

**EXTRACT FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE HIGHWAYS,
TRANSPORTATION AND WASTE MANAGEMENT SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE HELD ON 24 OCTOBER 2002**

66. Government Consultation on the future development of Air Transport in the United Kingdom.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Highways, Transportation and Waste Management concerning Government consultation on the development of air transport in the U.K. over the next 30 years. The County Council's formal response would be decided by the Cabinet (at its meeting on 19 November 2002), taking into account views of this Scrutiny Committee and the Scrutiny Commission among others. A copy of the report, marked 'F', is filed with these minutes.

Comments from Mr. G. H. Perkins JP, CC, notified under the Sensitive Issues Procedure, were circulated at the meeting and a copy is filed with these minutes. Mr. Perkins stated that there had been few complaints about noise or disruption from the East Midlands Airport, and its economic benefits to the area were considerable; however, he was not in favour of a second runway at the present time.

Mrs. L. A. S. Pendleton CC, Cabinet Lead Member for Highways and Transportation issues, attended the meeting, and with the agreement of the Committee spoke on the report.

The Scrutiny Committee discussed the report and the initial statement of the Leader of the Council on the matter. The following observations were made:-

- The accuracy of Government forecasts for increases in air traffic and the soundness of the proposals arising from those predictions should be strongly challenged.
- A new airport in the Rugby/Coventry area would adversely affect the environment in south Leicestershire - roads would be unable to cope with increased volumes of traffic and communities would suffer unacceptable levels of noise and pollution.
- Further gradual expansion of East Midlands Airport should be supported, having regard to local communities and the environment. An area wider than that suggested by the circulation of the report under the Sensitive Issues Procedure was affected by the flight paths from East Midlands Airport.
- The road network in the vicinity of East Midlands Airport was already under pressure; noise and pollution from vehicles travelling to and from airports was a major concern for the future.

- It was imperative that the Government planned now for an integrated transport system, building on the existing rail network to link major towns and airports.
- A higher tax on aviation fuel, to help fund solutions to environmental problems generated by increased volumes of air traffic, should be considered by the Government.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the statement by the Leader of the Council (appended to the report) supporting a gradual and incremental growth of East Midlands Airport but rejecting the option of a second runway there and proposals for a new airport between Coventry and Rugby, be endorsed, in view of -
 - (i) the environmental consequences of rapid expansion in air traffic for the County, and
 - (ii) concerns over the accuracy of growth forecasts up to 30 years ahead;
- (b) That it was the view of the Scrutiny Committee that, in addition to the points made by the Leader, the response to the Government's proposals should stress the urgent need for an integrated public transport system, to -
 - (i) ensure the continued success of East Midlands Airport in the immediate future and address the problem of congested roads, and
 - (ii) cope with the possible increase in future demand for air travel;
- (c) That the comments of this Scrutiny Committee be referred to the Scrutiny Commission at its meeting on 6 November 2002.