From: Mike Whiting, Cabinet Member for Planning, Highways, Transport and Waste

Barbara Cooper, Corporate Director, Growth, Environment and Transport

To: Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee – 19th March 2019

Subject: Aviation 2050: The future of UK Aviation

Classification: Unrestricted

Past Pathway of Paper: N/A

Future Pathway of Paper: N/A

Electoral Division: All divisions

Summary:
This report outlines Kent County Council's (KCC) proposed response to the Department for Transport's (DfT) consultation on *Aviation 2050: The future of UK Aviation*, which is the Government's new aviation strategy. The consultation closes on 11th April 2019.

The DfT put out a call for evidence for a new aviation strategy from July to October 2017. KCC responded to this, primarily on issues of noise and sustainable growth. The response made the case that growth is often to the detriment of communities living near airports or under flight paths. KCC's response concluded that the call for evidence underplayed the impact of noise and that communities should be directly considered in the principles of the strategy.

The draft aviation strategy has taken into account many comments from the call for evidence and consequently has a new strategic theme to "Ensure aviation can grow sustainably." The focus of the entire strategy has shifted to quality of life and health impacts in the context of a partnership for sustainable growth that can balance the economic, social and environmental impacts of growth. Positive steps forward have been made in the consultation document to strengthen the noise policy framework as well as to clarify how changes in aviation noise emissions are monitored, with a range of policy proposals that will provide better information, measurements and assistance for local communities.

KCC's proposed response continues to focus on the theme of sustainable growth, with other stakeholders better placed to advise Government on matters such as technological advancements and safety. The proposed KCC response is in line with the adopted *Policy on Gatwick Airport* and accords with recent responses to other aviation consultations.

Recommendation:
The Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and endorse or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Planning, Highways, Transport and Waste on the proposed Kent County Council response to the consultation.

1.   Background: Aviation Strategy Call for Evidence

1.1   The Department for Transport (DfT) put out a call for evidence for a new Aviation Strategy. This call for evidence ran from 21st July to 13th October 2017. Kent County Council (KCC) responded to the call for evidence and was generally supportive of the proposed aim and objectives of the strategy.

1.2   However, KCC strongly made the case that growth is often to the detriment of communities living near airports or under flight paths. KCC's response stated that the call for evidence underplayed the issue and that addressing the impacts of aviation noise deserved to be an objective in its own right. This is because of the intolerable situation with aircraft noise over west Kent, predominately due to air traffic arrivals into Gatwick Airport. KCC's response suggested that communities affected by aviation should be directly considered in the principles of the strategy; otherwise the Aviation Strategy risks not reflecting the recent commitment to addressing noise and air quality in other government aviation consultations.

1.3   The call for evidence also introduced a new policy, without consultation, that Government is supportive of all airports making best use of their existing runways, including those in the South East. This has proven especially relevant to Gatwick because the restriction on use of the emergency runway expires in 2019 and consequently the draft Master Plan 2018 proposes that it is routinely used in accordance with this Government policy. KCC's response to Gatwick's draft Master Plan therefore made it clear that a robust planning process is needed to ensure that growth is appropriately managed and its impacts mitigated.

1.4   The call for evidence received 372 consultation responses, and Government published its response, *Beyond the Horizon*, in April 2018. This stated that the Aviation Strategy would set out the long-term direction of aviation policy to 2050 and beyond. It's aim was worded "To achieve a safe, secure and sustainable aviation sector that meets the needs of consumers and of a global, outward-looking Britain." Six objectives were set out, unchanged from the call for evidence, with further information on key challenges given. These objectives were:

1.   **Help the aviation industry work for its customers:** The focus of the strategy will be on improving the flying experience for passengers at every stage of their journey, including accessibility, compensation, information, and addressing disruptive passenger behaviour.

2.   **Ensure a safe and secure way to travel:** Safety and security will be the top priority and the strategy will address risk management, safety standards overseas, trials of new hand luggage screening, and raising security standards internationally.

3.   **Build a global and connected Britain:** Building on existing global connectivity as the UK leaves the EU and opens up new links with the rest of the world by establishing a new relationship with the EU on aviation issues, looking at air service agreements elsewhere, reducing barriers to the movement of freight.

4.   **Encourage competitive markets:** The strategy will look to maximise the benefits of competition in the sector by ensuring that it delivers the

right outcomes for consumers, continuing the transparency of slot regulation, looking at regional connectivity in the UK by both air and surface transport.

5. **Support growth while tackling environmental impacts:** As demand for air services is expected to continue to grow significantly, there needs to be a new framework for growth that takes account of the impact of aviation on the environment and ensures growth is sustainable. The strategy will consider the need for a new framework and what that should look like, address airspace modernisation, look at whether the right regulations/controls/incentives are in place to address noise, review how road and rail links to airports are delivered.

6. **Develop technology, innovation and skills**: To encourage technological developments by reducing policy and regulatory barriers to innovation, including making the most of the opportunities of a digital future (data sharing), automation and electrification of aircraft, aligning government, industry and academia to incentivise innovation, and addressing skills shortages.

2. Summary of '*Aviation 2050: The future of UK Aviation*'

2.1 The UK has the largest aviation network in Europe and the third largest in the world. The Government recognises that the aviation sector is a significant contributor to the UK economy (supporting around half a million jobs) and consequently actively supports growth of the sector. However, this is caveated that growth must take place in a sustainable way and that actions must be taken to mitigate environmental impacts.

2.2 The strategy recognises challenges that the industry is facing, including:

- Global change and shifting markets
- Impact of competition on business models
- Increasing passenger demand
- Changing expectations of passengers
- Effects of international climate change
- Making the most of new technology.

2.3 The purpose of the new strategy is to keep the UK competitive globally, ready to take advantage of new opportunities in the aviation and aerospace sectors. This must be done whilst managing challenges in the economic, political and environmental arenas.

2.4 The strategy is based around strategic themes rather than the objectives of earlier iterations described at 1.4. These themes are:

1. **Build a global and connected Britain:** To build new connections to rapidly growing aviation markets, to pursue objectives on environmental measures and liberalisation internationally.

2. **Ensure aviation can grow sustainably:** Demand for air travel has grown significantly since 2010 but it must be sustainable. This requires a partnership between the government, regulator, industry and other

stakeholders to work within a new policy framework to better manage the environmental impacts of the sector.

3.   **Support regional growth and connectivity:** Recognising airports as local economic hubs that provide connectivity, employment and transport, as well as potential contributions to economic rebalancing.

4.   **Enhance the passenger experience:** Making sure all passengers have a good experience of flying by creating a new Passenger Charter to promote best practice. This also includes commitments on border checks and action against disruptive passengers.

5.   **Ensure a safe and secure way to travel:** The UK is a global leader in aviation security and safety and the strategy seeks to address global variations in standards as well as work with the industry to make the skies safer for everyone.

6.   **Support General Aviation:** This covers all non-scheduled civil aviation, such as business jets and air displays. The strategy seeks to encourage growth in the sector.

7.   **Encourage innovation and new technology:** The strategy recognises the role of innovation and new business models in growing the sector and wants to capture the benefits for consumers by unlocking new options for how people and goods move.

2.5   The government is seeking feedback on the policy proposals outlined within each strategic theme, and any suggestions for additional proposals that could be considered. The objective of this consultation is to then inform the content of the final strategy document by considering proposals based on the strategic case, implementation, regulatory/financial burdens, and overall acceptability to different stakeholders.

3.   Summary of KCC's proposed response to the consultation
(full response to the consultation questions is provided in Appendix A)

3.1   The consultation has a total of 97 questions, but KCC's draft response focuses on the proposed policies which could ultimately have an impact on Kent and its residents and businesses.

3.2   Within the theme of "ensuring aviation can grow sustainably", the government seeks views on the establishment of a sustainable growth partnership which would attempt to balance the benefits of aviation with addressing environmental and community impacts. KCC's draft response proposes to fully support this action and would welcome the explicit inclusion of Local Authorities to ensure environmental and community impacts are appropriately balanced against the benefits to aviation. The response also reiterates the need for such partnership to ensure that airports formally commit to sharing benefits with local communities, especially when growth is organic and outside of the planning process. For example, Gatwick has made clear its ambitions to reach 50 million passengers per annum (mppa) and is expanding in a way that does not require planning consent. It is proposing the use of larger aircraft and greater utilisation of the shoulder peak periods to achieve this level of growth. Gatwick is therefore able to grow regardless of the policy position in the Crawley Borough Council Local Plan (policy GAT1), which supports growth up to 45mppa, and that was not expected until 2030.

3.3 Airports are already producing new master plans and expansion proposals since the release of the policy to make best use of existing runways, and it is therefore vital that the partnership for sustainable growth and its constituent proposals are enacted now. Further, some of the proposals are simpler to implement, such as changing the minimum standards for noise insulation schemes. KCC asks government to work with stakeholders to judge how quickly the proposals can be brought forward.

3.4 KCC's proposed response firmly supports the proposals for a stronger noise policy framework. However, to improve their efficacy, we consider that thought needs to be given to supporting those in rented accommodation when they are newly affected by noise or increased noise. Current insulation and relocation schemes are targeted at home owners to the detriment of long-term tenants. It is proposed that KCC welcomes the review of minimum standards for insultation schemes, although individual airports should always be encouraged to go beyond the minimum requirements. Tailored guidance on this should support the Local Planning Authorities and take into account recommendations from airports and the Independent Commission on Civil Aviation Noise (ICCAN).

3.5 Proposals for the modernisation of airspace and growth through use/development of new runways will require new flight paths and cause new communities to be overflown, as well as existing communities to be more frequently overflown. Involvement in the decisions about where and when aircraft can fly is simply not sufficient in instances where there is new noise disturbance. Compensation and mitigation should be very high for new communities even though noise cannot be totally mitigated. The proposal to ask the Independent Commission on Civil Aviation Noise (ICCAN) to consider how to best support communities in engaging with the airspace change process is important, especially in the context of airspace modernisation because it will result in newly affecting communities with noise, as well as potential concentration of overflight.

3.6 The height at which aircraft fly along designated flight paths is also an issue for those overflown (as the lower the aircraft, the more noise). There is increasing evidence from complaints from residents that aircraft are flying lower than they should. There needs to be stricter enforcement of the heights aircraft fly, especially on approaches to Gatwick over west Kent, which experiences low flying aircraft on a regular occurrence.

3.7 The draft response proposes that KCC does not support growth at all costs and therefore encourages a review to be undertaken following new evidence on health impacts for local communities affected by airport operations. There is continually emerging evidence on the impacts of aviation noise that strongly demonstrates the real health costs felt by individuals, including evidence that people are becoming more sensitive to noise than they have been before.

3.8 We also have concerns regarding resourcing for the extensive airspace modernisation programme in the south. It is imperative that the Government provides the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) and the ICCAN with sufficient resources to ensure appropriate stakeholder engagement is undertaken and that airspace modernisation is completed within targeted timescales. To determine the most effective methods of meeting the needs of affected

communities will require substantial work from the airspace change promotors, within demanding timescales. It is therefore important that they are supported and that the CAA has the necessary powers to compel promotors to enact the change process, as well as complete it to a satisfactory standard.

3.9 KCC's proposed response also recommends the passenger experience includes integrated ticketing, such as rail fares purchased concurrently with flight tickets. Enhancing the passenger experience looks at the whole end-to-end journey from booking a flight to onward travel from the destination airport. It is accepted that the whole experience of using an airport can be heavily influenced by surface access options. This is not just in terms of journey time, but also reliability, price and customer experience.

3.10 In response to the proposals outlined within "supporting regional growth and connectivity", KCC asks the government to consider it appropriate for the airport operator to pay for, or towards, the upgrading of connecting local transport infrastructure where they are increasing the capacity of the airport and this should form a policy proposal as part of the partnership for sustainable growth. Whilst this is usually addressed through the planning system, where airports are growing outside of this process there is still a burden on local transport routes.

3.11 Travel to and from the airport must also be considered as this is vital for freight where it is often the case that goods are transferred to van or lorry for redistribution. The proposal to support airports to develop master plans and surface access strategies consistent with regional and national transport strategies is welcomed. This is particularly important as more Sub-national Transport Bodies are formed and achieve statutory status. There is a need to integrate the strategies for these vital transport infrastructure assets with the longer-term vision for the Strategic Road Network, Major Road Network and rail network. Transport for the South East is the appropriate body to consider these various pieces of strategic transport infrastructure collectively with economic and population growth to formulate sensible transport investment recommendations.

3.12 Other transport improvements and strategic objectives for economic rebalancing will also influence choice of location for additional capacity. For example, High Speed 2 would make Birmingham Airport closer to the South East in terms of journey time and the emphasis on growth in the Northern Powerhouse region might suggest Manchester Airport.

3.13 There continues to be a financial burden on Local Authorities in terms of officer and Member time to provide representation at consultative committees, bespoke groups (such as the Noise Management Board at Gatwick, and the Health Local Authorities Briefing, for example), and various other bodies addressing noise and growth at local airports. When the whole of airspace in the south is modernised through individual airspace change proposals then this will put great strain on Local Authorities in terms of staff and member resource particularly in the context of reduced Local Government funding.

4. Conclusion

4.1 The DfT launched a 16-week consultation on the 17th December seeking views on the proposals outlined in their draft Aviation Strategy; *Aviation 2050: The Future of UK Aviation*.

4.2 KCC's proposed response focuses on the theme of sustainable growth, with other stakeholders better placed to advise Government on matters such as technological advancements and safety. The proposed response is in line with the adopted *Policy on Gatwick Airport* and accords with recent responses to other aviation consultations.

4.3 The consultation closes on the 11th April 2019. Following analysis of consultation responses and revisions made to the document, it remains the Government's intention to publish the final strategy, in the form of a white paper, by mid-2019.

5. Financial Implications

5.1 N/A.

6. Legal Implications

6.1 N/A.

7. Equalities Implications

7.1 Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) screening was undertaken as part of the development of KCC's Policy on Gatwick Airport, which this draft consultation response aligns with, which indicated no adverse effects on persons of protected characteristics. In accordance with KCC Policy, the EqIA is in the process of being refreshed prior to submission of this consultation response.

8. Other Corporate Implications

8.1 N/A.

9. Governance

9.1 N/A.

10. Recommendation:

10.1 The Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and endorse or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Planning, Highways, Transport and Waste on the proposed Kent County Council response to the consultation.

11. Background Documents

Appendix A: Proposed Response by Kent County Council to the Aviation 2050: The future of UK aviation.

Aviation 2050: The future of UK aviation

https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/aviation-2050-the-future-of-uk-aviation

Kent County Council Policy on Gatwick Airport

Kent County Council Policy on Gatwick Airport (December 2014) https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/documents/s49886/Item%209%20-%20Policy%20on%20Gatwick%20Airport.pdf

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