

Committee(s): Policy & Resources Committee – For decision Port Health & Environmental Services Committee – For information	Date(s): 19/09/2019 24/09/2019
Subject: City Airport Masterplan 2020-35 consultation response	Public
Report of: Carolyn Dwyer, Director of the Built Environment	For Decision
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Summary

This report covers the City of London Corporation's response to the draft City Airport Masterplan 2020-35.

The City Corporation support proposal which improve international connectivity for London and the South East and ensure the Square Mile remains a global centre for financial and professional services.

The draft masterplan proposes increasing both the number of flights and the operational hours of the airport. The consultation documents do not provide significant technical detail on potential air quality and noise impacts of this increase in activity.

Support in principle for expansion and more efficient use of the airport, which could support City businesses, needs to be caveated to recognise the potential adverse impacts on our business and resident populations. We will approach City Airport to work with them in identifying the effects in more detail and to mitigating them.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Approve the proposed consultation response to the draft City Airport Masterplan 2020-35 (Appendix 1).

Main Report

Background

1. The City of London Corporation has engaged in the debate regarding UK national aviation policy since the 1930s when it purchased land for a City of London Corporation airport at Fairlop in Essex. More recently, engagement since the late 1990s has consisted of consultation responses and the commissioning of research to establish the requirements for UK aviation policy in the context of maintaining London as the world's leading international financial and business centre.

2. Since 1996 the City of London Corporation has consistently supported and endorsed proposals that have sought to increase aviation capacity in the south east of England, provided they are accompanied by the requisite surface transport infrastructure and appropriate environmental safeguards.
3. More recently, the Court of Common Council agreed on 15 October 2015 to ratify Policy and Resources Committee's decision to strongly support increased aviation capacity ahead of the Government's decision on south east capacity expansion. This policy adoption facilitated the City Corporation's support of the proposed third runway at Heathrow airport.
4. London City Airport have ambitions to increase capacity and activity at their site and have released their [City Airport 2020-35 Masterplan](#) for consultation and have requested a response from the City Corporation.

Overview of proposals

5. The masterplan seeks to support the growth of City Airport as a critical component of London's transport infrastructure. It provides a framework to support projected demand for services from 4.8m passengers a year in 2018 to 11 million passengers per year in 2035. It is expected that capacity would need to increase from a present maximum of 110,000 to 151,000 aircraft movements.
6. There are no proposals to increase capacity through a new runway, extending the length of the existing runway or expanding the site boundary. Moreover, the proposals seek to make better use of existing infrastructure through greater flexibility in its flight restrictions.
7. Presently, operating hours include an 8-hour overnight curfew on all flights between 22.30 to 06.30 and a 24-hour weekend closure between 12.30 on Saturday to 12.30 on Sunday. The first and last half hour of operation have strict restrictions. To achieve growth, the masterplan recommends increasing the number of flights during these half hour windows. It also recommends reducing restrictions on weekends, which are currently a 24hr window between 12.30pm on Saturday and Sunday.
8. The masterplan does not outline either the increased aircraft movement numbers at these times or their potential impact. Instead, it outlines how the airport will support quieter, cleaner aircraft to more than offset any negative air quality or noise impacts to both the immediate and wider area.
9. Additionally, proposals include improving connectivity to and from the airport, specifically with improved public transport and walking and cycling infrastructure. There is also a longer-term ambition for an interchange with Crossrail south of the airport, which would provide significantly improved connectivity with the Square Mile.

Summary of response

10. The consultation format is split across 8 questions, each asking for a multiple-choice response on whether we agree or support their approach and to what extent. Each question is accompanied by an open text box to provide further comments.
11. We recommend providing caveated support for the masterplan. We do not propose providing unconditional support as:
 - a. There is not enough information provided regarding the changes in number of flights during sensitive time periods and the impact on air quality and noise pollution
 - b. There is not enough information provided regarding flightpaths.
12. The response offers the City Corporation's support in ascertaining local impacts to the Square Mile.
13. The full proposed response is available in Appendix 1.

Corporate and Strategic implications

14. The expansion of London City Airport is contentious due to its proximity to central and inner London's business and resident populations. This is evident in public political responses to the consultation across the capital, including:
 - a. the London Assembly's environment committee have stated that any operational changes to the airport must prioritise the health and wellbeing of the 750,000 impacted residents rather than the airport's commercial opportunity.
 - b. Rokhsana Fiaz, the Mayor of Newham, has written a public letter demanding that the consultation is stopped due to a lack of clarity and technical details on the impact to the borough.
15. Unconditional support for the expansion of the airport would be in conflict with the London Assembly, Newham Council and resident and environmental groups who do not support the airport's proposals. Further details are needed to understand better the potentially adverse impacts of the proposals before full support can be given.
16. As the airport may impact air and noise quality in the Square Mile, supporting the proposals could work against the policies and ambitions of both the City Air Quality Strategy and the City Transport Strategy. Additionally, failing to meet national and European air quality is recognised as a corporate risk.

Conclusion

17. We propose supporting in principle the expansion of airport activity subject to the provision of further satisfactory details enabling a fuller understanding of the potential impact on City businesses and residents. We will request to work with City Airport to understand these impacts and how they can be mitigated.

Appendix 1 – Proposed City of London response to the City Airport Masterplan 2020-35

1. The draft master plan proposals outlined in section 4 prioritise making best use of our existing runway in accordance with Government policy. Do you agree that we have sought to do this in the most appropriate way?
 - a. Agree
 - b. *The City of London Corporation supports the principle of making best use of the existing runway's potential capacity provided that the proposed changes do not have a material effect on the amenity of London residents including those in the City. However, more City-specific information is needed to establish the likely effect on City residents.*

2. Do you agree that growth over the master plan period should only be accommodated within the existing aircraft noise contour limit and that the airport should seek to reduce the area of the contour over time by adapting infrastructure to accommodate more quieter, cleaner, new generation aircraft?
 - a. Agree
 - b. *Environmental improvements in aircraft technology both for noise and air quality are welcomed and should be shared between operators and residents.*

3. Do you support our aspirations in section 4 to further increase employment at the airport, especially for local residents, and invest more in local business and community initiatives?
 - a. Agree
 - b. *The City welcomes initiatives that provide local employment benefits to communities, especially those that may otherwise be negatively impacted by the development.*

4. Subject to addressing environmental issues, would you support the principle of more flexibility on the number of flights during the first and last half-hours of operations during weekdays if it was important to meet passenger demand, improve connections and help accelerate investment in more quieter, cleaner, new generation aircraft? This would not affect our commitment to an 8-hour night-time curfew on all flights.
 - a. *Neither support or oppose*
 - b. *The City Corporation understands the rationale to relax flight restrictions during the first 30 minutes of operation, 06:30-07:00, and the last 30 minutes operation, 22:00-2230, to improve operational efficiency and broaden the airport's passenger appeal. However, the detail of proposed changes is not specified. We are concerned that increased flights within these sensitive times, coupled with desired expansion to the weekend operation, will have a detrimental impact on those who live in the Square Mile and City fringe. We would require more detail on the proposals with supporting acoustic impact analysis before we can support this proposal.*

5. Subject to addressing environmental issues, would you support the principle of more flexible flight times at the weekend if it was important to meet passenger demand, improve connections and help accelerate investment in more quieter, cleaner, new generation aircraft?
 - a. *Neither support or oppose*
 - b. *The City Corporation understands the rationale to relax flight restrictions during part of the weekend in order to boost operational efficiency and broaden the airport's appeal for non-business travellers. The City Corporation requires more City-specific detail to quantify any impacts or changes that changes to weekend operations would bring to City residents.*

6. Do you support the measures in sections 4 and 5 to manage and mitigate environmental issues over the duration of the master plan (e.g. noise, air quality, emissions, transport)?
 - a. *Support*
 - b. *The City Corporation supports in principle the measures to mitigate environmental issues. However, more detail is needed on the City-specific impacts and mitigation measures. We expect that mitigation measures would be included in the strategies and procedures that are approved through the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to manage and limit environmental impacts. Furthermore, we would require assessments of the masterplan's impacts to understand whether the noise and air quality improvement is achieved in the Square Mile. It would also be useful if the airport could confirm that these proposals do not require any other changes to operate. This includes whether any route adjustments (flight paths) are required. Currently only London City Airport arrivals landing on an easterly approach (that is they approach the airport from the west) fly over the City of London. All departures and aircraft landing on a westerly approach do not fly over the City of London. We would need more information in this area before being able to support sections 4 and 5.*

7. Overall, do you support our plans and measures to increase passenger and staff travel to and from the airport by public transport and sustainable means?
 - a. *Support*
 - b. *It is encouraging to see that City Airport has the fewest arrivals as a proportion by private car at any London Airport at only 12% of arrivals. We support the continued ambitions of City Airport to further reduce this figure, specifically by including a link to the Airport within any further additions to the Elizabeth Line l. This will provide quick and direct connectivity between the Square Mile and the airport, bolstering the City of London as a global financial and business hub.*

8. Overall, do you support the plans outlined in the draft master plan?
 - a. *Support*

b. *The plans outlined in the draft master plan are supported in principle subject to clarification that the proposed changes to operating times and the increase in the number of flights will not have a material effect on the amenity of City residents or businesses. Further details are needed to clarify the effect of the proposals and the mitigation measures. The global and domestic connectivity provided by aviation services are critical to the functioning of the City's economy and London's position as a world leading centre for financial and professional services. London's services are highly global and knowledge-intensive, with a concomitant demand for international travel to meet and service the needs of clients, and to travel to local offices internationally and manage satellite operations – with companies travelling inbound to global and regional headquarters in London, and international clients accessing London's densely connected expert financial and professional services ecosystem. Of London's 3.5million international business visitors in 2018, 79% arrived by air. Our previous work with City businesses identified that 73% of respondents considered air services to be either critical or very important in providing direct contact with clients and survey providers; 64% considered air services to be critical or very important for internal company business. However, these proposals are likely to impact the City and the scale of these impacts need to be properly assessed if such changes are implemented. We expect that airport would mitigate against any significant impacts in order to gain general support. We welcome the opportunity to work with City Airport to identify impacts on the Square Mile and to mitigate them during the refinement of the airport's 2020-35 draft masterplan.*