

Statement

5 December 2023

I am Sir Stephen Timms and I have been the MP for the area including the Airport – East Ham constituency – since June 1994. Before that I was a member of the Council of the London Borough of Newham. I was in 1986-87 the vice chair of the Council’s planning committee, and in that capacity negotiated on behalf of the Council with the developer Mowlem the original planning conditions for the airport, ahead of its opening by Her Majesty the Queen which I attended in November 1987. The planning authority at the time was the London Docklands Development Corporation, but the LDDC and the Council were working closely together.

I went on to be the Chair of the Planning Committee in 1987-90, and Leader of the Council from 1990-94,

until my election to the House of Commons in June 1994.

I am a supporter of London City Airport. It has been, in my view, an excellent corporate citizen of the London Borough of Newham. Of course, the proposal for an airport was a controversial one. Some local residents energetically opposed the airport in principle, as inappropriate in an urban area. But there has always been a large group of residents – in my assessment, the larger group – which has welcomed the economic benefits that the airport has brought. The Docks, where the airport is located, used to be the source of tens of thousands of local jobs, but closed down in the 1970s. Most people, in the 1980s, when the Airport was being planned, were pleased at the prospect of jobs coming back.

I have always, therefore, placed a high value on the contribution made by the airport to the local economy. It provides excellent work opportunities for a significant number of local residents, and opportunities, particularly for young residents, to embark on attractive careers. The Airport has always been committed to recruiting unemployed local people, for example with its “Take Off Into Flight” initiative.

I do accept that, notwithstanding the impact on local residents, and within reasonable constraints, it is fair enough for the airport to seek to increase the number of people and flights it accommodates.

However, ever since I negotiated those original planning conditions for the airport as vice-chair and then chair of the Council’s planning committee almost four decades ago, it has been part of the deal that the airport will close for twenty-four hours

every weekend, from 12.30 pm Saturday lunchtime to 12.30 pm Sunday lunchtime. Extending flights to Saturday afternoon is a fundamental breach of that understanding. Residents living near the airport would never again be able to enjoy a quiet weekend afternoon in their garden. That would fundamentally erode residents' ability to enjoy their homes. And, if you are outdoors, those aeroplanes are extremely noisy!

The negotiation which I conducted on behalf of the Council in 1986 was, as I mentioned, with Mowlems, the developer and initial operator of the Airport.

The Mowlems representative with whom I negotiated was Mr Roger Sainsbury. He has long since retired, but I recently had the opportunity to meet him again in a different context. I took that opportunity to ask if he agreed that the 24 hour weekend pause was fundamental to reaching the

agreement which allowed the airport to open. He confirmed that that was his recollection too.

I do ask, on behalf of my constituents, that the appeal recommends upholding the Council's refusal of the application.

Thank you.