



Meeting	ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY STANDING SELECT COMMITTEE	
Date	13 March 2006	agenda item number

**NOTTINGHAM EAST MIDLANDS AIRPORT MASTERPLAN
CONSULTATION****Purpose of Report**

1. On 10 February 2006 Nottingham East Midlands Airport (NEMA) published a draft Master Plan – in effect a blueprint for implementing the conclusions of the Government's Air Transport White Paper (December 2003). The deadline for comments is 14 May 2006. The intention is to present a draft County Council response for approval to Cabinet, and this report seeks the views of Committee to help inform this draft response.

Background

- 2 NEMA has expanded rapidly over recent years. It is now the 11th biggest regional airport in the UK, and offers passenger flights to 100 destinations. It is also a major air freight airport, as both the largest "pure freight" airport (i.e. hosting flights which are 100% freight) and the leading express freight airport in the UK.
- 3 The Air Transport White Paper (December 2003) considered the future of all the airports in the UK. In relation to NEMA it concluded that although there was currently no case for a second runway, the airport should nevertheless be permitted to expand, albeit with stringent controls on night noise. In particular the White Paper predicted annual passenger numbers to grow from 4.5m now to 9.2m in 2016, and to between 12m and 14m by 2030. Cargo will increase from 278,000 tonnes today to 1.2 million tonnes by 2016 and 2.5 million tonnes by 2030. Air movements (take-offs and landings) will increase from 57,400 in 2005 to 110,900 in 2016 and around 180,000 by 2030. A review of the need for a second runway would only be triggered if growth is more rapid than these predictions.
- 4 The airport has brought strong economic benefits for the Region. The site employs 6,500 people directly, with a total including indirect employment estimated at 9,100. This latter figure is expected to rise to 26,000 jobs by 2030. Most new employment is expected to come from major conurbations to relieve local labour market pressures and assist regeneration. The airport is estimated to contribute £1.3m per annum to GDP

- 5 The airport claims to be widely supported by local communities, with 89% of residents within 12 miles of the airport believing it is a good thing for the local area. The Master Plan also claims that regional and local (land use) plans are generally supportive of further expansion, with suitable environmental safeguards.

Main proposals

- 6 The main proposals within the Master Plan may be summarised as follows:
- Build a small extension to the existing runway. This, it is claimed, will bring environmental benefits including reduced air pollution and noise from take off as lower acceleration is required.
 - The case for a new runway to be reconsidered towards 2030.
 - Expand and improve existing terminal facilities to accommodate growth in passenger numbers.
 - Increase car parking spaces, but at a lower rate than predicted growth in the number of passengers and employees.
 - Expand cargo and maintenance zones.
 - Encourage development that does not need to be at the airport site instead to be located in or on the edge of urban areas.
- 7 The airport will seek to reduce the environmental impact of current business and future growth as follows:
- Maintain current environmental management system (ISO14001) and have it independently audited every 6 months.
 - Independent monitoring of air quality around the airport, and keep air pollution within Government limits.
 - Contribute to tackling climate change by using renewably generated electricity on site, and biomass fuels to heat the airport terminal.
 - Apply stringent noise controls, working with the airline operators. There will be a particular focus on reducing night time noise, with a target of containing night noise below 1996 levels at least until 2016. There are also proposals for compensation and grants for the most affected properties.
- 8 The airport is required to produce a surface access strategy which seeks to maximise access using non-car modes. Proposals include providing funding to help provide new public transport connections. The airport has adopted a target that by 2016, 30% of employees and 10% of passengers should travel using non-car modes.

Comment

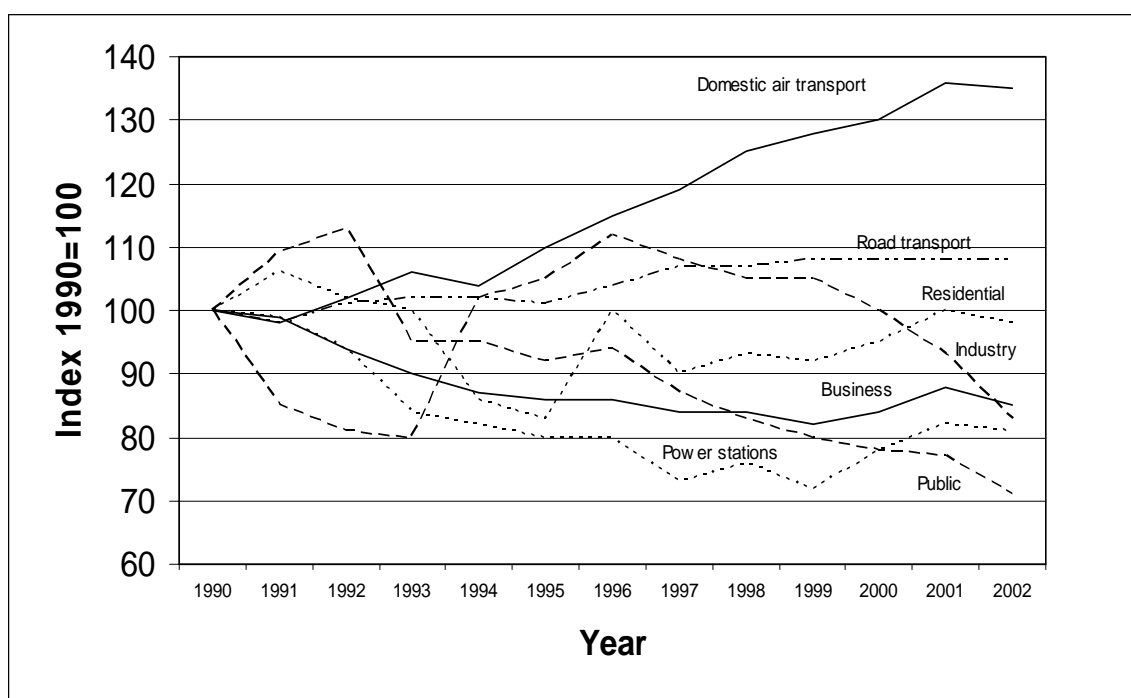
- 9 The consultation over the Master Plan is to be welcomed, in that it opens to public debate some of the important issues associated with the airport. However the Masterplan takes as its fundamental starting point the recommendations within the Air Transport White Paper, which endorse the expansion of the airport within the existing site (but excluding a new runway).

It does not seek views on the rights and wrongs of expansion – simply on how this should best be accommodated.

- 10 The debate on the airport is likely to rest on the balance between the significant economic and social benefits the airport brings on the one hand, and the environmental disbenefits which result. The environmental disbenefits may be broadly summarised into local environmental impacts (particularly noise and air pollution) and global impacts (climate change as a result of air travel, and on-site activity such as heating of buildings). It is notable that the Master Plan considers all environmental impacts in detail except those associated directly with aircraft in flight.
- 11 There is a clear logic to the recommendations and proposals within the plan if growth is to be accommodated whilst minimising local environmental impact. In particular:
- The proposed runway extension would appear to bring significant environmental benefits, particularly related to noise and air pollution.
 - Investment in new terminal buildings will help ensure passenger comfort and minimise delays, given the projected increases in numbers.
 - Decreasing the ratio of car parking to passenger and staff numbers as these grow will provide greater incentive for alternative modes, particularly public transport, even though the total number of car journeys will increase.
 - Displacing airport-related development where possible to nearby urban areas will potentially support local regeneration and provide jobs closer to the homes of employees. This is to be supported subject to the normal provisions of the land use planning process.
 - The commitment to use employment growth at the airport to relieve local labour market pressures and support urban regeneration is to be welcomed.
 - The clear commitment to reducing noise levels, particularly at night, is to be supported.
 - The commitment to reducing airport-related air pollution is also to be supported, although it is unclear in practice how this will be achieved given that most of this pollution derives from road traffic to and from the site, which is expected to grow.
 - The proposal to increase the use renewable electricity and biomass on site is to be welcomed.
 - The proposals to seek significant increases in the proportion of journeys to and from the airport that are made in non-car modes, including the provision of funding for public transport, are to be welcomed. However the projected increase in road traffic serving the site remains of concern, and any future planning application for car park extensions or other development should be subject to rigorous transport impact assessment. Where appropriate, if approved, there may need to be significant financial contributions to integrated transport measures, and these will need to address related transport impacts in Nottinghamshire as well as in North West Leicestershire, the local planning authority.

- 12 However, there must remain serious concerns over the climate change impacts of the aircraft movements that will use the airport in the future. The government's consultation document over the Review of UK Climate Change Programme in December 2004 has identified that air transport has been the fastest growing contributor to carbon dioxide emissions, as illustrated below. Although this diagram only shows the emissions from *domestic* air transport, which made up just 0.4% of UK carbon emissions in 1990 and 0.6% in 2002, the emissions from international air travel are considerably greater. The same report predicts that 97% of emissions from UK aviation will come from *international* flights by 2030, and that this will represent 25% of the UK's emissions from all sectors.

Figure 1 – Index of Carbon emissions since 1990 by sector



Source – Government consultation on review of UK Climate Change Programme December 2004

- 13 There is no doubt that national and international plans to tackle climate change will need to address with some urgency the contribution made by air transport, particularly given that international flights are excluded from Kyoto Protocol targets. However it is also the case that any one airport which seeks to limit growth in flights in isolation will simply displace some or all flights to competitors, with corresponding damage to the local economy. The issue of air transport and its impact on climate change (and the depletion of finite fossil fuel resources) needs to be tackled nationally and internationally, and it would be unreasonable to expect NEMA to operate unilaterally in this regard.

Conclusion

- 14 Committee is asked to consider the issues raised in this report, and in the Master Plan consultation, and endorse in particular:

- The comments in paragraph 11 above as the basis for a proposed consultation response to NEMA on the Master Plan
- The comments in paragraphs 12-13 relating to climate change for inclusion in the proposed consultation response to NEMA, but additionally in a separate response to government.

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Background papers

- 1 Nottingham East Midlands Airport Draft Masterplan consultation document (NEMA - February 2006)
- 2 The Future of Air Transport White Paper (Department for Transport - December 2003)
- 3 Review of the UK Climate Change Programme Consultation Paper (HM Government – December 2004)

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