

## Strategic Transport Forum

24<sup>th</sup> March 2017

### Agenda Item 9: Aviation Consultations

**Recommendation:** It is recommended that the meeting:

- i) Note the timescales for consultation of the draft Airports National Policy Statement Reforming policy on the design and use of UK airspace
- ii) Agree that the Chairman be authorised to agree the consultation response on behalf of the Strategic Alliance

#### **1. Context**

- 1.1. Following on from the Davies Commission (Summer 2015) which recommended a new (third) runway at Heathrow, the next stage in the process is the development of a National Policy Statement.
- 1.2. The Department for Transport (DfT) have produced a draft Airports National Policy Statement, which is currently out for consultation and will be subject to Parliamentary scrutiny.
- 1.3. Alongside this, the DfT are also consulting on a new framework for determining the design and use of UK airspace (i.e. the way flight paths are agreed).

#### **2. Overview of the Consultations**

- 2.1. The draft Airports National Policy Statement sets out:
  - the need for additional airport capacity in the south-east of England
  - why government believes that need is best met by a north-west runway at Heathrow Airport
  - the specific requirements that the applicant for a new north-west runway will need to meet to gain development consent
- 2.2. The UK Airspace Policy (framework for design and use of airspace) has implications for airports across and adjacent to England's Economic Heartland (EEH). It proposes to:
  - support the reform of airspace, thereby maximising the economic and social benefits of aviation
  - minimise the negative local impacts of aviation
- 2.3. The deadline for responses to both consultations is 11:45pm on 25 May 2017. The next steps will be for government to consider the consultation responses and, if

appropriate, amend the documents prior to final scrutiny and consideration by the House of Commons.

### **3. Emerging Issues**

- 3.1. The draft Airports National Policy Statement allows stakeholders to lodge their opinions around the potential Third Runway (should it gain final approvals) to ensure any issues that affect them are identified for future phases of the process. It does not however provide answers on the exact local infrastructure or flight paths that would be implemented.
- 3.2. In broad terms EEH should be in support of the proposals to increase airport capacity within the south east, however we need to be clear about the infrastructure implications of an additional runway at Heathrow. What we have learnt from previous major projects is that it is far better to ensure that any infrastructure asks from the Alliance are included in the draft NPS. Clearly we need to consider both road and rail link issues and opportunities
- 3.3. The UK Airspace Policy consultation has implications for the whole of the EEH geographic area. This consultation will look to set the framework for decisions around future changes in flight paths and stacking areas. It will include proposals for an independent noise commission but details of what that might involve are, as yet unknown.

### **4. Formal Responses from the Alliance**

- 4.1. Buckinghamshire County Council (BCC) is in the process of drafting responses to the consultations. Consequently it is proposed that BCC take a lead on coordinating responses for the Alliance (this was discussed and supported by the Transport Officers Support Group at its February meeting).
- 4.2. If agreed, BCC will circulate their draft responses to Alliance members in order to collate feedback. BCC will subsequently create amended versions of the consultation responses in order to ensure full coverage of the Alliance perspective.
- 4.3. Due to the consultation deadline being prior to the next Strategic Transport Forum, it is proposed that the Alliance's final consultation responses are reviewed and signed off by the Chairman (Heather Smith).

Martin Tugwell  
**Programme Director**

March 2017