
From: Bryan Sweetland, Cabinet Member – Environment, Highways & Waste
To: Environment, Highways & Waste Cabinet Committee
Date: 4 July 2012
Subject: Bold Steps for Aviation – a Kent County Council discussion document
Classification: Unrestricted

Summary:

This report outlines KCC's discussion document, Bold Steps for Aviation, which suggests how the UK's aviation capacity needs could be met without the need to develop a new hub airport in the Thames Estuary. It is intended That Bold Steps for Aviation will contribute to, and inform, the national debate and is published in response to the recent proposals from Lord Foster and the Mayor of London. The document will be used as the basis for KCC's response to the Government's forthcoming call for evidence for maintaining the UK's hub status, which is scheduled to commence July 2012. The report is provided to members for information.

Recommendation:

That members note the recommendations made to Government within the Bold Steps for Aviation discussion document and provide comments for consideration during the preparation of KCC's response to the Government's forthcoming consultation.

1. Introduction

This report outlines KCC's discussion document, Bold Steps for Aviation, which suggests how the UK's aviation capacity needs could be met without the need to develop a new hub airport in the Thames Estuary. It is intended to contribute to the national debate and is published in response to the recent proposals from Lord Foster and the Mayor of London promoting an airport in the estuary.

2. Financial Implications

This document has no impact on the Council's capital and revenue budgets and spending plans.

3. Bold Steps for Kent and Policy Framework

Bold Steps for Aviation focuses on Bold Steps for Kent's aim of helping the Kent economy grow. It champions the use of regional airports in meeting the UK's

aviation demands and, in particular, pays particular attention to the use, and development, of Manston and Lydd Airports as promoted by the Regeneration Framework (for details see page 12-13 of the Bold Steps for Aviation document).

4. The Report

The UK's aviation needs are currently being examined by Government and an aviation policy will be published for consultation in July 2012. In addition, there will be a call for evidence on how the UK can maintain its hub status and therefore remain competitive on a global scale. The Government have said that, with the exception of a third runway at Heathrow, all options for retaining this status will be explored.

Recently both Lord Foster and the Mayor of London have put forward proposals for a hub airport in the Thames estuary and in his first published interview since re-election, Boris Johnson restated his desire to see an airport situated within the Thames estuary.

In response KCC have not only stated their opposition to the development of an airport in the Thames estuary but have developed a discussion document which sets out suggestions for how the forecasted growth in aviation can be met without the need for such an airport. This document is Bold Steps for Aviation and is appended.

It is considered that the Thames estuary airport proposals will not solve the UK's lack of capacity in sufficient time to prevent the UK losing its position as a premier hub. Therefore, in addition to setting out the reasons for KCC's objections to the Thames estuary airport proposals (see page 8-9 of the Bold Steps for Aviation document), the document suggests courses of action that will enable the UK to respond more immediately to the capacity issues facing aviation and ensure we remain competitive. The six recommendations to Government include:

- The construction of a high speed rail link connecting Gatwick and Heathrow.
- Improved rail connectivity of other regional airports (Manston, Lydd, London City, Southend, Stansted, Luton, Southampton and Birmingham) with London, Gatwick and Heathrow.
- Further development of Manston Airport, other existing regional airports in the South East (Lydd, London City, Southend, Stansted, Luton and Southampton) and those with good connections to London (Birmingham).
- Capacity growth at Gatwick through the addition of a second runway after 2019.
- Any proposals for a Thames Estuary airport are not progressed any further.
- No action is not an option but action to address capacity issues must be taken quickly; rather than depending on an estuary airport that will take years to develop and may not even succeed, better use of our existing hub and regional airports NOW will ensure that the UK retains its premier position as a hub airport.

Further details of these recommendations can be found on pages 10-16 of the Bold Steps for Aviation document.

The intention of this document is to contribute to the national debate and put forward suggestions for alternatives in response to those promoted by Lord Foster and the Mayor of London. The document has been shared with central Government,

including both the Minister of State, and Secretary of State, for Transport and Kent MPs. It has also been circulated with relevant district and county Leaders and members of the Local Enterprise Partnership and Kent Economic Board. The document is also available via the KCC website and comments are welcomed – this is, after all, a discussion document.

This discussion document will be used as the basis for KCC's response to the Government's forthcoming call for evidence for maintaining the UK's hub status, which is scheduled to commence July 2012.

5. Conclusions

Bold Steps for Aviation demonstrates that there is an alternative to the development of an airport within the estuary in order to meet aviation needs. This document will help commence a dialogue with central Government and other relevant stakeholders.

Recommendations

That members note the recommendations made to Government within the Bold Steps for Aviation discussion document and provide comments for consideration during the preparation of KCC's response to the Government's forthcoming consultation.

Background Documents

Bold Steps for Aviation – appended.

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