

**SOUTH EAST ENGLAND REGIONAL ASSEMBLY
REGIONAL PLANNING COMMITTEE**

Date: 27 July 2005

Subject: **Heathrow Airport Interim Masterplan**

Report of: Director of Planning and Transport

Recommendation:

It is recommended that the Committee, in responding to the consultation:

1. Restates the Assembly's opposition to the development of a third runway and sixth terminal at Heathrow Airport and emphasises that more recent work has identified that the potential impact of such an expansion would be worse than that set out in the Aviation White Paper;
2. States that it is unacceptable for the contents of the Masterplan to be finalised until such time as the Assembly is afforded the opportunity to comment on the conclusions of work commissioned as part of Project for the Development of a Sustainable Heathrow;
3. Highlights that submission of a safeguarding map in advance of consideration of the outputs from Project for the Development of a Sustainable Heathrow would be premature;
4. Emphasises the importance of working with the Assembly to identify any additional surface access requirements over and above existing commitments set out in the Surface Access Strategy arising from Development Scenario 1 at the earliest possible opportunity
5. Emphasises the urgency of additional investment by the Government in public transport infrastructure (such as Airtrack) in order to provide the required level of access to the United Kingdom's premier international airport.

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To inform the Committee of the contents of the draft Heathrow Airport Interim Masterplan, and to seek approval for a proposed response to the consultation.

2. Background: Purpose of the Masterplan

- 2.1 The "Future of Air Transport White Paper" (usually referred to as the "Aviation White Paper") was published in November 2003 and sets out the Government's view on the future role of the UK's principal airports over the next 30 years.

The Government concluded that while maximising utilisation of existing runway capacity in the wider South East was the priority, there remained a need for new capacity to be developed in the form of two new runways over the period of the White Paper.

- 2.2 The following sequential principles were set out in the White Paper so far as the future development of wider South East airports were concerned:
- i. To maximise use of the existing runway capacity at the key airports across the wider South East;
 - ii. To develop an additional runway at Stansted Airport;
 - iii. Subject to environmental targets being met, to develop a third runway at Heathrow Airport; OR
 - iv. As an alternative to (iii) - if environmental targets are not met at Heathrow so precluding expansion there - to develop an additional runway at Gatwick Airport.
- 2.3 In making these proposals, the Aviation White Paper set out the need for the operators of the key airports in the region to prepare Masterplans. The purpose of these is to set out in more detail the implications of the White Paper for each airport.

3. The Heathrow Airport Interim Masterplan

- 3.1 BAA published the first Heathrow Airport Interim Masterplan in June 2005. Comments on the draft have been requested by 31 October 2005. The Masterplan sets out two scenarios. Common to both is continuation until 2015 of the current arrangement whereby Heathrow operates on a basis of two runways, and (from 2008) five terminals. The scenarios differ in terms of the assumptions made beyond 2015, reflecting the uncertainty that arises from the Aviation White Paper, particularly with regards to the question of whether or not additional growth at Heathrow would breach environmental limits.
- 3.1.1 Development Scenario Option 1: where airport operations beyond 2015 remain within existing limits, with no expansion of overall airport footprint. Terminal capacity would be approximately 87 million passengers per annum (mppa) by 2015. Efficiency gains (arising from larger aircraft, improved management of the apron space, etc) could enable a slight increase in capacity up to approximately 90-95mppa in 2030 whilst staying within the current cap of 480,000 air movements per annum.
- 3.1.2 Development Scenario Option 2: based on the eventual development of a third runway and sixth terminal at Heathrow by 2030 along the lines set out within the Aviation White Paper. A separate consultation on the detailed implications of a sixth terminal is proposed for 2006. Terminal capacity would be approximately 116mppa by 2030. There would be an expansion of on-site

facilities, and expansion of the airport footprint northwards, most notably extending across the present M4 motorway corridor (covering a greater area than the White Paper proposals). Overall, this would lead to a total loss of around 700 residential properties.

- 3.2 The Masterplan makes brief reference to the possibility of “Mixed Mode” operation on the existing two runways (simultaneously using the runways for both take-off and landing manoeuvres).
- 3.3 BAA intend to submit a safeguarding map to the Local Planning Authorities at the same time as publishing the final Masterplan, which will be endorsed by the Civil Aviation Authority and subject to a five-yearly review.

4. Other Relevant Information

- 4.1 Consideration of this Masterplan needs to be set in the context of the Government’s “Project for the Development of a Sustainable Heathrow” (PDSH), as part of which work is underway examining the implications of the White Paper’s proposals in respect of surface access, air quality and mixed mode operation. The results of the PDSH are expected in Spring 2006.
- 4.2 The proposals set out in the Masterplan also need to be considered in the context of the Assembly’s recently published research about the implications of the Aviation White Paper. This demonstrated that the likely environmental and surface access implications for both Heathrow and Gatwick airports would be significantly worse than those indicated by the White Paper.
- 4.3 In this context air quality is a particular issue. The European “Standard for Nitrogen Dioxide” (1999/30/EC) requires Nitrogen Oxide (NO₂) emissions to be limited to an annual mean limit of 40µg/m³ by 2010. This standard has been translated into the UK Government’s National Air Quality Standard, with a requirement that the standard should be met by 2005. Air quality monitoring shows that this standard is currently not being met in a substantial part of the area surrounding Heathrow Airport which has already led to the declaration of an Air Quality Management Area.
- 4.4 The Government accepted in the Aviation White Paper that meeting environmental standards would be a pre-condition of any consideration of further expansion at Heathrow.

5 Key Issues Arising from the Masterplan

- 5.1 Development Scenario I: Two Runways, Five Terminals
 - 5.1.1 The current Airport Surface Access Strategy is based on a target of 40% of passengers travelling to the airport by public transport. The Masterplan states

that this target would be retained, however the additional terminal capacity will increase pressure on an already congested transport system surrounding the airport.

5.1.2 The full implications on the transport network of the additional terminal capacity are not set out in detail in the Masterplan. This lack of clarity is a serious cause for concern. Although BAA is actively pursuing the development of an enhanced network of coach and express bus services, it is likely that additional public transport capacity will be required, particularly in light of the cap on car parking provision being retained. The Assembly has highlighted the importance of proposals such as Airtrack being brought forward at the earliest possible opportunity in order to address pressures arising from the opening of Terminal 5.

5.2 Development Scenario 2: Three Runways, Six Terminals Layout

5.2.1 The Assembly has previously expressed its concerns to Government, partially acknowledged in the White Paper, in respect of the likely impact on local housing and labour markets arising from any expansion of Heathrow Airport beyond Terminal 5. As the Assembly's recent research demonstrates, any such expansion would have a detrimental effect on the local environment and quality of life for communities surrounding the airport.

5.2.2 The Masterplan states, "those living close to the airport are likely to experience a worsening of the noise climate". The work underway as part of the PDSH will quantify the number of people affected. In addition the Masterplan suggests that the "Noise Preferential Routes" for aircraft movements to and from the airport need to be reviewed. This gives rise to the very real possibility that the number of communities directly affected by aircraft noise will increase.

5.2.3 Whilst the Masterplan identifies a number of potential measures that could be applied in order to reduce air pollution arising from surface access, the lack of detailed proposals makes it difficult to assess whether these would be sufficient to meet the required environmental standards.

5.2.4 The additional terminal capacity associated with this scenario would further increase the pressure on the already congested transport system. The lack of any detailed proposals within the Masterplan makes it impossible to assess whether a package of measures is capable of being developed to manage the pressures in an acceptable manner.

5.3 Mixed Mode Operation

5.3.1 A separate consultation on Mixed Mode (simultaneous use of the runways for take-offs and landings of aircraft) operations has yet to be undertaken by the Government. Work is progressing on this issue as part of PDSH. Mixed Mode

operation would be consistent with the Government's stated aim of maximising runway use at South East airports, but would bring with it additional concerns regarding the potential impact on the environment. The Government should use the public consultation to set out in detail the potential impact of such an operation in order to enable stakeholders to take an informed view on the merits of such a proposal. The Masterplan indicates that the status of the existing Cranford Agreement, agreed between the Government and local residents in the 1950s, and the "Westerly Preference" arrangements may form part of such a consultation.

6 Conclusions

- 6.1 The Assembly has an agreed position in respect of the future of Heathrow Airport; namely that that airport operations should be supported on the basis of the current planning limit of two runways and five terminals. The Assembly's recently completed study looking at the implications of the Aviation White Paper has demonstrated that the likely impacts of expansion beyond this limit would be even worse than originally envisaged by the Government. The response to the consultation on the Masterplan should therefore restate the Assembly's opposition to any expansion beyond the current planning limit.
- 6.2 There is a considerable body of work underway as part of PDSH that is examining in greater detail the potential impact that any further expansion at Heathrow Airport might have on the environment and transport system. Given that the Government has accepted the critical nature of these issues in determining whether or not any further expansion is possible it is essential that there is sufficient time to assess and comment on the outputs of PDSH before BAA submit a safeguarding map to the CAA. Submitting a safeguarding map in advance of such a debate would be premature and undermine the role of the Assembly as the statutory regional planning body. The Masterplan must not be finalised until the Assembly (and other consultees) have had the opportunity to examine and comment upon the PDSH work.

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