

TRAFFORD GREEN PARTY

A RESPONSE TO THE MANCHESTER AIRPORT MASTERPLAN 2006

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Compiled and edited by:

Joe Ryan Trafford Green Party



Introduction

The Trafford section of the Manchester Green Party intends to become a separately constituted local party in January 2007. Individuals within that section wholeheartedly support the submission made by Manchester Green Party. In addition, Trafford would like to submit the following points:

Environment

We are concerned that Manchester Airport threatens to develop into the Green Belt.

While the airport agrees that “build and provide” does not work, it does imply that expansion work for “non-essential” land use will take place outside the airport boundary. Some of this may be in Greenbelt land and will not be acceptable.

One of the justifications for development is the desire to take a slice of the growing aviation market. This is then additionally justified by the need for relieving congestion in the south-east of the country. Manchester Airport is already a major cause of traffic congestion around the southern part of the M60 and the M56.

Does it want to create more congestion so that the North West is as bad as the South East?

There is no way that an increase in passenger numbers to 40 million to 2015 can be “managed properly” to avoid “the potential for greater impact upon the environment and our neighbours”. The plans admit that more people will come in cars and knows that pressure on parking space will result in more “kiss and fly” journeys (ie people being dropped off and later picked up by friends or family) resulting in a doubling of journeys to and from the airport. Park and Ride are not an effective solution since it will merely spread airport parking away and potentially impact on places not associated with the airport.

It is intriguing that the airport says that “monitoring and modelling of GHG [greenhouse gases] emissions is an emerging area and, currently, accurate data is[sic] available only for energy-related GHG emissions”.

The airport must take responsibility for all emissions made on its territory and that includes emissions by all vehicles including aircraft.

The airport must also take some responsibility for emissions made by inward and outward bound aircraft from take-off to landing.

It obscures environmental awareness and sustainability by referring to climate change as an “emerging issue” and as “a debate”. No credible authority on climate change refers to the issue in such a cowardly manner. It continues to fail to be decisive about its commitment to climate change by stating “the understanding of climate change is an emerging subject.” No, it isn't, it has emerged quite well already. Not to worry, it will “engage in the climate change debate”. There is no debate about whether it is happening. The real debate is between those who will do something about it and tackle the problem, and those who will do nothing.

Which side is the airport on? It claims to have reduced some GHG emissions, but admits this was not part of an overarching climate change policy.

Is this organisation expecting us to believe it is environmentally responsible?

Jobs and Society

Manchester Airport plans to increase jobs for “local” people. However it envisages that jobs per passenger ratio will fall because of technical and technological developments and “efficiencies”. Whether these efficiencies will be brought in by the increased number of no frills flights is unclear. But the current ratio of jobs per passenger is $1\frac{1}{3}$ jobs per 1000 passengers. Aviation is not an efficient employer. The figures Manchester Airport uses to justify its job creation are fanciful and at best guesswork. Indirectly employed people is a fudge designed to improve Manchester Airport’s image. If it takes credit for these jobs then it needs to take responsibility for the emissions of aircraft outside its boundaries.

Manchester Airport’s delight in creating jobs is undermined when it states that it will oppose other non-airport developments. So non-airport jobs and businesses are not wanted by an organisation that claims to create jobs?

Manchester Airport is proud of its links with education and the arts. Some of these links have little to do with aviation. However it is happy to take credit here. By this token it must take the ‘credit’ for the emissions of aircraft that use Manchester Airport beyond its boundaries as mentioned above.

Conclusion

We invite Manchester Airport to engage with the Green Party to incorporate its national aviation policy into its Draft Master Plan and to reject its original document.

Manchester Airport’s own figures on employment are either guesswork or, if taken at face value, show that it is an inefficient and uneconomic employer or creator of jobs. It threatens the Green Belt, the green lung of the conurbation of Greater Manchester. If it expands into the Green Belt, it will do so ignoring the wishes of people in Greater Manchester, and in Cheshire too. The Draft Masterplan as it currently stands threatens the economic, social and cultural sustainability of the North West and must be rejected.

Appendix Green Party Policy on Aviation from *Manifesto for a Sustainable Society*

Background

- TR500** Heavier-than-air craft are one of the most energy intensive and polluting forms of transport. The worst are supersonic aircraft. Aircraft burn more fossil fuel per passenger or ton-mile than other modes of transport. This profligacy is heavily subsidised by the international agreement to impose zero taxes on aviation fuel.
- TR501** Aircraft emit carbon dioxide, nitrogen oxides and water vapour into the upper atmosphere, which is much more sensitive to pollution than the air at ground level. The greenhouse warming effect of one unit of aviation fuel is generally held to be several times that of fuel burnt by terrestrial modes of transport. Also aviation is the fastest growing source of greenhouse gas emissions. A large part of this extra warming is caused by the creation of water vapour (as well as carbon dioxide) from the combustion of aviation fuel, which is a mixture of compounds of carbon and hydrogen. Though the water is harmless at or near ground level it has a big effect in the upper atmosphere. This means that there is almost no possibility of reducing aircraft-induced global warming by replacing conventional fuels by hydrogen.
- TR502** Global warming produced by air transport is not covered by the international negotiations led by the IPCC to address climate change. The actions taken by the International Civil Aviation Organisation in response to the Kyoto Agreement on Climate Change on allocating emissions of greenhouse gases to countries and developing means of reducing aircraft emissions have been wholly inadequate.
- TR503** The air travel industry is growing rapidly. In Europe alone the growth rate as of 2000 is about 7 to 9% per year, while the air freight industry is growing faster. At these rates, the increase in aviation's greenhouse gas emissions by 2012, the end of the first commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol on climate change, is set to be more than double the reduction targeted by the Protocol. So aviation would more than reverse the Kyoto reductions.
- TR504** Aircraft cause local pollution: noise which damages the health of those living near airports, volatile organic compounds which are carcinogenic, and water pollution from de-icing fluids. Airports also produce pollution from engine testing, paint spraying and the attendant pollution that goes with the large infrastructure and transport to and from the airport.

Aims and Objectives

- TR510** The Green Party seeks a reduction in the amount and impact of air transport.
- TR511** It is essential that the demand for air transport is managed in a way compatible with wider social and environmental objectives. The Green Party advocates a drastic reduction in the number of journeys made by air for whatever purpose. We must first discourage the growth of air transport.

TR512 The Green Party seeks substitution of air travel wherever possible with less damaging modes of transport, such as ferries, trains and buses. This does not apply to the emergency air services such as mountain rescue or specialist medical services, nor necessarily to air links to remote islands.

Aircraft policies

TR520 The Green Party would implement tougher regulation of aircraft emissions in all categories of chemical pollutants, including greenhouse gases, and of noise, and would introduce tougher emission and noise standards for new aircraft types. The worst kinds of aircraft, such as Concorde and any further supersonic transport aircraft, would be banned, as would night flights over populated areas.

TR521 A rolling programme is needed to phase out older and more damaging aircraft. Meanwhile, the use of such aircraft should be restricted.

TR522 As heavier aircraft have to use more power, burning more fuel and producing more emissions and noise, permitted loads would be reduced.

TR523 The Green Party would regulate more strictly the use of helicopters. These operate in more locations and at much lower heights than almost all other aircraft. Helicopters and heliports are extremely noisy to those nearby.

TR524 The appropriate use of lighter-than-air craft would be encouraged. These can use their own buoyancy for lift, and therefore consume less fuel, produce less pollution and less noise.

Infrastructure Policies

TR530 Air transport provision is currently based on the 'predict and provide' scenario, much the same as building more roads has led to increases in road traffic and more congestion. The Green Party believes that building more facilities for air transport must cease. This includes additional terminals and runways at airports, the conversion of disused MoD and smaller airfields into regional or satellite civil airports and the development of more local airports.

TR531 Alternative economic strategies would be developed for each airport including both the possibility of complete conversion to ecological and socially appropriate uses and the maintenance of the airport for restricted purposes consistent with the long-term objective of ecological sustainability, such as use for lighter-than-air craft.

TR532 The additional environmental damage associated with travel to and from airports on the ground can be reduced by encouraging appropriate modes of transport. The Green Party supports the provision of public transport links by rail and road to existing airports, and opposes additional provision for the use of private cars.

- TR533** The load and damage at airports is increased by excessive numbers of 'transit' passengers, who generate revenue for airport operators through landing fees and the use of retail facilities before flying on to another destination. Transit passengers should be reduced to a minimum, especially at airports which put a particularly large load on the environment and local communities, such as Heathrow.
- TR534** The Green Party is concerned about the development of airports as shopping centres. Such retail rents, etc. account for a very large part of current income for airport operators. The privatised British Airports Authority plc can be seen as primarily a property company. We oppose such development, especially where it is at the expense of existing shopping centres.

Financial measures

- TR540** The Green Party supports emission charges and increased landing charges on aircraft, including Air Traffic congestion charges, to reflect the full cost of the damage their use does to the environment. We consider that local authorities should be empowered to levy such on aircraft landing at airports in their area because of the localised damage and that done by related ground travel.
- TR541** The Green Party supports the removal of the various direct and indirect subsidies for air travel, and the adoption instead of fuel taxation and/or charges or levies. We recognise that achieving enough international agreement to make this practicable is difficult, and would seek in the first instance to impose such taxes in the UK. Taxation, charges and/or levies will be easier to introduce and more effective if it is done at a European or even global level, so the Green Party would work with institutions at those levels, as well as the air transport industry bodies such as ICAO and IATA, to introduce them more widely.
- TR542** The Green Party notes that air freight in particular exhibits both dramatic growth and by far the highest pollution per weight of goods transported compared with other modes. We would therefore introduce specific UK levies on air freight as well as working towards European and global agreements.
- TR543** The Green Party opposes the lifting of public sector borrowing restrictions on local authority controlled airports as this would encourage inappropriate development. Where investment is necessary, notably in air traffic control services and developing public transport links to airports, the expenditure should be recouped through charges on those providing and using air transport, not from general taxation.
- TR544** Air transport is an inefficient and capital intensive method of employment creation. Equivalent funds invested in other sectors will provide more jobs per pound spent and offer much more benefit to people and the environment.

Demand Management and promotion

- TR550** There is insufficient public awareness of the resources wasted and damage done by excessive use of air transport. The Green Party considers that governments should run public awareness

campaigns about the impact of air travel on the global climate, the local environment and human health.

TR551 The Green Party will campaign for the UK Government, the European Union and the relevant international bodies, to create a global demand management strategy for air travel, taking into account the excessive use of air transport by 'developed' nations.

Regulatory measures

TR560 Prevention of accidents and increasing their survivability must be the priority in the construction, maintenance and operation of aircraft and airports. There is concern that commercial pressure and a lack of sufficient independent regulatory resources in the public sector have reduced safety. For example, 'Kapton' wiring should be banned from civil as well as military aircraft.

TR561 Unsafe operation should lead to sanctions against operators including suspension or removal of licence to operate. Examples include operating aircraft with insufficient fuel for stacking or diversion, and aircraft dropping objects such as 'brown ice', caused by poor maintenance.

TR562 The Green Party is committed to the principle and extended practice of independent regulation and inspection by the public sector to ensure the highest standards of aircraft safety in aircraft construction, maintenance and operation. We strongly oppose any effort to privatise any of the regulatory bodies, and if any are privatised, would return them forthwith to public ownership.

TR563 Air traffic control services are a public responsibility and must be managed and provided by the public sector. We oppose any privatisation of air traffic control.

TR564 The Green Party is committed to proper precautions against air piracy and adequate public sector inspection of those on aircraft and at airports. Consideration should be given to refusing licences to operate from the UK to airlines that operate from airports overseas considered to have inadequate security.

TR565 The Green Party supports the banning of those found guilty of in-flight violence or aggression and any other acts that may endanger the flight from future flights, and would ensure that aircrew who took action against them were given the necessary protection. 'Air rage' is a hazard often associated with excess consumption of alcohol before and during the flight, the effects being exacerbated by the in-flight environment. The dispensing, sale and consumption of alcohol at airports and on aircraft should be subject to greater restriction.