, air traffic control and the residents to map out a way forward. HACAN is involved in these talks on the basis that re-jigged airspace, done well with respite periods for residents who currently get none, might be beneficial.

But everybody is going on a journey into the unknown. What is being proposed is the biggest change to flight paths for 60 years. And, unless your home is threatened by the building of a new runway, what matters to residents is flight paths.

We only need to look to Frankfurt to see what can go wrong. The re-jigging of the flight paths to allow for the 4th runway has seen unprecedented protests. Two and a half years after the runway opened thousands of residents still occupy the terminal each week. And the protests look like intensifying. Last month Plane Stupid Rhein-Main was set up.

Frankfurt, meet Warnham....

A new report shows that building a runway at Heathrow or Gatwick would mean big increases in passenger fees



The Aviation Environment Federation (AEF) has submitted a new report to the Airports Commission which casts doubt on the feasibility of building a new runway at either Gatwick or Heathrow. So far there has been little realistic discussion about who will actually pay for the proposed runways.

The new study, *“Who Would Pay for a New Runway”* by Brendon Sewill, shows that a new runway at Heathrow would be likely to mean an increase in landing fees and other airport charges from £19 per passenger now, up to £31. At Gatwick there would be a larger increase, up from £8 now to £33.60 (up £25). The study points out that with all the London

airports separately owned, unlike in the days of BAA, the cost will have to fall only on the passengers using that airport. If an expensive runway (and terminal) is built, the options are either that the passengers pay for it – or that it has to have public subsidy. 10.3.2014 <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=20374>

A report last year for the Airports Commission, by KPMG, concluded that a new Heathrow runway would need a subsidy of around £11 billion, and a new Gatwick runway a subsidy of nearly £18 billion. However, the Government is reluctant to commit public funds, and new EU guidelines ruling out subsidies to major airports. That leaves landing charges – will passengers put up with that, or vote with their feet by using cheaper airports? The report (12 pages) is at http://www.aef.org.uk/uploads/Who_would_pay_for_a_new_runway_1_2_3.pdf

The cost of a new Gatwick runway – £50 extra per return flight

At Gatwick the cost of the new runway and terminal would be as much as £25 more than now in airport charges (landing fees, aircraft parking charges etc), per passenger per flight. That is £50 per return flight.

The calculations are based on the estimate made by the Airports Commission that a new Gatwick runway would cost £10 - £13 billion. The local Gatwick campaign, GACC, say Gatwick often claim that a new runway at Gatwick would be cheaper than one at Heathrow. But they don't mention that the cost would need to be borne by roughly half as many passengers at Gatwick as at Heathrow. In the past the cost of new infrastructure was met by the Government, or spread among BAA's airports. But now all the airports are privately owned by separate companies. The cost of a Gatwick runway would have to be met only by the passengers using Gatwick.

£50 extra on a return flight might well cause price-sensitive passengers and airlines to choose to use Stansted instead, which has a lot of spare (cheaper) capacity. <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=20397>

Villages in Sussex up in arms as new Gatwick flight path shatters their peace and quiet



A new flight path has been introduced for aircraft taking off from Gatwick to the west, then turning left around Horsham. It passes directly over the village of Warnham and is a 6 month trial designed to get more aircraft off the Gatwick runway.

Normally there are 3 take off routes to the west, which are contained within compulsory Noise Preferential Route (NPR) corridors. The new route departs from the NPR, particularly over Warnham, where it has caused consternation.

The trial is a technical one not intended to measure the social impact and the airport chose not to announce it in advance; they hoped this would prevent complaints that might not have emerged otherwise. Instead there has been uproar.

Residents in Warnham are complaining strenuously about low-flying aircraft going over their homes from 6am each day. They feel the character of their village, let alone its tranquillity, are being destroyed. The planes pass over the village at approximately 2,000ft as often as every 5 minutes at some times of day. The noise is loud enough to have raised concerns about its impact on vulnerable residents, in particular the elderly and disabled. Rural residents often suffer more from noise pollution than urban residents – an effect that is well recognised - because there is little background noise. GACC considers it intolerable that new misery and a decline in house values should be caused, just to create extra profit for the owners of Gatwick. They say there is no national need for this route change. This could be a fore-runner of the widespread misery and protest that would be created across Surrey and Sussex by a new runway. 4.3.2014 <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=20279>



Francis Maude: Noise misery foreshadows Gatwick 2nd runway

Francis Maude, MP for Horsham, has received a great number of letters and emails from distressed residents in Warnham and Rusper, in recent weeks, about the new, unannounced, flight path trial over them. He is asking for much more detail about the trials. These include on what criteria will the trial be assessed? Why does it need to continue for six months? How is it being monitored? He says the misery currently being experienced by local residents foreshadows what would be a permanent feature of life in the area if a 2nd Gatwick runway were to be built. The amount of opposition to this trial suggests it is not being successful. 8.3.2014

<http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=20361>



Warnham is a wake-up call, not only for villages near Gatwick, of what they can expect from a new runway. It is also a reminder for those who may be overflowed by a 3rd Heathrow runway of what may be in store.

Government wants new runway pushed through in next Parliament, with no chance to vote against it

An interview with Patrick McLoughlin, in the Spectator, by James Forsyth, states:

“But McLoughlin has a plan that may stop airport expansion being dragged into the next general election campaign. In opposition, David Cameron was against expanding Heathrow. But in 2012, the government asked Howard Davies, an economist, to do a report on what runways Britain needs. He has been told not to publish his final conclusions until after the general election.

“So I ask McLoughlin: does that mean there’ll be no general election between the report and the beginning of the building process?

“Sitting here now, that would be what I would hope.”

Residents who’ll have to put up with a new runway, or even a new airport, will thus never get a chance to vote against it.” 7.3.2014 <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=20342>

Gatwick offers to pay households for noise of 2nd runway – dismissed by opponents as a “very small bribe”

Gatwick airport is on a PR and charm offensive to try to get support for a 2nd runway. This has been somewhat upset over the past two weeks by the impact on the village of Warnham of an unannounced flight path trial. Now Gatwick airport are making the offer of £1,000 per year to "all households most affected" by noise from a 2nd runway. The airport says would be equivalent to Band A Council Tax (currently £1000).

Gatwick CEO Stewart Wingate said the cash would help negate some of the impact. The airport estimates that 4,100 households would qualify for the money by 2040, using the discredited 57 decibel contour. In reality, the 57dB contour does not accurately reflect the areas where noise is annoying or causes disturbance - even the 54dB contour, as used in Europe, is an inaccurate measure. Many thousands more people - perhaps 48,000 - would need to be compensated if the 54dB contour was used. The £1,000 is a derisory figure, not even slightly compensating for loss of house value, or for loss of local amenity and quality of life. GACC described it as a very small bribe.

According to the Civil Aviation Authority, 3,650 people living in 1,600 homes around Gatwick are affected by aircraft noise today. They have never had any offers to pay them £1,000 per year. 10.3.2014

<http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=20394>

London MPs and Councils challenge Airports Commission on aircraft noise with updated “ANASE” report

In 2005 the ANASE (Attitudes to Noise from Aviation Sources in England) report into what level of sound caused community annoyance was undertaken, and it indicated that the 57 decibel contour – the measure the UK authorities still use – did not satisfactorily measure aircraft noise. In reality, significant annoyance was caused at much lower level of sound exposure.

However, this finding was inconvenient and so the report was shelved by the government. The 57 dB contour is still being used, and is the measure being used by the Airports Commission. The ANASE report has now been revised and updated, and this new report has just been launched by Hillingdon Council on behalf of the all-party 2M Group of councils opposed to Heathrow expansion. It shows far more people are badly affected by aircraft noise than the 57 dB contour would suggest.



Outer line indicates 57 dB contour

The 2M group are asking that the Commission investigate a new, more rigorous noise metric with which to assess and compare the noise impacts and costs of all the airport proposals. They say the Commission’s decision on a new runway cannot be based on seriously out of date evidence which bears no resemblance to real-life experience.

27.2.2014 <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=20207>

Full details of extent of Heathrow night flight plans ‘dug up’ by Leader of Wandsworth Council

The full extent of the Government’s plans to increase night flights into Heathrow has been “dug up” by anti-noise campaigners in the technical appendix of an Airports Commission's interim report, which was publicised on 17th December. The appendix shows that the number of planes allowed to land at Heathrow before 6am will increase from 16 to 35 from next year. The proposal is one of the short or medium-term recommendations to make maximum use of the existing runways at Heathrow.

Ravi Govindia, who is the leader of the 2M group of 20 councils opposed to expansion of Heathrow, which is deeply opposed to Heathrow night flights said: “We shouldn’t have to dig deep into a technical document to find out what is in store for us.”

Heathrow wants the amount of "stacking" to be reduced before the morning rush-hour. They say residents would be given "respite" from the noise, by having more in alternate weeks, followed by a week without planes. Mr Govindia, who is also Leader of Wandsworth Council, said people on the final approach flight paths into Heathrow were “deeply opposed” to the early-morning arrivals, which affect their sleep and are linked to serious health issues. The Airports Commission said: “We have recommended a trial of early-morning smoothing. A trial provides the opportunity for communities around Heathrow to experience and comment on the impacts.” 13.2.2014

<http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=19917>



Ealing Council - a member of the 2M group - have added their voice to the complaints about the recommendation on night flights, buried in the appendix. Ealing Council’s Leader commented: “One arrival before 6am is one too many.” Ealing and the 2M group have fought for years for a ban on night flights, and do not find an increase acceptable. Under a proposal called ‘early morning smoothing’, Heathrow would be allowed to land additional planes between 5am and 6am, which is classified as the

night quota period. The aim is to minimise delays and could allow the airport to manage with one runway for arrivals between 6am and 7am. <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=20054>

“London Councils” – representing 32 London boroughs & councils – calls for an end to night flights from 2017

"London Councils" is a cross-party organisation which represents London's 32 borough councils and the City of London and works on behalf of all of its member authorities regardless of political persuasion. It has responded to the 2nd stage of the government's consultation on night flights from Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted by repeating its call for a total ban on night time flying from 2017.

At present there is no ban on flying from the three airports at night but a limit on take-off and landing is in place. At Heathrow this is currently 2,550 in winter and 3,250 in summer. Councillor Catherine West, Chair of London Councils' Transport & Environment Committee, said: "Night flights are an unacceptable part of the capital's airport operations. This consultation is disappointing as it discusses keeping the current system, or extending the time period of the restrictions. It does not allow a proper assessment of the economic or health implications of banning night flights, which is what the majority of our residents want." London Councils believes night flight noise is a serious well-being issue and has a big impact on quality of life for ordinary Londoners. "Any new technical and operation procedures could help, but ultimately communities across the capital would like a ban on night flights from 2017." 5.2.2014 <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=19734>

Heathrow bid to end Cranford Agreement – allowing easterly take-offs from northern runway – is rejected by Hillingdon Council

The Cranford Agreement was a binding commitment the UK government made in 1952 to the residents of Cranford to reduce the impact of aircraft noise on residents. It prohibits, under normal Heathrow Airport operations, easterly take-offs (i.e. towards central London) on the northern runway. In January 2009, the government announced it was ending the Agreement (as part of consultations on a proposed 3rd runway). In September 2010 the current UK government reaffirmed the decision to end the Cranford Agreement. A planning application by Heathrow airport in June 2013 concerning the creation of taxiways on the Northern Runway, was required to enable the practical implementation of the ending of the Agreement as well as consideration of the associated environmental impacts. It also included the erection of a 5m high noise barrier around parts of the village of Longford.

This application has now been unanimously rejected by Hillingdon Council – which means Heathrow will not be able to have regular departures to the east from the northern runway. This preserves the 60-year-old gentlemen's agreement protecting Cranford residents from the noise. The downside is that people living in Windsor and Maidenhead continue to endure more landings. Heathrow is considering whether to appeal. 12.2.2014 <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=19889>

Council Leader says Hounslow will ‘fight to the last’ to prevent mixed mode at Heathrow

Hounslow Council have voiced their opposition to a report by York Aviation saying that using mixed mode on both Heathrow runways would, allegedly "boost UK economy by £206 million a year" from 2023. They say mixed mode is not acceptable and Hounslow residents will not tolerate losing their half days of relief from plane noise.

The report was commissioned by the City of London Corporation and business pressure group London First, which are both keen to see aviation expansion - both in the short term, and in the longer term by adding a new runway. They do not appear to be concerned about the level of noise this would subject Londoners to. At present (most of the time, except for when the A380 lands and in other situations) one runway is used for arrivals and one for departures, with the roles switching at 3pm each afternoon to ensure some respite for those under the flight paths. 80% of Hounslow residents are in favour of keeping runway alternation. Hounslow Council's deputy leader Colin Ellar said: "We will fight to the last to protect our residents from being subjected to more aircraft noise. While Heathrow is very important to us economically, the introduction of mixed mode flies in the face of a better airport." 14.2.2014 <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=19908>

Analysis by NATS for Airports Commission shows a 4th Heathrow runway would cut flight path capacity elsewhere



An article in the Times says a submission by NATS, the air traffic control service, to the Airports Commission warns of the problems that would be caused if a 4th (not only a 3rd) runway was built. The Airports Commission said in its interim report,

that it considers another new runway might be "needed" by 2050, if the first new runway capacity has been filled by then. Even one new runway is marginal, at best, for carbon emissions. [A 2nd new runway cannot be built and used, keeping within UK carbon targets]. There are fears that if Heathrow was allowed a 3rd runway, it would effectively become a Trojan Horse for a 4th runway - Heathrow airport has said that from 2030 a decision would have to be taken on a 4th. It has never kept secret its ultimate desire for a 4th runway. The effect on flight paths of a 4th runway at Heathrow would mean fewer planes could use the other London airports. The NATS paper says a 4th runway at Heathrow would reduce the combined capacity of Heathrow, Gatwick, Stansted, Luton, Birmingham, City and Southend airports by 9%. It would cut capacity at Gatwick, Stanted and Luton airports by 50% and at London City airport by 25%.

NATS says a 4th Heathrow runway would reduce capacity, relative to a 3-runway Heathrow, by 18% due to the disruption to flight paths to the other main airports. 10.3.2014 <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=20386>

Heathrow cutting 200 jobs (20% of total core staff) due to CAA restriction on landing charge rises

Heathrow Airport is planning to cut 20% of its core workforce despite turning its first profit since 2006 and said it is undergoing a "major" restructuring. Its full-year results statement showed it made a £426m pre-tax profit last year, up from a £33m loss previously, helped by the £1.5bn sale of Stansted in February 2013. Heathrow says it is making the staff cuts due to the CAA not allowing it to increase landing charges, though Heathrow can appeal till March 27th.

Its landing charges will be reduced in real terms by 1.5% below the rate of inflation every year until 2019. Colin Matthews said the cuts are likely to affect around 200 staff but no front-line roles, such as security, will be affected. Heathrow employs 7,000 people in total but 1,000 of those roles are part of its "central" head office structure, which is where the job losses are, partly due to having sold off its other airports. The number employed by Heathrow Airport Ltd in 2012 was 5,278 (compared to 5,265 in 2011 and 5,148 in 2010). 25.2.2014 <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=20139>

Fears in Heathrow area that a 3rd runway with associated infrastructure could add to local flood risk

The western end of Heathrow is within 3 miles of the River Thames. The western end of the airport is within 3 - 4 miles of Datchet, Old Windsor and Wraysbury, as well as Staines. These areas recently experienced unprecedented flooding, due to some of the wettest weather and more continuous storms and rainfall for several hundred years (which is consistent with predictions of climate change from rising global CO2 emissions). Heathrow airport itself covers a huge area in impermeable surfaces, and its storm drainage is on a vast scale. There were already fears from previous years of its impact on the drainage of the area.

Heathrow has the River Colne running along its western edge, and the River Crane along its eastern edge. A report in 2003 for Hacan recommended that a full EIA should be carried out on the impact of a 3rd runway on the Heathrow flood plain; and that as expansion of Heathrow would have a significant impact on water levels in an area much wider than just the Heathrow flood plain a detailed analysis is carried out in the impact a 3rd runway would have on rivers across a wider area. In addition it recommended that no decision should be made on a 3rd runway until full analysis has been done and has been put out to wide public consultation.

11.2.2014 <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=19851>

Lowfield Heath remembered – the ‘ghost village’ destroyed to build Gatwick airport

Memories of a village that was demolished as Gatwick Airport grew have resurfaced as campaigners fight plans for a 2nd Gatwick runway. Lowfield Heath disappeared in the 1970s after the then Gatwick aerodrome expanded into an international airport from the 1950s onwards. Today the only buildings that remain of the village are its windmill and Grade II* listed church. The windmill was moved but the church still stands - surrounded by industrial estates. In the church is a plaque commemorates a reunion in 1989 of "those who formed the village community at the outbreak of the second world war in 1939 and whose homes and village were subsequently displaced by Gatwick international airport".

The sad fate of Lowfield Heath is a "salutary reminder" of what can happen to a village next to an airport determined to expand. It was once a nice little community with a cricket club, a school and a WI. After the present Gatwick runway was built in 1958, people remained in Lowfield Heath because of a lack of compensation, but life became intolerable by the 1970s because of the noise of airport jets. But then in 1973 the area became an industrial development zone, so residents could sell their homes at "a large price" for warehousing and hangars. So they moved away. 9.2.2014 <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=19834>

British Airways Heathrow flight suffered ‘engine surge’ on take-off so returned for emergency landing

A British Airways plane was forced to turn back shortly after taking off at Heathrow Airport after an "engine surge" in the air. A witness said flames were "spitting out of the engine" as the aircraft took off at 20.54 GMT on Thursday 6th March.

British Airways said flight BA0364 to Lyon, France, touched down safely, and the aircraft would be "thoroughly checked over by engineers". The southern runway was closed for about 16 minutes. A local resident who saw it said: "I was in the petrol station opposite the airport, which is when I heard the bang, so I turned around and the plane had flames spitting out of the engine with a spluttering noise as it was still taking off. I then watched it continue to climb and the engine was still emitting flames intermittently." BA said: "A flight experienced what's known as an 'engine surge' as it took off from Heathrow" So the plane limped back into Heathrow. Webtrak shows it circling over Cobham etc for some 25 minutes before joining the northern runway approach path at around Brixton and landing at about 21.37 - so it flew for miles over densely populated areas of Surrey and London, on one engine.

The last incident of a plane having to make an emergency landing, and flying across London with a burning engine, was in May 2013, when the engine cowls had not been closed properly. That was only 10 months ago. 7.3.2014 <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=20332>

Huge protest in centre of Nantes against new airport – forceful police resistance; some rioting, violence and injuries



A huge protest took place in Nantes on 22nd February, against the planned new replacement airport to be built at Notre Dame des Landes, some miles to the north. The organisers estimated some 50,000 protesters, who came in from supportive groups from regions all across France. There are reported to have been 65 coach loads of protesters who travelled to Nantes to take part, and 520 tractors, brought by supportive farmers from surrounding areas. The protests were put

down with considerable force by the police, using water cannon, rubber bullets and tear gas. The Nantes airport issue has become very political in France. The politics of this issue have taken on national interest and significance. With elections coming up this year, the Prime Minister (and former Mayor of Nantes and ardent backer of the new airport), Jean-Marc Ayrault, is thought unlikely to back down from pressing for the airport. An opinion poll found 56% of those surveyed were against the new airport. But the courts have ruled it can go ahead, though there are on-going appeals on grounds of the law on water and on biodiversity.

It is not anticipated that there will be more forceful evictions of the farmers and activists who are occupying the land allocated for the airport, called the ZAD – Zone à Défendre as that would be politically unpopular.

The people passionately fighting the Notre Dame des Landes airport, in unspoiled French farming countryside, are linked into opposition to "Les Grands Projets Inutiles Imposés" (useless, imposed mega-projects) in many European countries. These big projects include HS2 and other schemes like a high-speed rail in Northern Italy and cyanide-mined gold extraction project in Romania. All these projects have managed to get support from very disparate sections of society. They all have real doubts about the economics or the necessity of the project; also they have land, homes, countryside or communities to defend; there is significant local opposition; and they also attract in outside opposition, from people with a variety of perspective as well as environmental. 23.2.2014 <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=20089>

Bavarian Administrative Court rules that building a 3rd runway at Munich airport is lawful

The Bavarian government in southern Germany have been trying for some time to get consent for a 3rd runway at Munich, to the north of the existing airport. On 19th February the Bavarian Administrative Court (VGH) ruled that the runway can go ahead, when they rejected the 17 lawsuits against the project. The 300 or so runway opponents in the court greeted the news with boos and by singing the Bavaria national anthem. The judge had to clear the court.

The project was halted by a referendum in June 2012, when by a majority vote the people of Munich expressed their opposition to the runway, which would demolish the village of Attaching. Though the result of the 2012 referendum was only valid for one year, the political parties in Munich are very aware of local opposition to the runway, and they need their votes. It is the state government and economic lobbies that want the runway. The legal judgement is not the end to the story, and the fight is expected to continue.

<http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=19991>



Opponents of the 3rd runway after the verdict

Those opposed to the runway point out that a runway is not needed as the number of flights has fallen over recent years and the current runways have plenty of spare capacity, with the advent of larger aircraft.

The figures for 2013 show that though there were 0.8% more passengers using Munich airport in 2013 than in 2012, the number of air transport movements (flights) fell by 5%. That is a substantial reduction.

The campaign against the new runway has repeatedly questioned the economic case for building a runway for which there is not

sufficient demand. For all 3 airports in Bavaria (Munich, Nuremberg and Memmingen) the number of air passengers did not grow in 2013, and the number of flights fell by 5.2%.

The volume of air freight and mail using Munich airport fell by 1% in 2013. So there is no evidence of growing demand there. 3.3.2014 <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=20225>

Uncertain privatisation of AENA casts doubt over its stalled Luton expansion plans

Spanish airport operator, AENA, bought Luton airport in summer 2013 from Abertis. AENA is one of the world's biggest airport operators in terms of passenger numbers, and manages Spain's major airports. It also owns minority stakes in 15 more airports around the world. The FT says that now their plans are in doubt and Luton has a question mark over its future. Luton is the UK's 5th largest airport in terms of passengers, and is the base for easyJet.

AENA had plans to expand Luton, taking its annual number of passengers from around 9 million to 18 million – plans that have been fiercely opposed locally. AENA had plans to compete with French airport operator ADP, Germany's Fraport and Singapore's Changi. The FT says now AENA's future is unclear and whether the Spanish government will allow it to be largely privatised. This is having an impact on its Luton plans. The Luton expansion is being held up, or is on a back burner. The privatisation is a political matter within the Spanish government, and whether it has to sell assets to rescue the nation's economy. The government hope to avoid selling much of AENA, and if it stays under state control, its Luton expansion plans may be scrapped.

22.2.2014 <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=20073>

Partners Group including Strathclyde Pension Fund also bidding to buy Glasgow airport

Ferrovial has recently made a bid to buy Glasgow airport as well as Southampton and Aberdeen airports. Ferrovial currently owns Heathrow Airport, as well as 25% of Heathrow Airport Holdings, (it is the biggest single shareholder) which owns Glasgow, Aberdeen and Southampton Airports. Therefore, technically, it already owns Glasgow airport. But it is looking to expand business interests in the UK and reports suggest it wants outright control of Glasgow Airport and the others.

Now Glasgow city council's pension fund - the Strathclyde Pension Fund (the wealthiest council pension fund in the UK) - is part of a bid consortium that is also bidding for Glasgow airport. The consortium includes Partners Group and Zurich Airport. Partners Group is a global private markets investment management firm. A decision by the Strathclyde Pension Fund group to try and buy Glasgow could spark a bidding war. The bid is supported by the Glasgow city council leader and the Renfrewshire council leader. If their bid was successful, public involvement in a takeover for Glasgow would place it in direct competition with Prestwick, which was bought by the Scottish Government last year. That could mean a political conflict between Labour-run Glasgow and the SNP administration at Holyrood. The Strathclyde Pension Fund has spread its investments across a wide range of areas and has a stake in Samsung and Apple, as well as property portfolio which includes a Wolverhampton shopping centre and an office block in Hong Kong. 22.2.2014

<http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=20072>

Redhill Aerodrome runway appeal, for a hard runway, dismissed by Planning Inspector

Plans to build a hard runway in place of its 3 existing grass runways at Redhill aerodrome have been refused by a planning inspector. The owners of Redhill Aerodrome, RAV, had wanted the hard runway in order to have aircraft movements all year, even in bad weather, and to increase the number of flights from 60,000 to 85,000 a year. Following last month's public inquiry, the planning inspectorate ruled the development was "inappropriate" and could "harm the green belt." Reigate and Banstead Council and Tandridge Council rejected the scheme last year, saying it was inappropriate development in Green Belt, so RAV appealed.

Local residents groups and Surrey Campaign for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE) were among objectors who gave evidence to the inquiry. Local Conservative MPs Crispin Blunt and Sam Gyimah lodged formal objections against the development, saying the economic case was weak and it would cause major detrimental impacts on the surrounding area. The airfield flooded as a result of heavy storms last month.

21.2.2014 <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=20040>

Manchester Airport Enterprise Zone causing piecemeal environmental destruction of Green Belt countryside

The new Manchester Airport Enterprise Zone is causing the piecemeal environmental destruction of Green Belt countryside. There are local concerns that airport-centric urban sprawl is destroying green space and open countryside, and locking in reliance on fossil fuel intensive infrastructure. The development of an Enterprise Zone, link road and 9,000-space car park is proceeding apace in the face of resistance from local communities. Planning permission is being granted in a piecemeal fashion, so there is little publicity of, or opportunity to oppose. Construction of a key component of the Zone, the World Logistics Hub, with 43 warehouses, office space and a 1,473 space car park has already begun. Earthworks, tree felling and installation of drainage are already under way, and wildlife and habitats are being destroyed. There are likely to be fewer new jobs than expected, as many will just move in from elsewhere for the tax breaks and subsidies. Government backing for the Enterprise Zone suggests a desperate shortage of business space in the area. In fact, there is a surfeit of empty offices, warehouses and paved areas. More detail from Rose Bridger. 25.2.2014

<http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=20138>

The environmental implications of the Airports Commission's backing for a new south-east runway

In a recent blog, Tim Johnson (Director of the Aviation Environment Federation) says that the environmental implications of the current pressure to build another south-east runway need to be assessed very carefully indeed, before any consent is considered. Aircraft noise remains the principal source of community conflict with airports. Noise does not merely cause annoyance, but there is also growing evidence supporting a correlation between aviation noise and ill health. There is also an established relationship between air quality and health and the EU's legal limits mean that any expansion plans must guarantee the limits will not be breached. Aviation's contribution to climate change remains one of the fastest growing sources of greenhouse gas emissions. UK aviation emissions already contribute around 6% of our total emissions with that proportion set to grow to 25% by 2050 (even if aviation emissions are maintained at 2005 levels). Unfortunately the Airports Commission has reached a decision on the need for a new runway before it has made an appraisal of the local issues. It is unfortunate that the Commission has made the mistake of viewing climate change, as well as local impacts of noise and air pollution as mere afterthoughts to their interim conclusions.

12.2.2014 <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=19907>

European Commission adopts new guidelines and opens the floodgates to public aid for airports and low-cost airlines

In February the European Commission adopted new guidelines on how Member States can financially support airports and airlines in line with EU state aid rules. The EC says the guidelines are "aimed at ensuring good connections between regions and the mobility of European citizens, while minimising distortions of competition in the Single Market." The stated aim is to ensure fair competition for flag carriers down to low-cost airlines, from regional airports to major hub airports and avoid overcapacity and the duplication of unprofitable airports.



Aid is allowed if there is seen to be a genuine need for accessibility by air to a region. Operating aid to regional airports (with less than 3 million passengers a year) will be allowed for a transitional period of 10 years under certain conditions, in order to give airports time to adjust their business model. Airports with less than 700 000 passengers a year get more favourable treatment. Start-up aid to airlines to launch a new air route is permitted provided it remains limited in time. The formal adoption of the new guidelines is expected in March 2014. 20.2.2014 <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=20007>

The European transport NGO "Transport & Environment" said it was outraged at the increase in subsidies to be allowed. The guidelines will allow regional airports and the airlines serving them to keep receiving subsidies worth an estimated €2-3 billion per year. This means an increased flow of taxpayers' money towards

regional airports for at least the next decade, and it would allow infrastructure aid for expanding airport facilities to continue permanently- regrettably including no meaningful checks on duplication of airports within a few hundred kilometres of each other. The guidelines also declare that past operating aid, which up till now has been illegal, will retroactively be made legal.

Operating aid is designed to cover the cost of running small airports, such as personnel and maintenance. Instead, operating aid has been used to lower airport fees to attract low-cost carriers, distorting competition and fuelling artificial demand for flying.<http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=20012>

T&E says this "gives a new blank cheque to airports and airlines that fail to boost local economies." T&E are particularly opposed to aviation receiving subsidies because aviation across Europe pays no VAT, and no fuel tax - exemptions worth €40 billion a year. The industry is also keen to avoid its inclusion in the EU ETS. Aviation globally contributes about 5% to man-made climate change. The EC says in Europe the aviation sector adds €140 billion to GDP and 2.3 million jobs, both of which represent 1% of the EU total. ie. EU aviation is 5 times more climate intensive than the average economic activity in Europe.

“People flying Ryanair should pay for their own tickets” – T&E

Ryanair and other low cost airlines have managed to manipulate the EU subsidies system adroitly, paying almost no landing charges at struggling regional airports, and this has made rock-bottom air fares possible. Purchase of this cheap air travel is the cheapest and fastest way for individuals to greatly increase their personal carbon emissions, and thus their contribution to rising global CO2. Traffic from Europe's small airports has risen rapidly: 130% growth over the past decade, versus ‘only’ 29% for the larger airports. This makes a mockery of fair competition in the aviation market.<http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=20194>

Government response rejects petition asking for no APD during school summer holidays

A petition asking that the government suspend or reduce Air Passenger Duty (APD) during the school summer holidays, has been submitted to the Treasury. It says British families need quality time together at a time they legally can (parents are not meant to take children out of school in term time). Quite why the families have to get on a plane in order to have quality time together is not explained.

As the number signing is now around 38,000 there has been a **response from the government**. They say "APD exists to provide revenues for the public services. Revenue from APD plays an important part in supporting this Government's stabilisation of the UK's public finances." They add that APD is charged by the airlines, and they have the option of not passing the cost on to the passengers. They also say that APD for the majority of flights, which are to Europe, is only £13 for a return trip. "The duty makes up a relatively small proportion of the total ticket cost. For example, it is less than 9% of the cost of an early booking for return flights for a family of four to Málaga in July 2014. Other charges imposed by airlines, such as fuel or luggage surcharges, can make up a much higher proportion of the total ticket price."

The industry ramps up the price of flights and holidays during July and August, by far more than the price of APD. For instance, a holiday price £2,015.59 in August and £1,214 for the same trip in late September.

18.2.2014 <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=19977>

Prototype “Hybrid Air Vehicle” (HAV) – the “Airlander” – may have its first flight this year

The world's longest aircraft has been unveiled. It is an experimental hybrid, which looks like a giant (helium filled) airship - which has a pod slung underneath, two small engine rotors and small wings. It is the shape of two rugby-ball shapes linked in the middle with a joining section. It uses little fuel and its advocates say it is "70% greener than a cargo plane." If the giant models can be made to work, they may be able to carry up to 50 tonnes payload. It can land on a small space, or on



water, and so is being promoted as possibly helpful to land aid and equipment to remote disaster areas with no long runways. The machines could also be used for long term surveillance as they can stay aloft for days or weeks, and be remotely operated. The length of the prototype is 302ft (92m) which is some 60ft longer than the Airbus A380 or the massive cargo-carrying Antonov An-225.

The company developing it has now received £2.5m of UK government funding for development "of quieter, more energy efficient and environmentally friendly planes." Business Secretary Vince Cable hopes this will be an "innovative low carbon aircraft which can keep us at the cutting edge of new technology to lead the world in its field." 3.3.2014 <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=20230>

China's CAAC has granted Sinopec a license allowing aviation biofuel to be made from rapeseed, palm oil & soybean oil

China's oil refiner, Sinopec, has been given a license allowing commercial use of its aviation biofuel by airlines. There was a biofuel test flight in 2013 using fuel made from hydro-treated palm oil and recycled cooking oil. Sinopec said it can now produce bio-jet fuel from a wide range of raw material feedstock, including rapeseed oil, palm oil and soybean oil (which competes with human and animal food).

Sinopec can produce 3,000 tonnes of the fuel per year, from rape seed, cotton seed and waste cooking oil. The company is considering joining with private enterprise in planting, collecting and processing these source oils, as well as getting waste cooking oil from McDonald's. Sinopec claims their biofuels generate 45% less CO2 than conventional fuels. China is now the 2nd largest consumer of aviation fuel, consuming nearly 20 million tonnes per year. Its jet fuel demand is estimated to be expanding by 10% every year, while the global average is less than 5%. The production costs of aviation biofuel remain at least 2 - 3 times those of crude oil.

16.2.2014 <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=19950>

London aircraft noise summit increases pressure for independent aircraft noise ombudsman

The group, "Let Britain Fly" organised an "aircraft noise seminar" in order to get together various speakers to discuss the issue, and the possible establishment of an independent aircraft noise ombudsman (ANO). The Airports Commission recommended it, in their interim report in December. Campaigners at Heathrow - where there is the largest aircraft noise problem - are hopeful that there may now be a new initiative that can help break the noise deadlock. Others have voiced concerns about the proposal, and fear that the creation of an independent noise ombudsman might be used as a means of paving the way for airport expansion, by defusing opposition. They would back a watchdog, provided he has real powers to set and enforce standards. What people who are overflowed - and troubled by plane noise - want is for less noise. Not just liaison, consultation, action plans and empty promises. 11.3.2014 <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=20433>

Useful Info

- For large amounts of up-to-date news on airports and aviation, see AirportWatch's news pages

www.airportwatch.org.uk/?page_id=148

- Watch plane movements in real time over the UK FlightRadar www.flightradar24.com

- Follow updates from the Airports Commission

www.gov.uk/government/organisations/airports-commission

- For daily transport news in the UK - Transportinfo at transportinfo.org.uk

- News and expert analysis on the AEF website at www.aef.org.uk and on Twitter @The_AEF

- Updates from HACAN at www.hacan.org.uk/

and from GACC at www.gacc.org.uk/latest-news

- Follow **AirportWatch** on Twitter @AirportWatch and Facebook on.fb.me/UoSkEx

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