

Matthew Harrison

From: Simon Finch [REDACTED]
Sent: 29 October 2018 16:52
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Port Operations (Jersey) - airport consultation

Dear Sir

I feel encouraged to write to you in relation to the Strategic Objectives and 2019 Work Programme at Ports of Jersey, with particular dismay at the proposed £42million spend at the Jersey airport.

I am sure that you are indeed familiar with the current airport, which was updated in 1997, with some ongoing works since that time, embracing parts of the older terminal structures. And while I acknowledge that some regulatory issues have arisen due to changes over the years, the proposed expense of £42million seems completely disproportional to the advantages the passenger will experience in the proposed new building.

The island's tourist industry is hampered by growth due to the rapid reduction in hotel beds over the past three decades, hence airport traffic will always have a limiting factor as additional hotel beds are not forthcoming. Business travel and short island stays may help in keeping growth marginally positive, but the proposed spend does not in my opinion correspond to future growth in airport traffic.

This is quite simply a vanity project undertaken by management wanting to create a personal legacy. They know that ultimately the actual spend will far outstrip the £42million estimated in 2017, as historically all States of Jersey projects are run over budget, and in many circumstances considerably so. Despite the PoJ being a "private business", should they suffer financial pressure it knows that the States of Jersey and therefore the tax payer will be forced to bailout this project.

The airport currently serves its purpose particularly well. Most flights have a checkin time of one hour or less, we have few flights requiring more, therefore there will be a limit on passenger numbers within the departures terminal, and this can be managed by the check in personnel to ensure no over crowding.

The times at which the terminal comes under strain are for inclement weather, such as fog resulting in delays, and naturally frustrations, yet travellers generally understand weather plays its part. More passengers are using technology to better time their appearance at the airport for delayed flights and this should only improve with better use of technology going forward. This should help to reduce the capacity issues at times of weather delays and other delays due to technical faults etc.

The £42m+ would be better off spent looking at working out how the airport can operate during these weather patterns and look at new technology that allows aircraft movement rather than grounding all flights.

The current restaurant and shop is adequate for the needs of the traveller. Maybe best to look at the lack of options at the harbour before thinking of additional options for dining at the airport.

The Gate departure arm is tired and agreed in need of modernisation, however it operates extremely well and since 1937 the airport has performed outstandingly in terms of safety. There is no necessity to get drawn into a regulatory money pit when the services have been more than adequate for decades.

There are many other points to be made against this vanity project which will not improve the experience for the regular traveller.

I would suggest a survey conducted at the airport requesting what people want from an airport. I would hazard a guess that the list would look something like:

Free drop off/collect zone

Sufficient check in desks so queues are short
Sufficient security checks so time to get through is swift
A place to grab a coffee/sandwich/paper
Warm and dry area to sit
Clean toilets
Accessible and readable departure screens
A wide variety of duty free goods at reasonable prices
Flights that take off on time
If flights delayed accurate and honest information is quickly available
Use of technology implemented elsewhere to minimise disruption from weather
Car parking fees are reasonable
Decent website to track flight arrivals and departures
Decent baggage handlers that don't damage bags
Decent disabled facility access in terminal
Assistance for disabled and frail customers to board/depart aircraft
Bags returned on clean carousel within a reasonable time frame from landing
Sufficient number of trolleys that work and no need for a coin
Easy access to hirecar representatives
Easy access to an ATM for arriving passengers
A board at the taxi stand with estimated costs of travel in taxi from airport to main destinations

(ie town/st Brelades bay, Gorey) A bus timetable in the airport building at the carousels so people can plan their routes.

These are just but a few things that would be desired, and most of these can be catered for in the current structure. The new £42m+ would add very little to any of these points above.

In a time where taxes are being raised to pay for long term health care, we are spending £10s of millions on where the hospital is to be located a further £42m+ on this complete white elephant is beyond a joke.

I look forward to hearing that this has been shelved and money better used to provide a more efficient transport service across PoJ services and especially re improvements at the harbour and the embracing of technology to reduce fog delays which is increasingly available.

Kind regards

Simon Finch.