

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

COUNCIL – 25 JANUARY 2006

REPORT BY EXECUTIVE MEMBER

12 LONDON LUTON AIRPORT CONSULTATION (OCTOBER 2005):
LUTON AIRPORT DRAFT MASTER PLAN

WARD(S) AFFECTED: ALL

RECOMMENDATION – that in respect of the consultation document entitled “Master Plan – A Consultation: Project 2030”, London Luton Airport Operations Limited be advised that East Herts Council:

- (A) objects to the proposals set out in the draft Master Plan on the basis of the significant consequences for the District in terms of increased aircraft movements and noise, together with the impacts of increased surface access requirements;
- (B) considers that the proposals do not reflect the provisions of the Air Transport White Paper; and
- (C) endorses the response of Hertfordshire County Council attached at Appendix A to this report.

1.0 Purpose/Summary of Report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek the views of Full Council on a suite of consultation documents published by London Luton Airport Operating Limited regarding future growth at Luton. The suite of documents is entitled “Master Plan – A Consultation: Project 2030”, and sets out the future of the airport to 2030. The views of Full Council are sought in order that the District Council’s formal response can be made, prior to the consultation deadline of 27 January 2006.

2.0 Contribution to the Council’s Corporate Objectives

2.1 The report seeks to contribute to Corporate Priority 6 by preserving the unique mix of rural and urban communities.

3.0 Background

- 3.1 The Government's Air Transport White Paper requires airport operators to produce a master plan. More detailed guidance on the production of airport master plans has been produced by the Department for Transport (DfT). This sets out that such master plans will not have a statutory basis, unless adopted by Local Authorities as part of their Local Development Frameworks.
- 3.2 The purpose of master plans is to "provide an indication of an airport operator's plans for infrastructure development" to assist in long-term resource planning and communication with stakeholders. The level of detail expected to be included depends on the likely level of development in the near term.
- 3.3 The proposed master plan begins with a description of the airport as it currently operates, including details on passenger numbers, employee numbers and the impact of the airport on the locality and the region. It goes on to outline the forecasts for the airport and its likely environmental effects.
- 3.4 The master plan that has been produced is a draft for consultation. The final version will accompany the planning application for the first phase of development, which is expected to be submitted early in 2006.

4.0 Report

- 4.1 Government policy for airport growth was set out in the Air Transport White Paper. The policy for Luton Airport is for a full length runway broadly on the alignment of the existing runway on condition that the overall impacts of such development are carefully controlled and mitigated and subject to stringent limits on noise.
- 4.2 This policy was drafted despite the objections to the SERAS consultation made by both East Herts Council and Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) objecting to any form of new full length runway or extension to the existing runway. Hertfordshire County Council accepted that, subject to environmental and other provisos, the maximum use of the existing runway (considered by the SERAS document as 15 million passengers per annum (mppa)) could provide additional capacity.
- 4.3 The preferred option put forward by the airport operators at Luton as part of Phase 2 is for a new full length runway some distance

(around 1km) to the south of the existing runway. A large amount of land (330ha) would be required from the Green Belt. The existing runway would be retained for emergencies and when the new runway is being maintained. There is also a possibility of continued use of the existing runway for business aviation.

- 4.4 This proposal is not considered to reflect the provisions of the Air Transport White Paper, which envisaged a “replacement” runway broadly on the existing alignment. While the proposals in the Master Plan would involve growth to 30mppa, the retention of the existing runway would clearly allow considerable growth above and beyond this level.
- 4.5 Hertfordshire County Council’s Cabinet considered a report on 17 January 2006 dealing with the Master Plan for Luton Airport. This report highlights the key issues affecting the county and reflects many of the issues affecting East Herts. The report is attached at Appendix ‘A’ (pages 75 -77) to this report. In summary, the County Council remain totally opposed to the development proposed in the draft Master Plan, which it does not consider to be in line with the White Paper.
- 4.6 While Luton Airport is not within East Herts, growth at the airport would have potentially significant environmental consequences in terms of increased aircraft movements and noise, particularly for the central and western parts of East Hertfordshire District. Flight paths have yet to be determined to accommodate the growth of aviation in the South East and this makes the implications for the District harder to evaluate.
- 4.7 In addition, growth could have considerable implications in terms of surface access. Access to the airport from the east via the A414 and the A120 would involve journeys through the District and these two roads in particular are already subject to capacity issues.
- 4.8 It is recommended that East Herts Council endorses the response by Hertfordshire County Council (Appendix ‘B’, pages 78 - 83) and objects to the proposals set out in the draft Master Plan.
- 5.0 Consultation
- 5.1 Consultation has taken place with Hertfordshire County Council on the response. Comments by North Herts District Council have also been considered as part of the report.

6.0 Legal Implications

6.1 No known legal implications.

7.0 Financial Implications

7.1 No known legal implications.

8.0 Human Resource Implications

8.1 No known human resource implications

9.0 Risk Management Implications

9.1 No known risk management implications

Background Papers

London Luton Airport Operations Limited Consultation document entitled
"Master Plan – A Consultation: Project 2030", October 2005

Contact Member: Councillor Mike Carver – Executive Member

Contact Officer: Simon Andrews – Acting Development Plans Manager
– Ext.1622

HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**STRATEGIC PLANNING AND PARTNERSHIPS PANEL
17 JANUARY 2006 AT 2PM**

Agenda Item No.

2

**SUBJECT: LONDON LUTON AIRPORT DRAFT MASTERPLAN :
PROPOSED RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION**

Report of the Director of Environment

Author: Steve Bailes

Tel: 01992 556293

Executive Member:- Derrick Ashley

1. Purpose of report

To inform the Panel of a suggested response to the London Luton Airport draft Masterplan and seek their views thereon to advise the Executive Member.

2. Summary

London Luton Airport's draft Masterplan sets out the airport operators proposals for developments to 2030. Phase 1 would be for extensions to the taxiways and terminal enabling the 'full use' of the existing runway and Phase 2, due to open in 2012, would be a new full length runway, new terminal and other facilities. The new runway would extend into Hertfordshire.

Consultation on the draft Masterplan runs to the end of January. The Airport will then produce a final Masterplan together with their first planning application.

3. Conclusion

The County Council has in the past totally rejected a new runway at Luton. The proposed response set out below reflects this view. It also asks for further information on Phases 1 and 2 to clarify both the Airport's intentions and the forecast impacts.

4. **Background**

A presentation on London Luton Airport's draft Masterplan was made to the Panel on 23 November. A briefing Note had previously been circulated and copies of the documents placed in the Members Room.

The suite of documents published in October 2005 making up the Master Plan (Consultation Draft) comprises: -

- Core Strategy - A Consultation: Project 2030
- Airport Surface Access Strategy - A Consultation: Project 2030
- Sustainability Appraisal - A Consultation: Project 2030
- Community Consultation Strategy - A Consultation: Project 2030
- Proposed Sound Insulation Schemes - Existing Airport: A Consultation: Project 2030
- Master Plan Non-Technical Summary: A Consultation: Project 2030

The Documents are on public consultation until 27 January 2006. The Consultation seeks comments on 18 questions but the response suggested for the County Council deals more generally with the issues.

The Masterplan considered 4 options for a new runway. The Airport's preferred location is Option D a new 3000m runway 950m south and parallel to the existing and offset 330m to the east. The plan showing the development is appended. (The county boundary is shown as a dotted line through the middle of the new runway.)

It is anticipated that officers from the Airport will attend this meeting of the Panel to explain aspects of their proposals. They will have seen the suggested response.

The Masterplan has been publicised by the Airport in the area around Luton with a newsletter and exhibitions. A number of public meetings have also been held. Those in Hertfordshire have registered great concern over the proposals particularly regarding aircraft noise and surface access.

The County Council's policy towards Luton Airport was determined in the consultation process which led to the 2003 Airports White Paper. The county's response to government totally rejected a new full length runway but did not specifically comment on the full use of the existing runway as it was not an element of that consultation.

The Council did recognise such a development could make a contribution to meeting air passenger demand without the need for new runways. Full use is also the policy of the draft Regional Plan (RSS) always subject to the impacts being adequately limited and mitigated.

The suggested response reflects the previously stated policy. The Panel are asked for their views to advise the Executive Member.

5. Suggested response

That a response based on that set out in the appendix to this is report is submitted to London Luton Airport:

Background Papers

*London Luton Airport draft Masterplan: suite of 5 documents
HCC response to Second Consultation on the Future of Air Transport in the
United Kingdom – 15 July 2003*

Appendix 'B': Suggested Response

Hertfordshire County Council response to consultation on the draft Masterplan for London Luton Airport.

The draft Masterplan consists of a suite of five documents. Despite their length and the work that clearly has gone into them the County Council does not feel it has sufficient detail to warrant changing its overall view on the future of the London Luton Airport.

This view, determined as a response to the pre White Paper SERAS consultation, is that the full use of the existing runway at Luton Airport may be acceptable subject to adequate controls and mitigation of the environmental and surface access impacts but further information on those impacts is required. However a new full length runway is totally rejected.

The draft Masterplan as presented provides insufficient information on full use and no justification for any change in the County Council's view. In particular it does not make clear what operational and environmental limits the Airport intends to operate within as it develops.

Phase 1

The proposal for full use of the existing runway, Phase 1, is noted as being in line with that described in the Development Brief for the Airport. That Brief however was written in the light of a new planning application being made dealing with matters such as environmental limits, aircraft noise and surface access.

It is recognised that the draft Masterplan was never to provide that level of detail but in providing no explanation of impacts or mitigation measures for the period to 2015 the draft is inadequate in this council's view. The Phase 1 proposal does not contain any information on future noise contours or traffic levels. As regards surface access for instance it is unclear what level of passenger throughput could be attained before the tracked transit system and other proposed schemes would be necessary and what level of airport traffic and resulting congestion is expected on local roads.

The County Council would expect all these issues plus those relating to the economy and the wider environment to be fully considered before it can take a view as to the potential for maximum use of the existing runway. Most importantly it would want any application to make clear the limits, in terms of passenger throughput, aircraft movements and noise contours, in which the Airport would expect to operate. The noise contours should be within those (day and night) recorded in 1999.

The county's dissatisfaction with the present situation, whereby permission for 5 million passengers a year (mppa) has been allowed by change of circumstance to encompass development to nearly 10 mppa and possibly beyond, is well known and such a situation must be avoided in future. Any

development would have to be subject to a detailed planning permission including stringent limits on operations which would be reviewed over time.

In addition the Phase 1 proposal to extend the taxiways needs to be justified in the light of the Phase 2 new runway proposal. The new runway is due to open 2011/12 when throughput is estimated at 14-15 mppa. At the Luton Local Plan Inquiry it was asserted that the capacity of the existing runway is 14-15 mppa (and 12-14 mppa for the terminal and aircraft stands) so the need for the Phase 1 taxiways is unclear.

Phase 2

The majority of the draft Masterplan deals with the situation of a new runway operating at 2030. There appears in fact to be more detail on the situation at 2030 than at 2015 contrary to the expectation in the DfT Guidance on Airport Masterplans. The County Council would have liked some detail on the 2015 situation for Phase 1 (assuming no new runway) and for Phase 2 (assuming the new runway opened 2011/12).

This response on the draft Masterplan and particularly Phase 2 deals with the major issues and does not seek to answer the specific questions raised in the consultation.

Forecasts (Question 8)

The forecasts of unconstrained passenger throughput are single figure forecasts and do not address different potential scenarios (such as Stansted opening its second runway in 2013 as it intends) or explain sufficiently the anticipated type of service (long haul, low cost etc.) or type of passenger (foreign, business etc). The figures need further explanation.

For instance the number of business passengers is forecast to actually decline post 2020 despite increases in total passengers (Figure 2.8 of the Surface Access Strategy) and the proportion of non UK passengers is forecast to rise (42% 2003 to 50% by 2030) while that at Stansted at least to 2015 is expected to fall (31% 2004 to 29%). The number of transfer passengers also needs to be made clear as all these aspects have a direct impact on surface access requirements.

Similarly the passenger aircraft movements and resulting levels of passenger per movement need further explanation. To these must be added the cargo, business aviation and other movements and the total demand then needs to be related to the envisaged runway capacity (hourly, peak day and annual). In addition some justification for the length of runway required must be provided in the light of these forecasts. It is insufficient to simply refer to the White Paper.

A particular area of concern is the level of night flights during the 8 hour night. It is clear the majority of these will be in the shoulder periods (06.00 – 07.00 and 23.00 – 24.00) but the reason and justification for this increase must be

made clear. A new Night Noise Policy needs to be devised to provide the required limits on night movements (shoulder periods and deep night).

Constraints on Development (Questions 7 & 11)

The constraints under which the Airport intends to operate are not made sufficiently clear. The reference case is for one new runway at 30 mppa in 2030. The actual proposal however appears to be for 35 mppa, the figure on which the noise contours are estimated.

The reference case anticipates using the existing runway for emergencies and maintenance purposes. It is unclear why one of the two intended new taxiways could not provide for these purposes.

The Masterplan commendably also points to the problem of Business Aviation, for which there are no forecasts, and suggests the existing runway could be used for such movements. The public and the County Council are naturally very concerned about the potential for Luton being a genuine two runway airport given the facilities which would be in place and while it is clear that is not the Airport's current proposal it is unclear how a consultee is expected to respond.

The potential for creeping development, which some would say we have already experienced at Luton, is inevitably of public concern. It is suggested the Airport make some public, and hopefully legally binding, statement on the matter of dual runway use and clarify what maximum level of throughput it intends to make a planning application for. The finalised Masterplan should make clear what operations are envisaged for 2030 and the limits and mitigation measures the Airport anticipate with regard to those operations.

Selection of Preferred Option (Question 9)

The methodology used to arrive at the preferred option is unclear in that the weightings given to various aspects are not clear. It would seem that ease of construction in terms of reduced infill and the potential to achieve a larger airport, in particular to not preclude development beyond the scope of the current White Paper, were considered most important. Some note on the comparable costs and on the practical capacity of the alternative options might help clarify the situation.

At present there is in this council's view no justification for such a huge land take from the Green Belt. The preferred option would more than double the size of the airport and facilitate a two runway operation. Such a scale of development is unnecessary to achieve the stated aim of a capacity of 30 mppa in 2030.

The environmental implications, landscape, ecology, archaeology etc, of the different options are not adequately considered. The differences between a close new runway and extended terminal on a limited site and that preferred with a larger site and additional terminal are not clear from the documents.

The treatment of the Public Safety Zones (PSZ) also needs further explanation. These were considered as part of the SERAS consultation and that for the close parallel runway (Option B), the option proposed in the White Paper, was not shown to create a problem. The reasons for the change in the PSZ and the implications of any extension over Capability Green need to be justified and explained.

As regards aircraft noise the County Council notes the reduction in the number of people in Luton affected by noise from the proposed runway. However this has to be compared with the additional noise being brought to new residents, largely in Hertfordshire. The number of residents so affected and the increases in the level of noise should be detailed.

We are all well aware of the problems of bringing noise to new areas from the extended controversies over Olney1B and Western Airspace. To this is added the uncertainty as to the location of new flight paths which could bring still more noise to new or existing areas. This uncertainty alone, though not the direct responsibility of the Airport, makes any comment on the merits of different options premature.

Surface Access (Questions 3 & 10)

The Surface Access Strategy sets out the targets for mode share and the anticipated new infrastructure required. The target given for public transport (bus, coach and train) for 2015 is 35%, less than that already achieved at Stansted. Given the similarity, as the County Council understands it, between the two airports this target seems unreasonably low.

The surface access modelling has not yet been done so the new infrastructure schemes, road, rail and other public transport, cannot at present be shown to be needed but inevitably their provision will not be in the hands of the Airport. Hertfordshire is concerned as to whether the schemes, if required, will be funded when they are needed and as to what the impacts on other local roads and rail services will be. When the modelling work is completed it should make clear what passenger levels and mode shares can be supported with and without particular schemes.

Whatever the results however Hertfordshire remains implacably opposed to the construction of new roads across the Green Belt to the east of Luton.

The County Council is also concerned about the impact on local roads east of the airport both in terms of rat-running and of severance with a new runway. Proposals as to how local access south from Breachwood Green is to be retained are required.

The surface access proposals are understandably not yet fully worked up. The County Council is though concerned that the Airport would not have control over the provision of needed infrastructure, road or rail. It would also

lack control over off-site car parking which it requires but which will be provided by others possibly in environmentally damaging areas.

Employment

The Airport's view as to the importance of increasing employment in the Luton area is recognised. However it is the County Council's experience at Stansted that developing airports handling largely low cost airlines do not create high levels of employment either on or off the airport site. Stansted anticipates fewer than 500 direct on airport employees for each 1 million passengers in 2015 and more evidence is required as to the justification of the Luton on airport employment forecasts, the throughputs, business aviation etc. catered for and the assumed productivity levels. The wider impacts also need much further explanation particularly in the light of the falling number of business passengers post 2020.

Any application for a new runway should be accompanied by an Economic Impact Appraisal to determine impacts and benefits. Any benefits to the economy of Luton and the surrounding areas, including Hertfordshire, then have to be balanced against the wider environmental disbenefits.

Other aspects (Question 17)

The Masterplan cannot be expected to deal with every issue but some more detailed information regarding local air quality and global emissions and the measures and mitigation to deal with them is required. In particular the implications in terms of additional emissions created by taxiing the kilometre from the existing terminal to the new runway needs to be assessed.

Sound Insulation Scheme (Question 4)

Acoustic insulation of dwellings within the annual actual 63 dBA contour would be an improvement on the existing situation and the County Council would expect the Airport to institute such a scheme regardless of future expansion plans. Noise levels below 63dBA are however still extremely disturbing particularly for those residents who were previously only minimally affected. Some level of compensation/insulation must be offered to such people.

The Airports White Paper also refers to the need for acoustic insulation where there is a large increase in noise (over 3dBA above the 2002 level). The draft Masterplan does not provide information on such increases even though new areas will be affected and the proposed scheme does not deal with this aspect.

Insulation must be accompanied with some form of sound proof ventilation or the value of the glazing is lost in hot weather when windows are open. It is questioned whether the financial offer of £3,000 is adequate. Certainly the £10,000 for community buildings is unlikely to be adequate for some properties.

The proposed schemes do not address the problem of blight which must be addressed as a matter of urgency. Masterplans are required by the government's guidance to deal with this issue.

Summary

In summary as regards Phase 1 the County Council requires more detailed information before it can meaningfully comment on the proposal. As regards Phase 2 the County Council objected to the proposed new runway suggested by government both prior to and after the publication of the Airports White Paper.

The draft Masterplan now proposes a potentially bigger airport with a massive land take from the Green Belt far in excess of that envisaged in the White Paper. Government policy as set out in the White Paper is for a full length runway broadly on the alignment of the existing runway on condition that the overall impacts of such development are carefully controlled and mitigated and subject to stringent limits on noise (paragraph 11.89 of White Paper). Hertfordshire County Council questions whether the proposal in the draft Masterplan is in line with this policy and remains totally opposed to such development.

In the light of the weaknesses in the draft Masterplan highlighted above the council would also expect further consultation prior to the submission of any planning application for expansion. Hertfordshire County Council would want to work with neighbouring authorities and the Airport to ensure all the issues are properly considered.