



In search of the Cornish White Elephant A critique of the Newquay Airport Draft Master Plan

Introduction

Cornwall County Council published the Draft Master Plan (DMP) for the development of Newquay Airport in December 2008. This sets out their vision for development until 2030 with detailed plans to 2015. The document sets out to show a thriving airport bringing benefits to the Cornish economy. The projection is for passengers to increase from 350000 in 2007 to between 1.4 and 1.8 million passengers by 2030, and an increase in flights from 11600 to 43000 or more.

This critique has been prepared by SNAIRE, a coalition of groups concerned about the expansion of Newquay Airport, comprising Groundswell, Cornwall Friends of the Earth, Campaign for Better Transport, Rising Tide, and Bagas Gwer Kernewek, the Cornwall Green Party, working in affiliation with AirportWatch South West. The paper demonstrates that many of the assumptions underpinning the forecast growth and the benefits claimed for an enlarged Newquay Airport operation are not supported by the available data. There are grave faults in the projections, the business case, the options presented and in the treatment of environmental impacts, as well as substantive omissions; taken together these elements coalesce into a document which is utterly flawed and a development that will likely prove a most expensive white elephant.

The Climate Change Act

In all discussions of carbon intensive industries/infrastructure the most crucial issue need always be climate changing emissions levels. Whilst the Masterplan was written before the Climate Change Act 2008 passed into law, it is still surprising that the authors appear to be unaware of the direction of Government policy. Indeed it was in October that the government bowed to pressure to include greenhouse gas emissions from international aviation (and shipping) into the Bill.

The act now commits the UK to serious cuts in carbon emissions within the timescale of the Masterplan of 80% of 1990 levels by 2050.

The forecasts for the airport show significant growth in emissions from both air and surface operations even including some very optimistic assumptions about efficiency.

It is difficult to reconcile this with a law that is mandating a 40% cut, which will have to be applied across *all* sectors and which latest science would like to see increased much further for safety - global heating realities almost definitely making this a necessity within a few years; (one of the most important aspects of the Act is that it will be continuously reviewed by a *Climate Change Committee (CCC)* that is independent of government. The Committee will

perform its review in line with emerging climate science and make recommendations to government accordingly on the 2050 target).

Any Newquay airport expansion will mean that other local industries will bear the costs of deeper emissions cuts and since it is the well-off who fly it is potentially the poor who will suffer most from rising costs to cut emissions by other Cornish industries.

In the context of the climate change act it would be appropriate to withdraw the Masterplan and present a fresh vision for the airport which was based on it delivering at least a 30% cut in its carbon impact by 2020. This may actually involve reducing the number of flights – although in this context each flight might deliver much higher economic value.

Projections & Forecasts

The DMP makes it clear that the main motivation for expansion is to make the airport viable – it is currently loss making. It asserts that break even is only possible if passenger numbers reach 750000 to 1000000, but this is on the basis of an academic report from 2002 that is not specific to the airport.

The Forecasting and Sensitivity Analysis annex (Para 1.0) states: *“There are two key forecasts needed to provide realistic estimates as to future service requirements – passenger forecasts and air traffic movement forecasts – and these define future infrastructure needed at Newquay Cornwall Airport to meet demand.”*

Thus it is assumed at the outset that the airport should be allowed to grow to meet (unconstrained) demand. This kind of 'predict and provide' approach is now discredited (since the 1998 Integrated Transport White Paper) – a more sensible approach is for policy to be set to define what level of service will be provided and then to ensure that infrastructure is provided to meet this. For example to take this approach for inbound tourism would mean assessing what total visitor numbers Cornwall wished to host in 2016/2030 and then examining what mix of transport links (air, road, rail, sea) could most effectively bring people in (at the lowest carbon cost and maximum journey quality). Or policy might set the airport the task of meeting its share of the 2008 Climate Change Act obligations and delivering a plan for this.

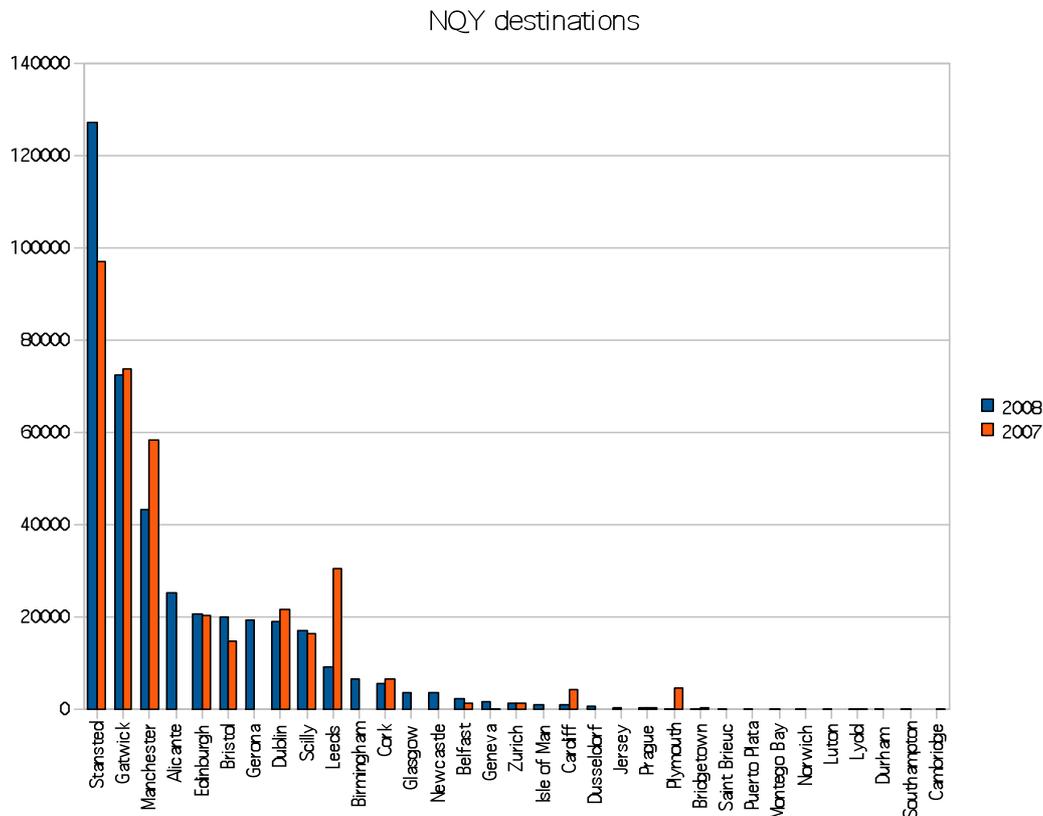
Having said this we have to deal with the Masterplan as presented, and there are several problems with the figures offered for projected passenger growth.

In 2007, the vast majority of passengers were between other UK airports and NQY, but the CAA figures for the twelve months up to September 2008 indicate that even though passengers totalled 406000 that the mix had changed significantly. Of the domestic destinations, only Stansted and Bristol had grown to any extent, the others had stagnated with Leeds-Bradford falling to a third of its previous level.

The two domestic airports that saw a rise are probably being used as outbound hubs to reach further destinations. In addition to this, the two new routes to Spain (both to outbound tourism destinations) added 44717 passengers between them out of a total rise of 52839. This indicates that the domestic market may have reached saturation point and that any future growth is likely to be in outbound tourism, which is of no economic benefit to Cornwall or the UK - indeed quite the opposite.

“...the Cornish have a strong propensity to fly (compared to the national average of 1.26 trips per year) and this may be a reflection of the relatively remote location of the County [sic] with longer surface access journeys” (Masterplan para. 3.5.6). This statement from the Masterplan is clearly a nonsense – the propensity to fly in Cornwall is one of the lowest in the country as the Annex 'Forecasting and Sensitivity Analysis' illustrates: *There is a strong link between the Gross Value Added of an area and its propensity to fly (i.e .the number of passengers departing*

or arriving in an area by air travel, expressed as a ratio to the population of that area). A higher level of GVA per head of population generally indicates higher disposable income that can be spent on holidays and flights as well as greater business activity in an area leading to more business flights". Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly (IOS) have one of the lowest GVAs per head in the UK and correspondingly, the propensity to fly is currently significantly lower than for



other regions.

The graph showing Cornwall GVA at £8k and propensity to fly around 0.2 has the next nearest region with a GVA around £10.5k and propensity to fly around 1.5.

Even if the Convergence and other programmes were successful in raising Cornwall to a GVA of the next nearest region, the propensity to fly figure still would not support a larger airport.

The notion that Cornwall is comparable with Northern Ireland or Scotland in terms of transport links is risible. Truro is the same rail time from London as Glasgow or Edinburgh, and nearer by car. Scotland however is several times larger than Cornwall – Inverness is another 3 hrs on the train - and includes many islands which are all or part dependent on air connections. Northern Ireland is, of course, on the other side of the Irish Sea.

The stated aim is to bring tourism in through the airport and to use it also for business flights. The route to Germany, which is used as an example of bringing in foreign tourists, carried a total of 886 passengers (that is 443 trips) over the 4 summer months. This is unlikely to have made much difference to the total tourist flows – many German visitors arrive by car. In fact only 4% of Cornwall's visitors are purported to arrive by plane, but instead of investing in the resultant 96% that don't fly, the DMP plans to expend lots of money on those that do.

In fact even this 4% figure is a gross exaggeration. Para 4.3 in the Annex Economic Benefits, says: “..in the Base Year in this case (2006), 108,000 visitors accessed Cornwall via the Airport”. A simple calculation would show that 108,000 is 2.7% of 4 million - not 4%.

In fact, it is likely that even the 108,000 is an overestimate. The total for terminal passengers at Newquay Airport in 2006 was 343,000, in 2007 it was 352,000. Taking the higher number for "2006/07" this represents 176,000 return trips. If 50% of those were inbound, it would account for 88,000 visitors arriving by air. Some of those would have been business travellers. Even on the most optimistic assumptions, the percentage of visitors to Cornwall arriving by air in 2006/07 was at most 2%, not 4%. The figure for 2008/09 might be 2.5-3.0% at most, not 5%.

As for the claimed 60% majority of passengers at NQY being inbound, this is not borne out by facts or data: The evidence that it is available from passenger surveys carried out at the airport, contradicts this proposition. The surveys were as follows:

- August 2007: inbound passengers 55.6%, outbound 44.4%
- January 2008: inbound passengers 28.6%, outbound 71.4%

Thus, even in August, the peak month for passenger numbers in total, and, presumably the peak month for inbound percentage, the figure for inbound did not reach 60%. Given the very low inbound percentage in January, it is reasonable to conclude that the year round average inbound percentage is probably less than 50%, so it does not constitute a majority.

It is *interesting* that nowhere in the Masterplan is there any estimate of what the percentage of inbound is estimated to be when passenger numbers have reached the fabulous *over 1 million* mark.

The recent (since publication) announcement by the Government of the intention to develop a rail hub near Heathrow allowing interchange not only with the airport from the mainline but also with high speed lines to the north and to the channel tunnel is likely to have a serious impact on the use of Newquay airport for both inbound and outbound visitors.

It is already possible to travel from Truro to Sweden or Poland within 24 hrs by train (including a comfortable Deutsche Bahn sleeper leg); with the Heathrow rail interchange both domestic and international connections by rail or plane will be far more attractive from the Cornish main line by train rather than using Newquay.

In addition the plan to start electrification of the GWR line, and significant increases in efficiency in the HST replacement fleet now planned will further reduce the carbon cost of rail travel and make domestic flights from Cornwall very disadvantageous.

The projections assume a compound 15% growth rate between 2007 and 2030 – this is far above any government supported or modelled figure and seems highly unlikely to be achieved. Comparing NQY with Bristol airport, it implies the catchment of the airport will be flying 3 times as often from NQY than the current level at Bristol. This is clearly an absurdity.

In addition, as it is clear that the main expansion will be dependent upon low-cost airlines, the cost of fuel is a major risk factor. Over the last two years, crude oil has risen from \$50 per barrel to \$147 and fallen back to below \$50 again as the recession has reduced demand. The International Energy Agency has predicted that the long-term, post recession price will be above \$100 per barrel. Ryanair stated that they could only break-even if average oil prices were below \$100 per barrel, and other airlines are in a worse position than that.

In December 08 the airport had to close for several weeks due to non-completion of the work to take over from the RAF, and as a result Ryanair has cancelled its schedule until March 2009. This has demonstrated not only the difficulty for the Council in delivering such projects, but also the risks of depending upon a small number of cost sensitive customers.

It is highly likely that *if* Ryanair does return to NQY in March that they will be looking for favourable terms, and this typically means a reduced airport charge or other forms of subsidy – something that they often ask for and receive from smaller European tourism destination airports. As the average UK airport charge to the airline is around £1.80 per passenger, it is

easy to see how the revenue raised by NQY may fall dramatically in order to retain this customer.

To summarise:

- forecasts are predicated on suspect reasoning
- projected passengers levels are not credible
- future increases are likely to be overwhelmingly in outbound tourism
- options and improvements to other transport modes are ignored
- dependence on a few low-cost airlines is likely to pay poor dividends on the investment.

Business Plan

The business plan contains various elements: the expansion of the terminal to allow for more passengers, the establishment of two flying schools and increasing general aviation, establishing plane maintenance and business jet operations, starting an aviation college and discovery centre, building two hotels, and using some of the land for a business park. It is clear that this is a wish list derived from picking bits from many other airports, and there is little justification for believing that any or all of these might be viable.

For instance, there are several aerodromes within Cornwall (Perranporth, Bodmin, Truro) that already have a significant general aviation and flying school presence. It is clear that trying to establish two flying schools at NQY will not only present logistical challenges with the passenger air services, but will also directly compete with these established businesses. The likely outcome is that all of the operations will be less profitable, that no significant increase in flights will be brought about and no net economic benefit will be felt in Cornwall.

The plane maintenance operation is unlikely to succeed either. The established airlines have their own maintenance at their bases (where the planes rest overnight). As the Ryanair routes are too infrequent currently there are no planes based at NQY, and it is unlikely that a significant number ever would be based there. Aircraft maintenance is highly skilled and requires expensive materials and tools, these are not a worthwhile investment unless they are to be used frequently and that means a significant number of planes need to be based at NQY, which is unlikely until the upper end of the projected passenger count is reached. One Ryanair plane carries 310000 passengers per year on average and if/until the routes operated from NQY (to non-base airports) can support this number for one airline it is unlikely that any planes will be based there. As many of the passengers already go to other Ryanair bases (eg Stansted, Bristol) it seems unlikely any plane will be based at NQY.

The business jet operation seems unlikely to generate much revenue given the distance of the airport (by land) from areas of sufficient wealth to support it. The aviation school and discovery centre seem to be bolt-on ideas with little grounding in reality or business analysis – without a major airline being based at the airport there would not be a critical mass to drive demand for such a school. Exeter is only just establishing these areas of business because FlyBe is based there and carries over one million passengers a year from Exeter alone. It seems unnecessary and imprudent to start a new facility so close to that one in Exeter.

The two hotels are an obvious bid to capture any hotel trade created by the airport and to internalize the profits. This will inevitably be to the detriment of the existing hotel, B&B and other accommodation in the area and is likely to have no net benefit to the economy. In fact this competition will most likely drive existing businesses to the wall and damage the cohesion of the community. It is quite common for such hotels to employ a large fraction of non-local staff, this will therefore not help to alleviate local unemployment and may in fact make it worse.

The business park could possibly make sense, but there is little synergy between it and the airport. They could share the same land, but the park would likely be a major and unacceptable trip generator, especially given the lack of effort being conferred on modal shift to public transport for the airport itself. The benefits that the business park will derive from being beside the airport are negligible, and certainly do not justify expansion of flights or passenger numbers. This seems to be the lowest risk element of the DMP and does not require any increase in airport operations.

It is clear that NQY is currently inefficient compared with its competitors – Bristol employed 2280 staff for 5.5 million passengers (414 jobs per million passengers) whereas NQY has 400 jobs at 350000 passengers (over 1100 jobs per million passengers). The long term trend is to increase efficiency and to decrease costs, and this means less staff involved from check-in, to baggage handling and in other areas.

The low-cost airlines are likely to dominate, especially in an era of recession or high oil prices, and they have very low staffing levels. Ryanair has 104 jobs per million passengers, and tries its hardest to internalise the profits of flying by supplying more of the services of the airport on the plane itself. It is clear that the viable long term staffing level at NQY is likely to be lower than it is now. To treble passengers just to make the airport “viable” is an insane solution – it will cost major investment, will not be delivered and does not secure the jobs, whilst increasing outbound tourism flows and depriving the rest of the Cornish economy of income and investment.

It is claimed that airports have benefits beyond their direct staffing, but this is open to question. In the analysis of Bristol Airport, Roger Tym and Partners found that the 2280 direct jobs might generate 1300 indirect ones (eg making sandwiches, supplying services) but only 68 of these were within the South West *region*. A similar picture is likely at NQY. Induced jobs (those created by spending by the staff) are irrelevant – any other jobs are equally good at this and in fact airport jobs are often low paid and thus have less spending power to induce other employment. Catalytic benefits, where other businesses benefit due to the presence of the airport are probably already at their maximum level: expanding the airport will not create any new opportunities, and in fact the outbound tourism spend will drain money from the Cornish economy.

It is often claimed that airports attract inward investment. This might be the case to some extent when they are newly established, but the amounts brought in by further expansion are not proven. As planes fly both ways, it is equally likely that money will flow out this way, and this is certainly true for the UK as a whole, due mainly to investment in lower waged parts of the world.

Options Presented

The options presented are biased and prejudged. The consultee is not allowed to vote for the “closing down” option, nor is the “do nothing” option a fair description. The “do nothing” option still expects more than double the passengers in 2030 that there were in 2007, with a bolt-on option to increase to 840000 passengers in the existing building!

The true “do nothing” would be to cap passengers at the current levels of around 400,000 and to make the airport as efficient as possible (though still a loss maker), by focusing of routes on those that deliver greatest benefit to the Cornish and national economy – ie business destinations and those likely to bring in inbound international passengers. The growth in domestic routes would be discouraged, the passengers to be facilitated by other improvements eg increasing public transport frequencies.

The two options to the south of the airfield are both based upon pie-in-the-sky expectations that we have already mentioned. The cheaper terminal building is denigrated

because it is box-like, yet the alternative costs many times as much. The assertion that the boxlike structure could not be energy efficient is farcical, and evidence that the DMP has been written to promote a glorious vision rather than a realistic plan.

The consultees should be allowed to choose the “close down” or “do not expand” options, which are likely to be the ones that deliver the largest economic benefits, with the lowest exposure to the risks of oil price, climate change and recession.

However, above and beyond this, the ‘close down’ option, instead of being framed negatively, should have presented a – utterly disregarded – potential positive option for alternative uses – for instance and most obviously as a renewable energy park. which could have immense economic benefits for Cornwall.

Environmental Impacts

The existing airport and its planned expansion have many environmental impacts, from increased traffic flows, aircraft noise and climate changing emissions. It is clear that the DMP is determined to allow expansion whatever these impacts and without any real effort to mitigate or compensate for them.

On **traffic**, the surface access strategy (ASAS) plan avoids any commitment or specific policy proposals to move a significant amount of passengers over to public transport, and this despite a planned massive increase in passengers and the vast majority currently arriving by private car. Most airports make a large amount of their revenue from parking fees, and this perhaps explains the reluctance to tackle the issue. The plans to increase parking spaces make it obvious that the will to reduce car traffic is missing.

We are given forecasts for passenger numbers and the proportion using public transport (defined as any vehicle carrying more than 6 passengers). The remainder will all use private, hire or taxi vehicles. We are given an average group size – this allows an estimate of the number of vehicle movements generated by the forecasts.

Whilst in percentage terms public transport use is forecast to grow from a current 3% to 7% with 0.84 mppa and jumping to 13% with 1.01mppa (although the reason for this optimistic jump is not explained), in absolute numbers of vehicle movements it seems that car use doubles at 0.7 mppa and increases by over 150% at 1.01 mppa.

If we factor in the kiss'n'ride (PU/DO) proportion which as the report notes doubles journeys, it looks as if the 1.43mppa scenario involves a massive quadrupling of traffic – an additional 750,000 car journeys even with the increase in public transport use and a reduction in PU/DO.

The Carbon Impact Study (CIS) gives a 2.5 times increase in emissions due to surface access between 2007/8 (0.34mppa, 1182TC) and 2030/31 (1.43mppa, 2973 TC). It is not possible to see how these figures are arrived at but they do not seem consistent with the vehicle movement figures from the ASAS. The CIS appears to be understating the emissions by around 80%

In setting out actions towards achieving the modest proposed modal shift towards public transport there are some good general ideas but no indicative goals or targets for implementation. The quoted guidance calls for “*challenging short-term and long-term targets for increasing the use of public transport by air passengers and employee.*”. Planning for only an additional 4% of passengers using public transport by the base case 2015 is hardly challenging.

The selective presentation of data in the ASAS to bolster the apparent viability of the airport expansion seems to be replicated throughout the plan. Whilst we would expect the Masterplan to attempt to present proposals in a favourable light this does not appear to be

supported by the underlying data.

PU/DO numbers are not given directly but can be inferred from proportion of private car use and the current car park capacity - assuming the car park is fully occupied year round with 5 day average stay as stated this would be 75% of current groups travelling. If the car park is less than 100% utilised then the PU/DO proportion must be even higher. The strategy is aware of the danger of increasing PU/DO by constraining car-parking so only proposes a modest change in car park ratios. The quadrupling of traffic above assumes that PU/DO can be reduced to 50% - although there is no indication in the report that this can be achieved.

On **noise**, the maps presented are inadequate and largely illegible. They are also evidently only from modelling and not measurement (for the current case). It is quite likely that the increase in flights of larger planes eg 737-800 and bigger will make a considerable difference to these maps, and this noise footprint will impinge upon the areas of Newquay most likely to be used by visitors. It is not mentioned if this will detract from the attractiveness of the area for visitors, despite them obviously coming to experience the beauty of wild Cornwall! Neither is the issue of *tranquility* - or its loss - addressed at all - a shocking omission given its major import to both local people and tourists.

On **climate change**, the analysis is flawed in many ways over and above the ignoring of the Climate Change Act 2008. Firstly, it seems that an unknown technology is used to ensure that emissions do not increase after 2015 despite the projected passenger counting doubling after that time. It is clear that no aircraft technology currently being developed is likely to make any impact on emissions before 2030 - the 20% improvements over the last 20 years have been mostly in making bigger aircraft (eg A380 vs B747) and it is not likely or desirable that these will fly from NQY.

Aeronautics is a mature technology; the boss of Rolls Royce recently stated that from now on to make quieter engines will in all likelihood increase fuel consumption (and hence emissions). The use of biofuels, although technically feasible, is not likely to make much impact on total emissions (due to the source of the biofuel), will have many significant side impacts (such as the loss of rainforests, indigenous communities and at higher species such as orang utan) and be very slowly adopted.

The DMP asserts that because the RAF has left, this reduces the total emissions, thus leaving a budget for the airport to use. This is flawed and mendacious reasoning. Either those emissions have moved to being based at another airport and thus are still being released, and hence there is no budget, or the reduction in emissions should be seized and used to help to achieve the 80% cuts that the Climate Change Act now commits the UK to achieving, including aviation emissions (see above). There is no sense in which there is a budget for increasing the emissions from NQY.

No matter how carbon neutral the airport terminal and ground operations are to become, this does not compensate for the increase in emissions from flights. The growth in international flights will make a massive difference; we calculate that the two Spanish routes will have increased the total emissions by 20% despite only increasing passengers by 12%. It is obvious that the airport has an ambition to grow the international network, and even long-haul flights, and this will increase its climate impact substantially - this is not shown in the DMP.

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

Alternative uses

In the SEA there is a requirement to consider alternative options. Only one option has been selected for evaluation and that is to close the airport and utilise the ground for 'open

storage'.

The preamble in Appendix E mentions a couple of other options which sound like they could carry economic, social and tourism benefits but then says: *“for the purposes of this assessment it has been assumed that the site would be used for open storage”*.

This is probably the least attractive option from every point of view apart from management simplicity and making the case for maintaining the airport appear more attractive.

There will be many potential alternative uses for the site and existing facilities. To take one obvious possibility the relatively high and exposed location would have good potential for renewable energy generation (both wind, solar thermal and solar PV). Given community involvement through the Council this could have significant economic benefits for the community and could spur a range of spin off opportunities – for example a business park offering free electricity to tenants when the wind was blowing or sun shining could trigger some interesting new operating models and employment opportunities. A solar heat collection system coupled with heat pumps could enable housing development with zero carbon heat costs, or be used for light industry requiring heat (eg a bakery).

Cornwall already has the Wave Hub development, perhaps Newquay Old Airfield could provide a matching on-shore research facility coupled with significant training and skills development opportunities that are more realistic and realizable than hoping that an airline will deign to develop a flight training school for jobs that would be primarily based outside Cornwall.

The large open space also has potential for a number of leisure and sporting activities – although whether any of these could be an economically viable component of a holistic development plan would require further assessment.

If a valid assessment of the strategic plan is to be made then it must be considered against at least some serious alternative uses – simply settling on closing the airfield and settling on the default 'open storage' option is just not good enough. In particular there are potential uses that could positively encourage sustainable economic growth and employment (Objective 8).

Appraisal of Economic Benefits

In terms of the economic benefits to Cornwall of the passenger flows the plan claims that there is a net inflow of visitors and thus money into the Cornish economy. This claim seems dubious on the evidence presented, and the projections assume that there is more potential for increasing inbound tourism than outgoing.

Again the opposite appears to be true. If other programmes are successful in increasing the GVA of Cornwall then the implication is that more Cornish people will be flying out. No evidence is presented that there is any additional demand for inbound flights that could not be filled by road or enhanced rail links.

The most likely effect of expanding the airport would be to increase the proportion of outbound tourism, leaching money from the Cornish economy.

The paper makes a case that the airport itself generates economic activity that is beneficial to the local community. A number of possible businesses are suggested that are related to the airport operations (catering, maintenance, flight training) but in practice unless a new airline was to decide to use it as a home base and develop very rapidly, these facilities are all better provided at other existing airports. There is no reason presented to suggest that Newquay could break in to any of these markets.

On the other hand, investing a similar amount of public money in non-air industry

dependent schemes would be far more likely to produce greater, more secure and sustainable jobs and activity for the local community.

In deciding whether to invest in the airport the Council needs to be fully aware of the lost opportunity costs of not investing in other areas for the benefit of Cornwall. At the simplest level taking just the money from the transport budget earmarked for the airport and using it to reduce all public transport fares in Cornwall towards zero (for example following the direction originally set by the Oyster Card scheme in London) would be likely to generate far more spin-off economic activity through allowing people to move around for employment and leisure, than investment in the airport to make it easier for people to spend their money outside Cornwall.

The models underlying the paper have made assumptions about the cost of jet fuel. Before the current economic turmoil we saw oil prices rise to levels approaching \$150/barrel; with the onset of global recession and consequent reduction in demand they have fallen back below \$40/barrel. Whilst it might be thought that this supports the long term view in the assumptions, it is more likely that these extreme fluctuations in price with relatively small changes in global demand indicate that supply is now constrained at current levels and any increase in demand will bid the price back up.

In addition as long as the recession lasts and demand is depressed, the oil industry will not be making investment in attempting to increase production, so that if the economy recovers and demand rises there is likely to be an even tighter supply situation and higher prices.

Since the growth in the air transport is effectively on hold for the duration of the recession, and the Newquay Masterplan is predicated upon continuing growth, it is a reasonable certainty that if the airport does grow it will be in a fuel supply and price regime similar to that of summer 2008 rather than winter 2009.

The impact of this on airline operators may well be negative for Newquay's growth ambitions as they will have to concentrate on the highest value routes.

Conclusions

The Draft Master Plan presents a vision of development that is skewed and not based on reality, nor deliverable. The risks have been underplayed, the benefits over-estimated. The realistic options have not been left open to the public, yet it is exactly those options that need to be examined. Among these is the option to cap the airport at its current level of activity, around 400,000 passengers per year, and to minimize the subsidy it requires to operate at this level. This can be done by staying in the existing terminal, curtailing capital investment in the airport facilities and establishing a largely unrelated business park on the fringes of the land. This delivers the highest rate of return and smallest exposure to risk as well as minimising both the environmental impacts and the financial losses to the Cornish economy. But equally the public should have the chance to opt for the closure of the airport and the benefits this would clearly bring in environmental terms and for redevelopment of the site as a more environmentally and economically sustainable project that would bring real long-term benefit to Cornwall.

SNAIRE comprises:



Bagas Gwer Kernewek
The Cornish Green Party

Campaign for
Better Transport 



**Friends of
the Earth**



Snaire contact address: Millers House, Trenowth, Grampound Road, Truro TR2 4EH