

Programme Office
C/o Buckinghamshire County Council
County Hall
Walton Street
Aylesbury
HP20 1UA

Department for Transport
Great Minster House
33 Horseferry Road
London
SW1P 4DR

19th May 2017

Dear Sir,

NATIONAL POLICY STATEMENT (AVIATION): CONSULTATION RESPONSE

England's Economic Heartland Strategic Alliance established the Strategic Transport Forum in February 2016. Membership of the Strategic Alliance covers the area from Oxfordshire, through Milton Keynes and across to Cambridgeshire, and from Northamptonshire across to Luton.

The Strategic Transport Forum is the focus for a single conversation on strategic transport issues across the Heartland and maintains the overview of strategic investment priorities. The Forum works closely with the Department for Transport and Highways England, both of whom are members of the Forum.

The Strategic Alliance partners have set out their commitment to set out the case for establishing a statutory Sub-national Transport Body: work on developing the case for such a body is underway. Funding for the Forum is a combination of local partner contributions matched by funding from the Department for Transport.

Response to Consultation Proposal

England's Economic Heartland Strategic Alliance welcomed the Government's decision that identified Heathrow Airport as the preferred location for providing additional runway capacity in the London airport system.

It is important that, in addition to providing support for Heathrow Airport, the final National Policy Statement provides for the continued expansion of Luton Airport as part of the London airport system.

Expansion of services operating from Luton Airport are viewed by the Strategic Transport Forum as complementary to additional runway capacity at Heathrow Airport. The National Infrastructure Commission's interim report published last November stated that the Cambridge- Milton Keynes-Oxford corridor could be the UK's Silicon Valley – a world

renowned centre for science, technology and innovation. In the context of encouraging more investment from leading international companies in the area, protecting and enhancing the role of Luton Airport is all the more important given its role as key hub for business aviation services accessing the UK.

Whilst supporting the principle of additional runway capacity at Heathrow Airport this support is conditional upon the following strategic issues being addressed in the final National Policy Statement:

- A requirement that there should be no overall increase in the number of private vehicles entering the central area of Heathrow Airport, and that every effort should be made to reduce the absolute number of private vehicles.
- A requirement that the opening of additional runway capacity is conditional upon the availability of infrastructure and services that provide additional capacity for non-car access to Heathrow Airport.
- Strategic transport infrastructure projects that would be considered to make a significant contribution towards providing additional capacity include (but may not be limited to):
 - Western Rail Link (to Heathrow) - as a means of improving rail access to the wider Thames Valley.
 - Northern Rail Access – linking Heathrow Airport via a single interchange at Old Oak Common with an improved north-south rail connection to High Wycombe, Aylesbury, Milton Keynes and Northampton – as identified in the Chilterns/East West Rail Route Strategy .

Delivery of these infrastructure projects should be prioritised within the national rail infrastructure programme and delivered either by Network Rail or via an appropriate alternative delivery mechanism. The apportionment of costs associated with the delivery of such infrastructure should reflect the fact that additional runway capacity at Heathrow Airport is a national piece of strategic infrastructure.

- A requirement for the promoter, in conjunction with national Government, to identify, fund, and deliver measures during the construction phase that enable construction impacts to be mitigated – such measures to be developed and agreed in partnership with the relevant local transport and planning authorities.

In addition, the Strategic Transport Forum notes that the Government proposes to reform the use of airspace in the London airport system. The Forum supports the principle that any change in airspace should seek to avoid adverse impact on local communities, and where possible look to provide respite for those communities. London Luton Airport is an example of best practice in this area, introducing modern GPS procedures on its westerly departure route since summer 2015 in order to keep aircraft much closer to the centreline of the route resulting in positive effects for local communities on this flight path.

It is noted that the information released to date does not include proposals as to how the additional capacity at Heathrow Airport would be reflected in revisions to flight paths. Any change promoted in order to facilitate the additional runway capacity at Heathrow Airport

should not adversely affect the operation of other airports operating as part of the London airport system.

The Strategic Transport Forum looks forward to continuing to work closely with Government and the aviation sector in order to ensure that additional runway capacity is delivered to the benefit of the UK's competitiveness in global markets.

Yours .sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'H Smith', written in a cursive style.

Cllr Heather Smith

Chairman, Strategic Transport Forum

Leader, Northamptonshire County Council