

# Southend-on-Sea Borough Council

Report of Corporate Director for Place

To

**The Cabinet**

On

**18<sup>th</sup> March 2014**

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Transport and Planning Policy Group

**Agenda**

Item No.

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## **Update of The Airport's Commission Interim Report**

**Place Scrutiny Committee**

**Executive Councillor: Councillor Cox**

***A Part 1 Public Agenda Item***

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### **1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 To inform Members on the recent Interim Report from the Airports Commission dated December 2013 which includes the proposal for further study work into the Isle of Grain option for a new airport.

### **2. Recommendation:**

- 2.1 That Members note the report, and:-
- 2.2 **That the Director for Place in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Public Protection, Waste & Transport continues to input into the further work that the Airports Commission plans to carry out to support the Council's view in opposing any future plans for Estuary Airport development.**
- 2.3 **That the Council reiterates its opposition to the Estuary Airport.**

### **3. Background**

- 3.1 Members will recall the report that was presented to the Economic & Environmental Scrutiny Committee on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2013, re the Impact of the Estuary Airport Proposal, and proposed responses to The Airports Commission.
- 3.2 The Airports Commission is an Independent Commission set up by the government to identify and recommend to government options for maintaining the UK's status as a global aviation hub.

### **4. Summary of Airports Commission Interim Report**

- 4.1 The Airports Commission's independent review into airport capacity and connectivity in the UK has concluded that there is a need for one net additional runway to be in operation in the south east by 2030. Its analysis also indicates that there is likely to be a demand case for a second additional runway to be operational by 2050. The report is available here, <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/airports-commission-publishes-interim-report>
- 4.2 The Airports Commission's interim report published 17 December 2013 has announced that it will be taking forward for further detailed study proposals for new runways at two locations:
- **Gatwick Airport**  
  
Gatwick Airport Ltd's proposal for a new runway to the south of the existing runway
  - **Heathrow Airport (two options)**  
  
Heathrow Airport Ltd's proposal for one new 3,500m runway to the northwest  
  
Heathrow Hub's proposal to extend the existing northern runway to at least 6,000m, enabling the extended runway to operate as two independent runways.
- 4.3 The next phase of its work will see the Commission undertaking a detailed appraisal of the three options identified before a public consultation in autumn next year.
- 4.4 The Commission has not shortlisted any of the Thames Estuary options. It states that it has not done this because there are too many uncertainties and challenges surrounding them at this stage. It will undertake further study of the Isle of Grain option in the first half of 2014 and will reach a view later next year on whether that option offers a credible proposal for consideration alongside the other short-listed options.
- 4.5 The Commission will now focus on the challenge of appraising the three options, further assessing the case for a new airport in the Thames Estuary, and delivering a robust final recommendation to government in summer 2015.
- 4.6 The recently issues Introductory Note: Inner Thames Estuary Feasibility Studies has issued a timetable of events as detailed to reach a decision on whether an Inner Thames Estuary proposal is a credible option to be taken forward for detailed development work.

- Draft terms of reference to be finalised (**Comments by 14 February 2014**)
- Open call for evidence to feed into study outputs (**Call for evidence open 16 January 2014**)
- Seek to begin studies (**Early March – may be a phased approach, depending on progress**)
- Publish analysis and evidence received under call for evidence (**Closing date for call to evidence is 23 May 2014; publication expected to take place in early June 2014**)
- Publish study outputs (**early July 2014**)
- Deadline for views, comments, evidence and analysis on study outputs (**August 2014**)
- Decision on whether inner Thames Estuary proposal is a credible option to be taken forward for detailed development work (**by September 2014**)

4.7 A further round table meeting was held on 12<sup>th</sup> February 2014 with the Airports Commission (see presentation attached shown as **Appendix 1**).

This was attended by Essex County, Southend on Sea Borough Council, Medway Council and Kent County Council. The purpose of the meeting was to set out the next steps and seek views from the Local Authorities on areas where they can feed into this work. The Commission is proposing take forward four further studies into:-

- **Environmental impacts:** assessment of the impacts on the Natura 2000 sites, coastal system, habitats and species affected and historical and archaeological sites, in constructing and operating a new airport and identifying whether the legal tests could be met.
- **Operational feasibility and attitudes about moving to a new airport:** assessment of key potential operational issues and potential mitigation, including meteorological and wildlife impacts, the SS Montgomery and relocating energy facilities; assessing airline, airport, business and industry attitudes to the decision to move operations to a new hub airport, and to then moving operations.
- **Socio-economic impacts:** assessment of the local, sub-national and national economic and social benefits and impacts of building a new hub airport in the inner Thames Estuary, closing down Heathrow and London City airports, and redeveloping the Heathrow site.

- **Surface access impacts:** assessment of the operational, cost and environmental impacts of any surface transport proposals required to support a new hub airport, as well as impacts on existing and planned local and strategic transport infrastructure.

At the meeting the following points were raised that the Commission agreed to consider, including those in respect of the Terms of Reference for the studies:-

- Tranquility and ambient noise levels, should be considered in greater detail as well as the 57dBA Leq contours as this shows a reduction for Estuary Airport in comparison with other airport expansion plans.
- There should be a greater definition of wider environmental conditions. Especially flood risk, tidal impacts and fisheries. Must clearly set out how will this be examined and should be reflected in call for evidence eg Shoreline Management Plans.
- The effect of the closure of London Southend Airport has been more or less ignored in terms of social and economic impact. The relationship between planned growth in employment in Southend in proximity to the Airport (JAAP) and closure must be examined.
- The study considers likely changes in the economic geography of London and must also consider the wider south east, with a clear pointer towards SELEP work and the economic plan. Suggested that all scenarios for economic development must consider the Strategic Economic Plan and the fact that this already contains significant employment and housing growth targets within a coordinated strategy.
- Study to consider the significant effect on tourism.
- Surface access issues must look at new and existing infrastructure to develop packages of options including the effect on local roads and routes, and;
- Attitudes of key industry players, does this include LSA?

The Commission also requested that if there are local contacts, stakeholders or other organisations that can feed into the review, they would be pleased to receive details.

## 5. Other Options

- 5.1 This report offers no other options as it is for information only.

## **6. Reasons for Recommendations**

- 6.1 Given how any future airport in the area of the Estuary will affect the borough of Southend, it is important that Members are made aware of this on-going work from the Airports Commission.

## **7. Corporate Implications**

### *7.1 Contribution to Council's Vision & Corporate Priorities*

- 7.1.1 None this is an information report for future consideration

### *7.2 Financial Implications*

- 7.2.1 There are no financial implications

### *7.3 Legal Implications*

- 7.3.1 There are no legal implications

### *7.4 People Implications*

- 7.4.1 There are no people implications

### *7.5 Property Implications*

- 7.5.1 Nil

### *7.6 Consultation*

- 7.6.1 This is not a consultation

### *7.7 Equalities and Diversity Implications*

- 7.7.1 No equalities or diversity implications

### *7.8 Risk Assessment*

- 7.8.1 A risk assessment is not required

### *7.9 Value for Money*

- 7.9.1 Nil due to being an information report

### *7.10 Community Safety Implications*

- 7.10.1 No community safety implications

### *7.11 Environmental Impact*

7.11.1 None at this stage

**8. Background Papers**

8.1 Introductory Note: Inner Thames Estuary Feasibility Studies - January 2014

8.1 Airports Commission: Interim Report - December 2013

8.4 The Impact of Estuary Proposal Report - Economic & Environmental Scrutiny Committee - 31<sup>st</sup> January 2013