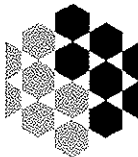


From the office of the  
Minister of the Environment



Department of the  
**Environment**  
www.doeml.gov.uk

Johnsons Solicitors  
Johnson House  
50-56 Wellington Place  
Belfast  
BT1 6GF

DOE Private Office  
Room 717  
Clarence Court  
10-18 Adelaide Street  
BELFAST  
BT2 8GB

Telephone: 028 9054 1166  
Email: private.office@doeml.gov.uk  
Your reference: DH/HLMcC/CM  
Our reference: COR/139/08

28<sup>th</sup> March 2008

Thank you for your letter of 19<sup>th</sup> February 2008 about the on-going review of the Planning Agreement at George Best Belfast City Airport (GB BCA). The Minister has read your letter and asked me to reply.

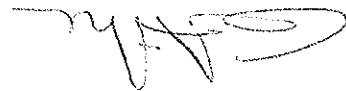
The Minister has been advised that, in view of the already extensive correspondence with Johnsons Solicitors and the residents' groups on the matter of a Public Inquiry and intensification of use at GB BCA, including the recent, lengthy Judicial Review proceedings, there is nothing the Department can usefully add in order to be helpful on these issues.

The Minister can confirm that the UK ratified the UNECE Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (the Aarhus Convention) on 24<sup>th</sup> February 2005. In line with the Convention's procedures, the UK became a full party to the Convention 90 days after this date in May 2005. The Minister agrees that the Convention is an important measure to ensure helpful and transparent procedures in relation to this review are in line with the intention of the Convention.

In relation to your comments about costs, the Minister would remind you that this was a matter for the courts and in reaching his decision whereby he exceptionally awarded the Department costs, the Learned Judge clearly took into account all the relevant facts of the legal challenge.

JOHNSONS  
2 APR 2008  
RECEIVED

GLYNIS AIKEN  
Private Secretary to Arlene Foster MLA  
Minister of the Environment



Yours sincerely,

The Minister hopes that you find this letter helpful in clarifying the position.

Finally, the Minister would like to refute your unsubstantiated allegation of an "undisclosed deal between the City Airport and the Department". You would need to take up your reliance on the associated City Airport article with its senior management. However, on a simple reading of the article it would appear that the reference to a "deal" is merely a comment concerning the recommendation of the EIP panel, linking the increase in seats for sale to the installation of a noise and track-keeping system.