

<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Airport Commission consultation</b>
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	<b>Officer Management Team - Chief Executive</b>
	<b>Prepared by - Head of Sustainable Development</b>

### 1. Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to provide a response to the Airport Commission on the proposals to expand Heathrow Airport.

### 2 Links to Council Policy Objectives

- 2.1 This particularly links to the Council's aim of "sustainable and clean environment, protecting our heritage, protecting our future."

### 3 The Consultation

- 3.1 The Airports Commission has published for consultation its assessment of proposals for additional runway capacity at Gatwick and Heathrow airports. The consultation presents the commission's analysis of the proposals shortlisted by the Commission last year: 2 for expansion at Heathrow Airport and 1 proposal at Gatwick Airport.
- 3.2 It invites public comment on the commission's detailed consideration of each proposal. This includes analysis of the cost of each proposal, the effect on communities of noise, property loss and construction, and the economic benefits and environmental impacts.

Sir Howard Davies , the Chairman of the Airports Commission, said:

'Since our Interim report last year we have undertaken a huge amount of work. We have carried out a thorough assessment, across a comprehensive range of subjects, looking at the benefits and impacts of each proposal.

We have not yet taken a view on which proposal strikes the most effective balance between the assessment criteria. It is important first that we provide an opportunity for this evidence to be examined, challenged and improved. This consultation gives everyone with an interest in the issue of airport expansion that opportunity.

Responses to this consultation will be a valuable addition to our evidence base and will directly inform our recommendation to the government when we publish our final report in the summer of 2015.'

- 3.3 Future demand forecasts across a range of scenarios predict significant growth in demand for aviation to 2050, placing additional pressure on already stressed infrastructure in London and the South East. This includes forecasts in which carbon emissions from aviation in 2050 are constrained to the 2005 level, in line with the Climate Change Committee's planning assumption for achieving the 2050 emissions target. Without the provision of new infrastructure the London airport system is likely to be under very substantial pressure in 2030, and demand will significantly exceed total available capacity by 2050. The Commission looked at accommodating this future demand through a variety of means, including measures to redistribute traffic, or through using surface transport improvements to replace the need for air movements. None of these options was found to be effective in reducing the capacity shortfall. **For these reasons the Commission concluded there is a case for at least one net additional runway in London and the South East by 2050.**

- 3.4 The Commission has looked at 52 different proposals for providing additional capacity in the South East including looking at the expansion of Birmingham Airport facilitated by HS2 services to Birmingham. However, that airport already has spare capacity which would not be filled until the mid-2040's and therefore is unlikely to resolve the South East's capacity shortage in the short term.
- 3.5 Following various sift stages, the Commission has identified two existing SE airports as the only credible locations for an additional runway. Gatwick, a new runway to the south of the existing and at Heathrow two alternative expansion proposals - a new runway to the north west of the existing runways (parallel with and to the south of the M4) promoted by Heathrow Airport Ltd; or alternatively an extension of the current northern runway to create a runway of double length promoted by Heathrow Hub. Heathrow Hub in addition proposes a new terminal and 10,000 parking spaces to the east of Iver station alongside the Great Western Mainline to connect with Intercity and Crossrail services. This would be accessed by new slip roads off the M25 to the north of the M4. This proposal is obviously of great concern as it is located within South Bucks District and would have a significant impact locally. The Airport Commission has however found that there is little economic merit in this part of the Heathrow Hub proposal, it duplicates Western Rail Access and it considers that it does not have any significant benefits over building on -airport facilities. This is discussed further below.

The consultation closes on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2015.

- 3.6 The Airport Commission has produced a large number of lengthy documents to appraise the three proposals (one at Gatwick and two options at Heathrow) on an equal basis. The table below sets out criteria and the objectives used in order to assess the proposals.

#### The Commission's objectives for the short-listed schemes

Phase sift criteria categories	Phase 2 objective	Phase 2 appraisal module
Strategic Fit	To provide additional capacity that facilitates connectivity in line with the <i>assessment of need</i> .	Strategic Fit
	To improve the experience of passengers and other users of aviation.	
	To maximise the benefits of competition to aviation users and the broader economy.	
	To maximise benefits in line with relevant long-term strategies for economic and spatial development.	
Economy	To maximise economic benefits and support the competitiveness of the UK economy.	Economy Impacts
	To promote employment and economic growth in the local area and surrounding region.	Local Economy Impacts
	To produce positive outcomes for local communities and the local economy from any surface access that may be required to support the proposal.	Economy Impacts
Surface Access	To maximise the number of passengers and workforce accessing the airport via sustainable modes of transport.	Surface Access

	To accommodate the needs of other users of transport networks, such as commuters, intercity travellers and freight.	
	To enable access to the airport from a wide catchment area.	
Environment	To minimise and where possible reduce noise impacts.	Noise
	To improve air quality consistent with EU standards and local planning policy requirements.	Air Quality
	To protect and maintain natural habitats and biodiversity.	Biodiversity
	To minimise carbon emissions in airport construction and operation.	Carbon
	To protect the quality of surface and ground waters, use water resources efficiently and minimise flood risk.	Water and Flood Risk
	To minimise impacts on existing landscape character and heritage assets.	Place
	To identify and mitigate any other significant environmental impacts.	To be defined
People	To maintain and where possible improve the quality of life for local residents and the wider population.	Quality of Life
	To manage and reduce the effects of housing loss on local communities.	Community
	To reduce or avoid disproportionate impacts on any social group.	
Cost	To make efficient use of public funds, where they are required, and ensure that the benefits of schemes clearly outweigh the costs, taking account of social, environmental and economic costs and benefits.	To be assessed in the business case
Delivery	To be affordable and financeable, including any public expenditure that may be required and taking account of the needs of airport users.	Cost and Commercial Viability
	To have the equivalent overall capacity of one new runway operational by 2030.	Delivery
	To actively engage local groups in scheme progression, design and management.	
Operational Viability	To enhance individual airport and airports system resilience.	Operational Risk
	To ensure individual airport and airports system efficiency.	Operational Efficiency
	To build flexibility into scheme designs.	
	To meet present industry safety and security standards.	
	To maintain and where possible enhance current safety performance with a view to future changes and potential improvements in standards.	

#### 4. Impact on South Bucks District Council Area

##### Extended Northern Runway

4.1 The Heathrow Airport Extended Northern Runway promoted by Heathrow Hub is the furthest away from the District boundary. The single runway allows it to be used for both departures and arrivals. It will require a total landtake of 724 Ha. 242 homes and commercial properties will need to be demolished centred on the Poyle industrial estate. These homes will need to be reprovided elsewhere. Further demolition of homes may be required as a result of surface access works. Surface access landtake will be an additional 330 Ha and 60 Ha for flood storage. Surface

access changes include putting the M25 into a tunnel under the extended runway south of junction 15 and widening and junction improvements to the M4 notably at junctions 4a and 4b. There will be a new link to the airport from Junction 13. The Airport Commission is concerned about congestion on the motorways and demand management measures may be required.

- 4.2 This proposal would add 220,000 aircraft movements creating a total capacity of 700,000. An additional 50-90,000 jobs would be created including direct, indirect and induced. The Commission also estimate an additional 60,000 homes would be needed over the closest 14 local authorities (including South Bucks) many of whom will have difficulty accommodating these extra numbers. This may need to be a Local Plan consideration when the Council undertakes its housing and economic needs assessments and duty to co-operate discussions.
- 4.3 Rail access to the airport from London and the Midlands and the North will be provided by Crossrail and HS2 (if constructed) via the connection at Old Oak Common and Heathrow Express from Paddington. Western Rail Access (which is considered to happen regardless of expansion proposals) will provide rail connections from the west and a new Southern Rail Access will connect with Waterloo services.
- 4.4 **The Commission's analysis** is that there will be a significant increase in the number of people affected by aviation noise, particularly in West London. People living to the north of the current flightpath (in South Bucks) would continue to experience no or very limited over flights. Air quality issues however will worsen. Negative impacts are also predicted on landscape, heritage, biodiversity and water (particularly flooding). There are residual risks of flooding downstream of the airport.
- 4.5 The scheme is estimated to cost £13.5 billion. These costs are lower than the alternative Northwest runway proposal but substantially higher than the Gatwick second runway option.

#### **North West Runway**

- 4.6 The Heathrow Airport North West Runway proposes a new full length runway to the north west of the current northern runway approximately on the alignment of the present A4, requiring relocation of businesses and homes. A new terminal would be built to the west of the current central terminal area. The land take would be 569 Ha together with 294 Ha for related surface access. A total of 783 homes would be demolished.
- 4.7 Surface access proposals would involve widening the M4 between junction 2 and 4 with a replacement J4b. Tunnelling the M25 under the new runway, and diverting the existing A4.
- 4.8 Air traffic movements would increase by 260,000 to 740,000.
- 4.9 Heathrow Airport Ltd wish to expand its air freight capacity and propose additional on airport facilities to the east of the airport. Commercial development on the existing A4 and surrounding area would need to be relocated including British

Airways headquarters at Waterside and the Grondon energy from waste plant alongside the M25.

- 4.10 Significant increased employment will be provided supporting economic development in the Heathrow Opportunity Area and Western Wedge both identified in the London Plan as an engine for growth. The number of jobs created including direct, indirect and induced is forecast to be within the range of 47,400-112,400. Expansion would also benefit the business clusters along the M4 corridor. The Airport Commission recognises the impacts on the surrounding area particularly noise, environmental and housing growth as local concerns. They estimate that an additional 70,800 homes (at the upper end) would be required over the 14 authorities.
- 4.11 In respect of noise an increased number of people would be affected particularly in the 2030-2050 period. However the situation would be better in the late evening and early morning as planes could land further west. The Airports Commission estimates that for those living within 5km of the airport the quality of life impacts would be broadly neutral. It should be noted that Richings Park is approximately 8km (5 miles) from the airport and therefore would expect to see an increase in noise.
- 4.12 This scheme is the most expensive at £18.6 billion mainly because of higher land acquisition costs and transit system costs. The cost would be borne by increased charges to airlines. Surface access works would be an additional £5.7 billion. Caution, in terms of potential additional costs, is expressed about the need to relocate the waste energy plant (no potential site has yet been agreed) and the tunnelling of the M25 as factors which may delay implementation.

#### **Heathrow Hub at Iver**

- 4.13 The Heathrow Hub proposal at Iver forms the subject of a separate report by the Airport Commission. It would be built on the Thorney golf course and the Thames Water's waste water plant site which would be reduced in size and relocated towards the Court Lane site. Passengers would be transferred to the airport by an automated dedicated train. The new station would be surrounded by a 10,000 space car park connected to the M25 by new slip roads and associated commercial development such as hotels. It is clear from the analysis that the scheme has a number of severe drawbacks. Network Rail is concerned that stopping fast trains for up to 4 minutes would delay services and inconvenience the majority of travellers who are not travelling to Heathrow. Transport for London object as stopping here would replace stopping at Old Oak Common and would not provide the connectivity that Old Oak Common does in enabling transfers between HS2 and Crossrail as well as with Underground services. It is also very likely that the existing Iver station at Richings Park would need to be closed as it would be too close to the new station. It also duplicates WRAtH but at more than 5 times the cost. The scope of the proposals greatly exceed any development envisaged in the South Bucks Core Strategy and would significantly exacerbate congestion problems on the local roads.

#### **Heathrow Spur**

- 4.14 Neither of the Heathrow proposals is considered to need the HS2 Spur as part of their surface access strategy and predict that few people would use such a service.

The Old Oak Common interchange could provide an appropriate good quality terminus with fast connection to the airport.

### Other issues

- 4.15 Geographic distribution of employees is expected to be in line with current patterns. London boroughs with higher unemployment levels are likely to absorb the majority of new jobs which will be largely low skilled. Heathrow Airport Ltd expects to train new staff through their existing on-site training facility. The Thames Valley corridor will continue to be an important location for international businesses. This will benefit South Bucks in being able to retain its existing employment base. Attracting new employment however would have a negative impact on the green Belt. The Airport Commission notes that South Bucks has a high house price to earnings ratio leading to affordability issues. This would deter the location of new housing within the District but there would still be additional pressure for new housing (and employment) and replacement housing for that demolished by the proposals. This important point will need to be addressed within the new Local Plan and in Duty to cooperate discussions.
- 4.16 The Airport Commission conclude that the communities of Richings Park and Dorney are not sufficiently affected by increased noise levels to qualify for compensation or insulation packages. The M4 appears to be the boundary for this. However this does not appear to take account of increased ground noise from aircraft at Richings Park or increased noise levels from a busier (and wider) M4. Air quality was a major issue when the previous 3<sup>rd</sup> runway was proposed and was instrumental in the decision not to proceed. The studies note that an emissions management plan is required to ensure that existing targets for 2025 for NO<sub>x</sub> and particulate matter are met. It is not easy however to separate air pollution caused by the motorways from airport related pollution. However Heathrow Airport Ltd are aiming to cut staff car parking by 50% and encourage more journeys by public transport hence the proposed investment in new rail services to the airport.
- 4.17 Both proposals involve culverting and diverting the River Colne in order to accommodate the new runway proposals. The Colne Valley will be improved and expanded to create additional recreational opportunities and biodiversity improvements. Increased flood storage is required to prevent further flooding downstream. 40 Ha of flood zone 3 is to be built on.

## 5. Conclusions

- 5.1 Proposals to expand Heathrow will have a significant impact on the District, both directly and indirectly. The biggest impact would be from the proposed transport Hub at Iver. However, the Airport Commission have effectively concluded that this element is uneconomic (compared to WRAtH), has no advantage in terms of providing the same facilities on-airport and has an unintended consequences of delaying the vast majority of passengers on the Great Western line who are travelling to London rather than to the airport. Communities in the South East (Richings Park) and South West (Dorney) of the District currently experience aircraft noise. It is likely that increased aircraft movements and for Richings Park, a runway (NW option) significantly closer than at present will result in increased disturbance with no proposed amelioration. In addition it is likely that the District will be under more pressure to accommodate both housing and commercial development. There

will also be an increase in local traffic in the Iver area particularly from construction traffic in connection with the surface access proposals and the changes to the motorway network will result in local disturbance for a long time. The proposed increase in freight capacity allowed for by the increase in flights will also attract more HGV traffic. This will have an adverse impact on the quality of life particularly in terms of noise and air quality (leading to health impacts) within the southern part of the District. Diverting the River Colne in the Thorney area and creation of flood storage areas will have local impacts but should not increase flooding in the District.

5.2 Most impacts are therefore likely to be negative with the exception of increased business opportunities supporting the local economy. The Heathrow Hub proposal for an extended runway (but not for the rail interchange and car park at Iver) is likely to have the least adverse impact as it is further away from the District's southern boundary.

## 6. Resources, Risk and Other Implications

6.1 Ongoing involvement in the Airport expansion proposals will have an impact on officer time.

6.2 A decision as to which proposal is taken forward will not be made until after the General Election. If Heathrow is given the go ahead to expand there will be a need for considerable engagement with the promoter to minimise impacts on the District over a number of years and officers will need to take account of the wider implications of development in duty to co-operate discussions and potentially within our new Local Plan.

## 7. Recommendation

7.1 It is recommended that this report should form the basis of the response to the Airport Commission. As the deadline for submitting a response falls before the next Cabinet meeting it is proposed that the Director of Services exercises delegated authority under Part 3, section 2, delegation (18) of the Constitution, to finalise and submit the Council's response in consultation with the portfolio holder.

<b>Officer Contact:</b>	<b>Jane Griffin, Principal Planner - Policy, 01895 837315</b>
<b>Background Papers:</b>	<b>Airport Commission's Consultation Document November 2014</b> <b>The interim report from the Airports Commission into airport capacity and connectivity in the UK.</b>