



Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food
Whitehall Place, London SW1A 2HH

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10/9

From the Minister

The Rt Hon Cecil Parkinson MP
Secretary of State for Transport
Department of Transport
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 3EB

9 September 1990

at first

Thank you for sending me a copy of your letter of 10 August to Chris Patten about the proposed working group to consider the wider implications of airport development at the locations identified by the Civil Aviation Authority in CAP 570.

The question of additional runway capacity and associated infrastructure inevitably impinges on a wide range of interests, and, so far as my Department is concerned, is likely to involve the loss of significant quantities of agricultural land. The implications for the national agricultural interest will be influenced by the choice of site and the land quality in that area. I agree therefore that my Department should be represented at official level on the working group when matters relating to my Department's responsibilities are being discussed.

Two other issues also occur to me. First, there will presumably be issues which it would not be appropriate to air at meetings which non-Government representatives attend. I assume you will be making arrangements for issues which require a Government view to be dealt with in a separate forum. Second, I note from your letter that you intend later this year to consult more generally on the contents of CAP 570, seeking written representations from interested parties. I believe it is essential that there should be wider consultation if the membership of the working group has to be restricted. So far as my Department's interests are concerned, you should consult both the Country Landowners Association and the National Farmers Union. In 1979 when decisions were being taken on the studies on a possible third London airport, the NFU in particular expressed concern about the lack of wider consultation and the implications the decisions might have for their membership.

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I am copying this to Cabinet colleagues, as well as to Tim Renton, Bertie Denham and Sir Robin Butler.



John Gummer
JOHN GUMMER