



n.b. P.M.
BAP 1719

cc: BAP

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My ref:

Your ref:

The Rt Hon Cecil Parkinson MP
Department of Transport
2 Marsham Street
LONDON
SW1

17 September 1990

Dear Secretary of State

SOUTH EAST AIRPORTS

Don

Thank you for your letter of 10 August about the Working Group to consider the wider implications of airport development at the locations identified by the Civil Aviation Authority in CAP570.

On the membership of the Working Group, I am content with your proposals. I suggest that you should make it clear in writing to SERPLAN that they are expected to cover the interests of the London boroughs and LPAC. I agree that my Department should take a full part in the work of the Group.

On the terms of reference themselves, I have only one suggestion: in the second paragraph, I suggest that the Group should "reassess" (rather than merely have regard to) the considerations which led to the 1985 conclusion that a second runway should not be built at either Gatwick or Stansted. Although this is clearly a very sensitive issue, without some reassessment the CAA's conclusions must surely be rejected from the outset.

I hope you will agree that the Group, under paragraph 3 of its terms of reference will be able to look not only at those regional airports which were specifically examined by the CAA, but any others which may make a contribution to meeting the growth in demand. I accept that, notwithstanding propositions which have recently been given press publicity, we should not divert the Group to looking at any proposals for major airports on greenfield sites in the south east.

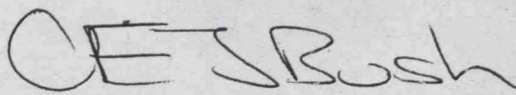
The working group will be inhibited from questioning the objectives of Government policy for airports as set out in the 1985 White Paper. In view of the mixed membership, this is entirely right. However, I do suggest that in parallel with its work we ought to be considering within Government whether those objectives need updating, in the light of the promotion of Stansted and regional



airports as well as the international role of Heathrow and Gatwick, and in particular in the light of the forthcoming Environment White Paper. While the Working Group is bound to deal with environmental aspects in its work, it will be for us to take account of the wider environmental implications of our airports policy, and I should like to see a recognition of this in the objectives.

If you agree, I suggest that these issues should be discussed by our officials in parallel with the Working Group. They are relevant to the preparation over the next few months of regional planning guidance for the south east. Our officials will also need to take account of developments in the transport industry that could affect the demand for airport capacity and the solutions sought, and, I suggest, of how far we can continue to meet that demand in the light of its planning and environmental consequences.

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



PP CHRIS PATTEN

(Approved by the Secretary of State
and Signed in his Absence)