

## **Annual General Meeting – 21<sup>st</sup> April 2006**

### **Campaign Director's Report**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The last twelve months has seen Future Heathrow establish itself as the public voice for a modernised and expanded Heathrow. We have succeeded in setting the agenda and reminding people of the economic importance of the airport to the UK as a whole and particularly to the Heathrow region.

In the early stages of the campaign there was often an assumption that we were scaremongering when we referred to the decline and possible closure of the airport. Recent developments in international competition especially in Europe have driven home the point that Heathrow's position will only be sustained if we modernise and expand with a third runway for regional flights.

I think the analogy with the London docks has been very useful as a way of reminding people how quick and irreversible decline can be if you do not invest and modernise. Our campaign slogans like "Your job, your future" and "Heathrow can either decline or expand. It cannot stay as it is" have I believe been very useful shorthand ways of getting our basic message across.

One of the more complex aspects of the arguments against expansion has been about environmental issues. I take the view that with appropriate development Heathrow can and should be far less environmentally damaging than it is at present. We do need to keep stressing the importance of the development and modernisation of the infrastructure of the whole Heathrow region especially the transport infrastructure. Progressive decline is not just economically disastrous but also leaves people living and working in a poor environment.

The next 8 to 10 months are going to be crucial. After the May local elections we need to step up the campaign and two of the key groups will be the business community and the trade unions.

The local business groups need to be galvanised to contact their local councillors and MP's while we get the national voice of business to communicate directly with Government and the media.

Some of the trade unions meetings have been particularly effective in conveying to their members the importance of fighting for the airport. We need to extend this to other trade unions and to reach out to as many airport and airport dependent employees as possible. They can be a very powerful voice for the airport and although I think we have made very good progress I think there is still much more to be done. We must never forget that there are 70,000 jobs on the airport and they need to be heard.

Our future campaign plans should make maximum use of our excellent campaign material and to follow up many of the plans already in hand. The links we have established with the media must be used to highlight important events like the support Heathrow cards as well as using any national and international events that reinforce the case for investment.

It has been a particular pleasure to have so much support from members of the Committee. I have been very impressed by the unstinting offers of support. My task would have been much harder had I been working with a less committed group of people.

Many thanks.

Lord Soley of Hammersmith  
Campaign Director