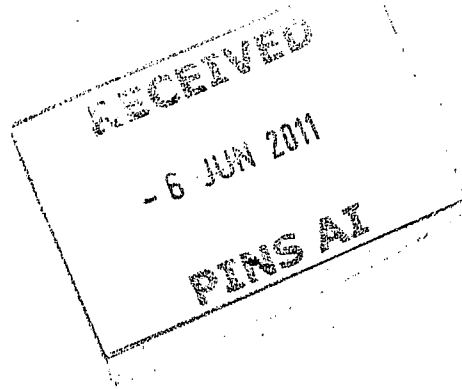


June 1st 2011.

CPRE/ai/c



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The Planning Inspectorate
Temple Quay House
2 The Square
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Dear Sir/Madam

**Re: PINS: App/L2250/V/10/2131934
London Ashford Airport**

On the 22nd of March last I gave evidence at the Public Inquiry concerning a planning application (Y06/1647/SH) submitted by London Ashford Airport to extend the length of the runway at the Lydd Ashford Airport in Kent. The evidence I gave was on behalf of the Campaign for the Protection of Rural England and it covered the subject area of sea level rise. My reason for writing is that I am concerned about the fact that I was told by both the barrister representing the airport and the inquiry inspector that much of my evidence was inadmissible. The context is as follows.

Given that my area of expertise is climate change with special reference to sea level rise, I am concerned that an application should be made to develop airport facilities at a shingle and sand based site that is only 2 to 3 metres above sea level. Most of my evidence was concerned with questioning the degree of protection offered by existing and planned sea defences, and the amount of sea level rise that might reasonably be expected over the next century and beyond. After being questioned by the CPRE's defence, it was the turn of the airport's barrister to question me. He asked whether I was familiar with Defra's UKCP09 climate information that is designed to provide guidance to aid planning for sea level rise. I was familiar with this. He then questioned me as to whether my evidence conformed to the UKCP09 guidelines, and I had to say that some of it did not, but that much of my evidence was in fact based on much more recent information. Thus, it is well acknowledged that the predicted rates of sea level rise are regularly being increased. I was then told by both the barrister and the inspector that they were only allowed to take into account the rates of sea level rise as forecast in UKCP09, so effectively much of my evidence might be dismissed.

To be honest, I find this quite bizarre. Whilst I recognise that planning authorities, developers, inspectors, etc all need guidance on this matter, on a subject as important as sea level rise then it seems to me that government predictions need to be constantly updated. I suspect that the data behind the 2009 UKCP09 predictions are based on the modelling of data that was gathered over perhaps the period 2006 to 2008. Things have moved on incredibly since then, and an array of publications point to a worsening of the sea level rise scenario.

I would be obliged if this note could be added to the evidence given at the inquiry, and I would welcome the Planning Inspectorate's view on whether (and for how long) it will be relevant to stick to the UKCP09 sea level rise predictions.

Yours sincerely

Geoff Meaden (Dr)