

Bagas Gwer Kernewek (The Cornish Green Party)

**Response to the Draft Masterplan (DM) for Newquay Airport,
January 2009**



The DM poses specific leading questions at the end of each chapter. The questions frequently presume that the DM is acceptable and seek to draw minor distinctions. The online consultation questionnaire is even more biased in providing a very limited range of possible responses.

We provide brief answers to the DM Chapter questions below and append some additional comments and information.

Q1.1: Given the guidance provided by the DfT regarding Masterplan preparation, are the reasons behind the preparation of this document clear and if not, why not?

– The reasons behind the preparation of the DM appear to be to justify committing public money and resources for the expansion of Newquay Airport. It does not provide any neutral information to inform a debate about potential uses of the site.

Q1.2: Are there any other areas you feel should be covered by the Masterplan? If so, please list with reasons.

The DM assumes a ‘business-as-usual’ approach predicated on continuing economic growth. The plan seeks to avoid any discussion of the relative benefits of an expanded airport as against alternative options in the context of current climate change forecasts and responses, or the current structural problems with our economic system, or the likely impact of increasingly scarce liquid fossil fuel resources.

Q2.1: Do you agree with the draft Masterplan’s interpretation of the policies affecting Newquay Cornwall Airport’s developments?

The DM fails to take any account of the wider policy framework. No case is made as to whether the expansion of the airport is desirable in social terms for Cornwall, and the assumptions behind the economic case are not supported by evidence. There is no benchmarking against realistic alternative options.

Q2.2: Are there any other policies you feel should be considered? Yes If so, please state which and your reasons.

Specifically the Climate Change Act 2008 is not considered (it passed into law around the time of publication of the DM, but those drafting the Masterplan should have been aware of it)

The potential impact of the legal requirement to reduce carbon emissions by 26% against the 1990 baseline by 2020 and 80% by 2050 on airport operations including flights is dramatic. The required reductions are liable to increase, but even on the current targets this implies a significant reduction in the number of movements at Newquay by 2020 – there is no technology that is going to reduce aircraft emissions by 26% over the next 12 years which would allow a zero growth plan for the airport.

For this reason, if no other, the Draft Masterplan should be withdrawn and completely reworked.

Q3.1: *Do you think the description of the Airport as it is today is an accurate summary? If not, why not?*

The historical description of the Airport is selective. The factual description of current physical assets is presumably accurate. The presentation of a survey of passengers who are flying as being representative of all Cornish residents' propensity to fly is ludicrous.

Q4.1: *The long-term vision of the Airport is set out in paragraph 4.2.1 in Section 4.2. Do you agree with this vision? If not, why not?*

We fundamentally disagree with the long-term vision for Newquay Airport

The vision stated is not achievable whilst it is built around continuing flying operations. There is no evidence that developing a small airport can provide a focal point for strategic employment. There is no evidence that a small regional airport is capable of being a key driver of the regional economy. The proposed designs in the DM do not follow the best sustainable development principles (which would be not to develop flying operations at the site), and it is laughable to suggest that a small airport serving a single county can offer a model for other regional airports to aspire to by growing itself.

Q4.2: *Do you agree with the long-term aims and short-term objectives set out in Section 4.3? If not, why not?*

The long term aims and the short term objectives are neither capable of delivering the stated vision, nor capable of supporting an alternative vision.

Q4.3: *Are there any other areas which you feel the Airport should include in its vision for the future?*

Given the location we would like to see an evaluation of the potential to develop a major onshore renewable energy facility including training, demonstration, development and production elements. This could match Cornwall's Wave Hub development off Hayle and establish the county as a player in a rapidly expanding market.

The availability of a brown-field site with an unobstructed elevated location provides a massive opportunity, and at the very least this needs fully evaluating alongside the existing proposals.

At first sight when compared with the option of concentrating on what may be a difficult market for aviation and related industries, and coupled with the opportunity to develop this looks like an option that could bring very significant economic and social benefits to Cornwall and the Newquay area. It reduces Cornwall's dependence on Tourism and offers better potential to act as “key driver of the regional economy”.

There may be other exciting opportunities for the future of the airfield, it is a flaw of the DM that it completely fails to explore these in order to demonstrate that attempting to grow the airport might be the best option for Cornwall.

Q5.1: *Do you agree with the case set out for an airport based at Newquay? If not, why not?*

The case set out for an airport based at Newquay is not made in the DM. In attempting to make the case it fails to deliver a sustainable proposal, it fails to demonstrate that the airport is the best solution for Cornwall, it uses flawed figures and makes schoolboy errors in attempting to manipulate them to the benefit of the plan, it fails to take account of the wider picture of future needs preferring to rely on discredited 'predict and provide' methodology which assumes that growth can continue without limits, it is extremely disingenuous in its treatment of carbon emissions, radiative forcing, and surface access impacts, it assumes that all the journeys it predicts might be made through the airport would be made by other means, and it appears to be ignorant of the implications of the accepted need for wide ranging reduction in pollution in order to avoid dangerous climate change.

The DM completely fails to make a satisfactory case for growing the airport.

Q5.2: *Are there any other considerations (constraints or opportunities) that you feel have not been raised? If so, please list with reasons.*

The DM fails to recognise the constraints of pollution (the requirement to reduce, not increase, carbon emissions in all aspects of life). The DM fails to recognise the constraints of fossil fuel (particularly liquid fuel) resource depletion and the likely impact on the economics of small airfield operation. The DM fails to recognise the impact of intermittent noise outside the immediate operating zone on the tranquility which attracts visitors.

The DM fails to examine seriously any alternative opportunities for use of the airfield site.

Q6.1: *Newquay Cornwall Airport has based its long-term plans on base case forecasts but has allowed for a range of growth in case of changes in the market or environment if the forecasts are exceeded. Do you agree this is a sensible strategy? If not, why not?*

The predict and provide methodology used is flawed.

Q6.2: *Newquay believes that demand at Newquay Cornwall Airport will be driven by economic growth within the region and inbound tourism (plus any other relevant factors). Do you agree with this view? If not, what factors do you think will stimulate growth at the Airport?*

There is no evidence that realistic levels of economic growth in Cornwall over the next 15 years need stimulate uncontrollable demand for flight, nor is there evidence that growth in tourism can not be achieved using other transport links.

Q7.1: *Do you agree with this phased approach to the incremental development of the existing facilities? If not, why not?*

The question is not relevant as we do not agree that development based on increasing flying operations is appropriate.

Q8.1: *Do you support the proposals for commercialisation of the Airport through attracting aviation related or associated activities? If not, why not?*

There is no link between transport infrastructure provision and economic activity. (SACTRA, 1999). It is as likely that the airport is actually a drain on the economy of Cornwall by exporting indigenous economic activity.

There is no evidence that aviation related activity will be attracted to the airport – even at the maximum forecast the airport would not be large enough for any likelihood of aircraft being based there, so maintenance and support activities would not be needed. There are already established flying schools for both private and commercial training throughout the SW and there is no reason to suppose that Newquay can penetrate this limited market.

A business park could be better supported by alternative activities as a hub for development – for example large scale renewable energy production could attract many diverse new businesses and training opportunities, leisure uses of the site could support new hotels that would be serving new visitors rather than taking custom from existing businesses in Newquay.

If the objective is to provide an engine for economic growth (and we would question whether this is a sensible objective) then an airport does not seem like a sensible choice.

Q8.2: *Do you support the development of a renewable energy centre on the south side of the airfield to support the Airport's ambition to become carbon neutral by 2015? If not, why not?*

The DM claims that the airport can be carbon neutral if it ignores the contribution from the aeroplanes that land and take-off at the airport. Unless the authors are suggesting that the airport is nothing to do with the aeroplanes that use it this is nonsense. It is like claiming that from a domestic point of view my journey to work by car is carbon neutral because I walk from my front door to the street where my car is parked.

Q8.3: *Do you support the development of the proposed Airport business park and the design standard for it set out within this Chapter and Appendix A3? No If not, why not?*

The development of a business park on the site might be appropriate if the engine for it was not an airport, but was something which encouraged the development of sustainable (in the sense of non-polluting and resource neutral) businesses.

Q9.1: *Do you agree that there is benefit in beginning passenger-independent development on the south side of the airfield? If not, why not?*

Focusing all resources on developing non-flying activities on the site would be sensible

Q9.2: *Do you agree that developments listed in this Chapter represent the best use of the area on the south side of the airfield? If not, why not?*

The developments listed in chapter 9 are either aviation related (aviation academy, airport offices, 'discovery centre') or parasitic (hotels and conference centre). These are not the best use of the area as they all depend on continuing use of the airport for flying.

Q9.3: *Are there any other facilities you would like to see developed at Newquay Cornwall Airport? Please list these, along with your reasons.*

We would like to see facilities which are capable of operating independently of the inevitable run-down of airfield operations.

Q10.1: *We have outlined our intention to grow the airport incrementally and in line with passenger demand. Do you agree with this approach and if not, why not?*

We do not believe that an approach based on responding to demand for an unsocial and economically and environmentally damaging activity is sensible.

Q10.2: *We have compared the benefits and disadvantages of developing new capacity on the existing terminal site to the north of the runway with a new terminal site to the*

south of the runway. We concluded that the best option would be to the south of the runway. Do you agree and if not, why not?

We do not believe that any money or effort should be spent developing terminal facilities on the South side. The existing North side terminal would be adequate for offering facilities to support general and commercial aviation as flying operations decline.

Q10.3: *Further, of the two options discussed on the south side, we feel the Integrated option Option 3) provides the most benefits and best opportunity for a successful development. Do you agree with this approach? If not, why not?*

Clearly we do not believe that any airport related development should take place on the south side.

Q11.1: *Do you agree with the general approach to the SEA as set in this chapter? If not, why not?*

The SEA completely fails to either take full account of the impact of flying operations, or to evaluate other potential uses for the same level of investment.

Q11.2: *Do you agree with the appraisal of options, as set out in Section 11.3? Are there any additional factors you feel should be taken in to consideration regarding sustainable development? If so, please list with details.*

It is outrageous to present three 'options' for development based on growing flying operations as the only choice. There are a myriad of potential uses for the site and to limit consideration to using the site for open storage is farcical.

The public and the council need to see some genuine alternatives so that a choice can be made that is best for Cornwall's future.

Q12.0 *There are no questions relating to Chapter 12.*

Chapter 12 Funding and Finance is arguably the most important part of the DM and to fail to invite public response, even in the form of leading questions used in the rest of the document, is a serious omission.

Ultimately the public are being asked to pay through their council tax for developing the airport (Transport including NCA is one of the largest single items in the One Cornwall Council draft budget).

The chapter raises serious risks, and there are even more short and medium term risks becoming apparent as the economic problems worsen.

Deeply worrying is the suggestion that the case for developing the airport is based upon the fact that the outgoing Council has already made debt and grant obligations which will be a burden on the Cornish taxpayer for the next 30 years.

Q13.1: *What principal social and economic benefits do you associate with Newquay Cornwall Airport and which of these do you regard as most important to local people?*

We see no irreplaceable social or economic benefits for local people from the airport. Whilst there are currently some jobs at the airport and some trade generated by the airport it is likely that investment in other activities would generate greater benefits.

In very simple terms the DM suggests that the public input to developing the airport is £15M over the next 3 years. With 408 direct and “induced” jobs at the airport simply giving all of those employees a grant of £12,500 a year would probably generate more economic activity as some of them developed small business ideas of their own.

Q13.2: *Are there other benefits to the growth of Newquay Cornwall Airport that you do not think we have addressed?*

The DM does not address the social and economic benefits or transitioning the airport away from flying into more sustainable activity.

Q13.3: *For you, what are the potential positive economic impacts of the Airport’s development?*

We see no potential positive economic impacts of the airport's development.

Q14.1: *Do you agree with the appraisal of surface access issues? If not, please explain any other transport matters that concern you or your organisation.*

The ASAS proposes generating massive amounts of additional traffic (up to 4 times current levels) with a small (not challenging) modal shift to public transport.

Q14.2: *Do you agree that access for buses, coaches, taxis and private cars will be better on a new terminal site to the south of the runway? If not, why not.*

We do not believe that a new terminal should be built so the question is not relevant.

Q14.3: *Newquay Cornwall Airport aims to provide enough car parking spaces on the airport to cater for people who do not use public transport rather than relying on satellite car parks away from the Airport. Do you agree with this strategy and if not, why not?*

The approach to parking is another classic example of predict and provide. The question betrays the flaw in the ASAS – it states “[the airport] aims to provide enough car parking spaces to cater for people who do not use public transport...” This approach completely undermines any attempt to promote a modal shift to greater public transport use.

Q14.4: *Do you think that the proposed ASAS will help to mitigate the key surface impacts identified and help to achieve the long-term modal split target the Airport has adopted? If not, what further measures do you think should be considered to ensure that it does?*

The ASAS is not capable of mitigating the surface impacts of the levels of growth anticipated. The only measure capable of mitigating the impact of the airport and promoting a modal shift is to reduce the number of flights using the airport.

Q15.1: *Do you agree that the carbon impact from the development of Newquay Cornwall Airport will have a similar impact if the same number of people arrived by other modes of travel? If not, why not?*

The DM carbon impact assessment is seriously flawed. The comparisons with other modes are artificially skewed to make flying appear less bad than it is.

Q16.1: *Do you think the Airport has addressed the main environmental impacts of the proposed development? If not, why not?*

The DM fails to address the main environmental impacts of the proposed development especially in relation to the carbon (and carbon equivalent) pollution impacts of flying.

Q17.1: *Do you think that the Airport has taken a responsible approach to the issues of mitigation and management of the impacts arising from the future development of the Airport?*

We believe that the proposed developments in the DM do not represent a responsible approach.

Q18.1: *Are there any elements of the residual impacts that you feel are not covered by this blight and compensation proposal? If so, please list them along with reasons.*

The noise impacts are based on the average noise contours. The use of average noise measurements does not adequately reflect the disturbance and distress caused by each flight as it is offset by periods of relative quiet between flights. In addition the impact further away from the airport of the disturbance caused by flights passing over an area that attracts visitors for its relative tranquility is not accounted.

The maps presented with noise contours are illegible, and appear to be estimates rather than being based on measurements.

Q18.2: *Do you feel there will be a requirement for a non-statutory Discretionary Purchase Scheme to supplement the statutory rights of property owners? If so, please explain why and what elements you see as necessary for the inclusion in the scheme.*

The statement in 18.4.2 that the developments planned “will not result in any depreciation in the value of nearby residential properties” seems to be wishful thinking. A non-statutory discretionary purchase scheme will certainly be necessary.

Q19.1: *Are there any other means in which you felt the Airport should have undertaken to reach its stakeholder group? If so, please describe the additional measures.*

The roadshow of exhibitions was not surprisingly poorly attended as most people remain unaware of the extent of the financial commitment that the council is proposing to make (and has already made) with their money.

The availability of basic information to the public during the preparation of the plan has been very limited. Council minutes do not make it clear what has been discussed and scrutiny appear to have been weak.

The website consultation is of very poor design providing only guided questions with choices biased in favour of development.

No attempt has been made to generate a public debate on potential uses of the airport or the issues around it ahead of the preparation of this very one-dimensional draft masterplan.

Holding the consultation over the Christmas holiday looks like an attempt to discourage responses.

Q19.2: *Are there any additional stakeholders you feel were not included in the consultation process set out above? Yes, If so, please list your additions and why.*

Stakeholders should include all residents of Cornwall, as well as all visitors. In particular since the airport disproportionately serves the relatively better-off residents and visitors serious efforts should be made to engage with those who are excluded from benefiting from the use of public money to support the proposed developments.

Additional Comments:

Airport Surface Access Strategy (ASAS)

The main concerns with the Surface Access Strategy are the number of additional vehicles that it promises will be using the roads, and the lack of specific policy proposals to support the ambitions for a small (not challenging) modal shift away from car use.

We are given forecasts for passenger numbers and the proportion using public transport (defined as any vehicle carrying more than 6 passengers). The remainder are all using 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 (1) 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 employees.”. 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 Airport Masterplan to attempt to present the proposals in a favourable light this does not appear to be supported by the underlying data.

- (1) PU/DO numbers are not given directly but can to 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.

Passenger Forecasts

A fundamental problem with the forecasts used as the basis for the Master Plan is indicated in the introduction to 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 fairly 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.

Propensity to Fly versus GVA

The graph on p6 shows Cornwall GVA at £8k and propensity to fly around 0.2. The next nearest region has a GVA around £10.5k and propensity to fly around 1.5.

Even if the Convergence and other programmes are 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 dependent on air connections. Northern Ireland is, of course, on the other side of the Irish Sea.

Tourism Projections

Recent growth at Newquay has been based upon the introduction of 'low cost' or 'no-frills' carriers such as RyanAir. Much of the Masterplan appears to assume that if these minimal cost flights were not available then the journeys would still be made by other means.

In fact the reverse is the case – it is the existence of the low-price flights that creates the demand, so much of the Carbon Impact Study is deeply flawed as it attempts to set the carbon cost of the airport operations against the cost of alternatives that would not in practice be used.

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.

Context of the Climate Change Act

The masterplan was written before the Climate Change Act 2008 passed into law, but it is surprising that the authors appear to be un-aware of the direction of Government policy.

The act commits the UK to serious cuts in Carbon Emissions within the timescale of the masterplan.

The growth plan for the airport includes shows 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 latest science would like to see increased much further for safety) which will have to be applied across all sectors as there is no one sector which can deliver the total required.

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.

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 an fuel supply and price regime similar to that of summer 2008 rather than winter 2009.

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

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 realisable 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 which could positively encourage sustainable economic growth and employment (Objective 8)

Bagas Gwer Kernewek,

c/o 9 Trevethan Rise, Falmouth, Cornwall, TR11 2DX

phone 07736 741268

email info@cornishgreenparty.org.uk