

REPORT TO:	Environmental and Development Services Committee	AGENDA ITEM: 8
DATE OF MEETING:	04 October 2012	CATEGORY: DELEGATED
REPORT FROM:	Director of Operations	OPEN
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SUBJECT:	"Draft Aviation Policy Framework" Consultation	REF:
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	All Wards	TERMS OF REFERENCE: EDS

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### 1.0 Recommendations

1.1 That the proposed responses to the questions posed by the Department for Transport, as set out in Annexe A of this report, be accepted as the Council's response to the consultation exercise.

### 2.0 Purpose of Report

2.1 To obtain a Council response to the Department for Transport's (DfT) "Draft Aviation Policy Framework" consultation exercise.

### 3.0 Detail

3.1 The Government is reviewing national aviation policy with the objective of developing a long term, high level framework for aviation. This will replace the 2003 Air Transport White Paper, which sets out the current approach.

3.2 Members will recall that the DfT's "Developing a Sustainable Framework for UK Aviation: Scoping Document" consultation was considered at Environmental and Development Services Committee on 25 August 2011 (minute EDS14 refers). The responses to that exercise have informed the "Draft Aviation Policy Framework" which has been made available for general consultation and may be viewed at <http://www.dft.gov.uk/consultations/dft-2012-35/>. The Government intends to finalise the framework by March 2013.

3.3 The Draft Strategy first identifies the benefits of aviation, in terms of its direct contribution to economic growth and employment and in facilitating trade, investment and inward tourism. It also identifies wider benefits including travel for leisure and visiting family and friends.

3.4 The main economic objective is to ***ensure that the UK's air links continue to make it one of the best connected countries in the world. This includes increasing links to emerging markets so that the UK can compete successfully for economic growth opportunities***. To achieve this the Government considers it important to maintain the UK's aviation "hub" capability, meaning that there should be airports handling large numbers of transfer passengers, the only current example in the UK being Heathrow. It also considers it important to develop links from airports which provide point-to-point services.

- 3.5 In the short term, to 2020, a key priority is to make much better use of existing runway capacity at all UK airports. This is to be achieved through measures to improve performance, resilience and the passenger experience; encourage new routes and services; support regional airports; and ensure that airports are better integrated into the wider transport network.
- 3.6 Beyond 2020, it is acknowledged that there are capacity constraints in the South East of England. Responses to the scoping document demonstrated a broad consensus on the importance of maintaining the UK's high levels of connectivity, but the Government considers that there is currently insufficient evidence to enable specific solutions to be identified. There will therefore be a "Call for Evidence" on maintaining the UK's international aviation connectivity later this year.
- 3.7 The draft Strategy then considers the environmental impacts of aviation. On climate change, the objective is to **"ensure that the aviation sector makes a significant and cost effective contribution towards reducing global emissions"**. This is to be achieved by working with partners abroad to secure a global emissions deal and improved aircraft technology standards along with the continued implementation of the EU Emissions Trading Scheme.
- 3.8 In regard to local environmental impacts, the overall objective is to **"aim to limit and, where possible, reduce the number of people in the UK significantly affected by aircraft noise"**. This is to be achieved by incentivising noise reduction and mitigation, the encouragement of better engagement between airports and local communities and through greater transparency to facilitate informed debate. In particular, the Strategy proposes independent monitoring and enforcement, realistic noise limits linked to penalty schemes and the use of instruments such as differential landing fees, which encourage take-offs and landings outside sensitive periods.
- 3.9 For other local environmental impacts, such as air pollution, the overall objective is to protect health by working to meet relevant legal obligations.
- 3.10 Aviation objectives are to be achieved largely through partnership working, the objective being **"to encourage the aviation industry and local stakeholders to strengthen and streamline the way in which they work together"**.

#### **4.0 Financial Implications**

- 4.1 There are no financial implications for the Council.

#### **5.0 Corporate Implications**

- 5.1 Strategic air transport policy has implications for the following themes of the Corporate Strategy:

- "Sustainable growth and opportunity" in that East Midlands Airport is important to the local economy as an employer in its own right, as an attraction to business investment and as a tourism asset.

#### **6.0 Community Implications**

- 6.1 Strategic air transport policy has implications for the following themes of the Sustainable Community Strategy:

- "Vibrant communities" in that air transport is a significant generator of carbon emissions and noise generated by aircraft can impact on local amenity.

- “Sustainable development” in that East Midlands Airport is important to the local economy as an employer in its own right, as an attraction to business investment in the region and as a tourism asset.

## 7.0 Conclusions

- 7.1 The Council has long recognised the value of East Midlands Airport to the local economy, but at the same time has sought to encourage the airport to adopt and extend measures to protect the amenity and health of local residents in relation to noise impacts, particularly at night.
- 7.2 The objective to **“limit and, where possible, reduce the number of people in the UK significantly affected by aircraft noise”** is considered to be ineffective as there is no indication as to what the upper limit of numbers of people affected should be. Given ongoing reductions in the levels of noise emitted by individual aircraft, it is considered that a more appropriate objective would be to **“limit to current levels and, where possible, reduce the number of people significantly affected by aircraft noise”**. This would allow continued moderate growth in air traffic movements whilst affording strong protection to potentially affected people.
- 7.3 A further concern is that the Draft Framework proposes no effective means of securing the above objective, whether more clearly defined or otherwise, as there is to be no overall co-ordination of activity among the regional airports. The consultation document suggests that Civil Aviation Authority representatives could feed back to Ministers on compliance with good practice and assessing airport implementation of noise penalty schemes. Whilst potentially beneficial within its limits, this would not provide the necessary means to influence the overall number of people affected by noise from airports at the national scale.
- 7.4 The Council has previously strongly expressed the view that airport sound insulation compensation schemes be extended to include all dwellings within the 40 dB of  $L_{\text{night, outside}}$  noise contour, rather than the 55 dB of  $L_{\text{night, outside}}$  contour as is presently the case at East Midlands Airport, in line with the conclusions of the World Health Organisation. This is reiterated in the proposed response to the current consultation exercise.
- 7.5 Proposed answers to the questions posed by the DfT are set out at Annexe A and, where relevant, have been framed with reference to the Council’s previously expressed positions on the issues raised. A number of the questions have no direct relevance to East Midlands Airport or to South Derbyshire and a “no comments” response has been proposed in these cases.

## 8.0 Background Papers

“Draft Aviation Policy Framework”	Dept for Transport, July 2012
“Developing a Sustainable Framework for UK Aviation – Scoping Document”	Dept for Transport, March 2011
“East Midlands Airport Masterplan – 2006”	East Midlands Airport, 2006
“The Future of Air Transport White Paper”	Dept for Transport, Dec 2003
“East Midlands Airport Noise Action Plan”	East Midlands Airport, 2009