

Report to Sustainable development panel

Item

13 September 2017

Report of Director of regeneration and development

Subject Norwich City Council response to Norwich Airport Draft Masterplan

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Purpose

To consider Norwich Airport's proposals for the expansion of the airport to 2045, set out in the draft masterplan.

Recommendation

To recommend that cabinet endorses the draft masterplan for Norwich Airport, subject to a number of proposed changes, and further consideration of an amended draft.

Corporate and service priorities

The report helps to meet the corporate priority to provide a prosperous and vibrant city.

Financial implications

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

Ward/s: Catton Grove

Cabinet member: Councillor Stonard – Sustainable and Inclusive Growth

Contact officers

Judith Davison, planning policy team leader 01603 212529

Graham Nelson, head of planning services 01603 212530

Background documents

None

Report

Introduction

1. Norwich Airport (NA) has published a draft masterplan for the airport for public consultation. The consultation period commenced in June and ends on 15 September 2017. The document is available to view at <https://www.norwichairport.co.uk/masterplan/>.
2. The Department of Transport requires airports to prepare masterplans addressing the core areas of forecast growth, infrastructure proposals, safeguarding of land and property, impact on people and the natural environment, and proposals to minimise and mitigate impacts. The intention is that masterplans are updated every 5 years, or when conditions or proposals deviate from those in the agreed masterplan.
3. The draft masterplan for Norwich Airport looks ahead until 2045 and consists of 2 phases: phase 1 until 2030, and phase 2 from 2030-2045.

Background

4. Norwich City Council is the local planning authority for the majority of the airport site and also has a landowner interest in the airport, jointly owning land within the airport boundary with Norfolk County Council. In addition the city council and county council jointly own the adjacent Norwich Airport Industrial Estate (NAIE) to the south.
5. Norwich Airport has been used as an airfield since the Second World War. Most of the airfield and buildings were bought by Norwich City Council and Norfolk County Council in 1967, and the civil airport opened for passengers in 1968.
6. The main terminal opened in 1988 and was extended in 2006. The airport handled approximately 460,000 passengers in 2015 and is now reporting that passenger numbers are in excess of 500,000 for the first time since 2008, although numbers remain some way below the peak recorded in 2007 of 772,000. The majority of passenger are scheduled and charter passengers. It also serves the off-shore market which represented around 22% of all passenger journeys in 2015.
7. The airport is an important local employer, generating around 1,240 full time equivalent (FTE) jobs on site, with an estimated 83% of employees living in Norwich, and supports a further 360 indirect jobs in the Norwich area. A number of aviation related businesses operate at the southern end of the airport site within the vicinity of the eastern apron. They include KLMUKE and Air Livery, both of which are aircraft Maintenance Repair and Overhaul (MRO) operations. KLMUKE has been providing maintenance at NA for 46 years; Air Livery carries out aircraft painting operations and has plans to grow in the future.
8. The airport also supports a considerable number of jobs elsewhere in the local economy. There are some airport related uses located on the adjacent Norwich Airport Industrial Estate (NAIE), for example the recently opened Aviation Academy.
9. The Northern Distributor Route (NDR), currently under construction and due to open in winter 2017-18, runs directly to the north of the airport and will greatly enhance its accessibility by car.

10. Due to the established nature of the use of the NA site as an airfield, permitted development rights apply to the development of operational land in connection with the provision of services and facilities.

Summary of proposals

11. The masterplan estimates that passenger numbers will grow steadily from 460,000 in 2015 to 930,000 in 2030, and to 1.4 million in 2045. The majority of the growth is anticipated in scheduled and chartered flights, rising from 77% of all passengers in 2015 to 95% in 2045. It is expected that the off-shore markets will significantly decline as a proportion of passengers over the same period.
12. Business aviation services are expected to grow within the masterplan period, through Norwich based operators such as Saxonair for example.
13. The masterplan sets out the main elements of the airport growth strategy to 2045 to support the increased passenger numbers. The majority of proposals are within the first phase of growth to 2030 and include: expansion of the existing main terminal building; additional apron capacity; limited expansion of existing maintenance facilities; increased car parking with new provision either through decking current car parks or potentially through reuse of the existing park and ride site assuming this can be relocated in future
14. Phase 2 (to 2045) includes: a 500 metre expansion of the main runway to the east (including land in Broadland District Council area) to accommodate larger aircraft in the future; and relocation of the air traffic control tower to the south of the runway. Longer term parking is also proposed on the Paddocks site on Holt Road.
15. The masterplan estimates a significant increase in jobs growth during its 20 year lifespan. It estimates that direct jobs will increase from the current figure of 1,240 jobs to 1,950 in 2030 and to 2,590 in 2045.
16. Notwithstanding these proposals for expansion and the potential extension of the runway the Masterplan concludes that there is no need to continue to safeguard 'Site 4' (41ha of land to the north of the runway which currently has planning permission for 95,000 sq m of aviation related development) for aviation related purposes. The Airport Masterplan, therefore, seeks the "flexibility to remove all or part of this area from within the operational boundary, depending on market demand for aviation and / or non-aviation related development".

Council's response to the masterplan

17. In general, Norwich City Council welcomes the publication of the draft masterplan for Norwich Airport, supporting its aspirations for expansion of the airport and welcoming the positive economic benefits that this will have for the local and regional economy.
18. The full text of the proposed response is set out at Appendix 1. The response covers a number of key issues including the airport's growth strategy and how best this can be managed to the benefit of both Norwich Airport and the city, transportation issues including surface access (formulated with input from Transport for Norwich), the future of Site 4, and potential environmental impacts. The response also discusses the interrelationship between the airport and the NAIE and the impact of the airport's expansion on the latter.

19. Members are recommended to endorse the masterplan subject to a number of proposed changes being incorporated within the revised document. The key changes required are:
- (a) that the Masterplan should contain a clear commitment to producing a Surface Access Strategy within a 3 year period supported by a Transport Assessment, and should also commit to an update of the Masterplan, if required, to ensure consistency with the Surface Access Strategy;
 - (b) the masterplan is amended so that it proposes retention of at least a significant part of Site 4 within the operational boundary, in the absence of objective evidence to support its entire removal, to allow long term possible expansion of existing MRO operators or the attraction of further such operators to the airport.
20. The intention is that the masterplan will be brought back to cabinet, once revised, for formal endorsement by the city council in due course.

Appendix 1:

Norwich City Council response to the Draft Airport Masterplan

Norwich Airport draft masterplan June 2017:

Norwich City Council response

Introduction

1. Norwich City Council welcomes the publication of the draft masterplan for Norwich Airport, supporting its aspirations for expansion of the airport and welcoming the positive economic benefits that this will have for the local and regional economy.
2. In addition to its role as local planning authority for the majority of the airport site, Norwich City Council also has a landowner interest in the airport, jointly owning land within the airport boundary (Site 4 – land to the north of the runway) with Norfolk County Council. In addition the city council and county council jointly own the adjacent Norwich Airport Industrial Estate (NAIE).
3. The city council's response to the draft masterplan covers a number of key issues including the airport's growth strategy and how best this can be managed to the benefit of both Norwich Airport and the city, transportation issues including surface access (formulated with input from Transport for Norwich), the future of Site 4, and potential environmental impacts. The response also discusses the interrelationship between the airport and the NAIE and the impact of the airport's expansion.

Future growth strategy

4. The city council supports the growth aspirations for the airport set out in the draft masterplan and the 30 year timeframe for its expansion plans.
5. The city council is keen to assist Norwich Airport to maximise the economic potential of the airport whilst addressing environmental impacts. In order to achieve this, the masterplan must provide an appropriate strategic framework to manage airport expansion, demonstrating how this growth will be managed sustainably, which will then inform consideration of future development proposals within the airport boundary.
6. As a principle, the management of the impacts of airport expansion should be linked to the growth in passenger numbers and flights (including freight and helicopter flights), so that growth is sustainable in terms of transportation terms and environmental impact. Norwich City Council therefore expects the masterplan to address the impacts of all aspects of the airport's operations within the masterplan period to ensure that future growth will be genuinely sustainable. The council also recognises that in order to carry out its expansion plans, NA would benefit from a planning framework that provides greater flexibility in responding to changes in the aviation market and demand for flights.
7. Sustainable access is fundamental to the future growth of the airport and the assumptions made about modal shift directly impact on masterplan proposals, for example the level of parking provision. A surface access strategy is therefore required at an early stage to radically change modal shift and ensure that the expansion of the airport is sustainable in transportation terms. The masterplan should contain trigger points for provision of key surface access measures related

to the intensification of airport operations. Further specific comments regarding transportation measures are set out in the Transportation section below.

8. The management of environmental impacts is also fundamental to the implementation of the expansion plans and their acceptability for residents in the surrounding area including both Norwich and Broadland council areas. In order to address this, the council suggests that the masterplan commits NA to investigate reviewing current planning controls for the wider airport site in partnership with the local planning authorities as part of the expansion strategy. This could set out principles and parameters around timing of flights which could be beneficial to NA in as it could provide it with greater flexibility in reacting to the demand for additional flights over the lifetime of the masterplan.
9. More detail on these issues is provided below.

Transportation issues

10. Both the city council's planning policy for the airport (DM27 in the Development Management Policies Plan) and the Joint Core Strategy (policies 5 and 6) acknowledge the regional significance of Norwich Airport in supporting wider economic growth. The airport is of major importance as a strategic transport hub as well as being a key business driver for the local and regional economy and an employer in its own right. The JCS supports transportation improvements at the airport to expand business and leisure opportunities, to enable it to expand and cater for a wider range of international and domestic destinations. DM27 focuses on the need to enable the airport to function effectively, to accommodate a transport interchange, and to grow.
11. The Norwich Northern Distributor Road will soon provide much improved road links to the Airport site from across the sub region that will help to realise the aspirations of the Norwich Airport Masterplan in terms of passenger growth and airport development at the terminal and other sites.
12. In addition to development within the Airport boundary, developments in the vicinity are also planned. The airport's role as a transport hub should involve facilitation of travel for these developments. The Airport also has a role to mitigate any off site transport or parking issues that may arise from growth of the Airport itself.
13. As well as addressing a range of considerations related to development potential, land uses, layout, and design etc, the masterplan needs to make necessary and appropriate provision for sustainable travel through a number of measures including a travel plan and surface access strategy. Although the need for sustainable travel is acknowledged in the masterplan, the level of detail included in the document is considered insufficient to ensure that the expansion of the airport will be sustainable in transportation terms in accordance with policies DM27 and DM28 (Encouraging Sustainable Travel) in the Development Management Policies Plan.
14. There is currently no Surface Access Strategy for Norwich Airport. The production of such a document is a statutory requirement and it is recommended that Airport Surface Access Strategies include an analysis of the existing surface

access arrangements and targets for increasing the proportion of journeys made to the airport by public transport, cycling and walking.

15. This deficiency is recognised in the Masterplan and some potential high level targets are included, as is an undated commitment to producing a Travel Plan. However, this section of the masterplan is considered to be particularly weak especially given that current access to the airport by sustainable forms of transport is generally poor.
16. It is disappointing that a full Surface Access Strategy has not been prepared alongside the Masterplan. Whilst it may not be desirable to delay the preparation of the Masterplan for this to be completed it is considered the Masterplan should contain a clear commit to producing such a Strategy within a 3 year period supported by a Transport Assessment. An update to the Masterplan may be required to ensure consistency with the Surface Access Strategy.
17. It is suggested that the Surface Access Strategy should:
 - Be contiguous with the Airport's Operating area. Therefore it will include provision for the Airport Passenger Terminal, Airport Freight Terminal, any private operator e.g. Saxon Air, and Site 4 employment area.
 - Reflect the intention of the city council to implement a bus/taxi link from Anson Road to the Airport loop road to facilitate two way traffic movements and the potential this brings for additional scheduled bus services to be routed via the Airport terminal.
 - Acknowledge that additional highway links are also planned at Meteor Close (for completion in 2018, general traffic except HGVs) and Heyford Road (date tbc, bus/taxi/cycle only) to improve connectivity of the Airport industrial estate predominantly by bus, cycle and on foot.
 - Support the Airport P&R service has a role to play in serving the Airport terminal and passengers from the adjacent Industrial estate, in particular for the Aviation Academy.
 - Respond to the enhanced Norwich pedalway network which will serve the Airport terminal and nearby areas via the Purple and Yellow routes
18. Transport Assessments (TAs) will be required to scope the changing pattern of travel at the Airport associated with its growth and inform the Access Strategy. TAs enable necessary measures to be identified to facilitate travel demand and agree modal shift objectives.
19. For example staff journeys are a very significant element of future traffic generation. The masterplan states that there is no current intention to restrict car parking for staff and that the strategy is to retain sufficient spaces at the airport for staff. It is acknowledged that a significant number of staff do shift work however there is potential to greatly increase the numbers of staff using public transport and car sharing through increased investment in public transport facilities and other measures (see below), and to reduce future parking requirements

accordingly. The masterplan is an opportunity for the airport to encourage a significant reduction in staff and passenger travel by private car.

20. The city council recommends that an initial TA is carried out to initiate the Norwich Airport's Surface Access Strategy and then at future intervals triggered by major development.
21. The Airport TA should consider:
 - (a) Adequate provision for travel by all modes
 - (b) Explore the feasibility of an Airport Transport Interchange for bus, coach, taxi, private hire, cyclists.
 - (c) Benchmarking its provision for sustainable travel against best in class comparator airports in Europe. e.g. London City Airport.
22. The current undated commitment to produce a Travel Plan should be replaced by a commitment to produce one alongside the Access Strategy as it will be an essential means of implementing the Airport Surface Access Strategy on an operational basis. The city council recommends that a Travel Plan is prepared covering the first five years following the production of a Surface Access Strategy, and then reviewed at 5 yearly intervals thereafter, or as triggered by TA revisions or major development. The council also recommends that NA should work with the Park & Ride operator to actively encourage use of this facility by staff and other businesses on the airport site, and on provision of a direct bus link to Norwich railway station too (including working with Greater Anglia). Consideration should also be given to working with key trip generators to the airport, such as the University of East Anglia (UEA) and Norwich Research Park.
23. The Airport Travel Plan should consider:
 - (a) Access to the Airport site by all modes of travel including bus, coach, taxi, private hire, cycle, walking, motorcycle, car or car share.
 - (b) Provision of high quality and accurate onward travel information from the airport, as well as high quality travel information to the airport from the city centre and other key trip generators, such as UEA and Norwich Research Park.
 - (c) Employees, visitors and passengers.
 - (d) EV chargepoints should be provided for vehicles (staff parking, passenger parking).
 - (e) Development of improved walking and cycling routes from outside of the site to the Industrial Estate and along the A140 to the NDR.
 - (f) Establishing a revised Airport P&R service that serves the terminal and provides a direct connection to the rail station.
 - (g) Funding measures to implement the travel plan such as subsidy for a new bus service to kick-start it before it becomes commercially viable, or the creation of a Transport Interchange facility, and the funding of Travel Plan officers for day to day support for sustainable travel.

Norwich Airport Industrial Estate

24. The airport is adjacent to the Norwich Airport Industrial Estate (NAIE), which is a defined employment area (under policy DM16 in the Development Management Policies Plan) and is jointly owned by the city and county councils.

25. The regeneration, redevelopment and rationalisation of landholdings within the NAIE are priorities for the city council to enhance its attractiveness for businesses (including airport related businesses); the city and county councils are planning to invest in this established industrial estate. The airport already benefits from proximity to the NAIE; many occupiers are in airport related business.
26. As part of the expansion of the airport, there is potential to increase employment and local economic activity through attracting airport related uses both to the airport operational area and surrounding area. However there is little recognition within the masterplan of the importance of regenerating the NAIE, the airport's role in enabling this regeneration through improved transportation links, and the mutual benefits that this could bring to NA.
27. There is a need for improved linkages between key businesses on the NAIE and the airport (eg the proposed airport hotel and Aviation Academy are located on the NAIE both of which need links to NA but currently have no physical connections).
28. The city council considers it essential to the regeneration of the NAIE for Norwich Airport to enable the implementation of the following measures:
 - (a) All publicly accessible roads within the airport to be cycle friendly
 - (b) Anson Road to airport loop road (two-way) to serve buses, taxis and cycles is essential along with scheduled bus services

Site 4 (land to north of airport runway)

29. Land to the north of the runway (known as 'Site 4') has outline planning consent for aviation related B1/B2/B8 uses (13/00520/O and 16/00965/VC). The draft airport masterplan states that this land is not required for future operational or expansion purposes and in para 9.32 proposes its removal from the airport operation boundary "...depending on market demand for aviation and/or non-aviation related development".
30. Given that the aim of the masterplan is to enable the sustainable expansion of the airport over the next 30 years, and that the wording in the draft masterplan is unclear about future aviation requirements, the city council currently considers it premature to conclude that all of site 4 may be released from being safeguarded from non-aviation uses on the basis of the lack of current market interest in building out the consent. Site 4 represents a major opportunity for the long term resilience and success of the airport and offers the scope for new MRO operators to be attracted to the airport. The masterplan does not provide any objective evidence to support the contention that the site is no longer required for operational purposes therefore in policy terms Site 4 remains unacceptable for non-airport related development. In particular there appears to have been no longer term thinking about whether the proposed runway expansion could lead to a demand to have new or larger MRO facilities constructed on the airport.
31. It is recognised that there may be a case to release some of site 4 for non aviation employment purposes, especially if this provided the infrastructure and services which increased the prospects of new major aviation relation development attracted to the remaining part of the site. However, it should be noted that the suitability of otherwise of parts of site 4 for non aviation related development will

be determined by the Greater Norwich Local Plan and or planning applications and the role of the Masterplan should be confined to considering whether it should be safeguarded rather than seeking to determine acceptable alternative uses should this no longer be the case.

Environmental impacts

32. The airport runway was constructed in 1940 prior to the introduction of the town and country planning system, and flights using the runway are uncontrolled unless they use the terminal buildings (ie holiday flights) which are subject to planning restrictions on hours of operation. This can lead to noise impacts during the night despite the existing restrictions. The expansion of the airport over the next 30 years including a proposed runway extension is likely to give rise to more complaints in terms of noise, air quality and ecology.
33. Noise generation is mostly an issue outside of Norwich City Council's area, particularly within the adjoining Broadland District Council parishes of Hellesdon and Old Catton but also further afield. The city council accepts that there will be some noise impact and that this needs to be mitigated through restriction in operating hours and balanced against the airport's contribution to the local economy.
34. Additional night flights are proposed for 4 nights per week during summer months. The masterplan contains some noise contour maps which indicate a moderate increase in some noise levels however the council would wish to see further evidence of projected levels of noise and disturbance in the surrounding area. A fuller noise impact assessment will need to be carried out to identify changes to the times and aircraft type, which is likely to be fully covered by any application to change usage times and extension of the runway. The noise contour maps appear to relate just to passenger flights. It is not clear what the increase in noise levels will be for all flights from the airport in the future (for example including helicopter flights and business flights), so clarification is required on this issue.
35. At present it is considered premature to indicate any acceptance or otherwise of the proposal for additional late night flights at the airport. Such a limited and specific proposal is more properly dealt with by an application seeking to vary the current planning conditions on the terminal building rather than through the masterplan which will need to be determined on its own merits.
36. Indeed it is somewhat surprising that the masterplan doesn't seek to address the issues of the airport operating hours in more substance as it is perhaps questionable how an airport handling 1.5 million passengers per year could effectively operate without any scheduled flying between the hours of 11pm and 6am. Also it should be noted that the current planning framework does allow late flying in certain circumstances and in the first six months of this year the City Council was notified of 22 instances of late flights in accordance with planning controls. In the light of this it is considered that there would be merit in exploring alternative approaches to managing the issue with a view to providing more certainty and support for the long term expansion of the airport.
37. Air quality: based on past air quality monitoring at the airport perimeter the current use of the airport does not give any air quality concerns, and increased usage is

not expected to increase air pollution levels to actionable levels. An air quality assessment would be expected with any planning application; this could be a simple calculation of aircraft emissions data and increased aircraft traffic.

38. Ecology: although the airport site is acknowledged to be of limited ecological value, the masterplan should acknowledge that the proposed expansion could have ecological impacts on surrounding areas of higher ecology value. For example, information provided as part of the Northern Distributor Road planning application states that land adjacent to Site 4 includes a major multi-species bat roost at a barn of Quaker's Farm, a tree roost of Natterers bats, an important bat flight line at Quaker Lane and also several other potential roost trees.