



THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT

Prime Minister

To note.

BHP

13/7



FROM THE SECRETARY OF STATE

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TELEPHONE 01-276 3000

My Ref:

Your Ref:

The Rt Hon Chris Patten MP
Secretary of State for the Environment
2 Marsham Street
LONDON SW1P 3EB

13 JUL 1990

Dear Chris,

SOUTH EAST AIRPORTS

You and I corresponded about this issue in the Spring, when Lord Carnarvon, as Chairman of CAA, was pressing for that body to be involved in the Civil Aviation Authority's work on airport and airspace capacity into the next century. You will wish to be aware that on Tuesday of next week the CAA will be publishing the advice which my predecessor commissioned two years ago.

I am proposing to announce the publication of this advice by written Answer next Tuesday 17 July. In my statement I shall make it clear that the CAA's work has been confined to technical considerations of airspace capacity and traffic forecasts, and that there are many wider matters which need to be thoroughly addressed before any decision to proceed at a particular location can be taken.

You and colleagues will want to note two particular aspects of the advice, which carry political sensitivity:

- * in order to carry out the technical work needed to establish the possible constraints on a variety of theoretical ways of meeting the need for new runway capacity to serve the south east, the CAA has had to assume particular locations for runways, and the report will include maps showing them, as the basis for their advice;
- * the inclusion of Gatwick and Stansted in the technical consideration raises questions about the undertakings we gave in our 1985 White Paper on Airports Policy about a further runway at those airports.

The relevant extracts from the White Paper are attached.

On the first point, we shall have to stress that the maps do not show where runways are going to be: they are no more than approximate locations assumed for a very specific and limited purpose.

On the second point, it was always understood in this exercise that all options other than green field sites were up for scrutiny. I propose to set up, as on the last occasion (when Stansted was considered) a working group and to announce it in my Answer. A draft of my statement is attached. As you will see, this reminds the working group of the White Paper undertakings.

There is one other issue which I shall be carrying forward, though I do not propose to do so for a few weeks. When I responded to the CAA's advice to me last year on the rules which govern the distribution of air traffic among the London airports, I said I would be considering its recommendations further in the light of the Authority's more wide-ranging advice. The situation for which the rules were devised has altered, and there are other factors, notably incompatibility with our liberalising stance in Europe, and a latent problem with US traffic, which argue for reconsidering the necessity for the rules. I shall accordingly be writing to the CAA during the Recess to ask the Authority to advise me on the case for abandoning some or all of them.

I am sending copies of this letter to the Prime Minister and other Cabinet colleagues, to Tim Renton, Bertie Denham, and to Sir Robin Butler.

James *East,*
Leil

CECIL PARKINSON

EXTRACTS FROM 1985 WHITE PAPER ON AIRPORTS POLICY (Cmnd 9542)

On Gatwick, the White Paper said,

"The Government believes that the provision of a second runway would have unacceptable environmental implications. It could only be built to the north of the present runway, which would require a major expansion of the airport's boundaries and bring the runway within a mile of the built up area around Horley. The village of Charlwood would be destroyed and other nearby villages would be seriously affected. Furthermore, it is by no means certain that the capacity of a two runway airport could be fully utilised because of air traffic control constraints arising from the proximity of Heathrow and defence establishments. The Government therefore reaffirms the policy that Gatwick should develop to its full potential as a single runway airport and that a second runway should not be constructed."

On Stansted, the White Paper said,

"The Inspector also recommended as a condition for the grant of planning permission that the Government should make an unequivocal declaration of intent that a second main runway would not be constructed. On current demand forecasts, it is very doubtful whether such a runway would be justified in the foreseeable future, while it is clear that it would give rise to severe environmental pressure. The Government therefore unreservedly accepts the Inspector's recommendation in this respect."

and in the index of conclusions,

"The Government does not intend that a second main runway should be constructed in the future and believes that the proposed ATM limit procedure will provide a valuable safeguard against such a development".

DTp
11 July 1990

STATEMENT ON RUNWAYS TO SERVE THE SOUTH EAST

The Civil Aviation Authority is publishing today its advice on airport and airspace capacity. Copies of the report are being placed in the Library.

Developments at Stansted and airports elsewhere will enable us to meet forecast demand for air travel in the south east up to around 2005.

The CAA's work has had two main elements: first, an examination of what additional runway capacity appears to be needed to serve the south east; and second, an analysis of the technical feasibility, in airspace and air traffic control terms only, of the options for providing that capacity.

The CAA has reassessed its traffic forecasts. It has reached the view that extra runway capacity to serve the south east will be required around the year 2005.

The Authority looked at eight options for further development at existing airports. At my request, it did not consider green field sites. Sir Christopher Tugendhat, the Chairman of the CAA, has noted in his covering letter to me that the Government will need to take account of many wider factors before making a choice. He has also acknowledged that the wider view might lead us to reject some locations which, from an airline or air traffic control viewpoint alone, might appear favourable.

I am acutely aware of the impact of airport development on the environment, on employment, and on local infrastructure. These matters will need to be thoroughly addressed before any decision to proceed at a particular location can be taken.

I propose to establish a working group to examine these factors, and to make recommendations. Representatives from bodies representing local and environmental interests, from airport and airline operators, from the tourism and travel industry, and from Government Departments, will be invited to participate.

In its 1985 White Paper on Airports Policy, the Government expressed its view that a second runway should not be built at either Stansted or Gatwick. The considerations which led to that view remain compelling.

I shall be reminding the working group of the undertakings which have been given in the case of Gatwick and Stansted and of the acute environmental problems which gave rise to the views which the Government expressed on those airports in the 1985 White Paper. Obviously the wider considerations the Chairman referred to are no less relevant at Heathrow.

In its advice, the CAA has said that it believes that traffic at regional airports will continue to grow rapidly, but that this will not be an effective substitute for additional London area capacity. I shall be asking the working group to assess this conclusion most carefully and to gauge the extent to which regional airports can play a part in meeting the overall growth in demand, into the next century.

12 July 1990

