

**EXETER CITY COUNCIL****EXECUTIVE  
16 SEPTEMBER 2008****DRAFT EXETER AIRPORT MASTER PLAN****1 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to agree a proposed response to a consultation from Exeter International Airport on a draft Airport Master Plan.

**2 BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 A copy of a detailed report to Planning Member Working Group (PMWG) on 8 July setting out the background to the proposals and key issues is available in the Members' Room. PMWG supported the approach outlined in the observations section of the circulated report and expressed concern that surface transport links should be in place at an early stage.

Existing airport facilities

- 2.2 The airport of about 137ha operates with an east/west runway (bearing 08/26) that is 2083 metres long and 46 metres wide. The main facilities are to the south of the runway. The terminal building has grown in an ad hoc manner. It has a capacity to handle about 600 passengers per hour (often exceeded) and 1.2-1.4 million passengers per annum (mppa). Exeter Airport has grown from about 0.4mppa in 2002 to 1.034 mppa in 2007 mainly due to the establishment and expansion of Flybe scheduled services. The number of commercial air transport movements (ATMs) has grown from less than 6,000 in 2003 to 18,600 in 2007. Movements are take-offs or landings so each aircraft produces two movements. Aircraft predominantly land from the east and take-off to the west. There are about 60 GA aircraft based at Exeter and four flight training schools contributing most of the other 30,000 General Aviation movements per annum. The airport is the Royal Mail 'Skynet network' hub for the south west with two aircraft operating.

Master Plan proposals to 2030

- 2.3 The airport is expected to grow to 3.368 mppa and 38,200 ATMS by 2030. It may reach 4.0 mppa if a more optimistic view is taken of future air traffic growth or capacity for growth is constrained at Bristol or South East airports. There would be no changes to the runway except a holding loop at the eastern end of the runway. The number of aircraft stands would double and the terminal building would treble in size. The impact of the growth in movements would be that the number in peak periods would double and the peak would spread to cover longer periods of the day.

**3 KEY ISSUES**

- 3.1 The report to PMWG noted that expansion of the airport will bring economic benefits but also environmental and climate change impacts. It should only be supported with a robust package of analysis, controls and mitigation on a number of issues. These are outlined below with the results

of further investigations. In many cases investigations are not yet concluded. Where controls and limits are to be applied to flying operations there may be opportunities to introduce them at a number of stages, adoption of the final master plan, approval of a significant planning application (such as a terminal extension) or a trigger in terms of the level of operations.

- An agreed limit on night flights between 2300 and 0600
- 3.2 There is presently no limit on night flights. The limit should be per individual night time period and have separate figures for Royal Mail (or any other mail) movements and 'Others' (charter). There are presently 6 movements a weekday night by two Royal Mail aircraft. A limit of eight movements a night would provide Royal Mail with some flexibility.
- 3.3 There is one Exeter based charter aircraft which makes an average of 5 night movements per week. A limit of two 'Other' movements a night would allow the operation of a second charter aircraft based at Exeter.
- 3.4 The operator should be asked to set limits in the final master plan that can take effect immediately.
- Phase out and limits on noisier aircraft types such as 'high end' Chapter 3
- 3.5 Some airports ban or limit the numbers of movements by the noisiest types of aircraft. Jet aircraft are classified under Chapter 16 of the ICAO by categories. 'High end' Chapter 3 aircraft are early noisier variants of aircraft such as Boeing 737s. The operator will be asked to agree the principle of a future restriction. The exact definition of aircraft affected and the timetable for introduction should be agreed at a later date.
- Further information on noise levels showing lower noise contours than 57dB, for during prolonged anticyclonic conditions and the detailed components and assumptions in the modelled information
- 3.6 The draft master plan includes day and night time noise contours that show the future operations will accord with Government policy on acceptable aviation noise. The noise modelling is based upon average conditions and is underlain by a series of assumptions. The operator has offered to provide more detail on the modelling and some sensitivity testing of potential worst case conditions however this has not yet been received. The Council's proposed response should be subject to the receipt of satisfactory information.
- A 'Quiet Operations Policy' identifying procedures, targets and monitoring relating to continuous descent, take-off and flight paths. This should be developed as soon as possible and be amended if controlled airspace is secured
- 3.7 There should be a commitment to development and early implementation of a quiet operations policy and towards its review if there are subsequent changes to controlled airspace. An extension of controlled airspace would allow control of aircraft movements over a wider area to minimise impacts.
- Installation of real time noise monitoring equipment
- 3.8 Many larger airports and some of a similar size to Exeter have actual noise microphones linked to the radar system that allow real time monitoring of actual noise and aircraft tracks that can be used to respond to individual complaints and for preparation of regular monitoring reports. Such systems

are dependent upon a compatible radar system and might cost up to £250,000 plus running costs. The Airport operator does not believe that a system is justified. Acquisition of a system should be a long term objective.

Further data, including benchmarking, demonstrating that targets for public transport usage and limiting future car parking are sufficiently challenging. A package of incentives to use public transport is required

- 3.9 The draft master plan includes future targets for modal split and car parking. Further information has been requested on how these have been formulated. Devon County Council's Airport Task Group has also commented that the target to reduce private car journeys is not sufficiently ambitious. There is a need for the operator to provide sufficient incentives to encourage use of and develop public transport.

Satisfactory evidence that a southern terminal will not prejudice achievement of a high quality public transport link between Exeter and Cranbrook

- 3.10 The operator is proposing to extend and refurbish the southern terminal and not to move to a new north terminal as previously envisaged. This decision will make it more difficult to link the terminal directly into high quality public transport services between Cranbrook, Skypark and Exeter and to provide a shuttle service between the terminal and Cranbrook Railway Station. The operator recognises that a south terminal has cost benefits but is not ideal for the transport strategy. This underlines the need for challenging targets and incentives as identified in paragraph 3.09.

Achievement of carbon neutrality for the airport, covering all ground activities by 2015 as an essential requirement, any offsetting scheme should be locally based

- 3.11 The draft master plan proposes that ground operations be carbon neutral. This needs to cover all operations. Any renewable energy / offsetting scheme should be planned in association with other adjoining developments such as Skypark and Cranbrook.

Analysis of the implications of the forthcoming Secretary of State's proposed modifications to the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) on potential airport expansion and new housing growth east of Exeter

- 3.12 The Secretary of State's proposed changes to the RSS propose the expansion of Cranbrook to 7,500 homes and that a further 4,000 be found within the area of EDDC on the eastern edge of Exeter. The operator states it opposes expansion of Cranbrook beyond 5,500 homes. This is understood to be because of the general growth in population close to the airport, and hence potential complaints. While the airport is an important part of the local economy and transport infrastructure, it should not be allowed to constrain future housing growth in the Exeter region.

#### **4 RESPONSES BY DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL AND EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL**

- 4.1 The report to PMWG stated that officers would liaise with Devon County Council (DCC) and East Devon District Council (EDDC) to try and develop a common approach.

Devon County Council

- 4.2 DCC's Environment, Economy and Culture Overview / Scrutiny Committee

received a presentation on the Airport master plan from the Airport operator on 18 August and discussed a series of questions arising from an Airport Task Group. DCC's Executive considered a report on the matter on 2 September. The County Council expressed some concerns about noise contours due to aircraft heading north passing over the city, about the adequacy of transport infrastructure to deal with increased passenger numbers and insufficiently challenging targets to reduce private car journeys.

#### 4.3 East Devon District Council

EDDC's Corporate Overview Committee received a presentation from the Technical Director of the airport on 24 July and resolved:

*'that the Draft Master Plan for Exeter Airport is supported in principle but members were concerned that there was a lack of detail on how more challenging targets for the modal shift from car to public transport would be achieved and the master plan indicated a potential increase in noise frequency for more households.'*

#### 4.4 EDDC's Executive Board of 6 August approved the above minute. The EDDC Executive of 3 September considered a report recommending:

1. The expansion of Exeter International Airport, as set out in the draft master plan of June 2008, be supported in principle in recognition of the economic benefits this will bring but without prejudice to the Council's role as Local Planning Authority in considering any proposals for development.

2. In view of the environmental and climate change implications of the expansion of the airport Exeter International Airport should:

i) Provide robust evidence outlining how sustainable transport (including ambitious targets for a modal split in adequate favour of public transport) is going to be achieved, because as spatial plans show a terminal to the south would be further from the proposed high quality public transport link between Cranbrook and its station, Skypark, the Intermodal Freight Terminal, Science Park and Exeter.

ii) Make clear in the master plan how the proposed new frequent public transport service connecting the Airport terminal to the new rail station will be delivered.

iii) Provide further information on: noise modelling and levels; the incidence of high power engine testing at night, the effect on noise levels of the existing ground running pen and what measures are proposed to minimise noise when the engine test facility moves to the south of the runway; assumptions on charter flight growth and possible consequences for night time activity; and car parking forecasts.

iv) Produce a 'Quiet Operations Policy' identifying procedures, targets and monitoring relating to continuous descent, take-off and flight paths.

v) Consider offering noise insulation assistance to occupiers of properties in East Devon experiencing airborne aircraft noise above 57dB LAeq, 16h

vi) Exeter International Airport be requested to engage with officers in a

detailed analysis on the implications for the Airport and its expansion of the Secretary of State's proposed changes to the draft Regional Spatial Strategy with respect to Cranbrook and other strategic developments to the east of Exeter.

- 4.5 The City Council, DCC and EDDC identify common issues relating to surface transport implications (modal split, public transport access and car parking), noise (controls on charter / night flights, assumptions used in noise modelling and the need for a quiet operations policy) and implications for Regional Spatial Strategy proposals for further development. EDDC also has more localised concerns regarding noise insulation and engine testing.

## **5 CONCLUSIONS**

- 5.1 Exeter City Council presently has an opportunity to influence the adopted airport master plan. It will be a consultee at a later stage on proposals by East Devon District Council relating to the airport in its core strategy and subsequent development plan documents making proposed allocations for land uses. The City Council will also be a consultee on any significant planning applications giving effect to proposals for airport expansion.
- 5.2 The policy context set by the 2003 Future of Air Transport White Paper is one favouring expansion of the airport up to 2.0-2.5 million passengers per annum (mppa) by 2030. The master plan proposes going beyond that level to 3.375 mppa. This policy context was set at a time when climate change issues were less to the fore and reflected a resolution to grant consent for a new terminal on the north side of the runway designed for 2.0 mppa. It would be very difficult for the planning authorities to resist expansion that accords with Government policy.
- 5.3 The proposals to focus improved terminal facilities south of the runway may make achievement of high quality public transport access more challenging but has some logic in terms of the programme for sequential expansion of the airport. Expansion of the Airport will generate more noise, while this needs to be minimised and mitigated, projected levels are not such as to suggest that expansion should be opposed.

## **6 RECOMMENDATION**

- 6.1 It is recommended that Executive supports the draft Exeter Airport Master Plan in principle subject to the comments in section 3.

**RICHARD SHORT**  
**HEAD OF PLANNING SERVICES**

### **ECONOMY & DEVELOPMENT DIRECTORATE**

**Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 (as amended):**

Background Papers used in compiling this report:

Draft Airport Master Plan