

EXECUTIVE

DATE: 9 MARCH 2009

SUBJECT: CONSULTATION ON DRAFT LUTON AIRPORT
SURFACE ACCESS STRATEGY

REPORT BY: HEAD OF ENGINEERING AND TRANSPORTATION

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IMPLICATIONS:

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|-------------------|---|-------------------------|---|
| LEGAL | ✓ | COMMUNITY SAFETY | |
| EQUALITIES | ✓ | ENVIRONMENT | |
| FINANCIAL | ✓ | CONSULTATIONS | ✓ |
| STAFFING | | OTHER | |

CONSULTATIONS:

| | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| COUNCILLORS CONSULTED | Councillors Simmons, Davis and Worlding |
| SCRUTINY COMMITTEE CONSULTED | Environment & non executive functions meeting on 19 February |
| STAKEHOLDERS CONSULTED | London Luton Airport Operations Limited has consulted other stakeholders on the draft Strategy |
| OTHERS CONSULTED | |

WARDS AFFECTED: All

LEAD EXECUTIVE MEMBER(S): Councillors Davis and Worlding

RECOMMENDATION(S)

1. **Executive is recommended to agree the Councils proposed response to the consultation by London Luton Airport Operations Limited on the draft Airport Surface Access Strategy.**

BACKGROUND

2. All airports with 1,000 or more passenger air transport movements per annum are required by Government to establish an Airport Transport Forum (ATF) and produce an Airport Surface Access Strategy (ASAS). In July 1999 the Department for Transport produced guidance on the role of the ATF, and what issues it expects an ASAS will cover. A copy of the Government guidance is included at Appendix A.
3. The guidance indicates (see paragraphs 5-8) that the ATF should be led by the Airport Operator, but should include representatives of other employers on the airport campus, passenger transport providers who operate services to the airport, local planning and transport authorities and other external parties interested in improving public transport access to airports and reducing reliance on car-based travel for passengers and employees.
4. The ATF has a key role to play in drawing up short and long term targets, developing the ASAS, and overseeing its implementation. The guidance indicates that it will be for the airport operator to decide what is appropriate and deliverable, taking into account the views of the local highway authority and the other ATF partners.
5. The aim of the ASAS is to set down targets for increasing the proportion of journeys to the airport by public transport and draw-up a strategy for achieving these targets. The guidance indicates that Government does not wish to prescribe the way in which the ATF define the ASAS, nor the specific measures, which the ATF pursues to achieve their targets. However paragraphs 18-32 of the guidance (together with Annex B) set out the minimum requirements and characteristics of a good ASAS, together with a summary of measures to achieve these targets.
6. The guidance also makes it clear that proposals for improving surface access to airports and plans to develop the airport will have to be consistent with regional planning guidance, and integrate with other proposals in the Local Transport Plan (LTP) and the Local Development Framework (LDF). Further information on the need for the ASAS to integrate with the planning context is included in paragraphs 33-35 of the guidance.

REPORT

7. Luton Airport had 120,000 air transport movements in 2007 and is therefore required to comply with Government guidance in terms of setting up an ATF and producing an ASAS. London Luton Airport Operations Limited (LLAOL) published its first ASAS in 2000, and a second one in 2002, with reviews being carried out in 2001, 2003 and 2004. LLAOL is now consulting on a draft of its third ASAS. A copy of the draft ASAS is included at Appendix B to this report.
8. The policy context is summarised in Chapter 3 of the draft ASAS. Given the requirement of the guidance that an ASAS should take account of the regional and local policy background, the next section of this report summarises the Council's views on the Policy context.
9. The remainder of the report summarises the key issues that the guidance requires an ASAS to consider, together with the measures to be implemented to achieve the targets as set out in the draft ASAS. For simplicity, these are set out in tabular format, with the left hand column representing the key issues as set out in the guidance and the right hand column representing the Council's views on these.
10. Whilst, as indicated in paragraph 20 of the guidance, it will be for the airport operator to decide what is appropriate and deliverable, the views of the Borough Council as the local highway and planning authority are an important consideration in producing the final ASAS as:
 - i) it is for the authority to determine whether the ASAS is consistent with its own policies and plans, and
 - ii) implementation of the ASAS is dependent on local authority co-operation, given their statutory planning and highway responsibilities

Policy background

11. When producing an ASAS, the contents should take account of the policy background that relates to surface access issues associated with the locality. In this case, the key documents are -
 - Air Transport White Paper (Dept for Transport, December 2007)
 - Luton Local Plan 2001 – 2011
 - Luton, Dunstable and Houghton Regis Local Transport Plan 2006 - 2011
12. The Air Transport White Paper (ATWP) sets out support for the growth of London Luton Airport (LLA) to around 30 million passengers per annum

(mppa) or 240,000 air transport movements, based on a single runway airport. In the first instance this growth is based on the best possible use of the existing runway, which the ATWP defines as “full use of a single runway”.

13. In achieving this growth, LLA are required to produce a master plan setting out key components of development and the infrastructure required. This should be accompanied by a long-term surface access strategy. The strategy should include project development, option appraisal and consultation, with a view to identifying preferred schemes, along with funding arrangements. These strategies should also reflect regional transport strategies, Local Development Frameworks and Local Transport Plans.

14. The Luton Local Plan includes a number of policies relevant to the ASAS:

Policy T1 (Transport Strategy) encourages that consideration is given to proposals which reduce the need to travel by private car and enables the use of sustainable transport.

Policy T2 (Location Policy) considers the location policy, which relates to developments with significant transport implications. This policy seeks developers to demonstrate that the proposal is served by public transport with sufficient capacity to meet the potential demand generated by the proposed development. It also requires the submission of Transport Assessments and Travel Plans.

Policy LLA1 (Development at London Luton Airport) relates to proposals within the airport boundary. All proposals are assessed subject to a number of criteria, including that the proposal provides car parking facilities which comply with the most recent ASAS, in terms of number of spaces and location and management of car parks.

Policy LLA2 (Airport related car parking) requires proposals for car parking to be justified in terms of need and again that it is in accordance with the most recent ASAS.

15. The objectives of the Local Transport Plan 2006 – 2011 (LTP2) are –

- improve the safety of the travelling public, especially children and those in vulnerable and disadvantaged groups
- reduce dependency on the private car
- increase the choice of transport available to all

- Make services (health, education, employment, leisure and shopping) more accessible to that people have a real choice about when and how they reach them.
 - Sustain a thriving local economy whilst minimising the impact of transport on the environment.
 - Improve the efficiency of the transport network.
 - Manage congestion levels, and accommodate future growth, through the short-term provision of effective alternatives to the private car and the longer term controlled management of demand.
 - Improve the use of the existing transport network through the effective management and maintenance.
16. The growth of LLA is supported within the long-term transport strategy objectives of the LTP2, based on the unconstrained demand forecasts contained within the draft master plan for the airport published in October 2005. It is anticipated that the master-plan would propose transport infrastructure improvements as part of its growth proposals, and the long term LTP strategy acknowledged that the Luton Dunstable Busway and East Luton Corridor will contribute to improved passenger and employee access.
17. The last ASAS was produced in 2002 and therefore the production of a replacement document is overdue. However currently as the master-plan has been withdrawn, the draft ASAS should provide some interim consideration of the infrastructure required to manage the increase in traffic attributed to the airport.

Review of the draft ASAS in accordance with Government guidance

18. Paragraph 20 of the guidance (together with Annex B) set out the criteria for the requirements and characteristics of an effective ASAS, and these are summarised in Table 1 overleaf, alongside officers views about how adequately the draft ASAS meets those requirements.
19. Paragraph 23 of the guidance summarises the sort of measures that an ASAS should contain to achieve the targets for increasing the proportion of journeys to the airport by public transport and reducing single occupancy car trips particularly for employees. These measures are set out in Table 2 overleaf, alongside officers views about how the proposals described within Chapter 7 of the draft ASAS will contribute to achieving those targets.
20. A draft of the Officer response was considered by the Councils Environment and Non-Executive Functions Scrutiny Committee on 19 February. Whilst recognising that the development of the airport was

important to the Council, Members supported the officer views set out in Paragraph 21 of the report, and suggested that the following matters should also be included:

- the need for the airport operator to fund bus services for airport employees
- concerns over the greater distance from disabled parking places to the terminal building as a result of the terminal area improvements

Table 1 Requirements and characteristics of an effective ASAS

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| Analysis of existing surface access arrangements, including public transport facilities in and close to airports, identifying constraints and opportunities to secure modal shift as airport-related demand and employment growth. | Analysis of mode share for passengers and employees based on mode share in 2007-2008. Chapter 4 of the draft ASAS describes the existing public transport services that serve the airport, and recognises that the topography of the surrounding area constrains the opportunities for increasing mode share by walking and cycling. However very little consideration is given to the future opportunities to improve access to the airport by non-car modes, such as the planned northern entrance to Luton Airport Parkway Station. |
| Setting of challenging short term targets and longer term goals based on the above. | The draft ASAS only covers the period 2008-2011. Whilst it sets targets to increase the proportion of passengers travelling by public transport, and to reduce single occupancy employee car trips to 60% over this period, it does not set any longer term goals. |
| Increasing the proportion of journeys made to the airport by public transport, bicycle and walking. | The draft ASAS sets targets to increase the proportion of passengers travelling by public transport from 33% in 2007 to 38% in 2011, and to reduce single occupancy employee car trips from 72% in 2008 to 60% by 2011. |
| Ensuring that objectives and targets are realistic, deliverable | Given that single occupancy employee car trips only decreased from 78% in 2000 to 72% in 2008, the target of 60% by 2011 is considered to be challenging yet realistic. However the percentage of passengers travelling by public transport has increased from 24% in 2002 to 33% in 2007 and the target of 38% by 2011 is considered to be less challenging. |
| Have regard to the need to integrate airports surface access with wider regional and local transport local and regional economic strategies and land use plans | Chapter 3 of the draft ASAS briefly summarises the National and Regional policy background. However there is only a brief mention of the local planning policy, and in particular the opportunities afforded by the increased employment and residential allocations in east Luton as set out in the emerging Luton and South Bedfordshire LDF. |
| Mix of short term actions and longer term proposals and policy measures to tackle the problems and deliver targets/goals | Chapter 7 of the draft ASAS refers to some of the transport schemes and initiatives that will improve access to the airport, particularly by public transport, for both passengers and employees. However this chapter is particularly inward looking, and makes no reference to a number of emerging transport proposals being promoted by either the local authority or developers that could improve access to and circulation around the airport including the northern entrance to the parkway station, Park and Ride proposals at Butterfield, and the planned road to serve the Wigmore employment area to the east of the airport. |
| An indication of the cost of schemes and the associated policy measures, and how they might be Funded | Very few of the schemes and initiatives mentioned in Chapter 7 are costed. Whilst it is assumed that the majority of measures within the airport campus are going to be funded by LLAOL, there is no mention of contributions to schemes being funded by others, despite the fact that the airport passengers and employees will benefit from many of these. |
| A set of performance indicators, and other output measures which can be used to monitor and assess whether the strategy is delivering its targets and stated objectives | Whilst chapter 6 of the draft ASAS contains targets for the period 2006-2011, there is no reference to the performance indicators that will be used to monitor progress in achieving these targets. |

Table 2 Measures that an ASAS should contain

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| Rail investment schemes | Chapter 7 refers to the benefits of the longer platforms and longer trains being implemented as part of the Thameslink programme. |
| Accessible light rail and bus-based rapid transit schemes | Chapter 7 recognises the improved access to employment opportunities that will result from the Luton Dunstable Busway proposals. However, given the LDB scheme mainly serves Luton Town Centre and areas to the west of the conurbation, no mention is made of the need for improved bus access from areas to the north and east of Luton. |
| Funding or pump-priming of significantly enhanced or new local bus services | Not mentioned at all. |
| Reallocation of road space to buses, coaches, taxis and/or private hire vehicles, e.g. Dedicated lanes for buses/coaches/taxis | Chapter 7 mentions the improvements around the Central Terminal area which will improve access for buses/coaches and taxis. However, the potential for schemes (such as bus lanes or High Occupancy Vehicle lanes) on the wider local network is not mentioned at all. |
| Taxi sharing schemes | Not mentioned at all. |
| Concessionary fares | A staff travel card scheme has been implemented which gives staff discounted fares for a number of rail and bus/coach operators. Has proved a success. |
| Cycling and walking (particularly for airport employees) | No mention at all, particularly given the potential for walking and cycling from the area of east Luton immediately north of the airport campus |
| More through-ticketing - better connections and co-ordination of services | Not mentioned at all. |
| Improvements to quality and security of waiting environment | Chapter 7 mentions the improvements around the Central Terminal area which will improve the quality and security of the area for those using public transport or taxis/private hire vehicles |
| Improved marketing and wider availability of real-time information such as telematics and public transport travel information | Chapter 7 outlines the need for improved marketing, but mainly in the context of enhancing awareness about existing information and initiatives. There is no mention of the use of real time passenger information even though this is a key element of the Busway scheme. |
| Park and Ride; both conventional and strategic sites at key points on the road and rail network | Not mentioned at all. |
| Traffic management and demand restraint-greater priority to pedestrians, cyclists and public Transport | Chapter 7 mentions the improvements around the Central Terminal area, which will give greater priority to passenger transport users, pedestrians and cyclists in the vicinity of the terminal area. However no mention of measures on the wider local network. |
| Improvements to road/junction capacity | Chapter 7 mentions the role that the Motorway widening and the East Luton Corridor improvements (due to be completed shortly) will have in improving highway access to the airport. However no mention is made of the need to improve M1 Junction 10a, given that the current roundabout is a serious constraint on this main corridor up to the airport. |
| Parking restraint and car park management | Paragraphs 4.34 –4.37 summarise the capacity of both the on- and off airport parking facilities. However no mention is made of any parking restraint/management initiatives. This is of particular relevance given the recent application from the airport to construct additional parking spaces on part of the former tip to the east of the airport. |

Conclusions and recommended response

21. The above assessment indicates that there are a number of areas where the draft ASAS does not fully comply with Government guidance. The following matters are of particular concern to the Council's Scrutiny Committee and officers of the Council:

- i) The draft ASAS falls well short of the characteristics of a good ASAS, and does not even meet some of the minimum requirements of the Government guidance. The document makes no reference to the long-term goals, and only contains short term targets up to 2011. In particular the short term target for improving passenger access by public transport is not considered to be sufficiently challenging and, based on previous trends could be reasonably increased to 40%.
- ii) The draft ASAS is inward looking. An example of this is that, in terms of considering measures an ASAS should include, the ASAS mentions the improvements around the Central Terminal area which will improve access for buses/coaches/ taxis and pedestrians in that area. However, the potential for reallocation of road space, traffic management and demand restraint measures on the wider local network is not mentioned at all.
- iii) The changes to the Central Terminal area currently being implemented, whilst meeting recent Government guidance to increase security around airport terminal buildings, results in a significant increase in the distance between the terminal buildings and the disabled parking spaces for pick up/drop off and airport parking.
- iv) The draft ASAS is reliant on other key stakeholders providing for some of the Airport's future transport needs, yet despite the assertions in Chapter 2 (Vision) of the draft ASAS, there appears to be little reference or recognition of the role of those stakeholders. Without the involvement of those stakeholders the targets particularly for increasing passenger access by public transport, could be difficult to achieve.
- v) Chapter 7 of the draft ASAS, which summarises the transport infrastructure and other initiatives to meet the targets, mainly refers to schemes and measures that have either already been introduced or are in advanced stages of planning. In the context of the previous point, it is disappointing that this Chapter fails to recognise the role that a number of emerging transport proposals being promoted by either the local authority or developers could play in improving access to and circulation around the airport including:

- the northern entrance to Luton Airport Parkway station,
 - the Park and Ride proposals at Butterfield,
 - the proposed grade separation of M1 Junction 10a, and
 - the planned road to serve the Wigmore employment area to the east of the airport.
- vi) There are a number of potential measures mentioned in the Government guidance which the draft ASAS does not address or mention at all, in particular:
- Funding of bus services for existing and potential employees both at the Airport and the wider Campus, in particular for those who live in the north of the town
 - Pump priming of significantly enhanced or new local bus services, in particular to serve areas to the north and east of the town
 - Taxi sharing schemes
 - Park and Ride
 - Parking restraint and car park management

OPTIONS

22. The Committee can accept the draft ASAS in its current form. However the implications of doing so are that the Airport will see it as acceptable to look to others to provide for its future transport needs with little or no direct involvement and without financial implication for the Airport.
23. The Committee is therefore recommended to agree a Council response expressing disappointment with the draft ASAS and highlighting the concerns expressed in Tables 1 & 2 and the conclusions stated in Paragraph 21 above.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

24. There are no legal implications to this report and this has been agreed by Richard Stevens in Legal Services on 23 February 2009.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

25. There are no financial implications of this report. Agreed by the Chief Accountant on 24 February 2009.

EQUALITIES, INCLUSION AND COHESION IMPLICATIONS

26. In terms of passenger travel to the airport, the increased distance of disabled parking spaces from the terminal buildings is disadvantageous to mobility impaired people.
27. The provision of alternative methods of travel to the airport from the rest of the town is important for existing and potential employees, in particular those living in the more deprived areas of Luton.
28. Agreed by Environment & Regeneration's Equalities Coordinator on 24 February 2009.

APPENDICES

Appendix A - Guidance on Airport Transport Forums and Airport Surface Access Strategies

Appendix B – Consultation draft of Airport Surface Access Strategy

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Report to and minutes of Environment and Non-Executive Functions Scrutiny meeting on 19 February 2009.