

SASIG MEETING DATES	2
2009 Meeting Dates	2
PARLIAMENTARY NEWS	2
Liberal Democrat Party reshuffle	2
Conservative Party reshuffle	2
GOVERNMENT NEWS	3
Hoon, G - Manchester Airport rail station upgrade	3
Heathrow expansion decision	3
HOUSE OF COMMONS QUESTIONS	4
Greening, J - Attendance at Heathrow air quality technical meeting	4
Hands, G - Air quality limit breaches	4
Hands, G - Heathrow expansion impact on west London	4
Gray, J - Heathrow expansion impact on air quality targets	5
Grogan, J - Heathrow impact air quality targets	5
Taylor, D - Environment Agency comments on Heathrow	5
Beresford, P - Aviation emissions forecasts	5
Brazier, J - Gatwick Airport expansion agreement	6
Brazier, J - Gatwick Airport expansion discussions	6
NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY	6
Farry, S - Public inquiry for Belfast City Airport planning application	6
Butler, P - George Best Belfast City Airport extension impact on Belfast International Airport	7
Newton, R - Potential economical benefits of George Best Belfast City Airport extension	7
Burnside, D - Aer Lingus flights from Belfast International to Heathrow	7
Wilson, B - Environmental Noise Directive in regards to George Best Belfast City Airport	7
EUROPEAN NEWS	8
European Commission adopts new air traffic management rules	8
REGIONAL NEWS	8
Newcastle Airport sign Thomas Cook deal	8
Belfast City Airport - Flybe oppose expansion	8
Robin Hood Airport applies to lift restrictions on night-time freight flights	8
INDUSTRY NEWS	9
Heathrow Airport in breach of pollution limits	9
Aer Lingus changes	9
US regulator set to delay BA tie-up with American Airways	9
easyJet launches 14 new routes across Europe	10
Flyglobespan drop Aberdeen - Canaries route	10
MEDIA NEWS	10
Heathrow flight path	10
Legal challenge to Heathrow decision	10
Protesters buy land in Heathrow expansion area	11
Parliamentary action following support for Heathrow expansion	11
Heathrow international rail exchange plans	11
TRAFFIC STATISTICS	11
IATA Traffic Statistics	11
AEA -Traffic and Capacity Data	12
Airports Council International reports airport traffic figures for November 2008	12
Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) Traffic Statistics	12
FORTHCOMING EVENTS	13
Debate on expansion of Heathrow Airport, 21 January	13
LGA - Tackling Climate Change, 21 & 22 January	13
Omega - Climate related air traffic management seminar, 29 January	14

Omega - JETCLIM Contrails Seminar, 29 January.....	14
Delivering Regional Spatial Strategies (RSS): A Map around the Maze, 3 February	14
Local Environmental Quality in a Low Carbon Age, 18 February	14
The Aviation Debate: Can the Growth Continue?, 25 February	15
The Future of European Rail, 17 & 18 March	15
Omega - Disruptive technologies seminar, 23 March	15
High Speed Networks, 23 April	15
Euronoise, 26 - 28 October.....	16
ANNEX A.....	17
Will Hoon give the go ahead for Heathrow and create even more chaos?.....	17
Government takes out loan on toxic asset.....	19

SASIG MEETING DATES

2009 Meeting Dates

These are the meeting dates for 2009:

SASIG meetings: 27 March, 3 July, 6 November.

CAG (Chairman's Advisory Group) meetings: 6 March, 12 June, 16 October.

PARLIAMENTARY NEWS

Liberal Democrat Party reshuffle

The Liberal Democrat Party have announced a reshuffle of their front bench:

- Simon Hughes - Shadow Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change;
- Steve Webb - Shadow Secretary of State for Work and Pensions;
- David Heath - Shadow Leader of the House;
- Jenny Willott - Shadow Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster; and
- David Howarth - Shadow Secretary of State for Justice.

Susan Kramer has chosen to leave the Shadow Cabinet to take up a new role, leading the Party's campaign against the expansion of Heathrow Airport.

Conservative Party reshuffle

The Conservative Party have announced a reshuffle of their front bench:

- Kenneth Clarke - Shadow Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Secretary;
- Mark Francois - Shadow Minister for Europe;
- Alan Duncan - Shadow Leader of the House of Commons;
- Chris Grayling - Shadow Home Secretary;
- Dominic Grieve - Shadow Justice Secretary;
- Nick Herbert - Shadow Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Secretary;
- Theresa May - Shadow Work and Pensions Secretary and Shadow Minister for Women;
- Eric Pickles - Chairman of the Conservative Party; and
- Caroline Spelman - Shadow Communities and Local Government Secretary.

GOVERNMENT NEWS

Hoon, G - Manchester Airport rail station upgrade

Transport Secretary Geoff Hoon has officially opened the upgrade to Manchester Airport railway station, asserting that the move would help strengthen the local economy and bring significant benefits to passengers. The £15 million programme delivers a new platform for the station as part of the wider modernisation of the West Coast Mainline programme, which increases the number of services running from Manchester Piccadilly and improving the reliability for air passengers.

Heathrow expansion decision

The awaited decision by Transport Secretary Geoff Hoon on Heathrow Airport was announced on 15 January. In his statement to the House of Commons he confirmed his support for adding a third runway with additional passenger terminal facilities and a longer runway, with an aggregate limit of 605,000 annual movements, which would be subject to review in 2020.

The use of mixed mode as an interim measure was ruled out and the decision to end the Cranford Agreement was announced. Expansion of Heathrow has been made conditional upon two key environmental tests - no increase in the size of the 2002 noise 'footprint' of the airport (i.e. the 57-decibel contour), and confidence in meeting European air quality standards around the airport.

The third local condition for expansion at Heathrow was the provision of adequate public transport. The Transport Secretary considered that the previously agreed capacity increases on the Piccadilly underground line along with Crossrail will be adequate to meet the estimated demand for rail access to a three-runway airport. The Government also welcomed the lead being taken by BAA to promote the Airtrack project providing direct rail access to the airport at Terminal 5 from the south and west; this scheme should, however, have been in place to serve Terminal 5.

A limit of 125,000 flights per year will be placed on use of the third runway, with any additional capacity available on the third runway being subject, after consultation, to a new 'green slot' principle to incentivise the use of the most modern aircraft.

The Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) will be given a new statutory environmental duty to ensure that it acts in the interests of the environment.

John McDonnell (Hayes and Harlington) (Lab) was banned from Parliament for five days for disrupting the debate that followed the announcement. Mr McDonnell picked up the mace and placed it on an empty Labour bench in protest at Mr Hoon's refusal to allow a vote on the decision.

The press releases issued by SASIG prior to and following the Minister's decision are at Annex A (page 17). These set out deficiencies and concerns relating to the expansion of Heathrow, none of which have been addressed or abated by the details set out by the Minister.

Within the Transport Secretary's overarching statement on 'Britain's Transport Infrastructure', he also announced a new company - High Speed 2 - which will help consider the case for new high-speed rail services between London and Scotland, and £250 million to promote the take-up, and commercialisation within the United Kingdom, of ultra low emissions road vehicles.

HOUSE OF COMMONS QUESTIONS

Greening, J - Attendance at Heathrow air quality technical meeting

Justine Greening (Putney) (Con): To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many people attended the air quality technical meeting on 28 September 2007 regarding the project for the Sustainable Development of Heathrow; which organisations those individuals were representing; and if he will make a statement.

Jim Fitzpatrick (Aviation Minister): The air quality technical group, which met for the last time on 28 September 2007, comprised representatives from consultants CERC, AEA Technology and Atkins along with representatives from British Aviation Authority (BAA) and officials from the Department for Transport.

Hands, G - Air quality limit breaches

Greg Hands (Hammersmith and Fulham) (Con): The Secretary of State will acknowledge that even in its current configuration Heathrow exceeds the pollution limits in the aforementioned EU air quality directive. Has he applied yet for the derogation that he says he will be seeking from that directive? If so, in terms of the road map he would have to outline for reaching eventual compliance with the directive, can he tell us how 220,000 additional flights each year would help in achieving that?

Hilary Benn (Environment Secretary): I am sure that the hon. Gentleman is aware that, in relation to nitrogen dioxide and Heathrow, the principal problem is road traffic, not aircraft movements. Therefore, what happens on the M4 and other roads in that area has a significant impact. We have not yet applied for that derogation. We are likely to do so first in relation to PM10, because we should have achieved the targets by 2005 - many other member states have not - and it is possible to allow for extra time until 2011. In relation to nitrogen dioxide, the date for achieving the target is 2010; we are not going to do so for the reasons I have set out, and the derogation would extend that to 2015. The hon. Gentleman is right that the Government will have to set out to the satisfaction of the Commission that we have a credible plan for dealing with that. We will have to do so in relation to all the sites where there is a problem, including Heathrow, but as I hope he is aware, Heathrow does not present the biggest problem, because those limits are exceeded by a greater margin in other locations around the country.

Hands, G - Heathrow expansion impact on west London

Greg Hands (Hammersmith and Fulham) (Con): The Secretary of State has a reputation for being quietly effective, but he lives in west London so he understands the impact that a 46% increase in Heathrow capacity will have on the environment of my constituents and those across that area. On Heathrow expansion, has he been defending Londoners at the Cabinet table, or has his reputation for quietness extended to silence on this occasion?

Hilary Benn (Environment Secretary): I am not known for my silence, and I have made it clear that my responsibility as Environment Secretary is to ensure that the Government's air quality and noise targets are met. When the hon. Gentleman has a chance to hear the announcement by the Secretary of State for Transport later, he will find the answer to his question.

Gray, J - Heathrow expansion impact on air quality targets

James Gray (North Wiltshire) (Con): How much harder will it be to achieve air quality objectives if the 222,000 extra flights a year, which will result from the third runway at Heathrow, go ahead? Will the Secretary of State outline the extent to which he wholeheartedly gives his passionate commitment and support to the third runway at Heathrow?

Hilary Benn (Environment Secretary): The hon. Gentleman must be a little more patient because my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Transport will make a statement later today. To answer the first part of the hon. Gentleman's question, the Government have always made it clear that our air quality and noise targets must be met before any expansion can go ahead.

Grogan, J - Heathrow impact air quality targets

John Grogan (Selby) (Lab): May I ask my right hon. Friend once again whether Government approval for the third runway at Heathrow would make it easier or harder to meet the air quality standards? The House will be interested in his views.

Hilary Benn (Environment Secretary): As I have already said in answer to the first question on the subject, the Government have made it clear that any decision on expansion must be subject to our meeting our targets for air quality and noise. That is essential. As I have said to other hon. Members, if my hon. Friend waits a little longer, he will learn from the announcement by the Secretary of State for Transport how that will be given effect.

Taylor, D - Environment Agency comments on Heathrow

David Taylor (North-West Leicestershire) (Lab/Co-op): The Secretary of State is known for not being swayed by passion, and for being an open-minded man who is happy to rely on science and his advisers. The Environment Agency has said that the third Heathrow runway would fail EU pollution limits because of unsafe nitrogen dioxide levels. How is it right—or how would it be right, to use the correct tense—for such advice to be discarded in a cavalier and cursory fashion?

Hilary Benn (Environment Secretary): I am certainly not in favour of discarding any advice in a cavalier fashion. I say once again to the House - I am sure my hon. Friend will listen very carefully to this - that the Government are determined that we will meet the air quality and noise targets that we have set, and which would be a condition on any expansion of Heathrow. People will be able to make a judgment about whether they think that condition has been met when they hear what my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Transport says shortly.

Beresford, P - Aviation emissions forecasts

Sir Paul Beresford (Mole Valley) (Con): To ask the Secretary of State for Transport with reference to the answer of 19 November 2008, on aviation: exhaust emissions, (1) whether his forecast was based on an assumption that the growth of aviation after 2030 will be limited by capacity constraints;

(2) what capacity constraints are likely to limit the growth of aviation in the UK after 2030;

(3) what the figures would be if it were assumed that between 2030 and 2050 aviation were to continue to grow at the same rate as forecast up to 2030.

Jim Fitzpatrick (Aviation Minister): The Department for Transport's "UK Air Passenger Demand and CO₂ Forecasts 2007" report explains that forecast growth in air passenger demand will be limited by UK airport capacity constraints (page 11), and by the maturing of the air travel market (page 19).

The same report, page 36, shows the terminal and capacity assumptions used in the forecasts. By 2050, it is forecast that all modelled airports in the South East and some others elsewhere in the UK will become capacity constrained.

The 2003 Air Transport White Paper supported the building of two new runways in the South East. On this basis, assuming that the pre-2030 growth rate continued to 2050 would not present a feasible view of the world post-2030, and therefore the Department for Transport does not have a CO₂ emissions forecast based on these assumptions.

Brazier, J - Gatwick Airport expansion agreement

Julian Brazier (Canterbury) (Conservative): To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether the 1979 agreement between BAA and West Sussex County Council would continue to bind any new owner of Gatwick Airport and prevent them from building a new runway before 2019.

Jim Fitzpatrick (Aviation Minister): The Government take the view that the 1979 agreement binds British Aviation Authority (BAA) and would bind any new owner of the airport. If any new owner of the airport wished to overturn the agreement, the first step for it would be to approach West Sussex county council and seek their agreement. In the absence of agreement, it would be possible for the new owner to ask the Lands Tribunal to overturn the agreement.

Brazier, J - Gatwick Airport expansion discussions

Julian Brazier (Canterbury) (Conservative): To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether he has taken part in discussions with BAA on proposals to build a second runway at Gatwick Airport once the Gatwick Agreement runs out in 2019.

Jim Fitzpatrick (Aviation Minister): No such discussions have taken place.

NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY

Farry, S - Public inquiry for Belfast City Airport planning application

SASIG Bulletin editor - below is a summary of the questions asked, not a verbatim transcript.

Stephen Farry (North Down) (Alliance Party) asked the Minister of the Environment two specific questions about the Belfast City Airport planning application:

- (a) the criteria to determine if there will be a public inquiry;
- (b) the timescale for a decision on a public inquiry.

Sammy Wilson (Environment Minister) responded:

- (a) the key test in deciding the process route is whether a public inquiry is necessary to provide a forum for the presentation and consideration of issues arising from representations received and which need to be assessed to allow the Department to determine the application;
- (b) Public Inquiries are normally only called in association with applications designated as being of major importance under Article 31 of the Planning (NI) Order 1991. My Department anticipates being in a position, within the next few weeks, to confirm that the application, for the extension to the runway, will be designated under the Article 31 procedure. A decision on whether there is a need for a public inquiry will be made shortly thereafter.

Butler, P - George Best Belfast City Airport extension impact on Belfast International Airport

Paul Butler (Lagan Valley) (Sinn Fein) asked the Minister of the Environment for his assessment on the impact the proposed plans to extend the George Best Belfast City Airport runway will have on Belfast International Airport.

Sammy Wilson (Environment Minister): Article 25(1) of the Planning (NI) Order 1991 provides that in dealing with an application for planning permission my Department shall have regard to the development plan, in so far as it is material to the application, and to any other material considerations. These material considerations must be considerations of a planning nature.

The application to extend the runway is at an early stage and the assessment of its potential impacts has not yet been concluded.

Newton, R - Potential economical benefits of George Best Belfast City Airport extension

Robin Newton (Belfast East) (DUP) asked the Minister for Regional Development for his assessment of the potential benefits of an extension to the George Best, Belfast City Airport, to the economy.

Conor Murphy (Regional Development Minister): I have not carried out such an assessment but I am keen to see the airports of the North develop and increase business, within any constraints that the planning system may impose to limit local environmental disbenefits. As with the other commercial airports, Belfast City Airport is an important transport gateway to help growth of the local economy.

Burnside, D - Aer Lingus flights from Belfast International to Heathrow

David Burnside (South Antrim) (Ulster Unionist) asked the Minister for Regional Development what representations he has made to the Government of the Republic of Ireland to retain Aer Lingus flights between Belfast International and Heathrow airports to ensure the slot allocation.

Conor Murphy (Regional Development Minister): I have not made such representations. Decisions about routes are a commercial matter for the airlines. I recognise the importance of maintaining slots at Heathrow for services to and from Belfast airports and the Department for Transport (London) is aware of our concerns.

Wilson, B - Environmental Noise Directive in regards to George Best Belfast City Airport

Brian Wilson (North Down) (Green Party) asked the Minister for Regional Development, in light of the Environmental Noise Directive, what plans he has to submit evidence on the planning application for the expansion of the runway at George Best Belfast City Airport; and for his assessment of a public inquiry to consider this issue.

Conor Murphy (Regional Development Minister): My Department has no statutory responsibilities in relation to noise management measures proposed by George Best Belfast City Airport under the requirements of the Environmental Noise Directive.

My Department is being consulted about the planning application for the expansion of the runway and will respond in relation to matters that are its responsibility. Whether a public inquiry should be held is a matter for the Department of the Environment.

EUROPEAN NEWS

European Commission adopts new air traffic management rules

The European Commission has agreed new rules for the use of data link in air traffic management (ATM) systems in Europe. Data link technology revolutionises communications between air traffic controllers and pilots through supplementing voice communications with an air-ground data link. The set of common technical and procedural rules adopted by the Commission are essential to modernise air traffic management systems within the Single European Sky initiative.

REGIONAL NEWS

Newcastle Airport sign Thomas Cook deal

An extra 70,000 holidaymakers will fly from Newcastle Airport next year after a multi-million-pound contract was signed with the tour operator Thomas Cook. Around 100 jobs will be created as part of the plans to base extra aircraft at the airport and launch new routes. The move will see package holidays offered to 12 destinations, many of which had been lost following the demise of XL Airways in the summer. They also include three brand new routes to the Greek Islands of Kefalonia and mainland resorts of Santorini and Skiathos. The Boeing 757-200 aircraft that will come to Newcastle in May is being relocated from Canada. Newcastle fought off competition from several other regional airports to secure its services. New flights will run seven days a week to destinations including Dalaman and Bodrum, Sharm El Sheikh, Reus, Zante, Crete, Tenerife, Paphos and Larnaca.

Belfast City Airport - Flybe oppose expansion

Flybe, the airline that flies to more destinations than any other from Belfast City Airport, has called for the airport to be refused permission for a longer runway. The comment has caused a row with rival Ryanair. The current runway length is more than sufficient for Flybe's planes, but too short for Ryanair. Flybe, which has had a base at the Belfast airport for more than 25 years, called for people to submit objections to the Planning Service and said that it would be submitting a formal objection. Arguing that permitting a longer runway would be damaging for the Northern Irish economy, the airport, the environment and the local community, Flybe said that the only airline that wanted the runway extended, was Ryanair. Ryanair dismissed the comments.

Robin Hood Airport applies to lift restrictions on night-time freight flights

Robin Hood Airport has applied to Doncaster Council to lift restrictions on night-time freight flights in a bid to create more jobs. The airport has submitted plans to relax the limitations, which they say will make greater use of the site and bring it in line with other airports that transport cargo. It wants a ban on noisier aircraft like Boeing 747s - known as QC4s - operating at night withdrawn as airport officials are concerned the current ruling is hampering efforts to attract a freight operator to set up base at the hub.

Freight operations from the airport are currently below expectations. Since opening in April 2005 Robin Hood carried around 600 tonnes of cargo annually in its first two years. Bosses say one reason is the restrictions on QC4 planes using Robin Hood between 23:00 and 07:00, which are more stringent than most other regional airports. Robin Tudor, spokesman for Peel, owners of the

airport said current annual noise limit regulations would not be amended if the application were passed.

The council has now started a consultation process on the application. The consultation period will end on 30 January. The application will then go before the Planning Committee.

INDUSTRY NEWS

Heathrow Airport in breach of pollution limits

New figures reveal that last year air quality broke the Government's own pollution target despite initiatives by BAA to curb hazardous emissions. The EU legal limit for annual mean average level of nitrogen dioxide - and the current Government target - is 40 micrograms per cubic metre. There are 5 air pollution detectors monitoring nitrogen dioxide in the area around Heathrow. Of these, 3 failed to meet the Government's target in 2008. The mean level was 52 micrograms per cubic metre from the air pollution detector near the airport's perimeter fence; in addition to this high reading, a monitoring site near the M4 had an annual mean average of 49 micrograms of nitrogen dioxide per cubic metre. Another site at Hillingdon had an annual mean average of 43. The Heathrow monitoring site has recorded levels of nitrogen dioxide between 52 and 55 micrograms per cubic metre over the past five years.

Aer Lingus changes

Aer Lingus has announced plans to resume flights between Shannon airport in the west of Ireland and Heathrow airport in March 2009. The airline had been under pressure from the Irish Government to reinstate the route after discontinuing it in January 2008 when the airline transferred its Heathrow slots to Belfast International.

Aer Lingus has also stated they will launch a £100m base at Gatwick Airport. The Irish flag carrier announced plans to base up to eight aircraft at the UK's second-largest airport in a move that will create 120 jobs and be a boost for Gatwick owner BAA, which is in the process of selling the airport. The Gatwick base will be the first Aer Lingus hub outside Ireland. The announcement is a boost for the airport, which has suffered a severe fall in passenger numbers following the collapse of XL and Zoom. Currently Aer Lingus operates a Dublin to Gatwick route and they will recommence their Gatwick to Ireland West Knock route on April 6.

US regulator set to delay BA tie-up with American Airways

The US Department of Transportation (DoT) has requested more details in relation to British Airways' (BA) proposed tie-up with American Airlines (AA). The DoT has asked BA, AA and Iberia Airlines to supply details relating to fares and take-off and landing slots, as well as data on how the alliance would affect "capacity and pricing decisions". They are reviewing whether or not the bid would be exempt from some competition provisions under US law. Antitrust immunity allows carriers to share routes, pricing and scheduling data without actually merging. BA and AA argue that a US/EU treaty reached last March relaxing restrictions on airport access and transatlantic service will boost competition across the Atlantic, benefiting passengers and carriers wishing to begin or expand services. A previous antitrust immunity attempt by the pair foundered several years ago over US regulatory concerns about access to Heathrow for other airlines.

The DoT request will be seized upon by some of BA's rivals, especially Virgin Atlantic, which believes that the BA/AA alliance is anti-competitive. Virgin Atlantic has claimed that it would lead to BA/AA controlling 63 % of the Heathrow to New York JFK market.

easyJet launches 14 new routes across Europe

easyJet has announced that it is opening 14 new routes across Europe, for summer 2009. Nine of the new routes will operate from UK regional airports, with fares for the new routes starting from £22.99 including tax. As part of the expansion, easyJet will base an additional aircraft at Liverpool from 1 June 2009 and at Manchester from 4 August 2009.

Flyglobespan drop Aberdeen - Canaries route

Scottish budget airline flyglobespan has dropped its fourth international route from Aberdeen Airport. The airline is blaming poor demand for the cancellation of the weekly service to Gran Canaria, which only began operating on 22 December 2008. In November 2008 flyglobespan dropped its Aberdeen service to Sharm el Sheikh in Egypt after selling only 200 seats. Two months earlier the Lanzarote and Barcelona routes were also cancelled.

MEDIA NEWS

Heathrow flight path

The Times has reported that hundreds of thousands of homes will be exposed to more aircraft noise from planned new flight paths that will allow 60,000 more aircraft a year to use Heathrow's existing runways. The flight paths will be phased in, the first as early as next year, and will affect people living up to 30 miles (48km) from the airport. Expansion at Heathrow will require a complete redesign of the flight paths of approaching aircraft.

Aircraft will take different routes from the holding stacks to the new turning points, meaning there will be winners and losers in terms of noise. Residents in many parts of inner London will no longer have aircraft passing within earshot, but millions of people in outer London and the Home Counties will either be exposed to aircraft noise for the first time or find many more aircraft flying directly overhead. The main losers will be those living close to the new turning points, which will be over Reading to the west and Dartford and Woolwich to the east. Noise levels will also increase in Watford, Amersham, Camberley, High Wycombe, Barking, Rainham, Ilford, Leytonstone, Walthamstow, Barnet, Carshalton and Beckenham. People in Hampstead, Highgate, Islington, Hackney, Mile End, Stratford, Harrow, Ruislip and Henley will no longer hear any Heathrow-bound air traffic.

A report by National Air Traffic Services mentioned in the consultation document on Heathrow expansion says that changes to Heathrow's flight paths mean that aircraft departing from Gatwick will also have to be rerouted.

Legal challenge to Heathrow decision

London Mayor Boris Johnson is to support a legal challenge against the Government if the proper processes were not followed in reaching a decision to expand Heathrow.

The Sunday Times reports that any legal challenge will be based on the failure of Heathrow to curb noise and carbon emissions, as required under European regulations.

Protesters buy land in Heathrow expansion area

Land earmarked for the construction of Heathrow's third runway has been bought by anti-expansion protesters. Land the size of half a football pitch near Sipson village was bought by a Greenpeace coalition. It has pledged not to sell the land to the Government or BAA if the airport expansion gets the go-ahead. Four key Greenpeace campaigners - including actress Emma Thompson and impressionist Alistair McGowan - bought the land for an undisclosed fee. Conservative front bench spokeswoman Justine Greening, Liberal Democrat MP Susan Kramer and Labour MP John McDonnell were given a piece of the title to the land by Greenpeace and the group hopes to hand more of the land parcel to others in a bid to complicate any attempt to force them to sell through compulsory purchase.

BBC transport correspondent Tom Symonds said recent planning legislation included clauses that allowed the courts to consider whether or not a land purchase that blocked planned development was "vexatious or frivolous". This could, in turn, scupper Greenpeace's plans to obstruct the construction.

Parliamentary action following support for Heathrow expansion

The Guardian reports that rebel backbenchers remain opposed to Heathrow expansion, but acknowledge the concessions made. The Liberal Democrats said that they plan to table a Ten-Minute Rule Bill by the end of the month on the Government's Planning Bill, forcing a vote on all airport expansion. An expected Conservative plan to table the issue as an opposition day debate failed to materialise.

Heathrow international rail exchange plans

The Sunday Times have reported that plans for a high-speed rail link have taken a step forward with the formation of a development company to start work on the project. Heathrow Hub has been set up by Arup, the engineering and professional-services group that introduced the scheme. Documents at Companies House show several of Arup's most senior employees are directors, as is Ian Trehearne, a partner at top City law firm Berwin Leighton Paisner. It is believed that the company will seek to raise about £10m from outside investors to pay for detailed feasibility work. The engineering firm used a similar approach to develop its plans for the Channel Tunnel Rail Link in the late 1980's, setting up a group that formed the basis of today's London & Continental Railways.

TRAFFIC STATISTICS

IATA Traffic Statistics

The International Air Transport Association (IATA) announced results for November showing a 4.6% drop in international passenger traffic and a 13.5% drop in international cargo. International capacity dropped by 1%. The November load factor stood at 72.7%, which is a decline of approximately 3% over the same month last year. Giovanni Bisignani, IATA's Director General and CEO said, "As air cargo handles 35% of the value of goods traded internationally, it clearly shows the rapid fall in global trade and the broadening impact of the economic slowdown. By comparison,

this is largest drop since 2001, in the aftermath of September 11. The industry is now shrinking by all measures. The 1% capacity cut in international passenger markets in November could not keep pace with the 4.6% fall in passenger demand. We can expect deep losses in the fourth quarter."

AEA -Traffic and Capacity Data

The Association of European Airlines has released traffic and capacity data for its members in November 2008. The November traffic posted a resounding drop in volume compared to the previous year, of 4.7%. The traffic downturn occurred against a capacity decrease of 2.7%. With the inception of the Winter timetable season, 21 out of the 31 airlines who report passenger data had instituted capacity cuts, planned in advance as economic conditions deteriorated during the Summer. Apart from domestic traffic in Europe, where structural changes have contributed to a steep decline in AEA traffic, the biggest loser in November was the North Atlantic, with a 7% drop in traffic volume. Next was cross-border operations within Europe, where a drop of 5.4% equated to 30,000 fewer passengers each day boarding an aircraft of the AEA members. Far Eastern traffic was down 3%, and even the perennially buoyant South Atlantic route showed a decrease, of 1%. Overall, the capacity cuts did not achieve an improvement in load factors, which declined 1.5% to 73%.

Airports Council International reports airport traffic figures for November 2008

Airports Council International (ACI) has reported that global air traffic experienced a major setback in November 2008. Total passenger numbers during the month were about 2% lower than in November 2006 and 8% lower than in November 2007.

Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) Traffic Statistics

The Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) provides monthly aviation statistics. The total terminal and transit passengers figures for October 2008 compared with October 2007 are summarised below:

- for all reporting UK airports in October 2008 – 20,349,444 compared with 21,532,147 in October 2007, a decrease of 6%;
- for all reporting regional airports in October 2008 - 8,772,575 compared with 9,308,359 in October 2007, a decrease of 6%; and
- for all reporting London airports in October 2008 - 11,576,869 compared with 12,223,788 in October 2007, a decrease of 6%.

A selection of the CAA figures for terminal and transit passengers for October 2008 are given in the table below for the larger English, Scottish & Welsh airports, showing the percentage change from a year earlier.

CAA Monthly Statistics for Selected UK Airports

	October 2008	October 2007	% Change
Gatwick	2,779,087	3,095,677	-10
Heathrow	5,636,171	5,853,874	-4
London City	292,923	288,976	1
Luton	886,311	871,777	2
Southend	3,445	4,244	-19
Stansted	1,978,932	2,109,240	-6
Total London	11,576,869	12,223,788	-6
Birmingham	844,315	849,668	-1
Blackpool	45,787	48,226	-5
Bournemouth	89,866	102,216	-12
Bristol	539,065	534,833	1
Cardiff	183,729	209,942	-12
Coventry	22,552	60,859	-63
Doncaster Sheffield	85,644	109,526	-22
Durham Tees Valley	56,952	73,424	-22
East Midlands International	480,618	474,549	1
Edinburgh	794,670	820,244	-3
Exeter	82,144	97,601	-16
Glasgow	788,704	874,239	-10
Humberside	38,105	44,109	-14
Leeds Bradford	267,353	264,431	1
Liverpool	465,179	459,491	1
Manchester	1,812,294	2,006,372	-10
Newcastle	464,908	530,434	-12
Newquay	42,263	32,098	32
Norwich	54,752	66,301	-17
Southampton	165,763	178,995	-7
Total Regional	7,324,663	7,837,558	-7
TOTAL	18,901,532	20,061,346	-6

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Debate on expansion of Heathrow Airport, 21 January

The Greater London Authority has reported that on 21 January 2009, London Mayor Boris Johnson is to lead a public discussion about the implications of a third runway on the environment, quality of life and economy in London at the Beck Theatre in Hayes. The Mayor, who made a clear manifesto commitment to oppose expansion at Heathrow, will head up the anti-expansion side of the debate. The Mayor will be joined by key figures from both sides of the Heathrow expansion debate for the People's Question Time taking place at the Beck Theatre in Hayes on 21 January at 7pm. For more information please see <http://www.london.gov.uk/mayor/events/index.jsp>.

LGA - Tackling Climate Change, 21 & 22 January

This LGA conference – titled ‘In the Eye of the Storm: Councils at the Heart of Tackling Climate Change’ – takes place at the Lowry Hotel, Manchester, on 21 & 22 January 2009. This conference, organised jointly with the Energy Savings Trust, will focus on the opportunities and challenges facing councils in adopting targets to tackle climate change through the new performance framework. Councils are uniquely placed to deliver change but cannot do it alone, so the conference will also look at mobilising communities and businesses to take action. Workshops at the conference will provide practical advice on reducing emissions from your own operations and businesses, transport, households and adaptation, as well as interactive workshops on engaging householders, developing partnerships with businesses and employees, involving community groups and useful lessons from the council Reputation Campaign. Cost: (ex VAT) £460.00, member organisation rate: £360.00. Further details at: www.lga.gov.uk/lga/events/display-event.do?id=1063985.

Omega - Climate related air traffic management seminar, 29 January

Omega is hosting a seminar on 29 January 2009 at Royal Society, London. This conference will focus on the European ATM system and make extensive use of actual flight trajectories and airport operations data to help describe the current system. The discussion will provide in-depth insight into ATM’s environmental efficiency, enabling recommendations to stakeholders for potential improvements. Further details at: <http://www.omega.mmu.ac.uk/climate-related-air-traffic-management-seminar.htm>.

Omega - JETCLIM Contrails Seminar, 29 January

This seminar hosted by Omega on 29 January 2009 at Royal Society, London. The aim of the seminar is to disseminate findings of Omega’s studies: JETCLIM and Contrails - Adding to a Climate Model. The seminar will share results from Omega’s work to incorporate aviation contrails into Hadley Centre’s climate model, primarily in terms of temperature range effects and regional climate responses. Further information at: <http://www.omega.mmu.ac.uk/seminar-contrail-and-climate-assessment-modelling-and-the-relationship-with-technology-developments.htm>.

Delivering Regional Spatial Strategies (RSS): A Map around the Maze, 3 February

Waterfront Conference are hosting 'Delivering Regional Spatial Strategies: A Map around the Maze' at Bircham Dyson Bell, London on 3 February 2009. Key issues that will be considered during this conference are whether RSSs are succeeding in delivering necessary development, infrastructure and investment across the regions; do RSSs provide sufficient detail to function as part of the Development Plan alongside Local Development Frameworks; and are RSS policies worded to allow implementation through the development control process. This seminar seeks to help delegates find their way through the maze and learn how to make the most of the system to deliver the results they need. Further information at: <https://www.eventsforce.net/waterfront/frontend/reg/homepage.csp?eventID=40>.

Local Environmental Quality in a Low Carbon Age, 18 February

Environmental Protection UK is hosting this event at the Institute of Physics, London on 18 February. This event will look at the threats and opportunities for local environmental quality posed by action on climate change, and how integrated local and global environmental policy can be developed. Further details at: <http://www.environmental-protection.org.uk/events/details/?id=1714>.

The Aviation Debate: Can the Growth Continue?, 25 February

Waterfront Conferences are hosting 'The Aviation Debate: Can the Growth Continue?' on 25 February 2009 in central London. This conference will focus on the challenges ahead for the industry. The conference plans to tackle the following questions; can aviation growth be delivered whilst meeting climate change and air quality targets, where can the growth be accommodated and what will be the impact of the current economic downturn on the industry. The conference will also look at how the Planning Bill will affect future aviation expansion, and whether or not the National Policy Statement (NPS) on aviation will mirror the growth agenda of the 2003 Aviation White Paper. Further information is available at:

<https://www.eventsforce.net/waterfront/frontend/reg/homepage.csp?eventID=36>.

The Future of European Rail, 17 & 18 March

Marketforce Conferences are hosting 'The Future of European Rail' on 17 & 18 March 2009, at The Imperial Riding School, Vienna. Rail is one of Europe's most important growth areas, integral to the delivery of larger political and economic objectives including greater integration, environmental protection and internationally competitive markets. Despite a bright future for the sector, not all companies will prosper. The European Commission's emphasis on competition will inevitably produce both winners and losers and this conference provides an opportunity to consider how the continent's rail market is developing and what strategies will give operators the best chance of success. Further details at: <http://www.marketforce.eu.com/eurail/>.

Omega - Disruptive technologies seminar, 23 March

Omega is hosting a seminar on 23 March 2009 at the University of Sheffield. This workshop aims to identify potential future scenarios for aviation technology. It will give participants an opportunity to look beyond existing systems to new and challenging alternatives that might produce a revolutionary improvement. Further details at: <http://www.omega.mmu.ac.uk/disruptive-technologies-seminar.htm>.

High Speed Networks, 23 April

Waterfront Conference in partnership with First Class Partnerships Rail Consultants are hosting 'High Speed Networks' on 23 April 2009 at Stephenson Harwood, London. This seminar will explore the case for the construction of high -speed links in the UK and will discuss these in the context of UK and wider European networks. The seminar will provide a forum for the consideration of the key policy and funding issues that will need to be addressed if Britain's high-speed links are to be delivered. Further details are available at:

<https://www.eventsforce.net/waterfront/frontend/reg/homepage.csp?eventID=29>.

Euronoise, 26 - 28 October

The 2009 Euronoise event will be held at the Edinburgh International Conference Centre, Edinburgh from 26 to 28 October. Euronoise is the European conference on noise control, co-ordinated by the EAA Technical Committee Noise and organised by a national acoustical society on behalf of the European Acoustics Association (EAA). The programme will consist of key-note lectures, invited and contributed papers in structured parallel sessions, workshops and poster presentations. Further information is available at: <http://www.euronoise2009.org.uk/>

Most of the parliamentary information in this bulletin and some news items were sourced from De Havilland Information Services plc. The following sources are also used: The Guardian On-line, The Telegraph On-line, The Independent On-line, Financial Times On-line, United Kingdom Parliament's World Wide Web Service, The BBC On-line, BAA's Website, ENDS On-line, Aviation International, Environmental Data Interactive Exchange News Service, ENDS Daily, Airwise.com, Croner Environment Centre Newsletters.

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SASIG Press Release 09/1/09 – Prior to announcement of Heathrow expansion decision

Will Hoon give the go ahead for Heathrow and create even more chaos?

Secretary of State for Transport Geoff Hoon seems about to announce the go ahead for the contentious third runway at London's Heathrow Airport, together with a new rail terminal. The announcement has been deferred for months, following a reported Cabinet split and a rebellion of backbench MPs.

With the third runway and with aircraft alternation on the original runways being retained, a 49% increase in air traffic movements (ATMs) to 702,000 will result. There will be a near doubling of road traffic, crammed onto south-west London's already groaning road network.

The site for the third runway means that over 700 homes will have to be demolished, putting up to 35,000 people on the homeless register. The community of Sipson will be wiped out. Harlington and Harmondsworth will be subjected to horrific noise and air quality impacts. Millions of people in London will suffer increased noise and air pollution.

The Government promised that the expansion of Heathrow would only go ahead if strict environmental limits were met. However, the legal standards used to reflect acceptable noise levels are almost 30 years out of date and the pseudo-scientific calculations of future air pollution are excessively aspirational. This leaves communities with little hope of successfully challenging the intrusion at any future planning inquiry.

Even without a third runway at Heathrow, the UK is likely to have applied for an extension to the 2010 deadline for complying with the European Air Quality Directive. The addition of 40 million road users will make meeting local air quality measures on toxic nitrous oxides and other harmful gases impossible.

How the Government plans to integrate this expansion, which will deliver 2.6 million additional tonnes of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere, with its legal requirement to cut carbon emissions by 80% by 2050, remains mere conjecture. It is likely that local authorities in the surrounding area will be forced to absorb a great deal of the impact through local transport planning – and this means other people and business will bear the brunt by having their legitimate activities curtailed.

The one positive aspect of the decision is that the Government seems to be supporting better rail access to Heathrow from around the UK and Europe. But this should be used to delay, not support, the need for a third runway until a full review of the 2003 Air Transport White Paper has been undertaken.

Councillor Jamie Macrae, Chairman of SASIG commented: *"Local residents and businesses should not have to suffer the impacts of increased noise, traffic and congestion. A clean, accessible & efficient public transport network must first be provided to serve Heathrow whilst the country, not the Government, decides on the best aviation strategy for the next 50 years. That will show that Heathrow has already expanded beyond any sensible environmental limits."*

SASIG has been calling for a review of the White Paper for the past five years, and considers the promised new National Policy Statement on Aviation as a valuable opportunity to reassess the situation.

ENDS

NOTE TO EDITORS

SASIG is a national group of local authorities that work together on strategic aviation issues. Our membership includes the authorities immediately around Heathrow, those further from the airport where the population will be affected by the proposed changes, along with authorities around other UK airports.

For further information please contact: Cllr Jamie Macrae (SASIG Chairman), or Anna Mahoney (SASIG Director) at SASIG, PO Box 1308, Kingston upon Thames, KT1 2WF

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09 January 2009

SASIG has a broad membership of local authorities but does not speak on behalf of the Local Government Association as a whole.

SASIG Press Release 16/01/09 – Reaction following Heathrow expansion approval

Government takes out loan on toxic asset

Secretary of State for Transport Geoff Hoon has given the go ahead for the contentious third runway at London's Heathrow Airport - essentially taking out a loan on a toxic asset.

Approval of the new runway and associated passenger terminal is a disastrous decision and further compounds the inadequacy of the Government's national policy on aviation. The negative community impact and environmental pollution associated with Heathrow is already unacceptable and can only be made worse by expanding the airport.

Much of the clear opposition to the airport expansion proposals was dismissed by the Government in their assessment of the consultation responses despite having invited any comments that interested parties may wish to make.

SASIG has real concerns that consideration of the local impacts of this development has not been, and will not, be adequate. To date the execution of national aviation policy through the regional and local planning system has not afforded debate on the local impacts of nationally significant aviation developments. This is likely to worsen with the introduction of the Infrastructure Planning Commission (IPC) as the body that will determine BAA's planning application for the third runway at Heathrow.

There is serious disparity in the Government's approach to local democracy. The Government has proposed measures intended to support local communities taking part in local governance, whilst at the same time lowering the quality of consideration of local implications during national policy deliberations. There is now no provision for cross-examination of the issues presented on major infrastructure projects, leaving the IPC to make their decision based on untested evidence. Cross-examination has been shown to be essential for improving the viability and acceptability of major development schemes.

The Government is also requiring local authorities to take action on climate change issues, whilst refusing to address the conflict between the national carbon reduction policy and the national aviation expansion policy. This must be addressed in concert with reviewing the national aviation policy, in order to achieve provision for aviation along with social and environmental protection.

The expansion scheme now also includes a new railway link for Heathrow, despite such detail not having been included in the consultation. This 'sweetener' is being regarded by the Government as complementary to the third runway. SASIG is clear that this rail link to Heathrow should be used to provide for domestic trips thus releasing slots at the airport for long-haul flights.

Commitments already made for the surface access required to serve existing development at Heathrow, in particular Terminal 5, have still not been honoured. Rail improvement schemes such as AirTrack and Crossrail are still on the drawing board. When environmental and movement limits have been set in the past they have all too quickly been swept aside as an inconvenience rather than a benefit.

SASIG Chairman, Cllr Jamie Macrae, said: "We have no confidence in the Government's aspirations for a third runway at Heathrow meeting environmental limits, based on past performance and the assumptions underpinning the Minister's decision. Appropriate expertise, resources and powers must be provided if the additional role for the Civil Aviation Authority as environmental regulator is to have any chance of being effective.

The Government is so far behind where it should be based on past promises that the decision on runway 3 is not only wrong but offensive."

SASIG will continue to raise issues of inadequacy in the national aviation policy, representing its membership of 14 million people in 52 local authorities across the country. The Government's proposed new rail link to Heathrow could help reduce demand for the runway and give breathing space to prepare a sensible long-term strategy.

ENDS

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16 January 2009

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