

## **DRAFT DOCUMENT**

### **THE COUNCIL'S RESPONSE TO KENT INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT'S DRAFT MASTERPLAN**

To: **Airport Working Party - 27 February 2009**

Main Portfolio Area: **Economy and Culture**

By: **Director of Regeneration Services**

Classification: **Unrestricted**

Ward: **All**

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**Summary:** This report informs Members of the details of a draft Masterplan prepared by the Operator of Kent International Airport, and published for consultation in October 2008. It considers the contents and proposals of the Masterplan in the context of National, Regional and Local Policy Guidance, and provides comments upon the proposals within the Masterplan for Member consideration.

#### **For Decision**

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#### **1.0 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 This report provides the Councils response to the Draft Kent International Airport Masterplan, prepared by Infratil, the airport operator and published in October 2008.
- 1.2 The report provides contextual information in the form of the history of the airports development, including the imposition of a section 106 agreement relating to its civilian operation in 2000. Summaries of the most relevant Government guidance and national, regional and local policies relating to the future of the airport are provided to enable members to assess the Draft Masterplan in the context of this policy framework.
- 1.3 The Draft Masterplan is then summarised and comments are then made upon its soundness and upon changes considered necessary to enable the document to carry more weight when considering future development proposals for the airport. The relationship of the Masterplan to the emerging Local Development Framework is also considered.
- 1.4 The report concludes by making recommending that members support the provision of a Masterplan and its general aspirations and recommends alterations and additions to the draft Masterplan, proposing that, following these changes, further consultation is carried out prior to the Council deciding the status it wishes to give the final document.

## **2.0 CONTEXT**

### **Planning History**

- 2.1 The airport was originally constructed as a military airport; however, it has a long history of mixed military and civilian use.
- 2.2 In 1988 (reference F/TH/88/0121), permission was granted for the erection of a passenger terminal building, new access road and car parking facilities on a site then referred to as the 'civilian enclave' to the east of the airport, south of Manston Road. This permission was the subject of a Section 106 Agreement which included night flying restrictions.
- 2.3 In 1998 the military use of the major part of the airfield ceased, and the site was sold to the Wiggins Group. Prior to the disposal, Lawful Development Certificates were issued for:
  - (a) the retention of existing airfield buildings;
  - (b) the proposed use of existing airfield buildings in association with the use of the airfield for civilian purposes;
  - (c) for the proposed use of the airfield for civilian purposes;
  - (d) for the use of crown and airfield land and buildings for commercial civilian airport use.
- 2.4 Those certificates relating to the use of the airport for civilian purposes were the subject of a Judicial Review. The principal reason for the review was the lack of detail within the certificates issued relating to the type and level of use of the airfield. At both the High Court and Appeal Court, it was determined that the Lawful Development Certificates as issued were valid. This validity was, to a significant degree, based upon the proven significant level of previous civilian use, including the use of the airport for scheduled passenger services.
- 2.5 Subsequently, in 1998 (F/TH/98/1063), permission was granted for development works to enable CAA certification of the airfield comprising a visual control room, 3 no. portakabins, fire station extensions, antennae in cabins, perimeter security fencing, localised aerial met masts and a diesel fuel tank.
- 2.6 In 2000 (reference F/TH/00/0297), the first major application to facilitate the extension of use of the airport for civilian purposes was submitted. This application, granted in June 2000, permitted the replacement and upgrading of passenger aprons adjacent to the existing passenger terminal, the upgrading of the cargo apron around the existing western cargo shed, and improvements and part realignment of linking taxiways and the construction of a new hangar adjacent to the cargo apron.
- 2.7 The permitted hangar was subsequently amended in its design to provide a new cargo storage facility and customs building. The passenger apron and new taxiways have been constructed. There have been some minor improvement works to existing aprons adjacent to the cargo hangars. The provision of a new cargo apron has yet to be fully implemented.

- 2.8 In 2004 (reference F/TH/04/0463), an application was received and subsequently approved for the construction of a car park with associated roads, landscaping, security fencing, lighting and cameras. This car park was for the provision of up to 2000 parking spaces adjacent to the passenger terminal. The permission has been partially implemented. Up to approximately 1100 parking spaces can be provided, after which the full implementation of the planning permission cannot take place until a further Traffic Impact Assessment has been submitted identifying the full surface access impact of the additional parking, with proposals for the implementation of measures to address that impact.
- 2.9 The above permissions are the only major development proposals to have been implemented at the airport since it became a civilian facility. Other proposals granted permission, including a paint spraying hanger in 2001, have not been implemented, and the permission has now expired. During the period of civilian occupation there have also been a number of permissions granted for infrastructure improvements, including a surface water attenuation pond in 2001 which has been implemented, new electricity sub-station provision both to serve the airport and wider central island industrial proposals and, more recently, in 2007, for the provision of a fuel interceptor within the surface water drainage system serving the airport that drains into Pegwell Bay. This latter permission has yet to be implemented, and requires Environment Agency approval for a scheme that satisfies their discharge requirements.
- 2.10 The major applications were screened at the time to determine whether Environmental Impact Assessments were required in support of the planning applications. The applications were screened, and it was determined that there was no requirement for Environmental Impact Assessments. However, it was also considered that any further major proposals would have to be considered in the light of their accumulative impact, taking into account those works already permitted and either implemented or capable of implementation. On this basis it is considered likely that any further significant development proposals will need to be supported by an Environmental Impact Assessment.

#### **Recent Civilian Use**

- 2.11 Since its disposal for civilian use, the level of use of the airport has been relatively minor. There has been a relatively stable level of freight use, and some charter flight provision.
- 2.12 The only fairly intense period of use was from September 2004 to July 2005, when EU Jet were established and offered a range of scheduled flights to a variety of UK and European destinations. During this period, the busiest month saw over 62,000 passengers through the airport. In total, it is understood that over 400,000 passengers use the airport during the nine months of the EU Jet operation which provided 30 routes.
- 2.13 An analysis of this operation by the present Airport Operator indicates that failure was due to the use of planes that were too small to deliver efficiency on European routes, and too large for high frequency business-based routes. In addition, it was considered that insufficient marketing was carried out, that the service was unreliable and that it was attempted to provide too much capacity too quickly.

- 2.14 Members will recall considering proposals for the introduction of a major European based long-haul freight carrier at a recent Special Council meeting on 12 February. At the time of writing this report, news is awaited with regard to the potential relocation of this business to the airport.
- 2.15 Both the operation of EU Jet and the potential introduction of a long-haul freight carrier were subject to the need to permit a limited number of regular take-offs and landings during the night-time period (11 pm – 7 am). Both operations were the subject of agreement to temporary arrangements facilitating these movements. In both cases, the need to address the requirements of a Section 106 Agreement described below was made a proviso.

### **Section 106 Agreement**

- 2.16 In 2000, a Section 106 Agreement was entered into by the new landowners and the Council as Planning Authority. Unusually, this Agreement was not associated with a planning application, although its implementation was associated with the revocation of an older Section 106 Agreement related to the 1988 grant of permission for the passenger terminal.
- 2.17 The second schedule of the Agreement established the obligations of the owner and the Council with regard to the airport, and included the following requirements:

(1) **Night-Time Flying Noise Policy**

The preparation of a Night-Time Flying Noise Policy prior to commencement of regular night flying operations, including a restriction on aircraft with a noise classification in excess of quota count 4, a process for sharing data on details of aircraft operating during night-time and embodiment of the principles of UK Best Practice at the time and the appropriateness of those principles to prevailing local conditions. The Agreement also included the provision for punitive payments for aircraft with a noise classification in excess of quota count 4 taking off or landing at night time.

(2) **General Noise Limitations**

There was a requirement for the operator to submit a 63dB LAeq (16 hour 07.00 – 23.00 hours) noise contour map for the airport based on the previous 12 months of airport operations.

(3) **Dwelling Insulation Scheme**

Within 24 months of the Agreement, the operator was to submit a detailed scheme for noise insulation for dwellings falling within the 63dB LAeq (16 hour 07.00 – 23.00 hours) contour.

(4) **Preferred Departure Route**

A requirement to adopt the use of runway 28 (westerly take-off and landings) (as the preferred departure runway), and to supply data on runway departure usage on a monthly basis.

(5) **Noise Abatement Routes**

The submission of details of noise abatement measures required from operators of large aircraft.

(6) **Noise Monitoring Terminals**

Within nine months of the Agreement, to install at least two noise monitoring terminals.

(7) **Pollution Monitoring**

The installation of pollution monitoring tubes, and to provide results of pollution monitoring to the Council.

(8) **Noise Monitoring**

The implementation of noise monitoring and agreement of maximum noise levels to achieve a year on year reduction.

(9) **Green Travel Strategy**

The submission of a Green Travel Strategy by the owner, and provision of a Green Travel Plan for each application for planning permission.

(10) **Environmental Statement**

The submission of a Masterplan and Environmental Statement for consideration by the Council.

- 2.18 While these requirements were addressed to a degree by the previous owners of the airport their demise and subsequent change of ownership resulted in a hiatus in activity. The new owners, Infratil are seeking to address the need to revise the section 106 agreement, which was originally intended to have a three year lifespan. The preparation of the draft Masterplan addresses one element of the section 106 requirement and is welcomed in that respect. The requirements for airport Masterplans as detailed in Department for Transport guidance, are considered in detail below.

### **3.0 POLICY AND GUIDANCE**

- 3.1 As well as summarising Masterplan guidance, the following sections of the report cover the main policy and guidance applicable to the Masterplan preparation. This summary concentrates on the more directly applicable policies, but does not include reference to all the government policy statements and guidance notes that relate to the development proposed.

### **Guidance on the Preparation of Masterplans (2004)**

- 3.2 Following the publication of the White Paper, 'The Future of Air Transport' , in December 2003, referred to later in this report, guidance was issued on the preparation of 'Airport Masterplans' in accordance with the requirements of the White Paper. The Guidance considered that airports which had aspirations to achieve annual air transport movement throughputs in excess of 20,000 movements annually by 2030, or where the future level of impact might cause concern, may wish to consider preparing Masterplans.
- 3.3 The Guidance envisages a Masterplan providing a clear statement of intent relating to the future development of the airport, which can be given due consideration in the Local and Regional Planning process. It anticipates that airport operators will take the lead in the preparation of a Masterplan but, if the aspiration is for the Masterplan to be fully integrated into a Local Development Framework, there is a need for the operator to work closely with the Local Planning Authority from an early stage.
- 3.4 The Guidance identifies the following potential benefits in preparing a Masterplan:
- (i) It provides an indication of the operator's plans for infrastructure development;
  - (ii) Informing long-term resource planning;
  - (iii) A useful tool for communicating aspirations to a wide range of stakeholders, enabling well informed investment decisions;
  - (iv) Clarity over phasing of development projects;
  - (v) Providing a vehicle against which to assess progress being made in delivering proposals;
  - (vi) Demonstrating the full range of costs and benefits of airport growth;
  - (vii) A vehicle for assessing local, social and environmental impacts, and how those impacts can be mitigated.
- 3.5 The Guidance assumed the provision of Masterplans by the end of 2005, with quinquennial review. It was recognised that the dynamic nature of the airport sector also requires flexibility to enable infrastructure proposals of operating regimes to be able to respond to market requirements.
- 3.6 The guidance states that more detail is required for proposals likely to be brought forward in the time horizon of strategic and local land use and transport plans, especially where a significant application is expected in the near term (ie: the next 5 - 10 years). For the longer term, only indicative land use plans are required.
- 3.7 It is stressed that carrying out work at an earlier stage, that will eventually be required in relation to planning applications, will assist in the early identification of potential problem areas and improve the efficiency of the planning process.

- 3.8 In terms of content the guidance considers that the more ground covered and the more extensive the consultation, the greater the value of the Masterplan. The following core areas are anticipated to be addressed:

- Forecasts;
- Infrastructure proposals;
- Safeguarding and land/property take;
- Surface access initiatives;
- Impact on people and the natural environment;
- Proposals to minimise and mitigate impacts.

### **Forecasts**

- 3.9 An up to date breakdown of current traffic and an explanation of data in relation to historic trends and expected market developments is required.

### **Infrastructure Proposals**

- 3.10 There is a need to identify where constraints are expected to arise, and to identify the factors which could affect them, eg: traffic build-up, aircraft size, scheduling, land availability, environmental and safety issues, etc. The Masterplan should include an airport's Statement of Adopted Planning Standards demonstrating how airports make the best use of existing capacity before undertaking further development. An Outline Investment Plan identifying important milestones and Capital Expenditure Plans over the next 10 years should form part of the Masterplan.
- 3.11 Plans are not expected to take the form of detailed drawings, but to provide sufficient information to be understood by the lay person. The plans should demonstrate how airport proposals can be integrated with adjacent land uses, particularly where the airport is located close to sensitive neighbours such as residential and, importantly, environmental areas. Maps showing safety surfaces and Public Safety Zones (PSZs) can be provided separately.

### **Safeguarding and Land/Property Take**

- 3.12 One of the most important issues identified is the need to address the long-term land requirements for future airport development, and whether this requires changes to airport boundaries. These implications should be clearly identified to minimise long-term uncertainty and non-statutory blight.

### **Surface Access**

- 3.13 Surface access is considered a major issue where there is a need for short and long-term strategies. The split between use of public (including heavy and light rail, coach, bus and shared taxi) and private transport is acknowledged to affect the scale of any new investment in surface access required. The potential use of appropriate transport models to analyse impact is put forward.

- 3.14 It is acknowledged that, in the initial stages of Masterplan preparation, it may be possible to do little more than adopt a simplified approach which identifies the relevant schemes in broad terms, while identifying subsequent areas of work which will need to be taken forward in the near future to establish surface access impact in more detail.

### **Mitigation**

- 3.15 An important content of the Masterplan will be proposals for mitigation measures across the major impact areas, eg: emission controls, noise abatement measures, sound insulation, surface access schemes and traffic management, and measures to address landscape and biodiversity impacts. It is considered appropriate to consider compensation measures that may be required when the scale of impact is such that cannot be adequately mitigated.

### **Options**

- 3.16 In some cases, where there is more than one possible approach to development of part of the airport, consultation on options is proposed, with the potential to identify a reference case outlining the preferred option against which variations can be measured.

### **Appraisal of Proposals**

- 3.17 It is anticipated that airports should consider the following key impacts of their Major Development projects is the current and subsequent five year periods:
- Noise impacts (daytime/night noise/ground running) (EU directive 2002/49ec applies);
  - Air quality impacts – compliance with mandatory air quality values (EU directive 1999/30ec);
  - Surface access implications, including impacts on local and wider transport infrastructure;
  - Local economic, housing and employment implications;
  - The extent of property and land take.
- 3.18 The guidance states that the particular circumstances of the area will make a number of other matters potentially relevant, including biodiversity, heritage and landscape impacts, possible bird strike hazards and local concerns or constraints such as Special Areas of Conservation and Ramsar sites.



## **Process**

- 3.19 It is stressed that the emphasis of the airport planning process is that airports do not develop in isolation, and that development proposals should incorporate safeguards to minimise their adverse impact on the local environment. It is considered advantageous for airport operators to undertake a full-scale public consultation, especially where there are proposals for major infrastructure development. It is commented that the ultimate responsibility for the final content of any plan should lie with the airport operator.
- 3.20 It is stated that the Department of Transport should be consulted alongside other stakeholders before individual Masterplans are finalised. Once publicised, the Masterplan should be published and disseminated to all relevant Authorities.

## **Air Transport White Paper Progress Report 2006**

- 3.21 In December 2003, the Government set out a sustainable long-term strategy for the development of air travel. The strategy aims to achieve a balance between the economic benefits of airport development and the environmental implications. The strategy sought to:
- Ensure that aviation reflects the full costs of its climate change emissions;
  - Recognise that aviation brings real benefits to people and businesses;
  - Promote making much better use of existing airport capacity.
- 3.22 The Progress Report refers to the Stern Review on the economics of climate change, published in October 2006. The Stern Review recommends that the best way to tackle the complex pattern of carbon emissions is to ensure each activity which consumes carbon is priced in a way that reflects its true cost to society and the environment. The Government aims to pursue the inclusion of aviation emissions in the European Union Emissions Trading Scheme as soon as practical for all flights departing from EU airports, whatever their destination.
- 3.23 In addition, the Government has given a commitment to investigate and consult on proposals which will make it simpler for air passengers to offset carbon emissions arising from flights they take by setting out a Government Standard for how such schemes should operate.
- 3.24 In terms of impact upon the local environment within which airports operate, the White Paper establishes a number of strands:
- (1) Through the recently agreed Civil Aviation Act 2006, the introduction and measures to strengthen and clarify larger airports' powers to control noise and local airport quality, enabling airports to penalise the noisiest and most polluting aircraft.
  - (2) Addressing the noise of airline fleets.

- (3) The use by Airport Operators of Masterplans to provide a basis for ensuring that measures to address noise, air quality, impacts on biodiversity and heritage, and issues of blight are properly considered, clearly set out and taken forward transparently in consultation with the local community.
  - (4) Reference is made to the need for Airports to focus on developing public transport links and promoting effective travel planning to increase the number of passengers taking public transport to and from airports, thereby improving local air quality.
- 3.25 The White Paper recognises the economic benefits of air travel with the importance of aviation to the economy rising as a result of broader economic trends:
  - (1) Growing global economic integration, leading to increased business travel and movement of international freight.
  - (2) Rising disposable incomes resulting in increased leisure travel.
  - (3) Increasing the number of foreign visitors and residents travelling to and from the UK.
  - (4) The UK's success in acting as a hub for international travel (15% of international air passengers fly to and from the UK).
- 3.26 The Progress Report comments that the first priority is to make the most of the UK's existing airport through a process of improvement and modernisation. Growth and development at Regional Airports, without the need for new runways, give people across the country improved access to air travel.
- 3.27 The paper encourages energy efficiency and the use of renewable resources in airport developments, and the introduction of offsetting schemes whereby individuals can make a financial contribution to schemes that reduce CO2 production elsewhere by an equivalent amount to the CO2 generated by that individual.
- 3.28 It is commented that typically the cost of carbon offsetting for a short haul return flight is approximately £5, for transatlantic return flights £10, and for a return flight to Australia around £30.
- 3.29 The White Paper recommends that all airports follow the example of Manchester and Luton airports and plan to become carbon neutral, and that Airport Operators should publish an Environmental Strategy alongside their Masterplans, setting targets for recycling, reducing carbon emissions and improving the energy efficiency of their business operations, with the aim of achieving carbon neutrality as quickly as possible.
- 3.30 In terms of Public Health and Safety, the White Paper reaffirms long-established Government policy that, where traffic warrants it, Public Safety Zones (PSZs) will be established at the end of runways, where the risk is greatest. Within these PSZs, development is restricted.

### **Civil Aviation Act 2006**

- 3.31 This Act gives Aerodrome Authorities the ability to charge Aircraft Operators by reference to the omissions from an aircraft to reflect the impact of aircraft on local air quality in the vicinity of an airport where there are local air quality problems. It also provides Aerodrome Operators with new powers to make noise control schemes.
- 3.32 Aerodrome Operators remain subject to the Aerodromes (Noise Restrictions) (Rules and Procedures) Regulations 2003 which set out procedures airports should follow when considering noise related operating restrictions. A balanced approach is required where airports should not impose measures which are more restrictive than necessary to achieve noise objectives, and should not discriminate on other grounds.
- 3.33 The Regulations apply to civil airports that have more than 50,000 movements of civil subsonic jet aeroplanes in a calendar year. The Act introduces changes to the Civil Aviation Act 1982, and seeks to encourage the use of quieter aircraft and reduce inconvenience from aircraft noise, encourage the use of aircraft which produce lower emissions, control noise and atmospheric pollution in the vicinity of aerodromes and promote compliance with noise and emission limits.

### **The South East Plan**

- 3.34 The final draft of the South East Plan, which is anticipated to replace the Kent Structure Plan early this year, includes Policy T9 on airports. This policy supports an enhanced role for Kent International Airport as an airport of regional significance. It requires that priority is given in Airport Surface Access Strategies to reduce the environmental impact of surface access, and increase modal share in favour of public transport. The policy requires that targets are set and monitored that are consistent with the aims of local development documents and local Transport Plans.
- 3.35 Reference is made to the Air Transport White Paper, which supports the production or updating of Masterplans by Airport Operators, to set out the development of airports up to 2015. The policy comments that the appropriate planning and transport bodies will need to take account of these new or revised Airport Masterplans.
- 3.36 Reference is also made to the Aviation White Paper's comment on the important role that Regional Airports can play in providing access to air services that reduce the pressure on international hub airports, particularly in the period before any new runway in the South East is built. It is noted that smaller Regional Airports such as Kent International Airport could play a valuable role in meeting the requirements for air services and contributing to regional economic development.
- 3.37 It is commented that, subject to relevant environmental considerations, the development of Regional Airports should be supported, and Regional and Local Planning Frameworks should consider policies that facilitate growth at these airports.

- 3.38 Policy EKA4 refers to Urban Renaissance of Coastal Towns. Specific reference is made to the need for the economy of Thanet to be developed and diversified with reference made to a regional role for Kent International Airport.
- 3.39 Policy EKA5 refers to Manston's importance as part of the South East Region's gateway role. Policy EKA5 refers to the growth of Kent International Airport as a Regional Airport with up to six million passengers per annum being supported, provided proposals satisfy policy criteria for the environment, transport and amenity.
- 3.40 Policy EKA6 relates to employment land allocation, stating that in Thanet there should be a concentration on allocated site development rather than identification of additional land.
- 3.41 It is commented that Kent International Airport, with its long runway, has potential for growth with significant economic benefits for the sub-region.
- 3.42 It is commented that Environmental Impacts will need to be addressed, including noise and air quality. It is noted that large land reserves are available within and adjacent to the airport for ancillary uses and related activity, but that considerable investment will be required in surface access if the envisaged level of growth is to be realised.

#### **Kent and Medway Structure Plan**

- 3.43 The Kent and Medway Structure plan presently forms part of the development plan for Thanet and contains specific reference to airport growth. It will be superseded by the South East Plan on its adoption.
- 3.44 Policy TP24 relates to Kent International (Manston) Airport. It supports the development of the airport into a Regional Airport with a capacity of up to six million passengers per annum by 2021. It requires that development need is assessed against the need for development to be directly related to airport operation (unless for an alternative use supported in the Local Development Framework):
- 3.45 No material harm on internationally or nationally designated environmental areas.
- 3.46 No significant detrimental impact on locally designated environmental areas.
- 3.47 No significant adverse impact on the amenity of local communities which cannot be satisfactorily mitigated.
- 3.48 Mitigation measures relating to noise control, air pollution, light pollution, water pollution, sewage disposal, landscape species and habitat management.
- 3.49 Service access requirements being adequately accommodated within the capacity of the existing or committed Local Transport Network. Improvement to public transport modes, including the provision of a direct rail link when the flow through the airport reaches three million passengers per annum.

- 3.50 In terms of East Kent, the Structure Plan identifies it as an area for regeneration priority, and perceives that major economic development will be concentrated in strategic locations including Sheppey, Ashford and Thanet.

#### **Thanet Local Plan**

- 3.51 The Thanet Local Plan, adopted in 2006 includes policies relating to the development of the airport. Policy EC2 supports the development, expansion and diversification of the airport, subject to:
- Compliance with the existing Section 106 Agreement and/or subsequent equivalent legislation.
  - Built development designed to minimise visual impact, particularly on the skyline.
  - Appropriate landscaping schemes as an integral part of the development.
  - Assessment of Cumulative Noise Impact and effectiveness of mitigation measures in order to minimise pollution and disturbance resulting from increased aircraft movements or engine testing.
  - An Air Quality Assessment (in compliance with policy EP5) to demonstrate development will not lead to a harmful deterioration in air quality.
  - Development within the airport complex to the south of the airside development site (policy EC4) to be limited to that necessary for the purpose of air traffic management.
  - New development generating significant surface traffic to meet the requirements for surface travel demand in compliance with policy EC3.
  - No contamination of ground water resources as a result of the development.
- 3.52 Policy EC3 requires development to be assessed in terms of surface travel demand generated. Proposals will be required to demonstrate measures to reduce car-based travel in favour of sustainable alternatives, and to provide for highway improvements/ management required to accommodate particular thresholds of development at the airport.
- 3.53 Policy EC4 identifies areas reserved for airside development only.
- 3.54 Policy EC5 identifies land for airport terminal related purposes only.
- 3.55 Policy EC6 relates to the Fire Training School/MOD complex, and supports the development of airport or airport-related uses on this site should the current use cease.
- 3.56 Policy TR4 seeks the implementation of Phases 1 and 2 of the East Kent Access, and the realignment of the A256 adjacent to EuroKent Business Park. Phase 1 of the East Kent Access and the realignment of the A256 have now been completed.

- 3.57 Policy EP5 relates to local air quality monitoring, commenting that development proposals that might lead to exceedance of National Air Quality Objectives or a significant deterioration in local air quality resulting in unacceptable effects on human health, local amenity or natural environment will require the submission of an Air Quality Assessment to address existing background levels of air quality, accumulative effect of further emissions and the feasibility of any measures of mitigation to prevent or reduce the extent of air quality deterioration.
- 3.58 Policy EP7 relates to aircraft noise, stating that applications for noise sensitive development or redevelopment on sites likely to be affected by aircraft noise will be determined in relation to the latest accepted prediction of existing and foreseeable ground noise measurement of aircraft noise.
- 3.59 Policy EP8 specifically relates to aircraft noise and residential development, stating that planning permission for residential development on any land expected to be subject to a level of aircraft noise above 57dB(A) will be subject to the provision of a specified level of insulation to achieve minimum sound attenuation levels.
- 3.60 Policy EP13 relates to ground protection where development that has the potential for contamination of ground water sources will only be permitted if adequate mitigation measures can be incorporated to prevent such contamination.
- 3.61 Policy CC2 relates to landscape character areas. Of particular reference is the central chalk plateau where development should avoid skyline intrusion and the loss or interruption of long views of the coast and the sea.
- 3.62 Policy CC3 requires development to respect local landscape features.
- 3.63 Policy NC1 relates to habitat protection requiring that development proposals which result in the loss or damage to natural habitats or features would not be permitted. Exceptionally, it comments that where specific need has been identified which overrides the necessity of retaining the site over which no suitable alternative exists, at least an equivalent area of corresponding habitat will be expected to be created.
- 3.64 Policy NC2 states that development which would materially harm or detract from an SSSI or National Nature Reserve will not be permitted. Exceptionally, it is commented that where it can be demonstrated that the need for the development is compelling and overrides the national importance of the SSSI and no suitable alternative site exists, mitigating measures should be incorporated in the development to minimise the impact of proposals.

## **4.0 THE DRAFT MASTERPLAN**

### **A Summary of the Draft Masterplan**

- 4.1 The Draft Masterplan was published by the airport in October 2008. The Masterplan has been prepared on the basis of advice within the Department of Transport document, 'Guidance on the Preparation of Airport Masterplans', and with reference to Government, Regional and Local Policy Guidance referred to in the above report. Whilst there is not a need to prepare a Masterplan for the airport on the basis of the present level of use, the anticipated growth of the airport would necessitate its future production. In addition, the Section 106 Agreement referred to above also required the preparation of a Masterplan for the airport.
- 4.2 The draft Masterplan considers growth at the airport up until 2018 in more detail, and also looks at potential development to 2033. DFT Guidance actually specifies the preparation of Masterplans for the periods 2015 and 2030; these dates have been amended by the airport, taking into account the 10 and 25 year time horizons that apply to this Masterplan.
- 4.3 The Masterplan sets out a strategy for "sustained and responsible growth" of the airport in line with White Paper recommendations. The key stated objectives of the Masterplan are:
- To set out prospects for air traffic growth;
  - Identify facilities required to accommodate growth (eg: passenger terminals, freight handling areas, additional taxiways and car parking facilities);
  - Identify land outside the airport boundaries to be safeguarded to enable expansion;
  - Indicate approximate phasing of provision of additional facilities;
  - Provide parameters for the control of adjacent development to the airport;
  - Identify required infrastructure improvements by both the airport and others;
  - Maintain the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) compliance;
  - Indicate policy requirements to support the development of the airport;
  - Inform the development of the Thanet Council Local Development Framework;
  - Identify and mitigate against environmental impacts.

- 4.4 Chapter 2 of the Masterplan refers to the legal framework applicable to the airport. Reference is made to the Air Transport White Paper (2003) and the Progress Report (December 2006). In terms of planning implications, the need to adhere to National Planning Policy Guidance and Planning Policy Statements is referred to as is the need to comply with the emerging Regional Spatial Strategy for the South East, Regional Transport Strategy, Kent and Medway Structure Plan and Thanet District Local Plan Policy.
- 4.5 Also of relevance is Department for Transport Circular 1/2002, referring to the potential need for Public Safety Zones, areas of land at the end of runways within which development is restricted in order to control the number of people on the ground at risk of death or injury.
- 4.6 The Airport Security Act 1982 sets out requirements for airports. This also influences Masterplan proposals.
- 4.7 This chapter summarises the main planning issues related to the future development of the airport, which are summarised as follows:
- 4.8 Future sustainable development of the airport, balancing economic success within environmental concerns;
- 4.9 The resolution of surface transport issues through both strategic highway improvements and improved public transport and sustainable transport links, through the establishment of an Air Transport Forum and the development of an Airport Surface Access Strategy.
- 4.10 The control of aircraft omissions:
- The control of aircraft noise;
  - Consideration of public safety zones;
  - Airport security;
  - Airport Health and Safety;
  - Protection of ground water;
  - Mitigation of landscape impact;
  - Protection of wildlife and natural habitats;
  - Facilitation of economic growth.
- 4.11 Chapter three of the Masterplan sets out the present position, which is summarised below:
- Approximately 6,000 passengers per annum, principally to European holiday destinations;
  - 33,000 tonnes of freight per annum (approximately 625 freight aircraft movements per year);



4.12 Other general aviation activities, including use of the airport for crew validation flights:

- A passenger terminal that accommodates 60,000 passengers per month;
- Two aircraft maintenance hangars;
- Provision of a Category 1 Instrument Landing System (ILS) installed on Runway 28. Runway 10 is serviced by a localiser facility and non-directional beacon.
- Two aviation fuel depots – one to the north of the passenger terminal and a secondary depot to the north west of the B2190 which will require upgrading/ replacing to increase capacity should the airport develop.
- Rescue fire fighting capability as stipulated by the Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO);
- Strategic highway access via the A299 to the M2 motorway, with single lane access to the east towards Ramsgate;
- Limited direct bus services;
- Provision of approximately 1,100 parking spaces available to both staff and passengers, with the potential for a further 1,000 spaces subject to meeting the requirements of planning permission;
- A dedicated taxi drop-off to the terminal building;
- Ramsgate Railway Station is approximately five kilometres to the east of the airport, Minster is approximately two kilometres to the south and Birchington approximately five kilometres to the north;
- No dedicated cycle routes serving the airport;
- Approximately 100 employees, 120 contracts with mainly local Companies and 75 airport business employees on land within the airport;

4.13 Chapter four provides the airport's vision for its growth. In summary, it is contended that the airport has a large catchment area, that the South East has insufficient capacity to accommodate predicted growth and that the airport will provide an increasingly attractive alternative for airlines and passengers as congestion increases.

4.14 It is further contended that predicted growth is similar to demonstrated patterns at other airports serving similar size regions, and that the EU Jet service in 2003, whilst unsuccessful, provided a valuable insight into the potential of the market for the airport.

- 4.15 The growth forecast is based upon specific achievable development in the first five years of growth (2009 – 2013) and growth rates over the medium to long term (2014 – 2033). It is anticipated that initial growth will come in steps. Initially, passenger flights will be offered, but aircraft based at other airports will be operating single daily return flights to various destinations from the airport. As the market grows, additional services will be offered, and aircraft operators will look to base aircraft and crews at the airport.
- 4.16 It is anticipated that low cost passenger airlines, operating Code C aircraft carrying between 150 and 189 passengers, will be attracted to use European routes, with Regional Turbo Prop Operators serving domestic routes with 50 – 70 seater planes.
- 4.17 The Masterplan acknowledges it is difficult to specifically forecast medium to long term growth. Therefore, a growth rate of 5% is applied in line with average rates of growth previously experienced within the UK over the past 10 years. These rates are based upon assumed continued population and GDP growth, and may require some reconsideration in the present economic circumstances.
- 4.18 In terms of passenger numbers, this would see passenger growth as follows:

<b>YEAR</b>	<b>NUMBER OF ANTICIPATED PASSENGERS</b>
2010	500,000
2011	1,200,000
2013	2,000,090
2018	2,778,000
2033	5,776,000

- 4.19 In terms of freight, the anticipated growth in tonnes is:

<b>YEAR</b>	<b>TONNES</b>
2010	107,000
2011	138,000
2013	158,000
2018	211,000
2033	507,000

- 4.20 Chapter five outlines the airport's plans to achieve such growth. In order to cater for increased passenger growth, the present terminal facility could not cope with more than around 1,000,000 passengers per annum. It is then proposed to provide a new 24,000 square metre terminal to handle 3,000,000 passengers by 2018.

- 4.21 Associated with the development of the terminal, there will also be a requirement for:
- An improved parallel taxiway;
  - Enlarged passenger aprons;
  - A bulk fuel installation;
  - The provision of approximately 1,400 parking spaces per 1,000,000 passengers (4,200 spaces to serve 3,000,000 passengers);
  - The provision of a dedicated area for ground based services.
  - Beyond 2018, and assuming growth towards approximately 6,000,000 passengers and 500,000 tonnes of freight in 2033, there would be a need to extend the passenger terminal to 48,000 square metres, plus the following additional improvements:
    - A runway extension;
    - A fuel facility development;
    - Further extension of parking;
    - Additional freight aprons;
    - Provision of general aviation/fixed base Operators' operations to the south of the passenger terminal.
- 4.22 There is recognition that such growth in access provision will need to be delivered in a way that encourages passengers, staff and visitors to adopt sustainable travel habits, whilst also recognising that the car will play a continuing role.
- 4.23 It is recognised that, in order to achieve this, a **Surface Access Strategy** would be required to detail short and long-term targets for increasing the proportion of sustainable journeys associated with the airport. It is anticipated that this will be developed by an **Airport Transport Forum** comprising representatives from the airport, Local Authorities, transport providers and local business and community representatives.
- 4.24 Reference is made to travel mode share experienced at other airports around the UK, using information from the Civil Aviation Authority Passenger Surveys Report in 2006.

- 4.25 The percentage mode share information from a number of airports identified in that survey was as follows:

MODE OF TRANSPORT	PERCENTAGE
Private Car	59%
Hire Car	3%
Taxi/Minicab	18%
Rail	11%
Bus/Coach	8%
Other	1%

- 4.26 In terms of vehicle movement, it is assessed that 1,000,000 passengers will generate 1,800 movements per day, 3,000,000 passengers 5,400 movements per day and 6,000,000 passengers 10,800 movements per day. With each step change, it is anticipated that local highway upgrades will be required. It is acknowledged that there will be a need for a detailed analysis of traffic generation and impact relating to applications for proposed development.
- 4.27 The need for the expansion of car parking areas to the east of the terminal, and a requirement for new taxi and bus drop-off zones as the development proceeds is acknowledged, as is the need for improved bus services to serve the areas where people want to travel to in as direct a route as possible.
- 4.28 It is recognised that it will be necessary to invest further in rail services to maximise the potential for passengers and staff to commute to the airport using rail, with options considered as follows:
- Provision of a dedicated bus link to existing railway stations;
  - Bus link to a new railway station;
  - New dedicated rail spur line to the airport.
- 4.29 It is anticipated that a dedicated bus link or new rail spur may result in a 20% modal share shift.
- 4.30 The Masterplan supports the provision of a cycle network, particularly for staff use. It is acknowledged that small businesses at the airport are important to its development. Demand for these services will grow, eg: freight facilities, and flexibility is sought to enable the northern grass to be developed for these purposes.
- 4.31 Chapter six considers managing the impacts of growth. It is recognised that any expansion may bring major benefits to the economy, but also needs to address the need for sustainability in terms of:
- Sustainable consumption and production;
  - Climate change and energy;
  - Protecting natural resources and enhancing the environment;
  - Creating sustainable communities.

- 4.32 The Masterplan makes the assumption that the impacts of the airport cannot increase in proportion to airport growth. The Masterplan states a commitment to:
- Managing carbon dioxide emissions;
  - Investigating opportunities for renewal of energy generation;
  - Minimising noise levels;
  - Regular air quality testing;
  - Working towards a 50% recycling rate;
  - Upholding compliance to discharge consents and improving water quality;
  - Monitoring waste consumption;
  - Ensuring all new buildings are neutral consumers of portable water;
  - Implementation of regular ecological surveys;
  - Ensuring developments have a neutral and positive impact on biodiversity;
  - Maintaining an open dialogue with the local community to ensure mitigation of negative impacts of the airport.
- 4.33 In terms of energy and climate change, the Masterplan states that the Airport Operator will seek to achieve carbon neutrality through:
- Reducing energy usage;
  - Buying green energy;
  - Developing on-site renewable resources;
  - Investigating in certified schemes that, through offsetting, will capture the equivalent amount of CO<sub>2</sub> that would be generated from the site.
- 4.34 They also state that they will seek to ensure that passengers are made aware of the opportunity to offset the carbon footprint of their flights via operator websites and notices in the terminal building.
- 4.35 They will also seek to explore opportunities to establish shared energy generation and distribution systems with other site developers.
- 4.36 They also intend to promote training and awareness to ensure staff conserve energy, and monitoring and reporting of air quality and greenhouse gas emissions.
- 4.37 There is a commitment to developing a Green Travel Plan, and encouraging green fuel use for on-site vehicle fleets.

- 4.38 In terms of noise emanation, reference is made to the existing Airport Consultative Committee which meets quarterly and considers noise reporting, air quality reporting and other airport activity.
- 4.39 Reference is made to noise monitors installed at either end of the runway, interfaced with a flight movement database recording of aircraft-type data. This information is passed to the Consultative Committee in graphical form.
- 4.40 Air noise modeling is included in the Masterplan for the current baseline for the year 2009, and future activity in 2018, based upon a combination of forecast schedule movements, and 2006 and 2007 airfield movement logs.
- 4.41 It is acknowledged that the contour produced indicates the potential requirement for some properties to be noise insulated as the airport develops, which will require the preparation of a Noise Insulation Scheme in due course. Members will recall this requirement as part of the Section 106 Agreement.
- 4.42 There is also a commitment to work with airlines to ensure ground noise levels are minimised as the airport develops, with restrictions placed on the use of auxiliary power units.
- 4.43 In terms of traffic noise, there is a stated intention to restrict traffic noise through Manston village by restricting traffic to airport and emergency vehicles only once the 3,000,000 passengers per annum terminal is constructed. Any construction proposals will be subject to assessment of construction noise and necessary mitigation.
- 4.44 In terms of emissions to air, it is noted that there is no requirement for designation of an Air Quality Management area within the locality of the airport. It is acknowledged that emissions from large airports can have a detrimental impact on air quality due to increased aircraft and aircraft support activities. Increased road traffic is also acknowledged as a main source of emissions.
- 4.45 The Masterplan assumes an approximately 40% increase in aircraft movements over the next 10 years, and approximately 81% over the next 25 years. It is, however, contended that aircraft are becoming more efficient with fuel emissions, and that it is unlikely there will be breaches of air quality strategy objectives.
- 4.46 It is acknowledged that the infrastructure improvements and behaviour change approaches to ground access will be required, with a need to improve public transport services and encourage sustainable alternatives to the car for passengers and staff.
- 4.47 Proposals are put forward in terms of waste management to increase reuse of materials and recycling.
- 4.48 In terms of protection of water quality, the proximity of Pegwell Bay Nature Reserve and SSSI 500 metres to the south of the airport is acknowledged. Reference is made to a project under way to ensure airport surface water collected from areas of hardstanding is controlled for at least the airport to prevent contamination to both the aquifer that lies beneath the airport and Pegwell Bay.

- 4.49 There is a commitment to regular monitoring and compliance with future water discharge consents, and to ensuring that fuel spills, etc. are reported and emergency action taken to prevent pollution of the water supply. There is also a commitment to controlling and minimising the volume of run-off drainage from future airport developments into local water courses where feasible, through the use of sustainable urban drainage systems. Proposals are also being put in place to manage the use of water resources.
- 4.50 The airport has undertaken a survey of the ecological quality of the airport property using the standard Phase 1 methodology, and notable features and habitats were reported.
- 4.51 It is acknowledged that the airport is in close proximity to designated European Nature Conservation Sites, and that there is a need for consultation to be carried out with Natural England regarding potential operational impacts.
- 4.52 There is a commitment to undertake further surveys to identify species of principle conservation importance, and a commitment to sensitive stewardship of airport land. It is, however, acknowledged that these measures have to be undertaken without compromising aircraft safety through the attraction of birds to the airport.
- 4.53 It is contended that, in terms of landscape and visual impact, the development options set out in the draft Masterplan are in line with the characteristics of the existing airport complex landscape character, and that no landscape features will be lost as a result of the potential developments.
- 4.54 It is indicated that a Land Quality Survey has identified low levels of contamination which does not pose a risk to groundwater. However, it also comments that further surveys will be undertaken so that levels of contamination can be monitored and contained.
- 4.55 The archaeological potential of the site is acknowledged, and these implications will be considered in the location and construction of future development.
- 4.56 With regard to community benefits, it is acknowledged that East Kent is an area of priority for regeneration, with high levels of unemployment and pockets of deprivation evident. It is contended that increasing activity at the airport will work towards addressing these problems by providing both direct and indirect employment opportunities and stimulating the local economy.
- 4.57 A commitment is given to consult with the community in relation to the impact of the airport to ensure that nuisance issues do not occur as a result of expansion. The Airport Consultative Committee is put forward as a way of keeping local community groups informed.
- 4.58 In terms of procurement, a commitment is given to sourcing local contractors for future developments in the interests of sustainability and development of the regional economy.

- 4.59 Chapter 7 concludes the Masterplan, noting the positive factors in support of growth:
- A positive planning framework;
  - Capacity for growth at the airport;
  - Access to airport infrastructure;
  - Potential contribution to the local economy;
  - Potential regeneration benefits;
  - Demand for enhanced airport facilities.
- 4.60 Reference is made to Government support for maximising the use of existing airport infrastructure, and there is support at Regional and Local Plan level. It is contended that the airport is not heavily constrained by environmental features, and that the local highway network has sufficient capacity to increase surface transport vehicle movements, subject to appropriate improvements and the implementation of Travel Plan measures to encourage more sustainable use of alternative methods of transport.
- 4.61 Reference is made to the airport's available land for a suitable range of employment uses for aviation and non-aviation related businesses to come up for the rental or capital land values at or around other major South East airports.
- 4.62 It is also contended that access to low cost air transport infrastructure and service routes will promote the development of sub-regional and local tourism. It is perceived that the growth of the airport will contribute to the National, Regional and Local economy, and that the development of new businesses will increase local employment levels. The growth of local employment and resultant demand for housing and improved facilities is perceived to act as a catalyst for regeneration of communities near to the airport.
- 4.63 Reference is made to passenger airline operators interested in establishing regular scheduled flights from the airport to a number of UK and European destinations.
- 4.64 Reference is made to the potential strengthening of freight activities to alleviate freight congestion at other South East airports.
- 4.65 In terms of next steps, it is stated that the intention is to publish a final Masterplan early in 2009 after consideration of consultation responses, and to subsequently submit an initial phase of planning applications to make more efficient use of land within the existing airport boundary.



4.66 In addition, further surveys are to be undertaken to assess:

- Landscape impacts of proposals;
- Geological and ground condition impacts;
- Economic impacts;
- Health impacts;
- Noise impacts;
- Water environment impacts;
- Cultural Heritage impacts;
- Surface access impacts;
- Local biodiversity and ecology impacts;
- Sustainability.

4.67 It is proposed to continue stakeholder involvement through the Airport Consultative Committee, and as part of the planning application process.

## **5.0 COMMENTS ON THE MASTERPLAN**

### **General Comments of the Soundness of the Plan in Relation to Masterplan Guidance**

- 5.1 In general, the Masterplan covers the issues provided in Government Guidance, however the Guidance is itself very general in nature.
- 5.2 The airport is not required to provide a Masterplan to comply with Government Guidance. However, its aspirations for growth and the requirements of the Section 106 Agreement require its provision.
- 5.3 There is a strong policy context in support of the growth of the airport as a Regional Airport whose existing infrastructure should be utilised, subject to appropriate environmental parameters.
- 5.4 Masterplan Guidance requires Airport Operators to provide a clear statement of intent and to lead in the preparation of the Masterplan, but also requires close liaison with the LPA if the Masterplan is to form part of the LDF. At present the Masterplan has not been through that process, and must therefore be seen as an aspirational document to be referred to rather than a policy document.
- 5.5 The Masterplan aids the communication process and outlines infrastructure development requirements in a broad fashion. It does not, however, give detail relating to phasing of works or details of their implications.
- 5.6 In terms of assessing the Masterplan against Government advice, it is considered that it falls within the category of providing 'a more general statement on operational issues with little underpinning analysis' (paragraph 10). There is, however, an expressed intent to carry out further analysis to clarify the impact of development proposals which will assist in identifying the implications of growth and required mitigation.

- 5.7 There is an acknowledgement in the Guidance that the dynamic nature of the Aviation sector requires flexibility to be built into the planning process. However, the Masterplan process enables a degree of certainty to be built into the process, and the building-in of five year reviews will need to form an element of that process.
- 5.8 The Masterplan provides broad forecasts based upon an explained rationale, but the approach taken is rather generic and needs to focus more upon the particular circumstances of the site and location. Officers will be working with Airport Management, offering guidance on how this can be achieved.
- 5.9 Infrastructure requirements are again broadly identified, but there is the need for significantly more detailed investigation to ascertain the level of change, responsibility for provision and environmental impacts of growth. In this respect the Masterplan needs more clarity in terms of what studies are to be carried out, how they will connect to each other and when they are to be carried out. Costs and benefits of their provision should also be included. Paragraph 25 of the guidance comments that, 'it would be helpful to include more detail on the appraisal of environmental impacts' and 'options for reducing and mitigating those impacts'; this process will give the Masterplan more weight as a tool to influence policy development.
- 5.10 Paragraph 25 refers to the benefit of 'an outline investment plan identifying important milestones and capital expenditure plans over the next ten years'. This must be provided.
- 5.11 The Masterplan refers to PSZ's. It is considered to be worth exploring their extent and potential impact, to influence Development Control decisions as part of the process of identifying other potential land take to facilitate expansion, which is identified.
- 5.12 The proposed preparation of a Surface Access Strategy through the establishment of an Air Transport Forum is considered an essential element of the Masterplan process, which should be commenced before the airport generates significant traffic. This will help shape travel plans and infrastructure provision to improve sustainability. Forecasts of modal split are presently considered generic and possibly conservative, based upon the increasing move toward the use of sustainable modes of transport. The development of a transport model to inform this process is likely to be required as part of the planning application process, and should be considered at this stage.
- 5.13 The Masterplan presently identifies one proposed expansion scheme. It may be worthwhile treating this as a 'reference case' against which to consider options, a possible measure that would be needed for consideration of airport proposals as part of the LDF process.
- 5.14 In terms of appraising proposals, chapter six of the Masterplan provides a high level overview of how the Airport Operator intends to address the main issues raised as a result of airport expansion and the need to address Government Guidance and Regional and Local Policy.

- 5.15 There is a lack of specific commitment within this section which at present provides details of the airport's aspirations, rather than a commitment to address the impacts of development. For example it would be preferable for the Masterplan to set targets for carbon neutrality and emission controls and to establish a review process to amend those targets based upon technological advances that continue to reduce emissions. More specific targets on air quality would be welcome.
- 5.16 It would also be beneficial in due course if the Masterplan is accompanied by an Environmental Statement that more fully identifies the impacts of expansion proposals and mitigation measures. It is recommended that the Operator liaises closely with Natural England and the Environment Agency in particular to commence this process and identify whether and when there may be a need to consider the possible need for an appropriate assessment in accordance with the Habitat Regulations and the potential need for a Strategic Environmental Assessment. The Environmental Statement provision will be an essential accompaniment to a planning application seeking to gain consent for expansion of the airport.
- 5.17 The Masterplan has been the subject of public consultation. The nature of the consultation process, those consulted and responses received should be published as part of the preparation of a revised draft. It is suggested that this could be the subject of a further round of consultation prior to finalising the document, to enable the Operator to identify comments received and explain the changes made. Reconsultation should be with all statutory planning consultees as well as other stakeholders. The Department for Transport should form part of this process in line with its Guidance.
- 5.18 It is considered that taking the above steps would enable the Council, as Planning Authority, to give more weight to the document as a tool to be used for Development Control purposes.
- 5.19 In general terms, the Masterplan remains a stand-alone document that the Council can acknowledge, support and refer to when making decisions on the development of the airport. As stated in paragraph 8, 'if the Masterplan is to be fully integrated into a Local Development Framework, likely to be in the form of an Area Action Plan, the Airport Authority should work with the Local Planning Authority from an early stage, as the latter body will take ownership of the process and take it through the appropriate stages'. It is considered that at present the Masterplan comprises a separate document, but that members may wish to give a commitment to integrating proposals into the LDF process as described above.

#### **Detailed Issues**

- 5.20 As explained above, present Government Guidance does not require the provision of a Masterplan for the airport. In this case the existing Section 106 Agreement and the aspirations of the operator have resulted in the development of a draft Masterplan.
- 5.21 The Masterplan has identified numerous environmental and community issues that need to be addressed satisfactorily before much of the airport's expansion proposals can be pursued.

- 5.22 As was pointed out within the Planning History section of the report, any significant planning application for further development at the airport will need to be accompanied by an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA).
- 5.23 Screening opinions upon previously permitted proposals have indicated that the cumulative impact of these developments and any new development will result in such a requirement.
- 5.24 Once the need for an EIA has been definitively established, the airport will also need to request that the Council, as Planning Authority, undertakes a Scoping Opinion in conjunction with statutory consultees, including the Highways Authority, Natural England and the Environment Agency, to establish the information required in support of any Environmental Impact Assessment. Rather than waiting to submit a planning application, it is considered that there are considerable benefits in carrying out studies to assist in identifying both the scope of any Environmental Impact Assessment and issues arising from analysis of environmental impacts of airport growth.
- 5.25 The Masterplan presently comprises a relatively high level aspirational stand-alone document prepared by the airport. In line with guidance on the preparation of Masterplans, it is considered more appropriate to consider the document outside of the formal LDF process, with the Council commenting on its proposals with a view to agreeing the airport's document following further consultation. Following adoption of the LDF core strategy, the Council, as Planning Authority, would then be able to liaise with the airport in the production of a supplementary planning document.
- 5.26 The Masterplan should include specific reference in terms of how proposals will address the all requirements of the existing section 106 agreement listed above in the report. Cross referencing within the Masterplan will assist in ensuring compliance.
- 5.27 More specific reference should be made to a commitment to established arrival and departure routes and improvements in monitoring facilities. A commitment to the use of continuous decent approach in the interests of fuel efficiency and noise abatement should be included
- 5.28 One factual issue that requires looking at in relation to the document concerns references on page 21 of the draft Masterplan to the airport's entitlement to undertake various forms of permitted development relating to its operations in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995, Article 2 and Schedule 2 – Part 18.
- 5.29 The airport does not have the benefit of planning permission, and therefore cannot be considered to be 'operation land' in Planning Law. The airport operates legally as a commercial airport as a result of a grant of Lawful Development Certificates, which do not have the same status as a planning permission.
- 5.30 Because no planning permission exists, the airport has more limited permitted development rights compared to those airports with planning permissions whose land can be defined as operational land. This fact needs to be reflected in the airport Masterplan.

- 5.31 It is considered that compliance with the Human Rights Act 1998 should be a consideration of the Masterplan process.

#### **Local Plan Policy Issues**

- 5.32 In terms of the general proposals within the draft Masterplan, there are a number of areas where it goes beyond the parameters of existing policy. Specifically, these areas are:

#### **Surface Access and Parking**

- 5.33 Future Development Plans identify potential road improvements, and parking and aircraft facilities beyond the boundary of the existing airport, as defined within the Thanet Local Plan. It would not be appropriate to give full support to these elements of the airport's aspirations outside of the formal Development Plan or Development Control process. It is these areas that will require urgent attention through the development of the Local Development Framework in order to ensure that uncertainty and short-term blight referred to within the guidance on the preparation of airport Masterplans is avoided.

#### **Infrastructure Provision**

- 5.34 There is a need to demonstrate that there is sufficient capacity in terms of water supply, foul drainage, surface water drainage, gas and electricity to service the expansion of the airport. The method and phasing of such provision needs to be outlined within the Masterplan, with reference made to consents required to achieve that provision, particularly relating to surface water.

#### **The Northern Grass**

- 5.35 The Masterplan proposes releasing an area of the northern grass for general employment use. This proposal does not accord with the present Local Plan allocation for the site, and would need to be considered through the LDF process to determine whether general employment use is required on the site and to assess its suitability. The Council, as Planning Authority, is undertaking an Employment Land Review, and this site will be considered in the context of that review. The Working Party has noted that significant employment sites are characteristic of other Regional Airports. Therefore it is quite possible that, following review, the Northern Grass could be reallocated as general employment land.
- 5.36 A related issue to any proposals to change the use of this area is the need to demonstrate that sufficient land remains within the retained airport to provide for site surfaces. This needs to be demonstrated on a plan, as well as in the text of a document, and present proposals need to be expanded to clarify the position.

#### **Public Safety Zones**

- 5.37 As referred to above, there would be benefit in identifying the potential need for Public Safety Zones to cater for potential airport expansion, and to ensure that the possibility of development within such areas is carefully considered within the LDF process and in Development Control decisions.

- 5.38 The provision of additional information in the form of a commitment to the establishment of an Environmental Statement and the establishment of an Air Transport Forum to develop a Surface Access Strategy should be highlighted more within the document, with details of how and when these strategies are to emerge being provided.

## **6.0 OPTIONS**

- 6.1 Members have the option to agree the recommendations of the report. Alternatively, they may wish to add further provisos based upon the information provided.
- 6.2 Members also have the option to merely acknowledge the Airport Operator's production of the report, but resolve to treat the report as a 'stand-alone' document which will not be treated as part of the emerging Council Planning Process.

## **7.0 CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS**

### **7.1 Financial Implications**

- 7.1.1 There are no financial implications relating to this decision.

### **7.2 Legal**

- 7.2.1 It is not considered that there are any legal implications, should the Council resolve to acknowledge the Masterplan as the Airport Operator's document. Liaison with the Airport Operator subsequently to develop Masterplan proposals within the context of the LDF process will be subject to the legal requirements of that process.

### **7.3 Corporate**

- 7.3.1 Part one of the Corporate Plan relates to Thanet's economy. A major project relating to attracting employment opportunities to Thanet is the support to the aviation sector, including receiving and approving the Masterplan for Kent International Airport.

### **7.4 Equality and Diversity**

- 7.4.1 In the opinion of the writer, there are no Equality or Diversity implications with regard to this report or its recommendations.

## **8.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 8.1 That members agree in principle to the aspirations of the Draft Masterplan as it broadly aligns with Government guidance and Regional and Local Planning Policy and guidance and complies with the requirements of the existing Section 106 agreement on the airport.
- 8.2 That the airport be requested to publish the results of its consultation on the Draft Masterplan and proposed amendments for further comment prior to finalising the Masterplan, consultation to also be undertaken with statutory Planning Consultees including GOSE, SEERA, The Highways Agency and SEEDA.

8.3 That proposed amendments include the following alterations/additions to the Masterplan:

- (1) More specific measurable targets with regard to;
  - Sustainability;
  - Carbon neutrality;
  - Emission control (including proposals relating to airline offsetting measures)
- (2) More specific details are provided with regard to the establishment of an Air Transport Forum and the development of a Surface Access Strategy to cope with predicted growth. The forum remit would include the provision of Realistic revisions to forecasting of surface access issues based upon an aspiration for greater use of public transport and alternative means of transport to the private car.
- (3) Reference to the impact of the present economic conditions on predictions for short-term development
- (4) The inclusion of more specific proposals for the phasing of development proposals and associated infrastructure provision required as a result of those proposals for the period up to 2018, with details of approximate costs at today's prices. This analysis should confirm that measures proposed will ensure there is sufficient infrastructure capacity to cater for the growth of the airport in the context of other development aspirations for the area.
- (5) That more specific proposals, with timescale details are put forward for the implementation of environmental studies to assess the implications of phased growth and preparation of mitigation proposals where required. These studies to take place in consultation with the Environment Agency and Natural England and to result in the production of an Environmental Statement to accompany the Masterplan. This process must comply with the requirements of relevant EU Environmental Law.
- (6) That the status of proposals in the Masterplan that do not accord with the present extant policy documents, (ie: the Northern Grass, potential offsite highway improvements and parking proposals) are clearly identified as such in the Masterplan. The Masterplan should make it clear that these proposals are aspirations to be pursued through the LDF process.
- (7) That the Masterplan clearly defines how it meets the requirements of the Section 106 agreement.
- (8) That the Masterplan be amended with reference to the permitted development rights available to the airport.
- (9) That more specific reference is made to the implications of the introduction of Public Safety Zones at either end of the runway.

- 8.4 This report, subject to Member comment, will proceed to Overview and Scrutiny, and then Cabinet and, ultimately, Council on 23 April. After Council has decided its response, Officers will work with Airport Management towards further consultation and amendment of the draft Masterplan such that a final version of the document is produced.