



OFFICER REPORT TO LOCAL COMMITTEE
(Surrey Heath)

**CONSULTATION ON PROPOSALS TO EXPAND HEATHROW
AIRPORT
6 March 2008**

KEY ISSUE/DECISION:

To consider a response to the Government consultation proposals to expand Heathrow Airport.

BUSINESS CASE:

1. In 2002, the Government consulted on its air transport policy and set out its conclusions in the 2003 White Paper *The Future of Air Transport*. This promised further work and consultation on a number of issues relating to Heathrow Airport. In the light of that work, the Government is seeking views on how Heathrow could be developed over the next 20 years or more.
2. The White Paper made clear that the Government supported the further development of Heathrow, by adding a third runway and exploring the scope for making greater use of the existing two runways. The support was conditional on
 - A noise limit – no increase in the size of the area significantly affected by aircraft noise (as measured by the 57dBA Leq contour in 2002);
 - Air quality limits – being confident of meeting European air quality limits around the airport, in particular for nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) which is the most critical local pollutant around Heathrow; and
 - Improving public transport access to the airport.

The Department for Transport subsequently set up the Project for the Sustainable Development of Heathrow to consider whether, and how, these conditions might be met. The consultation document presents the results of this work and invites responses on a revised proposal for a third runway and review of operational procedures to increase the capacity of the existing airport. The Government states that responses will be taken into account in

reaching final policy decisions on Heathrow. The 14-week consultation period ends on 27 February 2008. A recommended response to each of the issues is set out in this report together with **ANNEX 1** answering the specific consultation questions. The County Council's response to the earlier consultation leading up to the 2003 White Paper is summarised in **ANNEX 2**. The revised recommendation by the Executive Members for Transport and Environment are attached as **Annex 5**.

CURRENT PLANNING POLICY:

3. The draft South East Regional Spatial Strategy (SE Plan) and the Surrey Structure Plan 2004 both include policy responses to the White Paper. SE Plan Policy T9 gives guidance to local authorities for their relevant plans and strategies to support the development of Gatwick and Heathrow airports within the levels of growth agreed in the White Paper. Priority is sought for an Airport Surface Access Strategy to achieve reductions in the environmental impact of surface access and a higher modal share in favour of public transport. The SE Plan Core Strategy raises serious concerns regarding the regional implications of the Aviation White Paper. It maintains that the forecast aviation traffic growth would require levels of development and surface movement which will be very difficult to accommodate, especially in the already congested, over-heated and polluted area around Heathrow.
4. The SE Plan was prepared on the basis of the current level of agreed growth at Heathrow. Consideration therefore needs to be given to the possible impacts of the proposals on the plan in terms of provision made for housing, employment growth and infrastructure. The plan states that the Heathrow situation would be reviewed in light of any future Ministerial decision or as part of the first review of the Plan, whichever comes first. The SE Plan further states (Core Strategy Para 1.28) that it believes the Government should have given more overall emphasis to the potential of regional airports.
5. The Surrey Structure Plan 2004 acknowledges the contribution that the two international airports make to the prosperity of the county and also the significant environmental impacts such as traffic congestion, urbanisation, noise and pollution. Policy DN8 seeks to safeguard the role of Heathrow and Gatwick Airports provided that the impacts on Surrey are sufficiently mitigated and substantial investment in supporting public transport infrastructure is provided to address current and future needs. The Structure Plan specifically mentions the need for airport expansion to be conditional upon substantial investment in surface access including Airtrack.

THE POSITION OF OTHER LOCAL AUTHORITIES:

6. Spelthorne Borough Council's Executive considered a response on 12 February. Their Members wish to look afresh at the proposals, but are not objecting in principle. Runnymede Borough Council are supporting the proposals, subject to appropriate transport infrastructure being in place, including Airtrack. Other local authorities around the airport have formed an alliance called the 2M Group to "present a common voice for the 2 million people whose quality of life is affected by Heathrow." The membership comprises west London boroughs and the boroughs of Slough, Windsor and Maidenhead and South Bucks District Council. Most of these authorities are known to be against the proposals, primarily on environmental impact grounds. The London Assembly's formal position on the proposals is not

Item 7

known at this stage, but the Mayor has issued a statement stating firm opposition to the proposals on the grounds that it will generate increased emissions of greenhouse gases and impact on climate change and lead to increased noise and air pollution for those living under the airport's flight path. The South East Regional Assembly has yet to respond formally, but the Planning Committee has raised concerns regarding displaced housing and infrastructure and environmental impacts.

THE PROPOSALS:

- 7 The consultation proposals include adding a third runway north of the A4 (2,200m compared with the original 2,000m proposal in the White Paper), supported by additional passenger terminal facilities (a sixth terminal), together with road and rail connections. By 2030, the airport could then handle up to around 700,000 flights a year, which is nearly 50 per cent more than today. (Indicative maps are included as **ANNEXES 3 and 4**)
8. Other proposals are concerned with measures to increase the number of flights from the existing two runways and other operational changes. The existing runways would be used for both arrivals and departures – what is called 'mixed mode'. This could allow up to around 540,000 flights, up 12 per cent on current levels, ahead of any new runway capacity. Full 'mixed mode' could be achieved by 2015. However, this is seen as a temporary measure, as mixed mode operations on the existing runways would cease once a third runway was operating. The new runway, however, would operate with both arrivals and departures.
9. Adding a third runway and a sixth terminal would require additional land, with a loss of around 700 properties, including the community of Sipson, with the details being subject to planning permission. The current 'westerly preference' (preferred direction of flight operation) would be maintained, but the 'Cranford agreement' (which generally prohibits easterly departures off the northern runway) could be abandoned as an interim measure to increase use of the existing runways. The Government believes that, on the basis of substantial reductions in road vehicle and aircraft emissions expected over the next decade or so, a short third runway could be added and EU air quality limits for particulates and nitro-dioxide could be met without the need for further mitigation measures.
- 10 Surface Access - The Government has not identified the need for special measures to limit growth in road traffic or mitigate vehicle emissions in order to comply with the air quality tests in the event of further development. However, they have looked at how road traffic conditions and demand on public transport would be expected to change over time in the Heathrow area. The Government is satisfied that there is potential to meet the likely demand for public transport access to Heathrow with a third runway. They claim some demand management may be needed in the Central Terminal Area if full mixed mode is introduced with effect from 2015. If development were taken forward, it would be for the airport operator, working with key parties, to develop a surface access strategy as part of preparing for any planning application.

RESPONSE:

- 11 **Adding a third runway and passenger terminal facilities (a sixth terminal)** - The County Council is mindful of the beneficial contribution that the airport makes to Surrey's economy and recognises the need to safeguard the role of Heathrow as a major international airport. There is however a risk that the potential environmental disbenefit including traffic congestion, noise and air pollution could outweigh the advantages to the people of Surrey, unless adequate infrastructure is in place. The land required for the third runway and sixth terminal will result in the loss of 700 homes, an area of Green Belt and mineral deposits. The consequent need for alternative housing for those displaced could mean a proportion seeking new homes in Surrey, in addition to housing generated by the growth in employment. This could have a serious impact on Surrey's Green Belt.
- 12 **Introducing mixed mode on the existing runways** – Whilst optimum use of the two existing runways would add to capacity in the interim, this will be at the expense of runway alternation which does allow significant relief to communities. However, mixed mode could be supported if restricted to peak hours to ensure residents benefit from the respite of alternation.
- 13 **Westerly Preference** - Continuation of the 'westerly preference' should be supported.
- 14 **The Cranford agreement** – Whilst it seems reasonable to suspend the 'Cranford Agreement' so as to spread the noise burden and also allow some respite through alternation for people living under the flight path of the southern runway, Stanwell would experience landings on the southern runway during easterly operations for the first time. This would impact significantly both on Cranford and Stanwell village. This is not therefore supported.
- 15 **Night time rotation of westerly and easterly preference** - The government's view is that the practice of rotating westerly and easterly preference at night should be maintained. This is supported as it allows more landings at night to come in over less populated areas.
- 16 **Runway alternation for arrivals in the early morning (0600 to 0700 hours)** - The government's view is that the current trial of alternating runways for arrivals in the 0600 – 0700 should be continued on a permanent basis subject to the operational provisos set out. This is supported.
- 17 **Surface Access** - According to the DfT projections the numbers of people taking public transport to the airport will double to around 38 million per annum by 2030. Numbers travelling by road will also double to 53 million per annum nationally. It is uncertain what additional transport schemes will be in place by 2030 to cope with the extra demand, as it has been left for a future surface access strategy to determine. However, it is essential that adequate transport access is provided to mitigate the potential traffic congestion generated by the proposals.
- 18 This consultation includes no new transport proposals other than the realignment of the M4 motorway spur further to the east to accommodate the third runway and sixth terminal. **(See ANNEXES 3 and 4)**. The A4 will need

to be routed below the taxiways linking the new runway to the existing airport. The Government have said that it would be for the operator, as part of a comprehensive transport assessment, to develop a surface access strategy as part of preparing for a planning application. This would include working with the Highways Agency and local authorities (including the County Council) to identify any demand management measures needed to address road traffic congestion around the airport.

19. The proposals for Terminal 5 assumed that the Airtrack proposal would be in place. This would provide a direct rail link into the airport from Waterloo, Reading, Woking and Guildford. BAA has commenced a Transport and Works Act programme to secure powers for its construction. The capital costs are estimated at £350-400 million and subject to funding could be completed by 2013. It is essential this scheme is implemented in terms of these expansion proposals and that funding is assured. Crossrail services will also serve the airport. Construction of Crossrail is due to begin in 2010 with services starting from 2017.
20. Other than existing commitments outlined above, there are also no proposals for the M4 or M25 and only mention of capacity improvements to the existing rail network, including the underground. Although it is recognised that supporting transport infrastructure proposals will be part of the operator's surface access strategy yet to be developed, serious concerns on whether the appropriate scale of improvements will be in place by the overall completion date of 2030 should continue to be expressed.
21. **Climate Change** - Since publication of the White Paper, the debate on climate change has shifted from whether we need to act to how much we need to do by when, and the economic implications of doing so. The Climate Change Bill, which is scheduled to receive Royal Assent later this year, introduces a legal framework to cut carbon emissions and adapt to climate change. The Bill will seek to reduce carbon emissions by at least 60% and the Government is committed to considering stronger reductions and the implications of including other greenhouse gases and emissions from international aviation and shipping. The Bill has been widely criticized for its omission of targets relating to the UK's share emissions of international aviation and shipping. Aviation is a growing source of greenhouse gas emissions in the UK. The Department for Transport's projections suggest that aviation will emit 17.4 million tonnes of carbon in 2050. This is equivalent to 26% of the UK total carbon allowance under a 60% reduction target. Given the Department for Transport's projections for increased aviation emissions, the County Council advocates the inclusion of aviation emissions in the climate change Bill's targets for a 60 percent reduction in carbon emissions and also supports action at International and EU level to include aviation in the emissions trading scheme.
22. **Air Quality** – The consultation asserts that the EU air quality targets can still be met with a third runway and that considerable detailed work has been done to demonstrate this. Whilst it is reassuring that there are specific targets that the government will be required to meet emanating from the EU Directive, there is concern that these projections may be too optimistic. There is significant weight attached to improvements in technology to achieve this, which may not materialise to the extent assumed. It is surprising that the concerns expressed over the air quality situation in the White Paper have all been overcome to the extent that no traffic mitigation measures are required.

The County Council takes this issue very seriously, particularly as there are already exceedances of the air quality limits in parts of London. Hence it would not be able to support the expansion unless there is a clear commitment from the government to ensure that BAA meet these specific targets for Particulates and Nitrogen dioxide in 2011 and 2015 respectively.

23. **Noise** - The evidence the Terminal 5 Inquiry Inspector heard on noise led him to impose two particular conditions related to noise, the contour cap and a movement limit. The County Council notes the Government's assurances that the 57leq contour cap will not be exceeded with a third runway, however clearly the movements limit would be significantly breached. The recent ANASE study does also demonstrate that people's sensitivity to noise does start at 43leq rather than 57leq. With improved track-keeping it is likely that communities under the flight tracks will experience significant noise and disturbance and the county council would wish to be satisfied that adequate compensation and sound-proofing is provided to compensate communities such as Stanwell. The County Council would also expect that the noise contour cap would be strictly enforced, to the extent that maximum capacity will not be achieved in some circumstances.
24. **Security, emergency planning, and business continuity** – Although not part of the consultation, the County Council is concerned to ensure that full provision is made for the increased security arrangements, emergency planning implications, and business continuity requirements arising from any expansion is use of the airport, both within the airport itself, and for the surrounding area.
25. The revised recommendation by the Executive Members for Transport and Environment are attached as Annex 5.

CONSULTATIONS:

25. Views on the proposals have been sought from the Runnymede and Spelthorne Local Committees and from the Transportation and Environment & Economy Select Committees. At their meeting on 4 February, the Spelthorne Local Committee did not approve the officer recommendation and on a majority vote carried a motion that the Executive be informed that, "On balance the Local Committee rejects any further expansion at Heathrow." At their meeting on 8 February, County members on the Runnymede Local Committee voted by a small majority against the proposed third runway and sixth terminal and also against 'mixed mode' operation. The Chairman of the Runnymede Local Committee has written separately to the Executive with further comments.
26. At their meeting on 13 February, the Transportation Select Committee made the following comments with regard to the consultation. The Committee felt that in terms of transport the consultation is flawed as any expansion of Heathrow Airport would raise serious transport issues concentrating on the M25 access and overall traffic movements, alternative routes when the M25 was not available, and public transport links to and from the airport. The Committee believes it is essential that the comprehensive transport assessment and surface access strategy mentioned by the Government as being required by any company seeking planning applications and the Airtrack proposal and Crossrail services provision be fully scoped and sound

investment proposals be put forward so as to allow stakeholders to comment on a completed proposal. The Committee would ask the Executive to make note of this in any reply to consultation that the major transport infrastructure required should be in place before any expansion at the airport becomes fully operational. The Environment and Economy Select Committee met on 18 February, after agenda despatch. Their views will therefore be subject of a separate report.

SECTION 151 OFFICER COMMENTARY:

27. There are no direct financial implications arising at this stage but there could be significant implications if expansion proposals proceed.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

28. As these are only consultation proposals at this stage, there are no financial implications for the County Council.

VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS:

29. As these are only consultation proposals at this stage, there are no value for money implications for the County Council.

EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS:

30. The consultation proposals seek to maintain the competitiveness of Heathrow Airport and to offer economic and social opportunities generated by aviation and related industries. In turn this will benefit individuals from a diverse range of multi cultural backgrounds and socio economic groups around the airport.

RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS:

31. As these are only consultation proposals at this stage, there are no immediate risk management implications for the County Council (though separate discussions are taking place about the implications of new larger airplanes using the airport). If the expansion in use of the airport goes ahead, there are security, emergency planning and business continuity implications for the County Council.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

It is recommended that the Executive recognises the important role of Heathrow in terms of its contribution to the national and local economy, but any support for further growth be conditional on:

- i) Substantial investment in local and regional access and the provision of major rail investment, including Airtrack, linking the airport with the Midlands, the West and the South, in addition to London being completed before any further expansion in use of the airport taking place;
- ii) Environmental constraints, particularly concerning the noise contour cap and EU air quality targets are not breached; and,

- iii) Security, emergency planning and business continuity arrangements being properly addressed.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

The report is drawn up on the basis of the Council's previous agreed policy, namely to recognise the important role of Heathrow in terms of its contribution to the national and local economy and therefore to continue to support proposals for a third runway and associated passenger terminal facilities. However, this endorsement is conditional on agreed environmental limits not being exceeded (especially in light of current concerns over climate change), to appropriate transport infrastructure being in place, including funding for Airtrack and other road and public transport improvements, and to Security, emergency planning and business continuity arrangements being properly addressed.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT:

The report, together with Annex 1 answering the specific consultation questions, will be forwarded to the Department for Transport as the County Council's formal response. The Department for Transport will conduct an analysis of all the responses received which will inform the Government's decision on whether to give its full backing to the development of Heathrow.

Lead Officer: Michael Jennings, Head of Policy and Public Affairs 020 8541 9043

Contact Officers: David Sutton 020 8541 9380 and Hilary Herbert 020 8541 9431

Consulted: David Munro, Executive Member for Transport, Peter Martin, Executive Member for Environment, Patricia Greer, Strategic Director for Policy and Performance and Andy Roberts, Strategic Director, Services for Communities.

Sources/background papers:

DfT (November 2007) *Adding Capacity at Heathrow Airport Consultation*

DfT (December 2006) *The Future of Air Transport Progress Report Cm 6977*

DfT (December 2003) *The Future of Air Transport Cm6046*
