Planning and Development Services

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The Planning Inspectorate  
Room 4/02, Temple Quay House  
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BRISTOL  
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For the attention of Leanne Palmer

Our Ref: 07/00169/AS  
Your Ref: APP/L2250/V/10/2131934 and APP/L2250/V/10/2131936  
Date: 3 August 2010

Dear Sirs

Planning Application YO6/1648/SH: Construction of a 294 metre runway extension together with an additional 150 metre starter extension.

Planning Application YO6/1647/SH: Erection of terminal building capable of processing 500,000 passengers per annum and 637 car parking spaces

Location: London Ashford Airport (LAA), Lydd, Romney Marsh, Kent, TN29 9QL

I refer to the above applications that the Secretary of State has directed under his powers to be referred to him instead of being dealt with by Shepway District Council.

Ashford Borough Council was consulted on these applications as neighbouring authority and the Planning Committee considered them on three occasions. At the first meeting (4 April 2007), a decision was deferred. On the second occasion (9 January 2008), the Committee resolved to raise an objection. That objection was confirmed at the most recent meeting (17 December 2008), when it was resolved that it would be inappropriate for Ashford Borough Council to support the developments in the light of insufficient information provided to address the Committee's stated concerns. Some additional information was received following the 17 December 2008 Planning Committee meeting, but it did not satisfactorily address the objections raised by the Council. The Council's objections therefore remain as follows:

1) Insufficient information has been forthcoming to clearly illustrate that noise and vibration from larger and potentially more frequent aircraft over Ashford Borough will not detrimentally impact upon the amenity of residents and detract from the ability to enjoy their homes, and that alternative holding areas cannot be arranged.

2) Insufficient information relating to traffic generation and the potential detrimental impact upon the highway network within Ashford Borough resulting from the expected increase in passengers and staff travelling to LAA has been provided. Some assumptions made in the Transport Assessments are not accepted and clarification has not been forthcoming.
3) Insufficient information has been provided to accurately quantify potential tourist generation and/or loss due to the expanded operations to LAA to evaluate the possible economic impact to Ashford Borough. At present the view is taken that positive tourist generation in the Borough will not result from the proposed development at LAA.

4) Key information has not been forthcoming to provide evidence to corroborate the findings of the Parsons Brinkerhoff reports relating to the assessment of the safety implications of the existing power stations at Dungeness and the forthcoming wind farm at Romney Marsh pursuant to the proposed expansion operation at LAA. The assessment carried out by British Energy as the Nuclear Licensee however suggests that an increased risk to the safety of the power station would arise from the proposed development.

Copies of the relevant reports and update reports to the Planning Committee, and the relevant Minutes, are enclosed with this letter.

In addition to the formal comments of the Planning Committee, already submitted to Shepway District Council, I would like to make the following comments:

- Ashford Borough Council's officers have made repeated requests for information on Ashford Borough's Council's grounds of objection. Those requests were made to Shepway District Council's officers in October 2008, March, April, May, June and November 2009.

- The Highways Agency have been queried about the impact on Junction 10 and the A2070 in particular about the issues raised in the Faber Maunsell technical Note dated 4 January 2008. Concern has also been expressed about the underlying assumptions of passenger growth of the airport to 300,000 passengers per annum irrespective of the applications subject to this appeal going ahead. According to the applicant, currently only 3,000 passengers per annum use the airport. As the existing airport does not currently handle anywhere near 300,000 passengers, it is not clear what had prevented this and how this growth will be achieved. The Council has therefore queried with the Highways Agency whether the baseline figures used in assessing the traffic impact are either accurate or realistic. The Council has written to the Highways Agency regarding these matters in October and November 2008, May and July 2009 and July 2010.

- In spite of the Council's efforts, the applicant has not provided information to show that Ashford Borough Council's concerns are unjustified.

Yours faithfully

Richard Alderton
Head of Planning and Development

Enclosures

cc: Highways Agency (Attn. Paul Harwood)

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