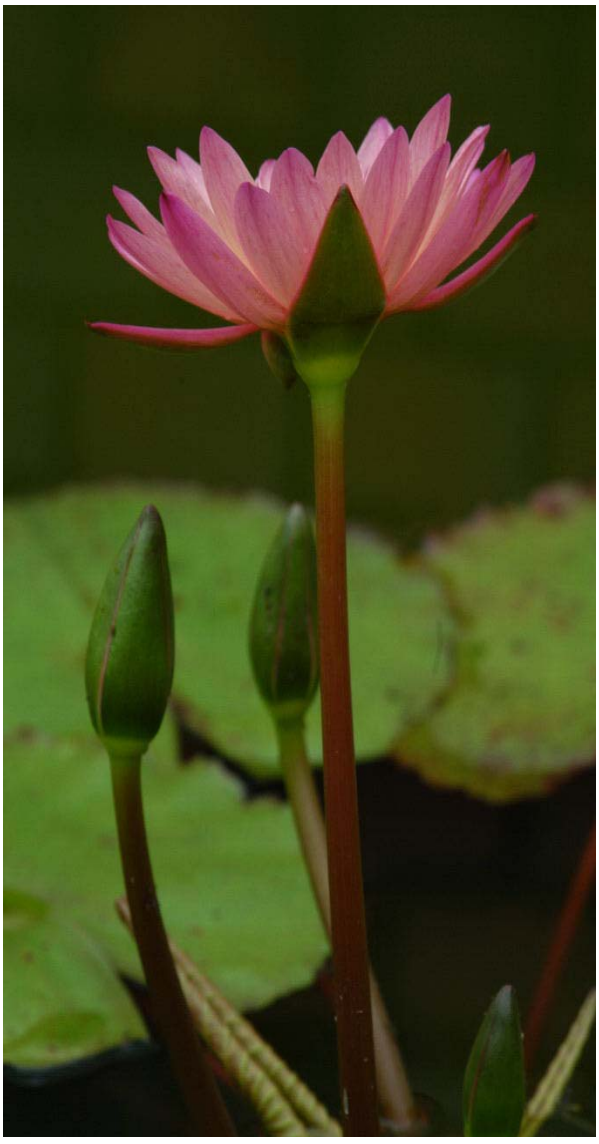
The Two Faces of BAA



A report commissioned by AirportWatch which examines the way BAA is using the honeyed words and images of Corporate Social Responsibility to push through its expansion plans

Contents

Page 3 Introduction

Page 4 The case for airport expansion – based on sound arguments?

Page 5 Hiding behind the Government – is this BAA's tactic?

Page 6 How BAA uses the language of Corporate Social Responsibility

Pages 8-11 Heathrow

Pages 12-15 Stansted

Pages 16-17 Gatwick

Pages 18-19 The Scottish Airports

Page 20 Southampton

Page 21 Corporate Social Responsibility – a summary of how it works

Page 22 BAA's response to Climate Change

Page 23 References

Page 24 Conclusions

Introduction

This report is a devastating indictment of BAA, the country's largest airport operator. It finds that behind the caring and responsible image which BAA works so hard to cultivate lies a ruthless company willing to turn over the lives of local communities in order to increase its profit margins. BAA is exposed at the champion of "greenwash". Always keen to highlight what it is doing for the environment, while at the same time planning the biggest single expansion of aviation this country has ever seen. It bestrides the international stage portraying itself as a leader in the fight against climate change, but is fiercely resistant to any charges or taxes that would curb its activities.

The report's author, Paul Morozzo, has meticulously examined the evidence. He spent many hours pouring over BAA's airport master plans and a range of other documents it has produced and statements it has made.

The report:

- highlights the contradictions between what the company says and what it does in relation to the seven UK airports it controls.
- examines BAA's method of selling us this expansion.
- reveals how the alchemists of spin employed by BAA attempt to turn the dross of blight, pollution, noise, climate change and demolition into the gold of sustainability, community, carbon trading and consultation.
- exposes the very real links which exist between BAA and the Government – links which the company is keen to cover up.

The report is divided as follows:

- First it briefly examines the arguments behind airport expansion.
- It then looks at the role of Corporate Social Responsibility in delivering that expansion.
- The bulk of the report unearths what BAA is saying and doing in the seven UK airports they own. First Heathrow, Stansted and Gatwick, then the three Scottish airports Glasgow, Edinburgh and Aberdeen. followed by the slightly contrasting example of Southampton.
- There is final short section on climate change

The report concludes:

- BAA is demeaning the language of ecology and sustainability by using it to promote significant growth.
- BAA's response to community pressure is not to deal with the residents' concerns, but to crank up its PR machine.
- BAA's tactics are beginning to backfire as campaigners start to understand that BAA uses spin to block the changes they are calling for.

This report should be read by campaigners, journalists and politicians

Airport Expansion – based on sound arguments?

In its 2003 Aviation White Paper, the Government proposed the biggest single programme of aviation expansion this country will ever have seen. It aims to cater for a trebling of the number of passengers using UK airports by 2030. It proposes the building of up to five new runways, plus a big increase in the number of planes using the existing runways at airports across the country.

It justified expansion on economic grounds

The very first words of the White Paper are: "Air travel is essential to the United Kingdom's economy and to our continued prosperity."[1] But the economic rationale for the expansion proposals is based on a study that, although commissioned by the Department for Transport, was largely paid for by the aviation industry. The forward to the study is not written by a government minister, but by the Chief Executive of the Airport Operators Association and the Chairman of the British Air Transport Association. Not surprisingly the industry got what it wanted. Oxford Economic Forecasting, the consultants who did the work, were not asked to factor in either the tax-breaks the aviation industry receives or the environmental costs of noise, pollution and climate change when assessing aviation's contribution to the economy.[2] Yet this one-sided study forms the basis of the Aviation White Paper. No wonder it rates aviation's importance to the economy so highly. The reality is very different. In terms of its contribution to the UK's Gross Domestic Product, aviation is only the country's 29th most important industry, one place below sewage and sanitary ware.[3]

It argued it was responding to public demand

In justifying their growth proposals the aviation industry and government also argue they are merely responding to public demand, but when did the public ever demand cheap subsidised flights. They took them when offered but the demand was largely manufactured by huge subsidies, linked to an unprecedented push to sell the idea of happiness elsewhere. The result was more and more people flying on holidays abroad. The demand for travel by flight is an example of the discredited predict and provide economic model which imagines future demand, sets out to provide for it, and then, lo and behold, there it is. Put simply, if you build a new road the chances are people will drive on it.

It ignored crucial facts

The industry-dominated White Paper ignored the £9 billion subsidy the industry receives each year through tax-free fuel and VAT-free transactions. It skated over the rising costs of climate change – aviation is the fastest-growing contributor to climate change. It failed to factor in the £11-£15 billion deficit there is each year in aviation tourism (the difference between what Britons spend abroad and visitors spend in this country). It didn't assess the effect this was having on the UK tourist industry. Not did it assess the effect the subsidised freight flights were having on this country's manufacturing and agricultural industries.

The buck stops with BAA……..

Responsibility for the expansion of airports may be complex, but here's something straightforward.

- When the bailiff turns up to evict the residents of Sipson, it will be BAA who's paying the wages.
- If concrete is ever poured on the meadows of Stansted, it will be paid for by BAA.
- If you wake at 5am in Aberdeen to the noise of aircraft for the first time, it was BAA who campaigned for them.
- BAA is the only company set to make a profit on every new passenger who sets foot in one of its airports and it spends hundreds of thousands of pounds lobbying to have this space for millions of new passengers.
- If there is a front line between aviation expansion and the public, a front line between a *truly* sustainable future and the machine of economic growth, then on one side stands BAA and on the other the communities around the seven BAA airports.

Hiding Behind the Government

BAA is a past-master at hiding behind the fiction that, in expanding its airports, it is really only carrying out government policy as set out in the Aviation White Paper.

The White Paper was good for BAA in two ways. First, it gave the company much of what it wanted in terms of airport expansion. Secondly, it gave it something to hide behind. Since the publication of the White Paper, which was very clear that the final decision on expansion lay with the airport operators, BAA sometimes talks about airport expansion as if it is a duty to government, not an active interest of its own: "In the UK, the White Paper has established a 30-year policy framework which has given us the confidence to plan for a second runway at Stansted, and to work with Government towards, potentially, building a third runway at Heathrow."[1] The truth is that BAA lobbied the Government hard to make airport expansion central to the White Paper. Here is Mike Clasper, BAA's Chief Executive, speaking during the consultation period, "It is vital that the Government delivers a clear direction as to where and how additional runway capacity should be provided in every region of the UK – but especially the South East. To put it bluntly, we need a new runway in the South East within the next ten to twelve years, because we are going to run out of capacity."

How BAA used its connections with government to secretly lobby for airport expansion

BAA was the main backer of Freedom to Fly, the industry-led lobby group that was set up in 2002 to make the case for airport expansion in advance of the 2003 Aviation White Paper. Freedom to Fly was thought to be the brainchild of Steve Hardwick, Director of Public Affairs at BAA**.** He is a long-standing Labour Party member who, before both the 1997 and 2001 General Elections, was given leave by BAA to spend time working at Millbank for the election and re-election of Labour. His connections with Labour helped him to persuade Joe Irvin to become the first Director of Freedom to Fly. Irwin was quite a catch because he had been John Prescott's paid political adviser (his right hand man) from 1999 – 2001 and previous to that had worked for the Transport and General Workers Union. Hardwick and his friends also persuaded Brenda Dean to become the Chair of Freedom to Fly (and its public face). She was made a peer by Labour, having made her name as the General Secretary of SOGAT, the print-workers union. Within a year Joe Irvin resigned and was replaced by a much more abrasive character in Dan Hodges, the son of Glenda Jackson, (Labour's first Aviation Minister in 1997, and regarded as the most pro-aviation of its many aviation ministers). BAA was clear about its motivation in setting up Freedom to Fly. Because of the flak it took when promoting Terminal 5, it needed a 'front organisation' to press the Government for expansion in the Aviation White Paper. It could then say that it was simply content to give the Government 'technical advice' on the options it was considering in advance of the White Paper. Freedom to Fly was simply set up to influence the White Paper and came to an end when it was published in December 2003.

Yet more connections…….

AviaSolutions was the company which the Department for Transport appointed to assess the responses to the consultation on its options for the Aviation White Paper. It has interesting connections with BAA. Two of its directors have worked for BAA. Seamus Healey had "extensive airport experience, gained in senior roles at BAA in Capital Development". Paul Eden "gained high positions in BAA" (Quotes taken from AviaSolutions' website). Eden employed his wife, Liz Eden, a former BAA employee to help assess the responses. Another key person who assessed the responses for AviaSolutions was Lyne Meredith, who had just left her job as BAA Group Planning and Environment Director. Many of the AviaSolutions staff worked out of the same building at Gatwick as BAA.

Part of wider links between the aviation and the Government……

BAA was centrally involved in lobbying for airport expansion in the White Paper. The whole thing is just part of the close links between government and the aviation industry as a whole. Perhaps the most startling example is the case of Roy Griffins who was the Department for Transport civil servant in charge of producing the Aviation White Paper. Not long after its publication, he resigned and re-emerged as the Director General of ACI Europe. ACI is the Airports Council International, the body which represents the interests of airports – including BAA. Then there was Rod Eddington who stood down as Chief Executive of BA in September 2005 to be appointed as the Government's Special Adviser on transport, charged with drawing up a blueprint for the sort of transport infrastructure the country will need to meet the requirements of the business community over the next 30 years. Going in the other direction was Baroness Symons who stepped down as a middle-ranking Minister in the Government at the last General Election to become a Director of British Airways.

"The Aviation White Paper was pretty much a walkover for the aviation industry…it was the same old predict and provide philosophy." Transport expert, Christian Wolmar

Corporate Social Responsibility

"The trouble with words is that you never know whose mouths they have been in."[4]

What BAA says is carefully constructed to fit within the formal language of what is called Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). Chief executive Mike Clasper believes the narrative of CSR is an important tool for delivering growth and profit in the modern business environment: "BAA's purpose as a company is to enable the profitable and responsible growth of our airports. One of our six strategies to achieve that purpose is to earn the trust of our stakeholders. Corporate responsibility is about how we manage our social and environmental impacts as part of our day to day business, in order to earn that trust."[5]

> "Corporate responsibility is about how we manage our social and environmental impacts as part of our day to day business, in order to earn that trust" **BAA Chief Executive**

CSR is a public relations method. It has developed in response to a more critical, informed public who are both socially and environmentally more concerned than they have been in the past. As Mike Clasper again explains, this is about the presentation and form business takes not the content: "At a time when trust in business is low, all of us have a stake in ensuring that the value that business adds to society is maximised and recognised. The smartest companies know that it is their behaviour in the marketplace which defines their success – not the extras that they may do on the periphery."[6]

Of course BAA can point to a whole host of things it is doing, changes it is making, which show CSR is in fact a change in the way it works. For example, it invests money in various community projects around its airports, it has targets to reduce in-house emissions and is working to promote biodiversity in natural sites it owns. This report will show that these various projects are in fact part of its presentational strategy, small acts which lever open the door to the language of sustainability, responsibility, consultation and community. Looked at as part of the reality of BAA's operation most of these projects are an irrelevance or insult in the face of BAA's real project, the expansion of airport capacity to meet the chimera of air travel demand. Corporate Responsibility is a down pillow strapped to the front of the BAA bulldozer.

Corporate Responsibility is a down-pillow strapped to the front of the BAA bulldozer

The aim of this report is to look beyond the honeyed words and contrast them with the reality that people are experiencing on the ground.

We look at the seven airports in turn.

Heathrow and the proposed 3rd runway

"We are sensitive to the fact that this would include the loss of up to 700 houses as previously stated in BAA's 2003 *Responsible Growth.*"[7]

Heathrow is the jewel in BAA's crown. In 2004/5 the airport brought in profits of £407 million, more than three times that of Gatwick, its second most profitable airport. Heathrow is also the most profitable per passenger making £6.02 for each of the 67.7 million passengers it handled.

The Government, BAA and most of the airlines would like to see a 3rd runway built at Heathrow. But the White Paper put plans for a 3rd runway on the back-burner because of fears that, if it was built, air pollution levels around Heathrow would exceed the EU legal limits. However, under pressure from the aviation industry, the Department for Transport is currently re-assessing its work on air pollution. A 3rd runway remains very much on the cards as far as BAA is concerned. It admits in its published master plan that the result would be the demolition of 700 homes, with the village of Sipson being wiped off the face of the map. A 3rd runway would also require a 3rd flight path – the Department of Transport's own figures show that would mean aircraft noise becoming a serious problem for 150,000 people across London and parts of Berkshire and Oxfordshire.

But BAA also wants to make fuller use of the existing runways. It wants to do this by getting rid of what is known as 'runway alternation'. This is the system where planes landing over West London change runways at 3pm to give people in the worst affected areas a half day's break from the noise. The prospect, if BAA and the Government get their way, is a plane landing over people's heads, one every 90 seconds, right throughout the day. BAA also refuses to support a ban on night flights at Heathrow.

The report examines how BAA is **selling** its plans to expand Heathrow.

The 3rd runway - 2000 meters of altruism

The 3rd runway would wreck devastation on the communities around Heathrow, while acting as a nice little earner for BAA. How to sell it locally? Call in Corporate Social Responsibility. CSR is governed by a number of rules. First, don't mention profit, keep that for the shareholders. BAA knows the drill. Here it is talking up the Heathrow 3rd runway as an altruistic exercise which will benefit everyone except itself: "opportunities to increase runway capacity at Heathrow are pursued for the benefit of passengers, airlines and the local and national economies."[8]

Our Communitynity 10/10

Target 2004/05

Develop a stakeholder consultation database

In its 2004/5 Heathrow Corporate Responsibility Report BAA gave itself 10/10 for its work in the 'community'.[9] This work included raising £32,000 for local charities, resurrecting a garden in a Hounslow school, giving a million pounds to the Hillingdon Trust and 68,000 employees doing 6,592 hours voluntary work - another way of putting it would be an average of nine minutes each per year!. What the report doesn't mention is the threatened demolition of the local school in Sipson, together with the effective destruction of other schools that will be intolerably close to any new runway. The report doesn't refer to the disruption to friendships and teacher-pupil relationships, the community networks, the travel routines and the stress of finding new schools. One of the central tenents of Corporate Social Responsibility is to take responsibility for the things that look good, make them seem even better and use them to draw attention away from the things that look bad.

Erasing communities – with the gift of compensation

In Sipson it is not only 700 individual homes that would need to be demolished to make way for the 3rd runway but an entire community (which dates back to medieval times) would need to be erased. BAA is offering a bond to homeowners and long-term leaseholders. It is called the Home Owner Support Scheme (HOSS). Under the scheme, the bond can be redeemed when BAA puts in for planning permission. BAA will then buy the property at what would have been its market value if it had not been blighted by the prospect of a 3rd runway. BAA is proud of its scheme. It is certainly more generous than schemes the Department for Transport has offered in the past. But it has had a devastating effect on the community. A 3rd runway could be ten years away. It is a community facing a decade of blight, clutching bonds that are no compensation for the homes that will be lost. But BAA can tell the world it has voluntarily made the community a generous offer.

Limit the compensation – limit the problem

BAA has trumpeted its 'bond' scheme, but its main purpose in making such a song and dance about it seems to be to cover up just how few people benefit from the scheme. It only applies to those people whose homes will be knocked down. It does not apply to people who will be left living so close to the new runway that, in the words of one resident, "if the 3rd runway goes ahead I shall be giving pilots cups of tea from the kitchen as they take off." Nor does it apply to the 150,000 people who will be under the new flight path, although there may be a small number of compensation and mitigation measures available for some of these people. BAA does not want to publicise the true number of people that will be affected by a 3rd runway. What better way to distract attention from those uncomfortable facts than to pour all its PR skills into highlighting the so-called generosity of the bond scheme that will be available to a small minority of people.

Legitimise your compensation scheme – through 'consultation'

BAA has tried to legitimise its Home Owner Support Scheme (HOSS) through consulting the local community – or, crucially, consulting selected parts of the local community – about it. But real questions have been asked about the quality of the consultation. Only people who would get some benefit from the scheme were consulted! The most substantial areas of population that would be next to the 3rd runway were not given the consultation documents. Far less the 150,000 who would be under a 3rd flight path. Far too few people replied to make any of the information relevant. Of the 5000 questionnaires handed out, only 542 people responded. This means the HOSS was developed on information gained from only 10.68% of a group that was inadequate in extent in the first instance. Furthermore, the questions asked had no independent scrutiny. Given that the consultation was mainly with people within this area, it's hardly surprising 53% supported it. Yet, in the spirit of CSR, we fully expect BAA will pepper is various reports over the next year with the support it has received from residents for its compensation scheme, making liberal use of feel-good words such as consultation, community and compensation.

Noise – 9.5/10

In its 2004/5 corporate responsibility report BAA gave itself a 9.5/10 in the noise section. BAA consistently trumpets what it is doing to improve the noise climate. It lays on tours of its headquarters for residents to show them how much it is investing in technology to ensure that planes landing at Heathrow adopt the quietest techniques available. It sets up committees to involve local authorities in monitoring the process. It delights in producing glossy charts to show that the noise climate is improving – forgetting to mention the way it measures noise underestimates the impact of the huge increase in aircraft numbers in recent years. Nor does it mention that what it regards as acceptable noise limits are significantly above those recommended by the World Health Organisation (WHO). Its glossily-packaged facts and figures, which have become an Orwellian joke to people living under the flight paths, are designed for only one purpose: to fool enough decision-makers that the noise climate is improving in order to enable BAA to go ahead with its expansion plans.

Its statements on the hated **night flights** have a particularly Orwellian ring: "various measures are in place to reduce the impact on the community as far as possible, for night flights……the preferential use of runways at night, controls on ground engine runs and the introduction of fixed electrical ground power to replace the use of ground power units."[10] But that CSR-speak was quickly dropped when Chief Executive Mike Clasper addressed the Institute of Economic Affairs: "I'm not advocating a relaxation of night restrictions – indeed in our response to the recent Government consultation we opposed any relaxation of the night flights regime,"[11] and "but I am pointing out that this is an issue which has to be considered and debated if we are serious about evaluating all the options for making the best use of runways. It's right, though, that such judgments are made by Government, and BAA will work within whatever restrictions the Government decides are appropriate for striking the balance between economy and community."[12] Clear where BAA stands?

Corporate Social Responsibility – no more than a bigger fig leaf?

The bottom line is that BAA wants to expand Heathrow in order to make more money. To do that, it is prepared to demolish hundreds of homes, blight and destroy communities, subject over 100,000 people to troublesome noise for the first time, increase noise levels for residents under the existing flight paths and support the retention of the hated night flights. It is a brutal plan. No wonder it stresses its community responsibilities, its voluntary compensation schemes, its concern for its 'stakeholders' and its desire to consult residents. The words are simply fig leaves to hide behind; an attempt to make the unacceptable acceptable. It's the language of Corporate Social Responsibility. For BAA at Heathrow CSR has become little more than a slick PR ploy to **cover up** and **sell** its aggressive expansion plans.

BAA's Double-Spread Boast

HEATHROW news

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FEBRUARY 1995

THIRD RUNWAY RULED OUT

Government backs BAA in ditching third runway possibility

THE possibility of a third runway at Heathrow has been ruled out following an announcement by the Department of Transport.

RULED OUT

THE possibility of a third runway at Heathrow has been ruled out following an announcement by the Department of Transport.

The decision was immediately welcomed by Heathrow.

"This is the right decision for Heathrow and the right decision for local residents," said Mike Roberts, managing director for the airport.

The announcement came in the Government's response to the report of a working party into runway capacity in the south-east (RUCATSE) completed last May. BAA, in its own response to the working party, strongly advised against the third runway option at Heathrow.

"The Government has accepted our arguments," said Mr Roberts. "A third runway would have meant the destruction of 3,500 homes and directly affected 10,000 people. In our eyes that was clearly unacceptable and we told the Government so.

"This decision should now completely reassure people living round the airport that our plans for Terminal 5 will not lead to another runway," he added.

"We always maintained that would be the case – and now the Government has confirmed it.

"I hope now this major threat has been removed that those who oppose Terminal 5 will re-examine the case and judge it on its merits."

The planning inquiry into BAA's application for a fifth terminal begins on May 16.

A virtual reality image of the proposed Terminal 5. The development has been heralded as "the first g architect Sir Richard Rogers. See centre pages for more graphics.

COMMENT

FOR months now BAA has been accused by highly vocal, yet minority groups such as HACAN, of not telling the truth about a third runway.

BAA has said repeatedly Terminal 5 did not require and would not lead to a third runway.

BAA has said repeatedly that it was pressing the Secretary of State for Transport to rule out a third runway.

BAA has said repeatedly THERE WILL NOT BE A THIRD RUNWAY.

And BAA has been proved right. The Secretary of State has accepted the BAA view. The issue has been settled; people's concerns have been met.

What now of those who claimed BAA was not telling the truth?

Will they perhaps show a little humility and accept that the company does listen and can actually help local people argue their case?

Will they now listen to what else BAA is saying?

For instance...

- BAA also says THERE WILL BE NO ADDITIONAL NIGHT FLIGHTS AS A RESULT OF T5.

- BAA continues to argue THERE IS NO NEED FOR A 14-LANE M25 BECAUSE OF T5 (if it IS built it will be for other reasons).

And the company has proved it can and will deliver.

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WE welcom majority of itative opinic The survey air their view Some 51 p terminal the ing of the M And 65 pe new termina "The poll around Heat director of H "We know nal 5. We ur tackle many

From *Heathrow News*, the newspaper produced by Heathrow Airport, in 1995. BAA rules out a 3rd runway…and has the temerity to slate "minority groups such as HACAN' for not believing them! Of course, at the time, BAA had to persuade a Public Inquiry to give permission for a 5th terminal. But that was then.

Stansted – selling a second runway

This short chapter puts BAA Stansted's claim that it is "passionately committed to sustainable development" to the test. There are many ways in which the airport's operation and expansion will impact on the lives of those around them but, due to space constraints, this report focuses on four particular aspects: the process of consultation, transport, tourism and spatial development.

"We passionately believe in the role and responsibility of aviation in supporting global, national and regional strategies for sustainable development." [13] **BAA**

The Aviation White Paper made a second runway at Stansted the priority new runway for the London area and BAA aims to have it built by 2013, despite massive local opposition and a previous public enquiry into a second runway that said it would be an "environmental catastrophe".[1] With a new runway the airport is likely to expand from 22 million passengers per year to close to 80 million. This expansion is vigorously resisted by the 6000 (and growing) strong Stop Stansted Expansion, by local councils and local MP's.

Consultation: A mirage of democracy in the desert of doublespeak

There is a lot of consultation going on. Interim Master Plan, draft for consultation, Stansted Generation 2: December 2005 consultation.

BAA makes much of the process of consultation at its airports:

"One of the commitments in our sustainable development strategy is to maintain a regular programme of communication and consultation on airport related issues with local authorities and other community representatives."[14] Gatwick

"By sharing our plans and business objectives with our stakeholders, we give everyone a genuine opportunity to influence planning schemes before we submit development proposals through the formal planning process."[15] Stansted

"We are fully committed to working with our local communities, airlines, neighbours, and all those who are interested in the future of the airport, and to consulting them about the way we work, and our plans for growth."[16] BAA Stansted Managing Director

It is reasonable to ask what is the purpose of all this consultation:

- The majority of people around Stansted Airport are against any further expansion.
- All the local councils at parish, district and county council level are against.
- All the local MP's are against it as are the people they represent.
- A poll of people in the Uttlesford district in 2002 showed 89% against a 2nd runway.[17]
- If the people in the region of the airport and their political representatives at all levels oppose Stansted expansion what does it mean when managing director Terry Morgan says, "as we move forward with our plans, and seek permission to grow, I hope that *together* (my italics) we can achieve the right balance of interests that will shape a future for Stansted."[18]

The surreal and cynical nature of this process was recently uncovered when the environmental consultants employed by BAA Stansted (RPS consultants) told their employees, they would do "all in their power"[19] to ensure that the airport operator can meet its objective of building a second Stansted runway and described their role, in acting for BAA, as being focused on "when and how to deliver the planning consent rather than if"[20].

If the answers are already decided what is the reason for the question.

So, why does BAA consult?

1. Because it has to

Consultation is a statutory part of the planning process.

2. To deflect from the real questions

There *are* questions that people in Stansted ask of BAA which are difficult or indeed impossible to answer. For example, how does a commitment to sustainability square with increasing CO_2 emissions, the destruction of forest and agricultural land and a massive increase in car travel? Or, the last public enquiry into a 2nd runway stated that a new runway would be an "environmental catastrophe", what has happened since that would make this statement invalid? There are questions to be asked, burning questions, but they are buried in an avalanche of trivia. For example, *The Stansted Generation 2: consultation on a 2nd runway* asked people to choose between seven different designs for a new runway - the runway they don't want!

3. To persuade people of the merits of the proposal

All the Stansted consultation documents make much of Stansted's economic importance and the numbers of people employed by the airport. This is not consultation; it's persuasion; it's advertising. The first line of the interim master plan says, "Stansted stands for everything that is best in a modern, mobile and business-focused economy."[21] The intent is clear from the start: the consultation's primary function is to persuade and undermine the confidence of those opposing these plans.

4. To make themselves and their 'stakeholders' feel better about what they are doing

These consultations are also reflective. They make the people planning this expansion feel better. Here's Alastair McDermid, the Project Director of Generation 2: "I want to make sure that for this consultation and the other that will follow, information is readily available and that everyone who wishes to express a view has the opportunity to do so."[22] He's not saying that expressing a view has any chance of changing anything, simply that he wants everyone to at least have had the chance to express a view. Clearly this is of no benefit to the threatened communities around Stansted but it gives those implementing the plans the delusion that the process was in some way democratically decided.

5. To consult on a few issues

Buried deep within these consultations there may even be some genuine consultation. BAA may genuinely be seeking people's opinion on the best place to site a 2nd runway and it may (although it seems unlikely) even respond to that opinion. There is however no debate, consultation or 'moving forward together' on any issue of weight or substance. The real choices have already been foreclosed.

Site of proposed second runway

Surface Access Transport: double-speak on car numbers

"Emissions from vehicles travelling to and from Stansted have an impact on local air quality. Road congestion is also an issue of concern for local residents. At Stansted, we support the Government's aim of increasing the number of passengers travelling to and from the airport by public transport. And we are committed to its vision of [1]integrated transport across the U.," [23]

A rise in air passenger numbers means that airports will see increasing numbers of passengers arriving by car. 40% of passengers arrive at Stansted by public transport, which is the highest rate of public transport use at any of BAA's airports. But future trends are depressing. A two-runway Stansted is planning for around 105,000 car parking spaces. With a second runway in place, passenger numbers will grow from 22 million to around 80 million. If the airport manages to increase public transport use to 50% (it hasn't made this commitment but lets be generous) the number of car journeys will still more than treble, rising to around 40 million journeys per year (see footnote). In the 2004/5 Corporate Responsibility report Stansted BAA gives itself 10/10 on the issue of surface access. But its unambitious target was, "Develop a detailed design for the new public transport interchange, providing greatly improved facilities for bus and coach passengers, and apply for planning permission by 31 October 2004." [24]

The ability of BAA Stansted to in any way affect the rise of car use may be curtailed by the financial realities of the airport. The airport operation itself makes a loss of around £1.20 per passenger. Profit comes from the combination of car parking and general retail activity which make around £3.24 per passenger.[25] With the added cost of a new runway and intense pressure from the low cost airlines to keep airport charges low, BAA Stansted may find the continuing parking charge cross-subsidy hard to resist.

There are already small examples that show weak commitment to 'sustainability' when it a choice between 'sustainability' or the bottom-line. This is what BAA Stansted *says* on the issue of car occupancy: "BAA Stansted is committed to minimizing the environmental impact of travel to and from the airport. We continue to encourage methods of travel that achieve this objective, with a particular focus on reducing reliance on the single-occupancy private car."[26] This is one of the things BAA Stansted *does*. The airport taxi franchise is sold to Checkers Cars for £200,000 a year. This means that only cars from this company pick up at the airport. Any other taxis arriving to drop off must go away empty-handed rather than, as at Heathrow and other airports, joining a rank to pick up existing passengers. Given that taxi journeys make up 8% of the 22m arrivals and departures, that is a vast number of empty cars that could be full were a more efficient system in place, but a more efficient system might not net £200, 000 a year extra profit.

Spatial development: from rural Essex to a rambling metropolis

Quadrupling the capacity of an airport cannot and will not take place in spatial isolation. If a second runway is built, Stansted will be bigger then than Heathrow is now. In reality there will be huge pressure for new housing for workers, retail outlets, hotels and the other developments that will inexorably follow in the wake of 80m travellers. These concerns are voiced by Stop Stansted Expansion: "A study conducted by consultants for the local county councils and district councils proposed that the demand for airport-related houses should be met through massive expansion of Stansted Mountfitchet, Birchanger, Dunmow, Bishop's Stortford and Harlow, plus substantial new towns at Felsted, Elsenham / Henham and possibly near the Hadhams. Whatever housing proposals are eventually adopted would seem to lead inexorably to the creation of a rambling metropolis whose economic well-being would be progressively dependent on the fortunes of a single industry, an industry whose activities will come under increasing pressure as the world grapples with global warming and the finite availability of fossil fuels."[27]

One of the many listed buildings that would be demolished to make way for a second runway

[1] These are conservative figures given one passenger journey may involve two car journeys if the passenger is dropped at the airport rather than parking there.

Tourism – BAA tells only half the story

As with other airports, BAA Stansted's chief argument for expansion is economic. One of the main economic benefits it lists is the numbers of incoming tourists: "in 2003, 1.8 million overseas tourists visited the East of England spending £592 million – almost 80% of them travelled by air."[28] These are undoubtedly impressive figures but there is an obvious missing piece of information. How many out-going tourists does Stansted facilitate and how much do they *not* spend in the UK? The tourism figures for the East of England for 2004 show a close to £2 billion tourism deficit. 1.492m incoming visitors spend £517m. 4.720m outgoing visitors spend £2.430bn abroad, thus creating a tourism monetary deficit of £1.913 billion. The overall deficit for the UK is around £15 billion, a figure that hides large regional disparities. Airport expansion will increase the deficit. The projection for the East of England in 2020 is a deficit of £3.80 billion. It should be noted that while 180,000 people are employed nationally in aviation generating 1.2% of GDP, 2.2 million people rely on tourism for employment generating around 4% of GDP.[29]

If plans for a second runway go ahead Stansted airport will, in percentage terms, expand more than any airport in the UK. No one seriously believes this expansion could take place without a profound impact on the surrounding communities and countryside. Look at a map of the proposed second runway and the land it will take. Think of the 40 million extra car journeys, the Wal-Mart's, the lorries, the warehouses, the hotels, the new housing, the noise and pollution of all the extra aircraft and then ask, what does BAA really mean by 'sustainable development'?

Gatwick

Gatwick is the UK's second biggest airport facilitating 32 million passengers per year. The interim master plan outlines plans to increase capacity on Gatwick's single runway to 45m passengers by 2015 and it highlights the possibility of a second runway after 2019, if Heathrow's third runway fails to go ahead. This second, wide-spaced runway would be built next to the town of Crawley and take Gatwick's capacity up to 80m passengers.

> BAA claims that the environmental impact of increasing the capacity on Gatwick's existing single runway, "may be no greater than they are today."[30]

This claim must be based on the assumption that both aircraft and cars will be fully 30% more efficient within nine years[2]. It is a remarkably optimistic claim. Most industry experts believe that aircraft are becoming cleaner by about 1% per year. And most accept that noise levels are unlikely to decrease noticeably over the next decade. Indeed, the increase in the number of planes will almost certainly result in higher levels of noise. Cars are becoming quieter and cleaner, but unless 'Surrey Man', alone in the world, is driving a new type of vehicle within ten years, BAA's claims are beyond belief. Even BAA itself seems to be unconvinced that things will become better for it other sections of the same master plan (paragraph 8.26) it admits that noise and pollution will get worse! What local residents at Gatwick and elsewhere would give for some straight talking from BAA.

No 2nd Runway before 2019

When Gatwick was first built, back in the 1950s, it was based on dishonest promises that it would never be a large airport. Thus local residents and the local councils realised that, on airport matters, they could not trust the word of governments or of BAA (then the British Airports Authority). So whenever BAA promised to do something, the locals insisted on them signing a legal agreement. When, in 1979, BAA said that it only wanted to build a new airport terminal (now the North Terminal) and promised never to build a new runway, the councils said 'sign here'. The result is that there is now a cast-iron legal agreement preventing any new runway before 2019.

And in 2001 when BAA wished to expand the airport to handle 50% more passengers, the Gatwick Area Conservation Group (GACC) said, 'OK if you sign a legal agreement to safeguard the environment.' One of the legal obligations, for example, was to halve the area affected by aircraft noise between 1996 and 2008. BAA was proud of the 2001 legal agreement and has tried to persuade other local authorities and campaign groups to go down the same route. So far without success.

We blight, we talk up compensation, but the reality…….

BAA will be providing compensation for people living within the area safeguarded for a 3rd runway who wish to move but who find it difficult to sell their houses. BAA has published proposals for compensation for those people who live within or very close to the new proposed airport boundary. Also for noise insulation of schools and hospitals. The areas covered, however, are small and mean that no schools or hospitals will be eligible. Over 7,600 houses will be blighted by the runway threat but only about 280 are eligible. There will also be no compensation for many years for the far greater number of people to who live under the potential flight paths from the new runway, and whose houses are blighted. They will have to wait claim under the Land Compensation Act one year after any new runway opened.

[2] If the airport is to expand by one third this activity will have to be 33% more efficient than it is currently to stay the same.

Night Flights – BAA is *actually* pressing for more

"The DfT is currently preparing proposals for the night regime that will be in force from winter 2005/06 to summer 2011. We expect to report the outcome of the DfT's consultation in the final master plan."[31]

Again BAA creates the impression it passively does the Government's bidding. Behind the scenes BAA lobbied the government to, "allow nearly 20 % more movements a year than at present, and nearly 20 % more than proposed by the DfT. They are urging the Government to allow 5 % more noise in summer than at present and 23 % more than proposed by DfT."[32] BAA and the Gatwick Scheduling committee (the Gatwick Airlines) both argued that a larger allowance for night flights was needed to allow for future expansion of the airport. If BAA is "committed to being a good neighbour."[33] as it suggests when giving itself 10/10 in the 'our communities' section of the Gatwick Corporate Responsibility report, why does it pressure the Government to increase the night flight quota that their 'neighbours' already think are onerous and damaging to health? Quite simply, because the lower quota that, in years past, was sold as being for the good of the community is no longer convenient for the company.

Gatwick – climate change culprit

Aircraft from Gatwick emit about 5 million tonnes of CO_2 a year. The figure refers to the carbon dioxide, CO_2, emitted in flight by all aircraft departing from Gatwick. The normal international convention is to count each nation as responsible for emissions caused by departing aircraft but not for those caused by arriving aircraft. It is generally accepted that greenhouse gas emissions from aircraft, because they take place at high altitude, are more damaging than similar emissions at ground level. The UK government, and most scientists, use a figure that CO_2 emissions by aircraft are 2.7 times more damaging than CO_2 at ground level. Thus the climate change damage caused by Gatwick aircraft is equivalent to around 13 million tonnes of CO_2 per year emitted from other sources, such as power stations or cars. That is 18 times as much as the climate change damage caused by the whole of the nearest large town of Crawley - industry, vans and lorries, private cars, and the heating and lighting of houses and offices. On average each passenger who passes through the Gatwick departure lounge is responsible for putting about 310 kg of CO2, or 85 kg of carbon, into the upper atmosphere. In everyday terms that is equal in weight to each passenger carrying on board 85 bags of soot each weighing 1 kg, and scattering them out of the window. Yet because aircraft produce invisible CO_2, few Gatwick passengers give a thought to the damage they are causing. Few consider how they are creating huge problems of death and destruction for the future. Few consider the harm they are doing to the world that their children and grandchildren will inherit. 17,000 bags of soot for each aircraft, and Gatwick has 120,000 aircraft taking off each year. That is the measure of the climate change damage done by Gatwick airport. Assuming the final BAA Gatwick Master Plan follows the draft published in March 2005 it will make things worse. The final Plan will set out proposals to increase the number of passengers using Gatwick to around 42 million by 2015. During the next ten years there may be some improvement in aircraft fuel efficiency but that is likely to be counterbalanced by the trend for people to fly longer distances. So the planned growth of Gatwick will mean roughly a 30% increase in emissions, making the total equivalent to over 17 million tonnes of CO_2 at ground level. That will be twenty-four times all the present emissions from Crawley. GACC, in its response to the draft Master Plan, said: *The main omission from the master plan is any discussion of the impact on climate change caused by emissions from aircraft taking off from Gatwick. Such emissions far outweigh those from BAA's own airport operations. The master plan merely says that they are the responsibility of the airlines, and need to be dealt with by international agreement. That is not good enough. Gatwick, as the second largest UK airport, and as one of the largest international airports in the world, cannot escape its share of responsibility. Nor can BAA when they make large profits from the operation of the airport.* GACC challenged BAA to publish statistics in the final version of the Plan showing the total CO_2 emissions caused by aircraft departing from Gatwick. Will they dare to do so?

For more details on this see the GACC website.

Page 22 of this report outlines the way BAA tends to suggest that there is little it can do about climate change. It shows how disingenuous it is being. As the biggest airport operator in the UK, it has considerable powers to reduce growth and thus affect the levels of noise, air pollution and climate change.

The Three Scottish Airports

BAA Scotland is predicting a huge rise in passenger numbers by 2030. The mean prediction figure for its three Scottish airports, Glasgow, Edinburgh and Aberdeen is 47.45 million passengers. Adding 6 million passengers for Prestwick (not a BAA airport) and BAA is predicting around 53 million passengers in a country with a population of just of 5 million. Will every child, woman and man in Scotland be flying six times a year by 2030?

The three Scottish airports are dealt with as a group in this report because, in terms of public relations, BAA operates them within some collective structures.

Edinburgh airport is planning to expand its current facilities (e.g. parking spaces from 6200 to between 9,500 and 10,500) and purchase an additional 390 hectares of land outside its current boundary to hold for a possible new terminal and runway.

Glasgow airport is also planning a 52-hectare expansion of current facilities to cater for demand up to 2015 and the purchase of 105 hectares of land for a new parallel runway beyond 2030.

Aberdeen airport is planning a terminal extension and is applying for planning permission to extend its runway by 300 meters.

All three airports will need, and are applying for, significant additional road infrastructure: this includes the West Peripheral Road which in part is proposed to deal with Aberdeen airport and is one of the two largest proposed road-building schemes in Scotland.

Our report concentrates on noise, biodiversity, renewables and tourism.

Noise

In Edinburgh thousands of people will be exposed to new levels of noise should BAA go ahead with plans for expansion of the airport. BAA says that, "finding ways to minimise the impact of noise on our local communities is a key challenge."[34] What does this mean in light of the commitment to expand the airport in the full knowledge that many more people will be exposed to noise disturbance as a result? And virtually nobody will receive any compensation, blight support or sound insulation assistance.

In Glasgow the number of people that would be exposed to increased levels of noise would be even larger. BAA says, "The number of people within 57-decibel Leq contour increases significantly, while the affected population within the 63-decibel Leq and 69-decibel Leq contours also increases compared to the 1999 base case."[35]

In Aberdeen: "In 2004, an application was made by Aberdeen Airport allowing it to become fully flexible with its opening hours."[36] In plain English this was an application to allow night flights! BAA, "recognize the sensitivities surrounding extended opening and will work with airline partners to ensure the ground/air noise is kept to a minimum."[37] Still unable to say the word *night*, flights have started during 'extended opening' since permission was given in March 2005. The Aberdeen airport master plan also notes that, "while aircraft are becoming progressively quieter, there is no avoiding the fact that increased capacity will inevitably lead to larger noise footprints around airports."[38] This process is part of a now familiar pattern: the environment and people's sensitivities are given lip service until they get in the way of growth.

Helicopters and peak oil.

"Helicopter traffic is forecast to reduce by 3.0% per annum over the forecast period, moving from around 15% of total traffic to 4%, reflecting the anticipated decline in off-shore oil and gas production,"

This sentence shimmers like a ghost in a hall of words. In all the interim master plans for all BAA's airports this is the only sentence that offers even a hint that the predictions of ever-growing demand for air travel are less robust than we are led to believe. North Sea oil peaked at around the turn of century, 30 years after US oil production peaked in 1970's. An increasingly influential and growing number of oil geologists are predicting global peak oil sometime between now and 2010. If they are right, the already volatile oil price will be going through the ceiling very soon. By 2030 oil prices and practical shortages may make flying the luxury of the profligate few.

Biodiversity

"Edinburgh Airport takes its responsibilities to the environment very seriously."[39]

"All three airports aim to promote the safe development of biodiversity within their boundaries."[40]

"In total, the additional land take required to develop Edinburgh Airport from 2013-2030 is currently estimated to be approximately 85 hectares of RHASS land, 280 hectares of land to the north of the River Almond…15.5 hectares of farmland to the south, and 10 hectares of farmland to the east."[41]

These quotes offer a remarkable contrast in aims. On the one hand, BAA "works with local biodiversity officers to obtain best practice for the management of on-site areas of natural biodiversity."[42] On the other hand, can this small area of highly managed on-site land (no more than a few hectares) compensate for the loss of nearly 400 hectors of agricultural and wild land, including a river and its banks, home to the heron and other birds as well as a variety of animals. It is perhaps ironic that whilst giving itself 10/10 on the issue of water quality, BAA Edinburgh is planning to pave over a significant portion of a large neighbouring river.

Over in Glasgow, BAA tells us its staff and their families, "spent the day building nest boxes for the native bird population (at the RSPB nature reserve at Lochwinnoch)."[43]

Unfortunately for the Whooper swans of Black Cart Water, this generosity only extends to birds that don't interfere with plans for expansion.

Over in Glasgow, BAA tells us that its staff and their families, "spent the day building nest boxes for the native bird population (at the RSPB nature reserve at Lochwinnoch)."[44] Unfortunately for the Whooper swans of Black Cart Water, this generosity only extends to birds that don't interfere with plans for expansion: "To the north of the airport boundary, a 3km stretch of the Black Cart Water has dual designation as a Special Protection Area and SSSI. This section of the river is used as a roosting and foraging site by wintering Icelandic Whooper Swans. In 2003, the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) requested that BAA Glasgow undertake a bird management study to assess the risk of the presence of the Whooper Swans in close proximity to the airfield and identify ways of minimizing any unacceptable risk. This study has recently been completed and, recognizing the forecast increase in air transport movements, BAA Glasgow would reiterate its well documented view that relocation of this habitat would be the most appropriate solution." [45]

Renewables

"On the expert advice of NATS, our air traffic control provider, BAA will continue to adopt a precautionary approach to proposals for wind turbines where we are advised there is a risk that these might compromise the safety, flexibility or capacity of the airport,"[46]. The same precautionary principle is stated in the Aberdeen interim master plan. The precautionary principle means structures that might cause risk in *some* circumstances are automatically blocked. Campaigners and some in the renewables sector are asking for a more proactive approach on the issue. BAA has been asked to engage with the sector and work at, "finding solutions to potential problems before they occur… furthermore, given the more accommodating approach taken in Europe on aerodrome safeguarding perhaps European solutions may also be considered rather than imposing the precautionary principle as outlined in the draft plan"[47]. This view is echoed by campaigners in Aberdeen concerned that BAA has apparently offered no assurances it will not object to offshore wind farms in the area.

Tourism

As in the case of its English counterparts, BAA Scotland promotes its airports as being good for the economy and tourism. BAA Glasgow wants to have its cake and eat it as shown in this passage: "As Scotland's busiest airport, Glasgow provides valuable domestic and international air connections and represents the country's main gateway to and from North America, supporting the tourism industry and important business interests across Scotland. Furthermore, Glasgow Airport has for many years led Scotland's leisure travel market, offering as many as 100 destinations in a busy year-round schedule."[48] The airport may benefit from two-way throughput of passengers but the ever-increasing number of out-going passengers are hurting the Scottish tourist industry.

Southampton Airport

Southampton airport currently caters for 1.5 million passengers per year. This number, BAA predict, will quadruple over the next 25 years to 6 million, with air traffic movements increasing from 37,400 to 96,300. This expansion will occur on the current runway but will involve either the extension of the existing terminal or the building of a new one. A significant area of open land within the airport boundary will be developed as the airport grows.

In contrast to BAA publications on Heathrow and Stansted, there is little talk of sustainability in either the master plan or the corporate responsibility report. As an example of the almost casual approach to these issues, the corporate responsibility report says on air quality, "Eastleigh Borough Council's air quality survey shows the airport contributes fewer emissions into the atmosphere than that of the local road systems."[49] There is not much else on air quality other than a commitment to undertake an air quality survey and use the information to develop an air quality strategy. This failure to stress its commitment to sustainability at Southampton, where the campaign against the airport expansion is not yet as strong as at other airports, suggests that BAA's emphasis on green issues and community involvement only comes into play when it is trying to quell rebellious residents. Contrast Southampton with Heathrow. The Heathrow interim master plan second paragraph states BAA is "planning for the future in an effective sustainable and responsible manner". Two paragraphs later, we are again told that BAA is "socially and environmentally responsible". The Southampton publications say virtually nothing on these issues. All of which tends to suggest it is only when BAA has a fight on its hands that its PR machine sets to work. As the Southampton campaign builds up, the green wash will surely follow.

With a planned quadrupling of passenger numbers Southampton Airport is a beacon of unsustainability in its region. Parking is set to rise from 2,820 to 8,600. The airport boasts of being the closest of any European airport to a train station but it is also the one which most people drive to, 86%. Even if the airport managed to reduce car access to 50% there will still be an extra 1.7 million airport associated car journeys per year by 2030.

The economic value of Southampton Airport is being questioned by local campaigners. A study done by the Geodata Institute showed the airport contributed £86 million to the local economy each year and employed over 1000 people. But local people are asking real questions about whether it is worth the problems it is bringing. They point out that the airport employs over 3,000 less people than the local university which carried out the research. As one local campaigner says, "it provides little evidence of economic benefits; more passengers would generate more economic activity, but then the same could be said of smoking cigarettes, slavery or carpeting 10 Downing Street with tiger pelts."[50] In addition, the proliferation of cheap flights at the airport is taking more tourist money out of the region than is being brought in.

Compared to the behemoths around London, Southampton is a small airport. That is no consolation to the people under its flight paths or parents of asthmatic children in neighbouring housing who face a quadrupling of growth. The per passenger damage to the local and international environment is by any reasonable measure similar to any other BAA airport.

The failure to stress its commitment to sustainability at Southampton, where the campaign against the airport expansion is not yet as strong as at other airports, suggests that BAA's emphasis on green issues and community involvement only comes into play when it is trying to quell rebellious residents. The tap of Corporate Social Responsibility can be switched on and off.

Corporate Social Responsibility

Key ways to making it work in the interest of your company

1. Only use it when you are under pressure
No need to pretend to be socially and environmentally concerned if you are not under any pressure. Only turn on the gushing tap of CSR when you need it.

2. Use the right buzz words
Community, consultation, sustainability, stakeholders usually work. A particularly nice phrase from BAA is 'responsible growth'.

3. Avoid the 'P' word – profit
Sell your plans as if they were in the interest of others – the national economy, the workers, the environment and, especially, the local community. Always come across as altruistic.

4. Avoid discussing the big questions which threaten you
In your consultations bog people down with trivia and lots of technical detail, but remember to give people choices…..but only on unimportant matters. Make people feel their opinion counts.

5. Legitimise your position
Identify a group of people who will agree with you plans. Use consultations and opinion polls to consult them. Keep quiet about whether they were representative. Keep repeating the results.

6. Set easy environmental and social targets which you know you will meet
Always make sure the targets don't affect your business or your profits. Tell the world about how good you are at meeting your targets.

7. On matters you want to avoid, set out to confuse
Make good use of selective statistics to challenge and throw doubt upon awkward facts such as any claims that the aircraft noise problem may be getting worse.

8. Think small, but talk big
Trumpet the small environmental and social gestures you are making in order to deflect people away from the big environmental and social questions it is not in your interest to tackle.

9. If you are in trouble, increase your PR offensive
If airport communities or environmental campaigns are becoming troublesome, don't concede an inch, simply up the PR and pretend to take their concerns on board.

10. If all else fails, cite the national economic interest
If your PR charm offensive is not working, fall back on the line about how you have the national interest at heart, neatly implying your opponents are self-interested groups.

And remember:

when you produce your CSR reports

don't cover them with pictures of noisy, polluting planes

instead use pictures of fields, flowers and children

Climate Change: the BAA Approach

Aviation is the fastest-growing contributor to climate change. The industry knows that it must be seen to be doing something about it. BAA has cleverly used the climate change issue to promote its green credentials while ensuring that nothing much is put in place to curb the growth of the industry and its own profits.

1. Lead the industry in pushing for a Europe-wide Emissions Trading Scheme

BAA early on spotted the potential of emissions trading. It had the advantage of being less onerous than taxes or charges. It would allow the airlines to continue to grow by buying permits to pollute. It would cost BAA, as an airport operator, nothing. It would require Europe-wide agreement which would be difficult. It would be unlikely to be implemented for several years. It would allow BAA to boost its credentials with government by organising seminars on it and getting the rest of the UK aviation industry to back it.

2. Claim climate change not is your really responsibility

"The main political debate in the aviation industry surrounds aircraft emissions, which BAA is able to influence but not control."[51]

3. Hint that anything which is put in place which may harm the economy may be counter-productive.

"While there are real environmental issues which require a clear specific response, such as the Earth's capacity to handle greenhouse gases, it is also necessary to recognize economic and social costs and benefits."[52]

4. Create a set of meaningless targets that are easy to meet. Create a distraction.

An Adequate Response?

There is now almost unanimous agreement within the scientific community that climate change represents an extremely serious threat, at worst making conditions for human life extremely difficult if not impossible; at best causing major disruption, economic hardship and millions of deaths due to food shortage and extreme weather events. Aviation if the fastest-growing source of CO_2 emissions. It is responsible for 3.5% of human-induced emissions worldwide and this could grow to 15% by 2050. This growth in emissions comes at a time when the UK government has committed to targets for reducing emissions. How adequate is BAA's response? It has a company wide policy to reduce emissions by 15% of 1990 levels by 2010. Not all emissions at the airport, just the emissions of the airport operations it is directly responsible for.

> BAA doesn't take any responsibility for the emissions from the aircraft using its airports. It confines its targets for cutting emissions to its airport buildings and a few vehicles. That doesn't even include the retail outlets. No wonder it is on course to meet its limited targets.

It is worth having a close look at one of its airports, to see how staggeringly inadequate this response is. We use Heathrow as an example. BAA claims to be responsible only for its direct operation which amounts to the airport buildings and a few vehicles; it doesn't even include the shops in the airport and it certainly doesn't include the aircraft which land there. Of course BAA is happy to take responsibility for the profits the airport makes. In 2004/5 Heathrow netted BAA £405 million pounds in profit, £6.02 for every single passenger that passed through its gates. It represents a goldmine for BAA. If gas-guzzling aircraft were not using the airport, then it's hard to see where there income would come from! It is part of the job of Corporate Social Responsibility to paper over figures that look bad and come up with figures and targets which fit with BAA's projected self-image: a responsible, caring, sustainable company. The emissions from Heathrow increased by around 1.5 million tons in 2004/5. BAA's reduction represents about half of one percent of just the yearly increase in emissions at Heathrow, not the total. This is quite literally half a step forward, one hundred steps backwards.

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Conclusions

1. BAA is planning the biggest single programme of aviation expansion the UK has ever seen

- It will decimate communities, demolish homes, destroy ancient woodlands and other important areas for biodiversity, increase noise levels and send global warming emissions soaring

2. In an attempt to cover-up the brutality of its expansion plans BAA has resorted to the language of Corporate Social Responsibility

- BAA is demeaning the language of ecology and sustainability by using it to promote significant growth
- BAA's response to community pressure is not to deal with the residents' concerns, but to crank up its PR machine

3. BAA consistently attempts to hide behind the Government and deflect responsibility

- The report has clearly demonstrated that BAA has lobbied hard for airport expansion

4. The wide-ranging discussions we have had with campaigners in compiling this report suggests that BAA's tactics are beginning to backfire

- Campaigners are coming to understand that BAA's clever use of spin is intended to block the changes they are calling for.

***The Two Faces of BAA* was commissioned by AirportWatch.**

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AirportWatch is the umbrella organisation which brings together both community and national organisations concerned about airport expansion.

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