

3. SUBSTITUTES AT MEETINGS OF COMMITTEE - COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 4

Councillor Bradbury substituted for Councillor Mockford. Councillor Moore substituted for Councillor E Belsey.

4. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor Mockford, Councillor Edward Belsey, Cllr Margaret Belsey, Councillor Barrett Miles, Councillor Marples, Councillor Whittaker, Councillor Reed, Councillor Andrew Lea, Councillor Hatton, Councillor Wall, Councillor Ash-Edwards and Councillor Llewellyn-Burke.

5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

None.

6. TO CONSIDER ANY ITEMS THAT THE CHAIRMAN AGREES TO TAKE AS URGENT BUSINESS.

None.

7. MSDC RESPONSE TO GATWICK AIRPORT DRAFT MASTERPLAN 2018

The Chairman noted that Gatwick Airport Limited (GAL) is required to produce a new Masterplan every 5 years. The current masterplan was adopted in 2012, and the draft Masterplan proposes three options for growth, to 2032. The Committee has been convened to consider Mid Sussex District Council's initial response to the draft Masterplan.

Lois Partridge, Business Unit Leader for Planning Policy and Economy introduced the report and took Members through the options, set out mechanisms to engage in the future, and described the Council's proposed response. The Masterplan sets out the plan for the next five years and includes three growth options which look 5-15 years ahead to 2032. She noted that there has been significant growth at the airport since the last plan was adopted in 2012. The National Policy Statement has also confirmed the Government's intention to proceed with a third runway at Heathrow, and the Government has published its guidance for airports other than Heathrow.

The Business Unit Leader confirmed that the Council's response supports the principle of sustainable growth at Gatwick Airport however the current plan is not supported by a strong evidence base in a number of key areas. The three options presented are not mutually exclusive, and there could be significant cumulative impacts of more than one option coming forward. The Council's response makes clear that the Council has concerns that the cumulative impacts of the options are not addressed in the Masterplan. The Council reserves the right to comment in due course once more detailed information has been provided. The draft consultation response is included in Appendix 1 of the report. She summarised the three options proposed by GAL:

Option 1 is to make best use of the existing runway by using larger aircraft, through the changes to flight patterns caused by the airspace modernisation programme, and by increasing the number of flights in off peak times. Together these measures could increase passenger numbers to up to 61 million passengers per year. Until more details are known and the impacts on flightpaths are understood, it is difficult to comment in detail on this proposal.

Option 2 proposes to make best use of the existing standby runway. GAL's legal agreement with West Sussex County Council signed in 1979 precludes the simultaneous use of this runway with the main runway. This option proposes to seek planning consent through a Development Consent Order (DCO) to use the standby runway for departures of smaller aircraft alongside the operation of the main runway. The DCO process is used for nationally significant infrastructure projects, and this would class as such as it proposes an increase of more than 10 million passengers. The Council will expect to be fully involved in the consultation on the DCO process.

Option 3 proposes safeguarding land for an additional runway to the south. There is no immediate plan to build this, but it would generate up to 95 million passengers.

A number of Members commented on the well-structured report and agreed that at this stage it is appropriate that the Council provide a high level response, until further detail is provided by GAL. It was noted that there was limited information provided by GAL on air quality, noise and highways issues at this stage.

Members raised the need for assurances on the use of low noise aircraft. It was noted that a prior presentation from GAL had confirmed noise calculations were based on an increase from 3% to 86% of aircraft being 'new generation' low noise planes. The noise implication needs to be addressed if this increase does not happen.

Members noted that a large number of new employment opportunities were to be expected by the increases proposed in options 1 and 2. Noting that unemployment levels in Mid Sussex are low, members acknowledged that a significant amount of people will commute to the area. A Member noted that GAL has limited options to improve staff access to the airport as cycle and pedestrian options are not practical, and the M23 Smart Motorway will not increase capacity. Therefore, Members considered significant improvements to the rail network are required to accommodate planned growth.

Regarding option 3, a Member felt that the Council's response did not address the proposal to safeguard land fully. The proposal would be taking away development land which could be used by Crawley Borough Council to help meet their housing need, or the land could be used to provide parking if the runway is not being built.

The Business Unit Leader for Planning Policy and Economy confirmed that although it is not possible to assure the use of specific aircraft, GAL will be strongly encouraged to incentivise the use of quieter aircraft. She also confirmed that the Government had recently launched the Aviation 2050 Strategy although a high level document it includes a section on the issue of noise and sets out expectations of airports to manage and reduce noise. It also encourages airports which are safeguarding land to continue to do so. Officers are reviewing this report and will amend the Council's response to GAL based on guidance in the 2050 Strategy.

The Assistant Chief Executive noted the importance of flagging up areas of concern at this stage. It was also important to be seen as serious consultees in the whole process and in order to assist with this, the Council has engaged two consultants, a Lawyer who has worked on national infrastructure projects and a Barrister who currently works with the Council on the Site Allocations DPD work. Engaging this expertise at an early stage is key to securing the right advice regarding engagement with GAL and the DCO process.

A Member raised concerns about relying solely on the evidence provided by GAL as they are projections which may vary over time. The Assistant Chief Executive confirmed that the Council will also engage specialist technical advice regarding transport, noise and infrastructure, which will be done in conjunction with West Sussex County Council and the Transport for South East Shadow Board.

Regarding employment opportunities associated with the airport expansion, a Member asked if there could be more detailed evidence provided on the types of companies currently supplying Gatwick, or being attracted to the area, to see how it aligns with the aims of the Council's Economic Development Strategy.

Sally Blomfield, the Divisional Leader - Planning and Economy acknowledged this is an area that could be considered in more detail. The Business Unit Leader for Planning Policy and Economy confirmed that the Greater Brighton Economic Board will shortly carry out a survey of 15,000 businesses in conjunction with the Council's Economic Development Team and the survey will include questions on the businesses' attitude to Gatwick expansion. This number of businesses will be contacted, in order to secure responses from approximately 1,500 overall.

A Member raised concerns about noise issues in the north of the District particularly around Copthorne and East Grinstead. He was also pleased to note that the Council's response on p.12 of the report draws attention to traffic conditions in East Grinstead and the Ashdown Forest, as the increase in commuters will have a dramatic effect on local roads. Other Members noted that the Council's response on transport needed to be more robust as there will be a significant use of roads which are currently unfit for purpose and there is an incorrect assumption by GAL's proposals that traffic will be running mainly from North to South. The Business Unit Leader for Planning Policy and Economy confirmed that any DCO will need to include a transport assessment to be approved by both Surrey and Sussex Highway Authorities.

A Member sought assurances on GAL's commitment to contribute to resolving rail transport issues to and from the airport. The Business Unit Leader for Planning Policy and Economy confirmed that this is included in the Council's response, and that the Government's 2050 Strategy includes a requirement for airports to work with local government to develop surface access strategies.

In response to a Member's query, the Assistant Chief Executive confirmed that the Council's interpretation of 'sustainable growth' relates to growth that is planned but also supported by what is needed to mitigate the impact of that growth. In line with the Government's definition it relates to social, economic and environmental issues. Regarding the timeframe for implementing GAL's proposals, it is not something driven by the Council but the draft response confirms that the Council intends to engage with every stage of any planning process, to ensure the Council's voice is heard.

A Member highlighted that a number of smaller airports such as Southampton are looking to expand, and asked whether GAL's proposals are based on the other airports each reaching their desired capacity. He felt it would be unfortunate if Gatwick expanded at the detriment of regional airports. The Business Unit Leader for Planning and Economy noted that the 2050 Strategy included a section on sub-regional airports, with the Government encouraging them to expand as it is predicted that passenger numbers will continue to rise over coming years at all airports

Members also raised concerns over affordability of housing for people taking up employment at the airport, and the possibility of companies running coaches to shuttle staff to and from work. Members also asked if information could be provided on the areas that passengers generally commuted from. These points were noted.

A Member also noted that a recent GAL presentation to West Sussex County Council prompted the question of what benefit the proposals would have for the rest of West Sussex. In response to the concern regarding housing, the Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning highlighted that airport workers are generally not badly paid, and it would be

wrong to assume there would be issues with staff affording housing in the area. He also highlighted that the Council wants to encourage all types of employment for Mid Sussex residents, not just highly skilled roles.

In summary a number of Members advocated providing a high level response at this stage and reserving further comment until more evidence has been provided by GAL. They acknowledged there were a number of positive aspects to the proposals contained in the Masterplan, but felt that further assurances and more detail was required, particularly regarding employment, housing, the reliance on SMART motorways and improvements on the railway network. The Assistant Chief Executive confirmed that the Council's response will be strengthened in these areas, and in light of the Government's 2050 aviation strategy. The Council will also have an opportunity to respond to the 2050 Strategy in 2019, via GATCOM.

The Cabinet Member for Community highlighted the figures contained in the Gatwick Airport Community Trust's unaudited statement 2017 which indicated that over the past two years £192,000 and £195,000 had been paid to surrounding communities. However, East Grinstead was only listed as receiving £8,200 in 2016 and nothing in 2017, with no mention of payments to any of the villages in the north of the District. He referred to the fact that the foundation supports a number of 3rd sector organisations that do mitigate against the negative impacts of the airport in terms of pollution and health, which is important. However he felt that compared to the figures quoted in the GAL proposal, the payments to communities in Mid Sussex were relatively small.

The Chairman acknowledged that it was crucial to seek the views of the Scrutiny Committees in preparing the Council's response. He also put on record the Committee's appreciation of the work which had gone into preparing a good initial response. He took Members to the recommendations which were agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED

The Scrutiny Committees for Communities, Housing and Planning and for Leader, Resources and Economic Growth:

- (i.) Considered and commented on the draft consultation response;
- (ii.) Authorised the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to make any further necessary minor amendments to the draft consultation response;
and
- (iii.) Noted the likely next steps in the process.

8. QUESTIONS PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 10 DUE NOTICE OF WHICH HAS BEEN GIVEN.

None.

Meeting closed at 8.12pm

Chairman.