

“Beyond the Horizon – The Future of UK Aviation” - Council Response

1. The questions posed by the government in the consultation paper and Council responses, in italics, are set out below.
2. “In what order of importance should the policy challenges listed below be tackled?”
 - Keeping pace with consumer expectations
 - Maintaining high levels of safety and security
 - Expanding our access to markets and trade
 - Encouraging competitiveness
 - Meeting increasing demand through sustainable growth
 - Keeping pace with technology and developing skills for the future”

Each of these policy challenges is important, but the Council considers that too low a priority is accorded to the need to protect the interests of those whose amenity and health may potentially be adversely affected by air traffic movements. Reconciliation of growth with environmental protection is expressed in terms of “how to build capacity and promote growth and connectivity, while balancing this with the need to minimise impacts and respect environmental limits” (para 2.16 of the consultation document). This formulation is considered to be weak as it implies acceptance of a degree of harm in order to accommodate growth. The Council’s preferred approach would be to limit growth to levels that can be satisfactorily mitigated in terms of noise, particularly at night, air pollution and other environmental impacts.

The challenges of “keeping pace with technology and developing skills for the future” and “expanding our access to markets and trade” should be accorded a high priority given the economic importance of aircraft manufacturing and air transport. This is particularly the case in South Derbyshire where many local residents are employed in these sectors.

3. “What are your views on the proposed aims and objectives?” (para. 2.2 of the consultation document)

Whilst the aims and objectives are supported, particularly in regard to developing innovation, technology and skills, the reference to growth and environmental impacts should be strengthened as follows: “accommodate growth within the limits of what can be satisfactorily mitigated in terms of noise, including single event noise levels generated by individual air traffic movements, air pollution and other environmental impacts.”

4. “What are your views on the proposed policy principles?” (para. 2.5 of the consultation document)

The Council objects to the omission of references to the protection of the interests of those whose amenity and health could be adversely affected by air traffic movements or to the protection of the environment.

5. “What are your views on the proposed policy tests?” (para. 2.6 of the consultation document)

The policy tests appear to be sensible and are supported.

6. “What are your views on the government’s proposal to support airports throughout the UK making the best use of their existing runways, subject to the environmental issues being addressed?”

The general approach is supported, but it is considered that it should be strengthened by stating that any potential adverse noise and emissions impacts must be satisfactorily mitigated. This is particularly important in relation to night noise impacts, potentially resulting from increased numbers of air traffic movements, the use of noisier aircraft or inappropriate operational practices.

7. “This document sets out the questions that the government would like to explore in developing the Aviation Strategy, within each of the six objectives that have been identified. Are there any specific questions on the six objectives that you think should be included in the planned consultations?”

Questions relating to the following should be included in the forthcoming topic based consultations:

- *Should the government seek to accommodate, stimulate or suppress growth in air transport?*
- *What is the right approach to addressing air transport in such a way as to satisfactorily mitigate potential adverse noise and air pollution impacts?*
- *Are the right incentives in place to ensure that industry continues to reduce noise, including the feasibility of noise targets?*
- *What is the best approach and combination of policy measures to ensure we effectively address carbon emissions from aviation?*
- *What could the government do to assist in the planning and delivery of improved surface access to meet the needs of consumers and those employed at airport sites?*
- *What skills does the sector require to maintain its competitiveness in the future and what is the role for government in developing them?*

8. “Are there any other sources of information or evidence that the government should bear in mind when developing the strategy? If yes, please give us some details of the sources of information or evidence.”

These matters will be addressed in responding to the themed consultation papers to be published by the government as the next stage in developing its aviation strategy.

9. “Does the proposed timetable (paras 2.12 to 2.15 of the consultation document) provide enough time to examine the issues in sufficient depth?”

Yes, if the topic based consultation papers are published in good time and a sufficiently long period is provided to allow consultees to meaningfully engage with the process. Given the need to consult working groups, confer with other interested

parties and report to committees it is suggested that the consultation period for each paper should extend to some six months.

10. “What action could the government take in order to ensure that the maximum number of people, communities and organisations are engaged in the process and are able to have their views heard?”

It is requested that maximum publicity be given to the themed consultations and that sufficient time provided to allow local authorities, parish councils, other public bodies, businesses and members of the public to fully engage with the process of preparing the strategy. The government should organise exhibitions and workshops to enable members of the public as well as politicians, professionals and business leaders to understand the issues to be tackled.

11. “Would your organisation be willing to take part or help organise events to help the development of the strategy?”

The Council would be willing to take part in such events, subject to availability of resources.

12. “Are there any issues which we have not covered in this document which you think should be included in the consultation process?”

Yes. It is considered that the question as to whether the government should seek to accommodate, stimulate or suppress growth in air transport should be open for debate as part of this consultation. The current document is framed in such a way as to suggest that growth will be encouraged with no possibility that any other stance might be considered.