

## **Response to the London Heathrow Airport Expansion Public Consultation**

### **Summary**

This report sets out the response to the Heathrow Airport's consultation on airport expansion and airspace change. The consultation began on Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> January and ends on Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> March. The consultation is split into two sections. The first section presents Heathrow's options and proposals to expand the airport on the ground and build a third runway. The second section considers the design of future airspace, in response to Heathrow's expansion. Consideration is given to the proposed options put forward and their impact on Surrey Heath.

### **Portfolio: Special Projects**

**Date Portfolio Holder signed off report: 12 February 2018**

### **Wards Affected**

ALL

### **Recommendation**

The Executive is advised to RESOLVE to agree the response set out in the letter at Annex 1 of this report as the Council's formal response to London Heathrow Airport's consultation on airport expansion and airspace change.

#### **1. Resource Implications**

- 1.1 There are no resource implications beyond that provided for within the agreed budget for 2017/18.

#### **2. Key Issues**

- 2.1 London Heathrow Airport is consulting on plans for its future expansion and development of a third runway. There are two parts to this consultation:

- Part 1 relates to the physical changes on the ground needed to build a new north west runway and operate an expanded airport;
- Part 2 relates to potential principles Heathrow will apply when designing the new airspace required for an expanded airport.

At this stage, future flight path options have not yet been developed.

- 2.2 Officers have considered the consultation material for the expansion of London Heathrow Airport in order to identify the key issues, from Surrey Heath's perspective.

#### **Part 1 – Airport Expansion**

### *Third Runway*

- 2.3 The consultation presents three options for the positioning of Heathrow's third (North West) runway. Whilst the Council does not specify a preferred option for the runway's positioning, it is considered desirable that a finalised option is selected as soon as is practicable, in order to provide clarification and certainty for the affected communities.

### *M25 Realignment*

- 2.4 The consultation describes proposals for the realignment of the M25 through tunnelling under the proposed new runway. Residents of Surrey Heath are likely to be impacted by these proposals, as the M25 is a key strategic route within relative proximity of the Borough. The Council recognises the benefits of completing works to the M25 that are adjacent to the existing road, and acknowledges that this proposal would be likely to minimise disruption to traffic, during its construction period.
- 2.5 Of the two options presented for how the realignment of the M25 will be configured, it is considered that the inclusion of collector-distribution roads parallel to the M25 (Option AB2) would be desirable, in view of the potential safety benefits arising from the separation of the 6 lanes on each carriageway of the M25. However, the signage for collector-distribution roads should be clear and well displayed, and updated information pertaining to the proposed reconfiguration should be provided for satellite navigation systems.

### *Surface Access Strategy*

- 2.6 The consultation sets out London Heathrow's proposed Surface Access Strategy, which aims for at least 50% of surface access passengers arriving or departing from Heathrow to be by public transport, by 2030, rising to at least 55% by 2040. These targets could achieve wider benefits in reducing congestion on the surrounding road network, as well as improvements to air quality, for which Surrey Heath can provide support. It is considered that the intention to retain the cap on Heathrow's existing number of on-site parking spaces, at 42,000, will help minimise increases in road traffic and corresponding pollutants.

### *Southern Rail Link*

- 2.7 The consultation advises that work with stakeholders will be undertaken to support the development of a new direct rail link to Heathrow from the south. This could provide connections to the South Western Railways Network, thus improving rail connectivity to the stations in Surrey Heath. These proposals would benefit residents of Surrey Heath with improved rail access to Heathrow Airport and the possibility of reduced journey times and fewer station transfers.

Furthermore, improved rail access could help to decrease the overall number of motor vehicle journeys, providing relief to the M3 and contributing to air quality improvements in the Borough.

- 2.8 The consultation proposes the development of a Modal Hub to consolidate freight operations. Of the options presented, it is considered the most beneficial is to position the proposed Hub alongside the Southern Rail Link and cargo centre, thus minimising road traffic on the M25 and roads surrounding Heathrow.

#### *Air Quality*

- 2.9 The consultation outlines Heathrow's aim to incentivise airlines to upgrade their fleet, providing cleaner, quieter aircraft and incentivising the more efficient operation of aircraft on the ground, which is considered to be of benefit to Surrey Heath. However, in determining Heathrow's air quality management, concerns are raised in respect of the existing air quality of Surrey Heath's highways network. This includes the A331 in the west of Surrey Heath, where exceedances of the annual mean NO<sub>2</sub> limit value have been identified through Defra's air quality modelling, and an Air Quality Management Area which is in place on the M3 between junctions 3 and 4a. Regard should be had to this in Heathrow's future approach to air quality and emissions, generated from both ground and air traffic.

#### *Loss of Housing in Heathrow's Surrounding Communities*

- 2.10 The consultation explains that the planned expansion of Heathrow will result in a loss of housing in certain communities close to the airport. The Council anticipates that any loss of housing arising from Heathrow's expansion would need to be addressed through new residential development to compensate for the loss, to ensure the objectively assessed needs of the relevant Housing Market Area(s) are met. If the loss of housing is addressed as a wider strategic issue, the Council considers that it should not impact housing requirements beyond the Heathrow and Slough Travel to Work Area, which does not include Surrey Heath, as indicated in Figure 13.1 of the consultation document, 'Our Emerging Plans'.
- 2.11 It is important to emphasise that Surrey Heath is subject to numerous environmental constraints and contains large areas of the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (TBH SPA) and its 400 metre buffer zone, within which residential development cannot be permitted. In addition, the rest of the Borough is entirely within 5km of this designated area. There are also large areas of MOD land and the majority of the eastern half of the Borough is designated Metropolitan Green Belt. This impacts Surrey Heath's ability to meet its own identified housing need and accordingly limits the Borough's capacity to consider addressing unmet need arising from other authorities.

## **Part 2 - Airspace Change**

- 2.12 The fundamental components for airspace change contained within Heathrow's consultation are proposed as future airspace design principles. These principles have been considered from Surrey Heath's perspective, as follows:

### *Principle 1: Flight Paths*

- 2.13 Three flight path options have been presented by Heathrow (Options A-C). Option A would concentrate flight paths within very specific areas, possibly resulting in frequent overflights for areas that were previously unaffected, and Option C seeks to share the routes over a wider area, potentially impacting a greater number of communities in Surrey Heath. Option B is considered most desirable, as this ensures that additional areas that have not previously experienced regular aircraft noise, such as Surrey Heath, would not be impacted, as far as possible.

### *Principle 2: Urban and rural areas*

- 2.14 Two options (A and B) are presented for airspace over urban and rural areas. It is recognised that both options have benefits and disbenefits. The Council seeks to emphasise that much of Surrey Heath's rural landscape contains habitats of international importance, principally the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area. Consideration should be given to these designated areas, which are home to wild bird species protected by UK and EU law, as designated in the EU Birds Directive. An important consideration for these habitats is air quality, and consequently, the Council requests that future flight paths should have due regard to these designations.

### *Principle 3: Urban areas*

- 2.15 The consultation presents two options for flight space over urban areas. The Council recognises the merits and detriments of both Option A – designing flight paths over parks and open spaces in settlements, avoiding residential areas, and Option B – designing flight paths over residential areas, avoiding open spaces. It is therefore considered that a balanced approach should be taken to future flight paths, in the interests of communities who enjoy visiting local green spaces, but also residents who reside within settlements.

### *Principle 4: Noise and Emissions*

- 2.16 The Council considers it will be necessary to balance the additional journey times and distances against the number of people benefiting from reductions in overhead noise. Where flight paths are not excessively extended or altered, the benefits generated for communities may be found to outweigh the harm of additional journey times and fuel burn.

### *Principle 5: Technology and Innovation*

- 2.17 Heathrow have set out their aim to work in partnership with airlines to secure investment for older aircraft, and utilise Performance Based Navigation. These initiatives are considered to be of benefit to Surrey Heath.

### *Principle 6: Night flights*

- 2.18 The consultation outlines Heathrow's commitment to encourage only the newest and quietest planes to fly in and out of the airport, particularly during the night period. Heathrow also resolves to continue minimising land charges for quieter aircraft at night, as an incentive. Both of these measures are supported by the Council. In addition, the Council supports Heathrow's pledge that the majority of future flights to the airport will be between the hours of 7am and 11pm, and the proposed extension of a night time flight ban from 5 hours to 6.5 hours. However, the Council objects to Heathrow's preferred ban period of 11pm to 5:30am. It is considered that, in the interests Surrey Heath's residents' quality of life, a ban period covering the morning hours from 12:00am to 6:30am would be more desirable.
- 2.19 Surrey Heath Borough Council have also requested to be notified of the outcome of this consultation and to be kept informed of future consultations on Heathrow, in respect of its expansion and changes to airspace

## **3. Options**

- 3.1 The options for the Executive to consider are:-
- (i) To **AGREE** the response to the London Heathrow Airport Expansion Consultation as set out in Annex 1 of this report.
  - (ii) To **AGREE** the response to the London Heathrow Airport Expansion Consultation as set out in Annex 1 of this report and any additional comments which the Executive may wish to make.
  - (iii) To **NOT AGREE** the response to the London Heathrow Airport Expansion Consultation as set out in Annex 1 of this report.

## **4. Proposals**

- 4.1 It is proposed to submit the consultation response attached at Annex 1 by the 28<sup>th</sup> March 2018 deadline.

## **5. Corporate Objectives And Key Priorities**

- 5.1 The proposals may affect Objective 1 of the Corporate Plan - *Making Surrey Heath an even better place where people are happy to live by*

ensuring that Surrey Heath's interests are fully considered in respect of future air quality, aircraft related noise, and the surrounding road and rail networks.

## 6. Policy Framework

6.1 The consultation process Surrey Heath is responding to will have implications for the wider strategic infrastructure networks in both Surrey Heath and areas in closer proximity to Heathrow Airport. The proposed expansion of Heathrow Airport is most likely to impact Surrey County Council's future Transport Plans, and may affect environmental policies in Surrey Heath's emerging Local Plan.

## 7. Other Matters

7.1 In relation to governance, sustainability, risk management, equalities impact, human rights, community safety, consultation, PR and Marketing there are no matters arising from this consultation by London Heathrow Airport.

## 8. Consultation

8.1 Heathrow Airport's consultation on airport expansion runs between 17<sup>th</sup> January 2018 and 28<sup>th</sup> March 2018.

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|-------------------------------|---|
| <b>Annexes</b>                | Annex 1 - letter to London Heathrow Airport<br>Link to the Heathrow Expansion Public Consultation – <a href="https://www.heathrowconsultation.com/">https://www.heathrowconsultation.com/</a> |
| <b>Background Papers</b>      | None  |
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## Consultations, Implications and Issues Addressed

| Resources                             | Required | Consulted |
|---------------------------------------|----------|-----------|
| Revenue                               | ✓        |           |
| Capital                               |          |           |
| Human Resources                       |          |           |
| Asset Management                      |          |           |
| IT                                    |          |           |
| Other Issues                          | Required | Consulted |
| Corporate Objectives & Key Priorities | ✓        |           |
| Policy Framework                      |          |           |
| Legal                                 | ✓        |           |
| Governance                            |          |           |
| Sustainability                        | ✓        |           |
| Risk Management                       |          |           |
| Equalities Impact Assessment          |          |           |
| Community Safety                      |          |           |

| <b>Resources</b> | <b>Required</b> | <b>Consulted</b> |
|------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| Human Rights     |                 |                  |
| Consultation     | ✓               |                  |
| P R & Marketing  |                 |                  |

**Review Date:**

**Version:**