
Meeting: Development Management Committee

Date: 13 February 2013

Subject: Consultation by Luton BC on Planning Application for expansion of London Luton Airport (our ref: CB/13/00088/OAC)

Report of: Director of Sustainable Communities

Summary: The report summarises the proposals in the Planning Application submitted to Luton Borough Council, provides for submission of specialist responses from CBC officers to this meeting, and makes comments on the proposals.

Reason for presentation to committee: Call in by Executive Member – significant importance and implications to Central Bedfordshire.

Advising Officer: Director of Sustainable Communities

Contact Officer: John Spurgeon, Principal Planning Officer, Major Applications Team
(Tel: 0300 300 5304)

Public/Exempt: Public

Wards Affected: All, but in particular Caddington Ward

Function of: Council

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Council Priorities:

Enhancing Central Bedfordshire – will have an impact on creation of jobs, managing growth, protecting countryside and enabling businesses to grow.

Promote health and wellbeing – has the potential to impact health and wellbeing through noise, road traffic and other factors.

Better infrastructure – would improve the capacity and facilities at the airport which has a major part to play in the accessibility of Central Bedfordshire from more distant locations.

Financial:

1. Has the capacity to generate income to local authorities not least in the potential for growth-related development in Central Bedfordshire.

Legal:

2. None.

Risk Management:

3. None

Staffing (including Trades Unions):

4. Not Applicable.

Equalities/Human Rights:

5. None

Public Health

6. The noise and air pollution aspects of the development need to be considered carefully to avoid further harm to residents of Central Bedfordshire, especially in the Parishes of Hyde, Slip End and Caddington.

Community Safety:

7. Negligible applicability.

Sustainability:

8. The proposal has sustainability significance in the location of development, proposed growth of airport travel and surface access to the airport.

Procurement:

9. Not applicable.

RECOMMENDATION:

The Committee is asked to:

1. Inform Luton Borough Council that this Council makes a holding OBJECTION on the proposal for the reasons given in section 17 below,
2. Inform Luton Borough Council of the additional comments which may be received by the date of this meeting following consultation within Central Bedfordshire Council.

Background

The Application

10. Luton Borough Council, as planning authority, has consulted us on the planning application they have received for works to London Luton Airport. The period of consultation expires on 19th February 2013. The application has been submitted by London Luton Airport Operations Limited (LLAOL), who operate the airport, as compared with London Luton Airport Limited (LLAL), a company wholly owned by Luton BC who own the airport. The proposal is:

Proposed alterations to Airport Way/Airport Approach Road, infill extensions and alterations to terminal buildings, extensions to existing mid and long term

car parks, new taxiway (Foxtrot), extensions to the existing taxiway (Alpha) and aircraft parking aprons (including 6 new stands) and a new multi-storey car park linked to terminal building.

The application may be inspected on the Luton BC website www.eplan.luton.gov.uk under reference 12/01400.

11. In detail, these elements are as follows:

- (a) The existing airport approach road, from the Holiday Inn roundabout, under the taxiway to the terminal buildings, would be dualled, with new junctions. The extra land would use the spare tunnel portal;
- (b) Improvements to the transport hub to provide 18 dedicated bus bays;
- (c) Extension to medium and long term car parks;
- (d) New multi-storey car park;
- (e) Improvements to terminal building involving internal reorganisation and minor extensions and building works to provide added security, capacity in departures, more direct internal routes, smooth baggage return;
- (f) New 2-storey pier (elongated covered structure to deliver passengers directly to/from aircraft);
- (g) New taxiway parallel to Taxiway Delta, and new replacement stands and taxiway extensions,

Airport statistics provided in the submissions

12. (a) Passenger numbers –
9.5m in 2011 on 99,299 air traffic movements (ATMs),
Est.10.3m in 2013 on 112,000 ATMs.
Current capacity 12.4m (but see reference to National Infrastructure Plan below)
Proposed 18m by 2028 on 157,000 ATMs.
LLA is 5th largest in UK.
- (b) Economic value – LLAOL has invested more than £215m since 1998. For comparison, the estimated cost of this proposal is £100m (letter sent by LLAOL to Gary Alderson, 7/1/13). Its annual economic value to the sub-regional economy is £789m, which would increase to £1.3bn by 2028.
- (c) Passenger car parking – 6,719 spaces at airport with planning permission for further 980 = 7,519 approved spaces. Proposed increase by 2,910 = 10,609 spaces.
3 companies operate off-airport parking – 7,500 spaces.
- (d) Employment – Proposed staff increase from 8,250 to 13,350 jobs (17,750 indirect) by 2018. The Airport Masterplan sets the projected staff level at 9,900 jobs and the indirect total at 18,500 by 2031. 100 jobs during construction.
To these figures we can add the estimate that about 20% of these jobs are/will be taken by CB residents.
- (e) Other facts:
- Lowest night noise infringement limit of any UK airport
 - Operates a Community Trust Fund and Charity of the Year
 - Estimated 73% increase in commercial passenger movements to

2031 within 40% growth in ATMs

- Increase to 40% of passengers travelling by public transport by 2017 (Airport Surface Access Strategy)
- Peak hour (0600 – 0859h) movements to increase from 34 (2011) to 40 (2018) but there would be peak spreading to accommodate other new flights
- LLAOL fines planes if excessive noise is produced on take-off – can be 6 x landing fee – money invested in community projects.

Basis of application and policy

13. Par.33 of the National Planning Policy Framework states:

“When planning for ports, airports and airfields that are not subject to a separate policy statement, plans should take account of their growth and role in serving business, leisure, training and emergency service needs. Plans should take account of this Framework as well as the principles set out in the relevant national policy statements and the Government’ framework for UK Aviation.”

Current national aviation policy is the Future of Air Transport White Paper 2003. This supports full use of a single runway at Luton, on condition that the overall environmental impacts would be carefully controlled and adequate mitigation provided. There is potential to deliver employment-led growth and there would be sufficient demand to justify expansion to 30mppa and 240,000 ATMs up to 2030.

Draft Aviation Policy Framework 2012 sets out the Government’s objectives and will replace the FATWP. The primary objective is to achieve long term economic growth. It supports the aviation sector within a framework which maintains a balance between benefits of aviation and its cost, especially climate change and noise.

In respect of the National Infrastructure Plan 2011 (NIP) Luton could achieve 17mppa with maximum use of current capacity. The Davies Commission was established by the government to review these figures. However, LLAOL believes that this order of throughput increase cannot be delivered on present infrastructure without an unsatisfactory level of customer service. Accordingly it proposed this development to slightly exceed the NIP level of growth and to provide capacity for 18mppa. In 2012 LLAOL issued a scoping report on a smaller scheme (16mppa). Appendix B comprises CBC’s response to this as well as its response to LLAL’s proposals for 18mppa. The current scheme is for the higher figure and includes more environmental controls.

South Bedfordshire Local Plan Review (par. 5.20) supported the airport provided environmental impact is monitored in consultation with local communities below the flight path and minimised so far as possible, and that future expansion is kept within acceptable environmental limits.

The Central Bedfordshire Development Strategy Vision reflects the Council’s five Priorities, which are summarised above, under ‘Corporate Implications’. There is a presumption in favour of sustainable development and a keenness to deliver more jobs. Although Luton Airport is not mentioned as such (the great majority of it lies outside the Council’s area), par.6.14 states that:

“During recent years, Central Bedfordshire has worked closely with our neighbours to ensure that the growth within Central Bedfordshire is complementary with growth in neighbouring authorities.”

Although the thrust of the paragraph is that Central Bedfordshire will bear in mind growth needs of its neighbours, this works both ways in that Central Bedfordshire can expect benefits from growth opportunities in neighbouring areas.

Luton Airport Noise Action Plan 2010 – 15 was approved by DfT and Defra and identified 55 action items. The proposals would be supplemented by a specific package of additional control measures including quota on total level of aircraft during night time, restrictions on noisiest aircraft, penalties for straying from routes, and a new insulation grant scheme. This would be compatible with UK best practice. The day (57dB) and night (48 dB) noise contours, agreed in 1999, would not be ‘breached’ although more people would now lie within these contours.

14. LLAOL recognises that the space limitations dictate opportunities and the proposal is designed to consolidate the complex and to satisfy customer expectations.

Consultations and responses

15. Notification of this consultation has been sent to Ward councillors for Caddington Ward; Hyde, Slip End and Caddington Parish Councils; Cllrs Bowater, Egan, Jamieson, Shadbolt and Young; and officers specialising in noise, air pollution, archaeology, transport, ecology and landscape. They have been invited to reply to the author of this Report by the date of this meeting. The Strategic transport officer has made early comments (see Appendix D) and these are taken into account in section 17 below, which has enabled us to provide a provisional recommendation. Appendices B and C are earlier comments made by CBC to scoping and masterplan consultations and are included to show consistency in our stance. We will report the comments from other consultees on the Late Sheet.

General comments

16. The economic advantages of having London Luton Airport as a neighbour are recognised. Luton Borough cannot itself accommodate all employees of the airport and figures available show that 20% of the jobs would go to residents within Central Bedfordshire. There will continue to be benefits of injecting this income into the local economy as well as non-resident employees using other facilities that we have to offer. Tourism in the area should also benefit. At this stage we expect the main issues to be noise and traffic. The internal technical responses will be important in assessing the adequacy of the submission and potential impacts for our residents and corporate interests.

Initial concerns

17. There is insufficient information primarily on the effects of the proposal at local level within Central Bedfordshire. Given the sensitivity of a number of issues, until more detailed assessment is undertaken the Council is unable to fully ascertain key impacts and possibly acceptable mitigations. In particular, key

issues that must be addressed further are that:

- There should be appropriate and convenient public transport access to the airport from relevant areas within Central Bedfordshire and in particular Dunstable and Houghton Regis,
- The reported Transport modelling work appears to be inadequate and that the recently updated Central Bedfordshire and Luton Transport Model should be used to fully test the combined effect of the background traffic, airport generated traffic, and traffic related to the growth area on the local and wider road network of Central Bedfordshire and the surrounding area,
- The programme of surface access infrastructure development and the associated soft measures should be effectively tied to the stages of any agreed expansion plan,
- A means should be devised to limit passenger numbers, particularly having regard to the effectiveness of environmental safeguards, and there should be a maximum limit on the number of aircraft movements,
- Aircraft noise and air pollution aspects of the development need to be considered carefully to avoid further harm to residents of Central Bedfordshire, especially in the Parishes under the easterly arrival route. These are Slip End, Caddington, Kensworth, Studham and Whipsnade and to a lesser extent Eaton Bray. Slip End, Caddington and Hyde are also affected by some departure routes.
- Under the 2008 Planning Act, airport expansion applications have to be referred to PINS as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project if it results in an increase of at least 10mppa in the number of passengers for whom the airport is permitted to provide air passenger transport services. This plan proposes an increase of just under 10mppa which is just below that required for submission to the IPC thus allowing LBC to determine the application. The risk is that this may be the first of several incremental increases in capacity. For this reason, if this council is minded to support this plan, it may be wise to ask for assurance that no further expansion takes place within a reasonable time scale.

Accordingly it is recommended that this council lodge a holding objection in response to this application because insufficient information is provided to satisfy us that there would be no adverse effect resulting from the proposed expansion of the airport. Given the sensitivity of a number of issues, until more detailed assessment is undertaken, the Council is unable to fully ascertain key impacts and possibly acceptable mitigations.

Appendices:

Appendix A – General layout plan of the airport showing location of works.

Appendix B – CBC response to LLAL Scoping Report, March 2012.

Appendix C – CBC response to LLA consultation on London Luton Airport revised Masterplan, October 2012.

Appendix D – Background to ‘Initial concerns’ section.