



meeting	CROSS SERVICE AND EXTERNAL AFFAIRS SELECT COMMITTEE	
date	26 January 2005	agenda item number

Report of the Director of Environment, Assistant Director, Regeneration, and Head of Scrutiny

**Robin Hood Airport Doncaster Sheffield – Highways and Transportation,
Inward Investment, and Tourism issues**

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1** The purpose of this report is to inform Members of current issues around highways and transportation, inward investment, and tourism, in relation to the Committee's study of Robin Hood Airport Doncaster Sheffield, and its impact on Nottinghamshire. This report will be supplemented by a presentation at the Select Committee meeting, by officers from Nottinghamshire County Council's Environment Department, and Culture and Community Department.

2. Background

- 2.1** Robin Hood Airport Doncaster Sheffield is positioned within the Yorkshire and Humber Region, although it is only 1.5 miles from the Nottinghamshire border. It is easily accessible by private vehicle from the UK's main motorways including the M62 (Hull to Liverpool), M1 (London to Leeds), the A1 (London to Edinburgh) and also the M18. However, bus services from Nottinghamshire to the airport are very limited. Rail access is also restricted. Doncaster is located on the East Coast Main Line, with a freight rail port, and has access by rail from all areas of the UK for passengers and freight. In addition the Lincoln to Doncaster line runs past Finningley, where the airport is located. However there is currently no station at the airport itself.

3. Highways and Transportation issues

3.1 Road

- 3.1.1** The impact on the road network in Nottinghamshire is considered minimal. It is considered that there is capacity in the current road network for the additional predicted vehicle movements generated by the airport.

3.1.2 The Blyth roundabout is in the Highways Agency's Targeted Programme of Improvements to become a grade-separated junction. In effect it will operate like a motorway junction with the A1 continuing without a break and slip roads and flyovers accommodating the other roads. Peel Airports, owner of Robin Hood Airport, will contribute £500,000 to these improvements; central government will fund the remainder of the £14 million scheme. A distribution and storage freight park will be located on the Blyth roundabout. This will ensure that increased HGV traffic carrying freight will impact only on the principal roads leading to the airport.

3.2 Public Transport

3.2.1 At the planning stage for the airport it was anticipated that funding would be built in to the airport's business plan to support public transport. Indeed, at the public inquiry Nottinghamshire County Council identified the need for regular hourly bus services from both Retford and Worksop to be paid for by section 106 contributions from the developer (Peel). Unfortunately, although section 106 funding was made available for public transport by the developer as part of the planning approval, the determining authority Doncaster MBC allocated this exclusively to services within their area, and none to provide transport links to Nottinghamshire. This was not a decision over which Nottinghamshire County Council had any influence.

3.2.2 As a result, Bassetlaw District Council, on behalf of Bassetlaw Local Strategic Partnership, the Alliance Sub-regional Strategic Partnership and Nottinghamshire County Council, has commissioned a study to investigate the feasibility of serving the airport by all forms of public transport (except rail) from Nottinghamshire. The study has been facilitated by a contribution of £10,000 from Nottinghamshire County Council, and the involvement of officers from the Environment Department. Consultants Steer Davies Gleave began work on the study in December 2004 and recommendations from the study will be published in early March 2005.

3.2.3 The transport study will examine the feasibility of serving the airport through the establishment of new bus services and the diversion of existing services, and will provide estimates of the likely costs and funding required to achieve these options. It is hoped that existing services from Worksop and Retford to Bawtry and Doncaster will re-route into the interchange at Parrotts Corner near Rossington to meet a new half-hourly service to the airport which has been funded by Doncaster MBC using section 106 monies.

3.2.4 The study will also consider the possibility for new, direct bus services linking Worksop and Retford, and main settlements en route, to the airport. However such services are likely to be expensive to provide, as the pattern of flights and density of population would suggest a relatively low volume of demand.

3.2.5 The main issues for bus service provision to serve the airport from Nottinghamshire are therefore:

- i) how much revenue support funding from Nottinghamshire County Council or any other potential funding sources would be required to implement the recommendations from the transport feasibility study? To provide an hourly service to the airport from Worksop and Retford, it would be necessary to run two buses from each town. It is likely that to cover the necessary spread of times this may total a net cost of £1,000 per day, when fares received are deducted. Running this level of service every day of the year therefore would cost over £350,000 (not taking into account the increased cost for Sunday running).
- ii) how long would this level of funding be required? – i.e. whether it would be needed just to ‘pump prime’ a service before it becomes commercially viable after a number of years, or whether funding would be required for the long term.
- iii) how will the necessary funding fit in with other funding priorities which Nottinghamshire County Council has to fulfil from its tendered bus services budget? If funding from this budget was diverted to support the new Finningley services it would involve reducing services for other communities. Nottinghamshire County Council will need to prioritise in a fair and systematic manner the demands for bus services to serve Robin Hood Airport against other demands on the tendered bus services budget.

3.2.6 Peel Airports, the owner of Robin Hood Airport, is promoting plans for a dedicated railway station on the Doncaster - Lincoln line. However, in the light of the adverse prevailing funding regime and national rail industry upheaval, including the demise of the Strategic Rail Authority, Peel has made little progress in taking this forward. However to support the case for a dedicated airport station, Nottinghamshire County Council officers have requested that the Inter City East Coast rail franchise agreement includes an extension to a Doncaster via Gainsborough service, to allow the possibility of train services to the proposed airport station.

3.2.7 Officers from the Environment Department continue to engage with the airport authorities in order to promote improved public transport from Nottinghamshire, and are currently members of both the Finningley Strategic Steering Group (which is currently under review) and the Air Transport Forum. In addition the Authority is a lead partner in the steering group for the Transport Feasibility Study.

4 Inward investment issues

4.1 Alliance SSP Investment Project

4.1.1 Nottinghamshire County Council, the North Nottinghamshire and North Derbyshire SSP – Sub Regional Strategic Partnership - and the districts are part of a £1million partnership working to attract inward investment into the

county and wider SSP area. Current successes include getting Cascade Biologics, an American company, to locate in Mansfield, a large distribution company into Shirebrook and Meridian Technologies to Ashfield. All these companies cited needing access to an airport within an hour's driving time, in these cases Nottingham East Midlands Airport. Nottinghamshire County Council contributes £10 thousand to the Investment Partnership.

- 4.1.2** This partnership will work with the new airport and the business park development at Finningley. They will build Finningley into future sales pitches and market business/industrial development sites as having access to Robin Hood Airport.

4.2 Procurement

- 4.2.1** Nottinghamshire County Council has worked with Business Link to promote local businesses as contractors and sub contractors in the construction stage of the airport. There has been some success, with a local company sourcing the steel for the terminal building.

- 4.2.2** Current work is geared towards local companies securing contracts to service the airport. There are two major national companies which have the market to deliver services within airports but sub-contracting is a possibility. Peel Airports has a policy of using local labour and companies.

4.3 Regeneration

- 4.3.1** This is a long-term issue. Nottinghamshire County Council can make some gains through supporting local companies and residents to access opportunities at Robin Hood Airport. Some active marketing of the airport has taken place and that work will continue to raise the awareness of the airport with businesses and residents.

- 4.3.2** Liverpool John Lennon Airport, which is also owned by Peel Airports, is an example of how Robin Hood Airport could develop. Since Peel taking over control of Liverpool John Lennon Airport passenger numbers have quadrupled, with over 2.8 million passengers using Liverpool in 2002 and an estimated 3.2 million in 2003. The Select Committee has learnt, from a study visit to Liverpool John Lennon Airport, how the airport has contributed to the revitalisation and transformation of the Speke Garston area of Liverpool. Nottinghamshire County Council can help ensure that these types of benefits extend to Nottinghamshire.

- 4.3.3** However a related issue which also needs to be considered is that there is a lack of sites for employment and industrial development in North Nottinghamshire.

- 4.3.4** In a survey by Nottinghamshire County Council's Research Team, Culture and Community Department, of firms in innovation centres in North Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire, only 2 firms mentioned airport transport as

being an issue. These firms said that they used Birmingham Airport because of the routes available.

- 4.3.5** The Air Transport White Paper, 2002, stressed the importance of air freight and its impact on job creation; Robin Hood Airport has plans to handle 2 million passengers and 50,000 tonnes of freight by 2014.

4.4 In bound tourism

- 4.4.1** Work on tourism is being led by the newly launched destination management partnership "Experience Nottinghamshire". Nottinghamshire County Council has a service level agreement with them to market Nottinghamshire to visitors.
- 4.4.2** Experience Nottinghamshire will ensure that Sherwood Forest is promoted and signposted from the new airport. The provision of an information point at the airport is also being considered.
- 4.4.3** Nottinghamshire County Council's Regeneration Division is in partnership with the Learning & Skills Council, New College Nottingham and the two SSPs to deliver an Action Plan for workforce development in the tourism, culture, leisure and hospitality sector throughout Nottinghamshire. A skills gap has been identified within the travel to work area of the airport and this project will have a role to play in developing the relevant skills, particularly in customer service skills and management development.
- 4.4.4** With the first flights beginning in May 2005 there are implications for accommodation, although initial predictions are for 99% of travellers to be outbound. This should change in the longer term e.g. Nottingham East Midlands Airport initially had 92% outbound 8% inbound - this has now risen to 20% inbound due to the name change and marketing.
- 4.4.5** There are plans for 3 hotels on site; luxury, medium, and basic. Locally there are an estimated 800 rooms in Doncaster. In the Bassetlaw local guide there are 9 hotels, the largest with 80 rooms, and 19 B&B establishments. There is potential here to develop new businesses providing tourism accommodation.
- 4.4.6** The long runway at Robin Hood Airport means there is potential for long haul flights. This indicates visitors with a different profile and differing needs to short haul holiday traffic and commercial activity currently being proposed.
- 4.4.7** Liverpool, John Lennon Airport has received an award for its outstanding contribution towards the development of tourism on Merseyside, bringing in a growing number of visitors especially from Europe. To ensure Nottinghamshire benefits from inbound tourism sufficient accommodation and an appropriately skilled workforce is essential.

5. Recommendation

It is recommended that Members discuss the issues in this report, and in the presentation to the Select Committee, in relation to Robin Hood Airport's potential impact on Nottinghamshire

PETER WEBSTER, DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT
NIGEL HAMSHERE, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR - REGENERATION
LYNN SENIOR, HEAD OF SCRUTINY

Background papers available for inspection

Report of the Chair of the Cross Service and External Affairs Select Committee – 14 July 2004: Robin Hood Airport Doncaster Sheffield – a project scope for examining the impact of the airport on Nottinghamshire.

Report of Councillor Sheila Place, Nigel Hamshere and Lynn Senior – 3 November 2004: Study trip to Liverpool John Lennon Airport

Nottinghamshire County Council ; North Midlands' Innovation Centres Survey Report of Research carried out for the North Derbyshire / North Notts. SSP. November 2004.

Electoral Divisions Affected

All.