

Consultation Number: F/19/86707 (Eastleigh Borough Council)

Site: SOUTHAMPTON INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, MITCHELL WAY, EASTLEIGH, SO18 2HG

Development: Construction of a 164 metre runway extension at the northern end of the existing runway, associated blast screen to the north of the proposed runway extension, removal of existing bund and the reconfiguration and extension of existing long stay car parking to the east and west of Mitchell Way to provide additional long stay spaces (Amended Description) This application is subject to an Environmental Impact Assessment.

Case Officer: Stephen Beli

Introduction

The Planning Committee will recall an earlier report to Committee in February 2020 ([see link to previous report and extract of plans](#)), the resolution of which was to defer consideration pending the receipt of further information and a re-consultation exercise.

Further information has now been submitted following the Court of Appeal decision in relation to a statutory challenge against the designation of the Airports National Policy Statement (ANPS), following the Government's decision regarding the 3rd runway proposals at Heathrow. This judgement effectively made the Government's Policy Statement to be of no legal effect unless and until it is reviewed by the Secretary of State.

In addition the description of development has been amended to that shown above and the proposed car parking area and layout has been amended to reduce the number of car parking spaces from 600 to 470 recognising the need for a modal shift of those visiting the airport from private to public transport modes. Members are referred to the attached amended plan extract of the proposed car park. The red line site boundary remains the same.

In addition, further ecological and other environmental information has been submitted following adverse comments received, together with additional information relating to a re-assessment of the socio-economic impact of the scheme following the COVID 19 pandemic.

Members are referred to the following web link to Eastleigh Borough Council who will determine the application, and which set out the responses received from various organisations in full. The non-technical Environmental Impact Assessment Summary, as well as a Supplemental Planning Statement provide a useful summary of the proposal (click on documents once link is activated)

<https://planning.eastleigh.gov.uk/s/papplication/a1M4J000000d3ql/f1986707>

For context the site lies approximately 10kms from the New Forest National Park boundary near Dibden, and about the same distance to the east of Totton the District's largest town.

Comments received

The following is a summary of some key consultation comments received on the amended and updated information. Other comments can be seen by following the above link.

Hampshire County Council (submitted by Leader of the Council)

Support in general terms given economic development catalyst and importance of the scheme to Southampton Airport as a regional aviation hub. The collapse of Flybe and the recent pandemic has brought this need into greater focus. A permission would assist the region in other growth areas as well as direct and indirect job creation locally, through greater opportunities for tourism growth. In environmental terms consider it is committed to carbon neutrality and regional airports can be key to greener air travel particularly when combined with use of more sustainable fuel in the future. Need to take into account however detailed technical and environmental considerations in deciding the application.

Hampshire County Council Economy Transport and Environment

Raise no objections as Local Highway Authority (LHA) and Local Lead Flood Authority (LLFA) subject to appropriate planning conditions and a S106 agreement. The LHA are satisfied that the number of new trips accounting for airport passenger number growth of up to 3 million annual passengers is acceptable. The LHA also considers that the additional trip impact on existing roundabout and road infrastructure will be acceptable and within the capacity of those features to cope with additional traffic. In terms of other public transport options these can be dealt with through a Travel Plan and appropriate contributions to support those services. The proposal will not prejudice other growth opportunities in the immediate area of the site. A section 106 will also cover a cap on vehicles and other matters relating to construction management. The LLFA recommend a condition detailed a surface water drainage scheme to be agreed.

Winchester City Council

Maintains its objection because of the adverse impact on local residents due to increased flights; a significant increase in carbon emissions which have not be adequately mitigated; and a minimal positive effect on the economic prosperity of Winchester District is considered to be outweighed by the impact of additional noise and carbon emissions.

Isle of Wight Council

No objections bearing in mind intervening distances and existing built form.

Environment Agency

No objections subject to appropriate safeguards during and after construction so as to ensure any contamination is effectively dealt with and groundwaters are protected.

At the time of writing no further comments have been received from the New Forest NPA, Highways England and Natural England. Both the New Forest NPA and the South Downs NPA have objected to the proposals on environmental grounds.

Assessment including impact on District

The proposal raises some significant environmental impacts balanced against the need to encourage local transport hubs and the potential for future economic growth and prosperity in the region. The applicants argue that their proposal is in line with Government Policy.

The issues surrounding carbon neutrality are complex and tied up with potential offsetting combined with greater use of more sustainable forms of transport and the use of more sustainable aviation fuels. The applicants point to a robust plan for carbon neutrality which will be agreed by Eastleigh Borough Council. They also point out in the latest Local Plan submission of the Council that such an airport expansion would be supported.

The number of additional flights with potential for increased noise and carbon is certainly a key consideration for those who live closest to the airport. It is noteworthy for instance that Winchester City Council consider this outweighs any economic benefit.

The applicants argue that the potential for economic growth and the protection of the existing 950 direct employee jobs particularly in the light of Covid 19 and the collapse of Flybe does tip the balance in the applicant's favour bearing in mind the environmental safeguards and the suggested cap on two way vehicle numbers to the site being offered. The applicants have put forward a case that the proposal could realise 1500 additional jobs of which it anticipates 1100 will be in the Solent LEP area.

In technical terms it does appear that the County Council Highway and Flood Authority are in favour. That said the views of Highways England regarding the Trunk Road network are still awaited as are those of Natural England.

Impact on NFDC

- a) Ecological - Apart from a more localised impact particularly during the construction phase the submitted Environmental Statement (ES) tries to quantify other wider impacts. In ecological terms it lists the Solent and Southampton Water SPA and Ramsar site, Solent and Dorset Coast SPA and the Solent Maritime SPA which all border the District being impacted by noise, air pollution and changes to hydrology and water quality. The ES also lists the New Forest SAC as being a receptor which needs to be considered. The ES however suggests the impact will not be significant and that a drainage strategy will avoid effects. The comments of Natural England will be key to the consideration of any harmful ecological impact on hydrology and water quality. Similarly, the Eling and Bury Marshes SSSI may be impacted by air pollution but this is listed as not being significant.

- b) Noise impact - With regard to aircraft noise it does not consider this to be significant, but it does not quantify the impact on the District per se. That said given the likely altitude of aircraft above the District such impacts could arguably be limited in their extent. If permission were to be granted it is likely that a monitoring regime of the various identified impacts would be undertaken. A Noise Action Plan which would limit flying hours and discourage the noisiest aircraft types, along with restrictions on night flying would form part of any approval. The proposed development will not alter the operational hours of the airports which currently has no scheduled nighttime flights (defined as 2300-0600 Monday to Saturday, and until 0730 on Sunday).

- c) Traffic impact – The ES considers there will be some increase potentially in private vehicle traffic through the District from increased airport use – again this is not considered to be significant.

- d) Air quality – National and local policies set out the requirements to assess air quality impacts of airport expansion. There is a potential effect during construction and post construction. Eastleigh BC and Southampton CC have declared Air Quality Management Areas. Current monitoring shows an improvement in air quality. During the construction phase this impact can be mitigated by a Construction and Environmental Management Plan. During the operational phase it is not predicted there will be any significant effect on air quality in the wider area away from the application site.

Conclusions

There is clearly a balance to be struck between the environmental impact and the potential for economic growth and the protection of the contribution that Southampton Airport makes to the economic prosperity of the sub region. Provided there are sufficient safeguards to ensure that any environmental harm is adequately mitigated, and sufficient and robust controls are exercised particularly in relation to the achievement of future carbon neutrality, the balance on this occasion can tip towards an approval recommendation. Should there be any further comments from Natural England, or the New Forest NPA an update will be given at the meeting.

Recommendation

That New Forest District Council raise no objection to this application subject to Eastleigh Borough Council being satisfied that environmental matters can be adequately addressed through planning conditions, and that a Section 106 Agreement can be concluded to cover carbon neutrality, a cap on vehicle numbers, and any necessary long term management together with the achievement of all necessary infrastructure works required.

Further Information:

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Location Plan

Southampton Airport



