

---

## **LONDON SOUTHEND AIRPORT – DRAFT MASTER PLAN**

### **1 SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This report seeks Members' views on a draft Master Plan intended to set the scene for the future development of London Southend Airport.

### **2 INTRODUCTION**

- 2.1 The draft Master Plan is a response to the White Paper 'The Future of Air Transport' published by the Government in 2003. The Plan is intended by the airport operating company to 'consult and inform stakeholders and interested parties on how the airport is proposed to develop in line with the Government's policy framework, as set out in the White Paper'. A copy of the 'Information Sheet' accompanying the Master Plan has been sent to all Members. In addition, a copy of the Executive Summary from the document is attached to this report, as Appendix 1.

### **3 KEY ISSUES**

- 3.1 The key issues for Members to be aware of in examining the draft Master Plan are as follows:

- The Master Plan is intended to inform and guide the consideration of specific planning applications.

COMMENT: the Master Plan is not a Development Plan Document and relevant material planning considerations will need to be taken into account in considering any planning proposal. Nevertheless, the Master Plan could be considered as the start of the process to prepare an Action Plan for development to be included in the Local Development Framework.

- It is suggested that growth to around 1 million passengers per annum by 2015 is a reasonable and achievable target, and the Master Plan provides some interesting comparisons to other types of development.

COMMENT: experience suggests that passenger numbers can in fact grow very quickly and the rate of growth proposed may very well be an underestimate. If growth rates are faster than expected, the airport operating company will need to move quickly to expand terminal capacity. There will also be other issues to consider, not the least being surface access and appropriate environmental impact assessments. The proposed new terminal has a capacity of about 300,000 passengers per annum, though with careful management, is likely to be able to serve a greater number before an extension is required.

- It has been assumed there will be no further changes in runway configuration.

COMMENT: if this is the case, then there is a limit to the types and sizes of aeroplanes that can be handled by the airport. It would be useful for the Master Plan to provide some information about this issue.

- In the short-term, the existing terminal will be used to handle growing passenger numbers. Once the new terminal is completed and operational the existing terminal will be used for business and general aviation.

COMMENT: the existing terminal offers an opportunity to develop a facility specifically for business aviation.

- The Master Plan includes a land-use 'zoning map' to identify broad uses within sectors of the airport site. The 'northern maintenance zone' includes land within the existing Aviation Way industrial estate, but also in the north east quadrant, land that is in the Green Belt part of the site and is largely undeveloped. Part of this area will be required for flying clubs, but the remainder is identified in the Master Plan as being suitable for hangerage and maintenance and support facilities. Aviation Way would need to be extended to provide access. Interestingly, the Master Plan also makes reference to a '10 acre field' that is outside the boundary of the airport, but which would be included in the northern maintenance zone.

COMMENT: The policies in the current and emerging Local Plan are supportive of the provision of appropriate development directly related to the aviation facility. Proposals that do not fall into this category would be very closely scrutinised. The airport policies in the local plan would not, though, apply to land in the Green Belt beyond the existing airport boundary.

- The maps included in the draft Master Plan purport to show the boundary of the airport.

COMMENT: This is slightly misleading in that the maps identify land in the control or ownership of the operating company, but that is not necessarily part of the operational airport. This includes an area of land on the east side of the railway line, between the railway line and Southend Road that was purchased by the company several years ago; this site is proposed to be used for the development of a commuter car park and 'transport interchange' in association with the new railway station. At the time of writing the report, an application had not been received.

- The draft Master Plan makes the following statement about access: 'The proposed new access to the east of Southend, to which the East of England Regional Assembly has assigned the highest priority, will need to be planned to integrate with access to the airport'.

---

COMMENT: There is a significant element of wishful thinking in this statement. Certainly it is important that options for improvements to the surface access arrangements to the airport are carefully examined. However, in supporting an examination of such options, there is no support given to the principle of a 'relief road' or 'outer bypass' through Rochford District. It is assumed the reference to the 'east of Southend' actually means to the 'east of Rochford'.

- At least half of the airport is currently located within the Metropolitan Green Belt and the Master Plan suggests that very special circumstances might be argued for development that could not be located elsewhere.

COMMENT: The policy situation has been mentioned above. There is support in principle for development that is required for the operation of the airport facility, and the statements in the Master Plan seem to be reasonably realistic and recognise there will be limitations.

- The benefits accruing from the development of the airport in relation to jobs and the convenience of a local airport are explained.

COMMENT: these positives are balanced against the need to carefully consider environmental impacts. There may also be a requirement to consider positive policies to encourage take up by local companies and employees.

- The Master Plan indicates that no major additional areas of land are required to meet CAA requirements or to enable the layout of development to be better planned.

COMMENT: The future development of the airport is very much focused on the existing estate and ambitions beyond are limited.

#### **4 CONCLUSIONS**

- 4.1 The framework for future development does not raise any major surprises and it is suggested that, subject to Members' views, in principle support be given to the broad principles outlined in the Master Plan.
- 4.2 In supporting the broad principles it is important to reiterate that Rochford remains opposed to the principle of an outer bypass/relief road, though it is recognised that the options for improved surface access to the airport must be examined.
- 4.3 Similarly, the Council as the local Planning Authority for the majority of the airport site does not give unqualified support to the more detailed elements of the Master Plan, including development in the 'northern maintenance and

---

support zone'. Any detailed development proposals that emerge will be subject to the appropriate level of scrutiny through the planning process.

**5 RISK IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The airport is a major provider of employment in South East Essex and the proposals for expansion will generate new opportunities. However, set against this must be a continuing and robust examination of environmental impacts to ensure that the amenities of local communities are protected.

**6 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 The growth and development of the airport will raise questions about environmental impact though noise, pollution, road traffic, etc. These matters can be addressed, but will need careful management.

**7 RECOMMENDATION**

- 7.1 It is proposed that the Committee **RESOLVES**

That, subject to Members' views, this report forms the basis of a response to the consultation on the London Southend Airport - Draft Master Plan.

Shaun Scrutton

Head of Planning Services

---

**Background Papers:-**

London Southend Airport – Draft Master Plan, April 2005

For further information please contact Shaun Scrutton on:-

Tel:- 01702 318137

E-Mail:- shaun.scrutton@rochford.gov.uk

---

**Appendix 1**

**London Southend Airport – Draft Master Plan  
Executive Summary**

**Southend Airport Serving the Thames Gateway and Local Demand**

ES1 Southend Airport supports economic development at the eastern end of the Thames Gateway, in the same way as the regeneration of Docklands at the western end has been assisted by London City Airport. Both airports will serve the Thames Gateway with a complementary range of air services, destinations and fares. In addition, Southend Airport, which has a slightly longer runway and much more land for aviation related facilities, is a major maintenance, repair and overhaul (MRO) base used by airlines and aircraft owners from all over the world. This valuable aspect of the Airport provides additional skilled employment opportunities which also contribute to the balanced regeneration of the Thames Gateway.

**Why are we preparing a master plan?**

ES2 In December 2003, following a long public consultation, the Government published its white paper 'The Future of Air Transport', in which airport operators were asked to prepare master plans.

ES3 Southend Airport is set to restart passenger flights now that the runway has been made compliant with the Civil Aviation Authority's safety standards. This master plan, prepared initially as a draft for consultation, is intended to consult and inform stakeholders and interested parties on how the Airport proposes to develop in line with the Government's policy framework as set out in the white paper.

**The Future of Air Transport**

ES4 The Government's White Paper, 'The Future of Air Transport' was published in December 2003. It set out a 30 year policy for airports based on balancing the economic benefits of growth with its adverse environmental effects. Among its general conclusions were the following:

- Air travel is essential to the United Kingdom's economy and to our continued prosperity. In the last 30 years there has been a five-fold increase in air travel. And it has opened up opportunities that for many simply did not exist before; half the population flies at least once a year and many fly far more often than that.
- The challenge we face is to deal with the pressures caused by the increasing need to travel whilst at the same time meeting our commitment to protect the environment in which we live.
- The Government recognises the benefits that the expansion in air travel has brought to people's lives and to the economy of this country.

---

Many businesses, in both manufacturing and service industries, rely on air travel; and it is particularly important for many of the fastest growing sectors of the economy. Visitors by air are crucial to UK tourism. Airfreight has doubled in the last 10 years; one third by value of all goods we export go by air. And 200,000 people are employed in the aviation industry, with three times as many jobs supported by it indirectly.

- All this puts pressures on airports, some of which are at, or fast approaching, capacity. The Government's role is primarily one of enabler and regulator, operating through the planning system in particular, to take a strategic view of where airport development may be needed. It must also ensure an appropriate balance both between competing land uses and between benefits and their impacts, when proposals for new development are under consideration.
- It is for airport owners and operators to bring forward such proposals, which will need to be considered through the planning system in the normal way. This White Paper does not itself *authorise* (or *preclude*) any particular development, but sets out policies which will inform and guide the consideration of specific planning applications.

ES5 While the headlines of the White Paper pointed to major developments at Stansted, Heathrow, and airports in other regions of the UK, it also provided guidance on the future role of small airports in the South East, including Southend. The White Paper's conclusions of particular relevance to Southend Airport were:

- Small airports have an important role to play in the South East, meeting local demand and relieving the pressure on the main airports.
- Regional and local planning frameworks should take account of the benefits that development at smaller airports could provide and consider policies which facilitate the delivery of growth.
- Continued provision of business aviation services is encouraged
- The operators of Southend (and Lydd and Manston) argue that their airports could grow substantially and each has plans for development. We consider that all these airports could play a valuable role in meeting local demand and could contribute to regional economic development. In principle, we would support their development, subject to relevant environmental considerations.

### **The Master Plan**

ES6 The White Paper proposed that master plans should be prepared for larger airports like Heathrow or Stansted, and those earmarked for major development like

---

Bristol or Edinburgh, to show what would happen and how the community would be affected. The Government's guidance did not list Southend as one of the major airports requiring a master plan, but suggested that other airports may wish to consider preparing master plans in order to provide a mechanism which will enable future development to be given due consideration in local and regional planning processes. The Southend Airport draft master plan is therefore a voluntary publication to help people understand the benefits and disadvantages of growth and give them the information needed to engage in the debate.

ES7 The master plan is not a planning application, and future planning applications for developments covered in the master plan would be accompanied by a full statement of the benefits and disadvantages, including a full environmental impact assessment. Such applications would provide a further opportunity for public involvement and require scrutiny by the local authorities and possibly by an independent Government Inspector.

### **National, Regional and Local Policies**

ES8 The master plan reviews relevant national, regional and local policies and demonstrates that the Airport's proposals are aligned with them. In particular:

- The Government white paper 'The Future of Air Transport' supports the development of Southend Airport to meet local demand.
- The East of England Plan supports the Airport's continued use and development provided this is consistent with its own operational safety and that of the major airports.
- A Vision for the Future of Thames Gateway South Essex says that expansion of air links at Southend Airport will provide catalysts for investment, improving connections and employment, and that this will be achieved in part by promoting the development of seaport and airport facilities.
- The Essex and Southend-on-Sea Structure Plan supports Southend as a regional airport, as do the Rochford and Southend-on-Sea Local Plans

### **Forecasts**

ES9 In the medium to long term Southend Airport is expected to grow to become similar in terms of passengers and aircraft movements to London City Airport today. Around 1 million passengers are forecast for Southend in 2015, a typical daily flow of around 1500 arriving and 1500 departing passengers or 150 in each direction per hour. These numbers would be similar to the numbers of customers at a fast food restaurant or a petrol station. Total aircraft movements are forecast to rise around 35% from 2004 to 2015. On a typical day there would be around 40 passenger flights, 2 or 3 aircraft movements associated with maintenance, repair and overhaul

---

and 5 or 6 business or corporate flights, an average over the operating day of 3 per hour. The remainder would be private, light aircraft movements from the flying clubs and others based at the Airport, continuing at about today's levels.

ES10 In the longer term, towards 2030, passenger numbers at Southend Airport could grow to 2 million a year. London City handled 1.7 million passengers in 2004 and Southampton a similar number. These numbers are much smaller than those for London's major airports, such as Stansted which handled over 20 million passengers in 2004 and is forecast to grow to 80 million in the White Paper.

### **The Airport's Infrastructure**

ES11 The Civil Aviation Authority's requirements for Runway End Safety Areas have now been implemented. A previous proposal would have displaced the runway and required the relocation of St Laurence and All Saints Church because of an infringement within the runway safeguarded area, but agreement has now been reached with the Civil Aviation Authority that this variation to their regulations is acceptable provided that the situation remains under review. The master plan assumes no further changes in the runway configuration.

ES12 The existing passenger terminal is to be used in the short term and then a new terminal and multi-modal transport interchange is to be built, for which planning permission has been granted. Located south east of the runway next to the railway line, the interchange will include a railway station in addition to a new passenger terminal, aircraft stands and air passenger car parking, plus a parkway car park for which approval is being sought. Further phases of the terminal will be built as passenger numbers grow. A hotel/restaurant and visitor facility are planned in an adjoining area. The existing terminal will then be used for alternative airport uses such as business and general aviation.

ES13 The substantial maintenance and support area south of the runway will continue to be developed for aircraft maintenance and repair activities.

ES14 The maintenance and support area north of the runway also offers scope for additional maintenance facilities. The western part is already developed but the eastern part is a substantial area partly used for flying clubs, aircraft parking, dismantling and fire training. The master plan zones this area for further development of hangarage capacity as well as other support activities, including the relocation of flying clubs and the air traffic control tower from south of the runway.

### **Surface Access**

ES15 The proposed new multi-modal transport interchange will provide a major improvement to the Airport's surface access arrangements and is expected to attract a significant proportion, around 25%, of passengers to rail. Roads and junctions serving the Airport would be able to accommodate the growth in traffic with the exception of the Southend Road/Sutton Road roundabout, which is already operating well above its capacity. Consideration will also need to be given to methods of

---

controlling commuter parking for the new station. The proposed new access to east Southend, to which the East of England Regional Assembly has assigned the highest priority, will need to be planned to integrate with access to the Airport.

### **Environmental Impacts**

ES16 No changes to flight paths are proposed. Aircraft noise has reduced significantly since the 1960s and 1970s when the Airport was last busy. New assessments of the noise impact of the numbers of aircraft suggested in the master plan (typically 40 passenger, plus 2-3 maintenance and 5-6 business aircraft movements per day) will be prepared, as well as assessments of air quality, archaeology, ecology and water quality.

ES17 About one half of the Airport is designated as green belt, including part of the site of the new multi-modal interchange. Very special circumstances, essentially relating to the lack of any alternative location, have to be demonstrated in order for planning permission to be granted for developments in the green belt.

ES18 Measures to minimise and mitigate these impacts are already in place and will be implemented as agreed thresholds are reached and developed further as the impacts are identified and measured. In particular, operational controls will restrict aircraft movements, landscaped areas will be provided and a Green Transport Plan will be developed through an Airport Transport Forum.

### **Benefits**

ES19 The Airport already generates around 1200 direct jobs, and has further indirect, induced and catalytic employment effects. The growth in passenger numbers could lead to a doubling of direct jobs and further increases in the other categories. The green travel plan will seek to provide improved travel arrangements for the Airport and the surrounding community. Passenger flights will benefit both local residents and businesses who will be able to travel from their convenient local airport rather than travel longer distances to other airports. Increased revenues will enable the Airport to upgrade its facilities and provide a greater return to Southend-on-Sea Borough Council, the freehold owner of the airfield.

ES20 The Airport recognises the importance of achieving a sustainable balance between the economic and social benefits that it brings to the region with the impact on the environment.

### **Land Use Plan**

ES21 No major additional areas of land are required but some small areas around the boundary are to be brought within the Airport, either to meet Civil Aviation Authority safety requirements or to enable the layout of the developments to be better planned. The master plan includes two plans, the first of which shows existing and approved developments and the second shows zones for longer term development.

**Consultation and Next Steps**

ES22 The draft master plan is being issued for consultation. Your views on it would be appreciated. Please send us your comments by 31 May 2005. Please give your postcode and let us know if you would like your response to be confidential. Please address your responses to:

Master Plan Consultation  
Southend Airport  
Southend-on-Sea  
Essex  
SS2 6YF

or e-mail to: [masterplan@southendairport.net](mailto:masterplan@southendairport.net)

We will then take your views into consideration and complete the master plan.