

SUBJECT:	Airports Commission: Appraisal Framework Consultation	
REPORT OF:	Officer Management Team- Prepared by	Director of Services - Head of Sustainable Development

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide a response to this consultation.

2. Links to Council Policy Objectives

2.1 Sustainable environment and thriving local economy.

3. Background

- 3.1 The Airports Commission (also known as the Davies Commission) published its Interim Report on 17th December 2013. It included three shortlisted options for increasing long term capacity at airports in the South East of England. One new runway is required by 2030 with possibly an additional runway by 2050. Two of the options are for additional runway capacity at Heathrow and the third for a second runway at Gatwick. To understand the economic, social and environmental impact of the short listed options the Commission will now subject them to a more detailed wider ranging and comprehensive analysis. The results of this analysis will be put to national consultation in the autumn of this year prior to a final recommendation to Government in the summer of 2015.
- 3.2 This consultation is about a framework to be used in Phase 2 of this process which will examine and compare each option in detail. The consultation on the framework content began on 16th January and will end on 28th February.

4. Options

- 4.1 The two options which affect South Bucks District are the two Heathrow Options. **See Appendix A for maps.** The first, promoted by Heathrow Airport Ltd (HAL) is for a new freestanding NW runway and sixth terminal. The new runway will be located to the south of the M4. The option shortlisted in the Davies Commission report includes a network of new motorway access roads north of the M4 connecting to the M25 in the Iver area. This would have a devastating impact on Richings Park including demolition of homes and property. Subsequently HAL has produced an alternative proposal which proposes access to the new terminal from the west and to the south of the M4. This option would have a much lesser impact on the residents of Iver and Richings Park and would appear not to involve loss of property. A decision will be made as to which option is preferred by May 2014. HAL is consulting on these options currently and has held a public meeting at Richings Park on 4th February and will also hold a one day exhibition in Richings Park on 27th February. HAL is actively encouraging responses although they give no further detail or assurances about where property will be lost or when compensation to those affected may be available. HAL has also been invited to address SDPAG on 13th March. As yet HAL has not responded. The consultation runs until 16th March.
- 4.2 The second option, Heathrow Hub, proposes extending the existing northern runway - effectively doubling its length to enable take-off and landing on the same runway. This option would include a new surface access from Iver to the airport running southwards down the east side of the M25 with a new terminal 6 located in Iver astride the Great Western Mainline connecting with mainline rail services and Crossrail. It would be

located approximately in the location of the Thorney Golf Club and River Colne. This new surface access rail line would appear to duplicate Western Rail Access to Heathrow on the western side of the M25. This scheme has been recently announced and is already in the pipeline to be delivered by 2021.

4.3 Both options are already causing blight to existing properties in Thorney, Iver and Richings Park, with residents reporting an inability to sell their properties at previously agreed values. In addition they are likely to have the following impacts to a greater or lesser degree.

- Demolition of homes and businesses.
- Loss of Green Belt
- Increased aircraft and traffic noise.
- Loss of existing businesses and jobs.
- Increase in pressure for new development particularly homes and airport related commercial development in the Green Belt.
- Pressure on local housing market leading to increasing unaffordability
- Increasingly unbalanced local economy -in terms of numbers of jobs and population
- Impact on quality of life in terms of increased traffic accessing new infrastructure on local roads, aircraft noise, loss of open land including Green Belt.
- Construction impacts in terms of increased HGV traffic on the local Iver roads
- Demand for airport parking locations
- A potential large increase in the local population leading to increased demand for services
- Increase in jobs for the local community but likely to be far more unskilled than skilled jobs on offer.
- Increasing blight leading to numerous empty homes and businesses is likely in the period leading up to the new infrastructure while the population and the businesses adjust.
- Impact on the environment in the Colne Valley and potential loss of biodiversity around the River Colne and Colne Brook.
- Loss of council tax and business rates if properties remain empty for long periods of time
- Increased security around the new terminal in Iver
- Increase in hazard risk

5. The Appraisal Framework

5.1 The framework will compare and contrast each option based on a series of criteria. The information will be provided to the Commission by the scheme promoters. The promoters also have to update their scheme design; develop a business case and provide a sustainability assessment. The Commission has chosen objectives against which the economic, social and environmental benefits will be measured. We are asked as part of this consultation to comment on whether this process is adequate and covers all issues. In the meantime the promoters are assembling the requested material. It is assumed that the promoters will contact the Council to obtain much of the required data. **What is unclear from this document is what catchment area they will be looking at.**

5.2 The requested criteria fall under the following categories.

- Strategic fit
- Economy
- Surface access
- Environment
- People
- Cost

- Operational viability
- Delivery.

5.3 This response will focus on those issues which particularly affect the residents and businesses in South Bucks namely economy, surface access, environment and people. It should be noted in terms of cost that these new runways are self-funded (by charging airlines to use the new runway and terminal facilities). Improved infrastructure such as surface access may well need public funding with a contribution from the promoters to be determined at a later stage.

6. Economy

6.1 There are two objectives to maximise wider economic benefits and support the competitiveness of the UK economy and to promote employment and economic growth in the local area and surrounding region. For South Bucks the local impacts are most relevant. These are sub-divided into business and services attracted, labour demand, housing demand and land required.

6.2 Business and services category recognises the risks in terms of increased urbanisation from employment and housing creating pressure on businesses and services including health, schools, and transport with insufficient mitigation in place.

6.3 Labour demand category recognises the risk that there is insufficient labour supply in the local and wider area and insufficient commuter transport.

6.4 Housing demand recognises the risk that there is insufficient housing supply in the local and wider area.

6.5 Land required recognises the risk that there are development constraints, insufficient land available and local opposition.

6.6 This topic seems well covered. **Our concern is mainly about the impacts that will affect the District in terms of loss of attractiveness as a place to live and work.**

7. Surface Access

7.1 The objectives are to maximise the numbers of travellers arriving at the airport on public transport or promote green modes of transport; to accommodate the needs of other users of transport networks, such as commuters, intercity travellers and freight and to enable access to the airport from a wide catchment area.

7.2 The Commission will look at whether schemes surface access plans unduly harm the interests of other users in terms of constraining the capacity or adversely affecting the cost of their journeys.

7.3 The assessment will consider modal split in terms of road and rail and the impact on the local and wider area. **However it is not clear if this will look at the impact on local issues of concern such as HGVs in Iver and the ability of the local roads to absorb increased capacity. In addition how the Heathrow Hub option will compare with WRAtH and whether there is scope to amalgamate the proposals if necessary.**

8. Environment

8.1 **Noise.** The objective is to minimise noise impacts. **It is not sufficient to seek mitigation in relation to night flights. South Bucks considers that night flights which result in sleep deprivation to a significant proportion of residents around airports should not form part of the normal operation of an airport and should be expressly excluded. Ground noise**

associated with operation and ground support equipment and infrastructure has not been included in the local impact assessment.

- 8.2 **Air quality.** The objective is to protect local air quality. Increasing the size or capacity at Heathrow will have a detrimental impact on air quality in an area already prone to significant traffic generated pollution- the criteria should set out to improve air quality locally and make clear that any deterioration would be unacceptable. Positive action to reduce air pollution is the only acceptable criteria, monetisation should not be considered an appropriate criteria. The geographic scope of any assessment of air pollution should include the full extent of the pollutant reach particularly when considering the impact of transport related pollutants. The Commission is asked to ensure that the proposals include all impacts beyond the curtilage of the airport and that communities are not excluded on the basis of assumption. Residents within this District directly affected by the continued expansion and intensification at Heathrow are often told that they are not included on the basis of outdated information or assumption suggesting they will not be affected
- 8.3 **Biodiversity.** The objective is to protect natural habitats and maintain biodiversity. All scheme s should provide clear strategies for mitigating environmental impacts, consistent with the relevant legal frameworks. The River Colne and Colne Brook are within the Colne Valley Biodiversity Opportunity Area as shown on the Proposals Map. The Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Biodiversity Partnership are implementing a scheme which looks at management, restoration and creation of new habitats. Mitigation alone would not achieve these aims.
- 8.4 **Water and Flood Risk.** The objective is to protect the quality of surface and ground waters, use water resources efficiently and minimise flood risk. The location of the Heathrow Hub Terminal 6 is within an area of high flood risk - zone 3 - from the River Colne and Colne Brook. Building within the flood plain is contrary to national policy. The terminal and associated car parking will both be at risk.

9. People

- 9.1. **Place.** The objective is to minimise impacts on existing landscape character and heritage assets. The Green Belt is not mentioned as a constraint nor is there reference to the National Planning Policy Framework which attaches great importance to the Green Belt and the fundamental aim to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open.
- 9.2 **Quality of Life.** The objective is to maintain and where possible improve the quality of life for local residents and the wider population. For South Bucks District it will be all pain and no gain. Issues such as blight, loss of open space, increased pressure for development, increase in traffic, air quality and noise issues are not conducive to an improvement in quality of life.
- 9.3 **Community.** The objective is to manage and reduce the effects of housing loss on local communities and to reduce or avoid disproportionate impacts on any social group. The Commission will examine any consequent need for new housing construction either to compensate for lost housing or to respond to urbanisation in the vicinity of the proposal. The appraisal will provide a qualitative assessment of the impact of airport expansion on the local community. Any compensatory housing would probably need to be located in the Green Belt, contrary to national policy. There is local concern about the time it will take before any compensation scheme is up and running to deal with the issue of blight that has already begun to affect residents. A property bond scheme (as proposed for HS2) would be our preferred approach.

10. Resources, Risk and Other Implications

- 10.1 Engaging with the schemes promoters could have considerable implications in terms of officer time as the work progresses.
- 10.2 There is considerable risk to the future quality of life in the District.

11. Recommendations

- 1) For the Sustainable Development PAG to endorse the concerns itemised in red and forward any comments submitted to Council.
- 2) Council to delegate authority to the Head of Sustainable Development in consultation with the Portfolio Holder to agree the Council's response.

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Background Papers:	Maps Appendix A. Appraisal Framework Consultation. https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/airports-commission-appraisal-framework