

A letter to our HEATHROW neighbours from
Sir John Egan, Chief Executive, BAA plc

terminal | 5

April 1999

Dear Neighbour,

In my letter to you on May 16, 1995, at the beginning of the Public Inquiry into a fifth terminal (T5) at Heathrow Airport, I promised on behalf of the Board of Directors of BAA plc and the management of the airport that we would:

- address your concerns
- act practically to minimise our impact
- report to you regularly.

It is right, as the Inquiry ends, that I now report back to you – and I'm pleased to confirm that we have kept our word. Every specific pledge we made in that letter has been repeated formally to the Inquiry; every practical step we promised has been taken.

Before dealing with them, one by one, let me thank you for your patience throughout the process – and for your support. It's been a trying four years; the Inquiry has been exacting and exhaustive. But at least everyone has had their say and all the leading parties to the Inquiry have publicly thanked the Inspector for the opportunity to make their points as fully as they wished.

So, how have we kept the promises we made to you at the start ?

No 'third' runway

Heathrow has two major runways with a cross runway only used occasionally (for instance, to allow some types of aircraft to land safely in high cross winds). In my 1995 letter we promised that "T5 does not call for a third runway". We have since repeated often that we do not want, nor shall we seek, an additional runway. I can now report that we went even further at the Inquiry and called on the Inspector to recommend that, subject to permission being given for T5, an additional Heathrow runway should be ruled out forever. We said:

"It is the company's view that the local communities around Heathrow should be given assurances... BAA would urge the Government to rule out any additional runway at Heathrow, and BAA would support a recommendation by the Inquiry Inspector in his report that the Government should rule it out. Indeed BAA invites the Inspector to make such a recommendation."

Our position could not be clearer, nor could it be more formally placed upon the record. T5 will not lead to a 'third' runway.

No more night flights

We also said in 1995 that T5 would not lead to an increase in the night flights quota. On the contrary, T5 would help keep the number of night flights down. Now we have told the Inquiry Inspector that if T5 was approved we would accept a legal freeze on the night flight quota... at today's levels.

At the same time as this unprecedented offer was being made we were – as promised – working with airlines to maximise the use of quieter aircraft at night. On behalf of the local community we funded a study of 'night alternation' where the runways used for landing aircraft in the night period were swapped on a weekly basis as they are in the day time. We've also been working with airlines to identify best practice for landing aircraft in order to minimise noise on the ground for local people.

Summary

No 14-lane M25

£630 million of rail expenditure

The biggest bus and coach programme in the country

The biggest employee public transport programme in the country

Europe's first dedicated motorway bus lane

A car parking cap on the airport

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130 Wilton Road
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Environmental action

No more noise

In my 1995 letter I promised that the overall noise climate would be no worse after T5 is fully operational than it is today.

Such is our confidence in this promise, based on a balance between a relatively small increase in flights and the phasing out of noisier aircraft, that we have also asked the Inspector to recommend a cap on noise... at the levels at the time pertaining when we first made that promise – in 1994. We have proposed that if T5 is allowed there should be a legally-binding cap on noise at 1994 levels.

Use of other airports

Forgive me for labouring the point, but these promises, now on the record at the Public Inquiry, are worth stressing:

- no additional runway
- no additional night flights
- no additional noise.

But let me return to my 1995 letter and our other promises.

Contribution to the community

Other action on noise

Our noise and track keeping system monitors aircraft and airlines who fly off track and we have introduced a strict reporting procedure to ensure that airlines are encouraged to modify their procedures. As a result, track keeping figures for departures using Heathrow's runways have improved considerably over the last four years with well over 80 per cent of Heathrow's aircraft now flying 'on track'.

All aircraft departing Heathrow are fined if they break noise limits at any time of the day or night. This money goes back into the local community to fund projects which benefit local people. In the four years since the Inquiry has been sitting, nearly £750,000 has been raised from noise fines and spent in your communities.

Conclusion

Data from our track keeping equipment has also been made available to a working group which has been investigating if variations in departure procedures by Boeing 747 aircraft could lead to reductions in noise on the ground. The results showed that by following a particular procedure an average reduction in noise of 1.5 decibels could be achieved.

No 14-lane M25

We always made clear we didn't need a 14-lane M25 for T5, and we encouraged the then Secretary of State for Transport to rule it out.

The final plan has now been announced and our assurances have been confirmed. **There will be no 14-lane M25.**

Instead the M25 will be widened to 12-lanes for a relatively short stretch from Junction 12 to Junction 15 (*with all the widening being within existing road boundaries*) not to service T5 but (as the Transport Minister made clear in a parliamentary answer), to cope with current pressure on the motorway. As we promised...

...there will be no greater widening of the M25 because of T5 than is proposed already, with or without T5.

Action on cars

But we promised more than that. We promised to take steps to **reduce the impact of cars travelling to the airport** by setting a long-term vision of 50 per cent of passengers using public transport to Heathrow. That will be tough, but *look at the start we have made*. As promised, we have:

- built and opened the Heathrow Express, now acclaimed as one of the best airport to city connections in the world. (And, as promised, the Heathrow Express will be extended to T5.)
- brought forward plans to open another express rail service from St Pancras. It, too, would extend to T5
- negotiated with London Transport for the Piccadilly Line also to be extended to T5
- worked with Hounslow and others to create a rail-air interchange between the south-west mainline and the airport; it will open soon
- worked with Hillingdon to redevelop Hayes station into a major integrated transport hub.

Our rail initiatives alone will cost over £630 million – that's the measure of our determination to respond to your concerns about traffic on the roads.

But it does not stop there. We have announced a series of other rail initiatives so that there is a real possibility of rail access from north, south, east and west.

And we have invested heavily in **bus and coach services**, providing:

- 50 per cent more bus and coach services
- Europe's first motorway lane dedicated to bus and coach traffic
- a major bus and coach station at the airport.

We have also taken imaginative steps to **encourage the 50,000 people who work at the airport to leave their cars at home**. Our award-winning project includes...

- upgrading the Hatton Cross underground and bus station into a major public transport interchange, doubling bus services
- making bus services more attractive with longer hours of availability, higher frequencies, greater reliability and better quality vehicles; passengers on Heathrow services have doubled
- making all local bus journeys on airport roads free
- launching Europe's first integrated public transport travel card.

One last point on road traffic:

One factor determining the number who drive to the airport is the availability of car-parking spaces. We will need an increase to cover T5. But some fear we will later come back for more. So confident are we that our public transport initiatives will succeed that we have told the Inspector that with permission for T5 we will accept a **legally-binding condition that car parking spaces are capped at the level requested in our T5 case. That means we will not be able to increase it – ever.**

Be in no doubt. This is a huge programme. It is being undertaken almost entirely at our own expense.

This is why we can promise that **the increase in road traffic as a result of T5 will be kept to a minimum.**

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Environmental action We promised the environmental impact of the terminal would be positive and we have confirmed at the Inquiry that the terminal will be positioned within the airport between the two runways on land that could be used for no better purpose.

It is being designed by the world famous Richard Rogers Partnership to be one of the first great buildings of the 21st century – we will all have reason to be proud of it.

Use of other airports We promised that our other airports would be developed to take as much of the burden off Heathrow as they possibly could.

We have kept that promise too.

Since the beginning of the Inquiry the number of passengers at Gatwick has increased from 21.5 million to nearly 30 million a year and Stansted has doubled the number of its passengers, making it one of Europe's fastest growing airports. We have applied to double Stansted's capacity and recently announced plans to expand Gatwick's capacity.

All this capacity plus T5 is needed if the nation is to meet expectations to fly in the 21st century – it isn't a question of 'either-or'.

Contribution to the community In my 1995 letter I promised we would seek to be a good neighbour and corporate citizen. The same year we launched our Contract with the Community to help develop educational and employment opportunities and to encourage environmental projects. We have since financially supported over 200 local projects.

And our employees add their time and skills; last year they spent more than 1,500 hours on local community support projects.

Conclusion In my May 1995 letter I said I hoped our public promises of action and accountability would enable you to think of T5 without concern and to look forward confidently to the contribution it could make to the local and national economy and quality of life.

You can now see those promises have been kept. Without exception we have either bound ourselves to them at the public Inquiry, asking the Inspector to recommend they be conditions on permission to proceed, or, where possible, already carried them out.

And this has been only a brief summary of them. Altogether we have made over 500 individual commitments designed either to boost the local economy or to mitigate any environmental impact of T5.

Another two years will pass before we hear the final decision. We believe, however, that our case for T5 has been well-argued and that we have addressed your concerns in a way that will enable all reasonable people to support the proposal, safeguarding 16,500 local jobs as well as creating a further 6,000 more in its construction.

It is for all of these reasons we believe the Inspector will recommend approval. Let's now forge a partnership to ensure that if T5 is approved it can be built with the minimum of disruption to the community and to the benefit of all.

Yours sincerely,



Sir John Egan, Chief Executive, BAA plc