



Strategic Fit:

Fit with Wider Spatial and Socio-Economic
Development Strategies

November 2014

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Executive Summary

Introduction

1. The Airports Commission's *Appraisal Framework* set out an intention to assess the fit of shortlisted schemes with wider spatial and socio-economic development strategies, based upon a review of existing development strategies and wider socio-economic and demographic trends.
2. The approach has not been to compare assessed impacts with existing strategies at the end of separate reviews, but to integrate an understanding of existing spatial plans and demographic trends throughout the appraisal process.
3. It is important to recognise that existing strategies by definition cannot take account of the impact of airport expansion at Gatwick or Heathrow – such proposals would necessitate revision of local and regional plans if they were to proceed.
4. Nonetheless, a review of existing plans at this time can afford insight into the value that is placed on the airports as part of socio-economic strategies and other strategic goals that may need to be adapted to accommodate airport expansion.

Methodology

5. In assessing the strength of alignment with existing plans and strategies, we have considered the following four questions:
 - What is the strategic vision for London and the South East? How does this vision fit within the wider national and international context? What is the place of the shortlisted airports within this vision?
 - How will the strategic role of Gatwick and Heathrow change to 2030, including as a result of planned surface access investment? How might airport expansion drive further change?
 - How do the economic impacts of airport expansion (in particular the impact on jobs, businesses housing and other development) align with existing plans? Can the expansion impacts be accommodated alongside existing plans?
 - How do the social and environmental impacts of airport expansion align with existing plans? Can the expansion impacts be accommodated alongside existing plans?

6. This report has reviewed evidence from a range of Local Plans, Strategic Economic Plans set out by Local Enterprise Partnerships, regional development plans, most particularly the London Plan, and wider national strategic frameworks such as the National Planning Framework and Aviation Policy Framework.
7. This report relies on conclusions but does not repeat in detail analysis from other appraisal modules.
8. Alignment is considered for expansion of Gatwick and Heathrow airports in general. Where appropriate, relevant differences between the Extended Northern Runway and Northwest Runway proposals at Heathrow are highlighted.

Analysis and Conclusions

What is the strategic vision for London and the South East? How does this vision fit within the wider national and international context? What is the place of the shortlisted airports within this vision?

9. An overview of existing plans and long-term strategies reveals common themes. The need to grow the economy, including to support a growing population in London and the South East is identified. London's role as a 'global city' is seen a strategic strength to be built upon and the importance of existing airports in facilitating this role is highlighted. Sustainable development must be advanced to enable greater economic growth and improve quality of life.
10. Spatially, the London Plan and Mayor's Economic Development Strategy describes a growth plan around an 'East-West axis' with Opportunity Areas identified throughout the Capital and strategic corridors linking to the wider region.
11. Individually, the importance of Gatwick and Heathrow airports to local and regional economies is recognised in a number of existing plans and economic strategies.

How will the strategic role of Gatwick and Heathrow change to 2030, including as a result of planned surface access investment? How might airport expansion drive further change?

12. The outcome of planned investment in surface access in the period to 2030 is likely to strengthen the strategic role of Gatwick and Heathrow airports.
13. In the case of Gatwick, more frequent services, newer trains and wider onward access via HS2 and Crossrail will benefit the airport's catchment area substantially. Whilst road access should also improve, the majority of rail access to the airport will be dependent on the Brighton Main Line.

14. In the case of Heathrow, multiple baseline rail improvements will provide enhanced access routes to the airport, boosting connectivity from the west, the north and across London. With airport expansion and anticipated Southern Rail Access programme, access from the south will also be improved via Clapham Junction. Road improvements with the “two-front-door” policy at the airport should improve access to the more simple terminal arrangement, but pre-existing concerns over congestion on strategic roads may continue.

How do the economic impacts of airport expansion (in particular impact on jobs, businesses, housing and other development) align with existing plans? Can the expansion impacts be accommodated alongside existing plans?

15. The local economic impacts of airport expansion would broadly travel in the same direction as existing economic plans and strategies. Airport expansion would serve to expand or accelerate these plans. The local economy analysis has found that the likely scale of expansion in each case would not be undeliverable alongside existing plans, but may present some challenges.
16. At a detailed level, plans would have to be adapted to accommodate the change in circumstances in the event of airport expansion at Gatwick or Heathrow. However this should be no surprise. Analysis suggested that there is sufficient flexibility within local economies to achieve this, given the relatively small scale of change to existing plans around Gatwick and Heathrow.

How do the social and environmental impacts of airport expansion align with existing plans? Can the expansion impacts be accommodated alongside existing plans?

17. The perceived impacts of airports on local residents and the environment are identified as an issue by local plan and strategy makers. Around Gatwick this has led to some concern over potential airport expansion. Around Heathrow, opposition to airport expansion owing to perceived environmental impacts is voiced in a number of strategies, including the London Plan.

Conclusions

18. An overview of existing plans and strategies is instructive in considering the place the airports currently occupy in strategic thinking and planning.
19. Airport expansion at Gatwick or Heathrow, alongside surface access investment already in progress such as Crossrail and HS2, would have the potential to substantially alter the role played by airports. This may include expanding potential economic benefits nationally and locally, increasing airport catchment areas and

having an effect on the composition and size of local communities and businesses. Technological changes would combine with the impacts of airport expansion to alter the shape and scale of environmental impacts which are an important concern for local planners. Wider demographic trends will also play their part.

- 20.** It is necessarily true that adding airport expansion to the range of factors which planners and strategy makers have considered in drawing up existing plans would require some revision of those plans. The Commission has sought to consider the feasibility of such changes and whether and how airport expansion could serve broadly to support the strategic direction set out.
- 21.** Expansion at Gatwick has the potential to align well with local and regional development strategies, providing potential increased employment and supporting economic development in the Wandle Valley corridor identified in the London Plan. Its growth could help foster development of the Gatwick Diamond. The impacts on the surrounding area of expansion (noise, environmental and potential housing growth) would need to be considered carefully in line with local concerns.
- 22.** Expansion at Heathrow has the potential to align well with local and regional development strategies, providing significantly increased employment and housing in the surrounding boroughs and supporting economic development in the Heathrow Opportunity Area and Western Wedge and along an east-west axis in the Capital, identified as an 'engine for growth'. The impacts on the surrounding area of expansion (including noise, environmental and housing growth) would need to be considered carefully in line with local concerns. Perceived environmental impacts have been cited as a reason to oppose airport expansion, including in the London Plan.

1. Introduction

- 1.1** The Airports Commission's *Appraisal Framework* details the following objective and method of assessment for shortlisted schemes:

Objective: To maximise benefits in line with relevant long-term strategies for economic and spatial development

Assessment of fit with wider spatial and socio-economic development strategies

The Commission will also scrutinise the potential impacts of each proposal in light of how they can support wider spatial and socio-economic development strategies. The Commission will also consider how each proposal may facilitate addressing various socio-economic developments, such as growth and shifts of future population in London and the UK.

This analysis will be based upon a review of existing development strategies and wider socio-economic and demographic trends. In assessing alignment with these strategies, the Commission will draw upon evidence from the Economy, Local Economy and Community appraisal modules, as well as the connectivity and competition analysis set out above. The Commission also encourages scheme promoters to engage with local and regional authorities, and to consider how their proposals for expansion align with and support their long-term socio-economic development strategies and how any potential risks can be effectively mitigated.

- 1.2** Assessing the mutual alignment of existing spatial plans and strategies with the impacts of airport expansion is not simply a matter of assessing the two independently and then comparing at the end of the process. Instead consideration of local plans and wider demographic trends is integral throughout the appraisal process. This paper details how this has been undertaken, what conclusions can be drawn and gives overall consideration to the question of strategic alignment given these factors.

- 1.3** Existing plans and demographics shifts will have an ongoing impact on their areas such that they must be factored into an assessment of airport impacts at an earlier stage. For example:

- To assess the extent to which the need for additional housing prompted by airport expansion can be accommodated, the local economy module has considered historic house-building trends in the relevant localities and existing plans for further development in the period to 2030.

- Demographics trends such as population size, age and geographical distribution are factors that are fed into the Commission's *assessment of need* and future demand for air travel. The performance of shortlisted schemes against this assessment and a range of alternative future scenarios is considered as part of the economy and other modules.
- In addition, local population forecasts are an input to the assessment of local economic impacts as they help to determine whether the economic potential of airport expansion will be fully realised.

1.4 As such, this report does not repeat much of the analysis that is contained in other documents, but considers more fully how these impacts and conclusions align with existing plans and strategies.

1.5 It is important to note that all existing spatial development plans and strategies make no allowance for the impacts and expansion of Heathrow or Gatwick and should not be expected to. Local plans must necessarily respond to anticipated local needs at the time they are drawn up. Airport expansion at Heathrow or Gatwick would have a significant impact on the nature of future local and regional needs and create new opportunities, changing the conditions for which decision-makers must plan. It should not be inferred that any current local plans are deficient if they do not take account of the impacts of airport expansion nor that in requiring change, airport expansion plans are necessarily misaligned with existing plans and strategies.

1.6 Indeed this is explicitly recognised in a number of strategies, for example the Coast to Capital LEP *Strategic Economic Plan* (March 2014) states that:

If the Davies Commission recommends a second runway for Gatwick, it will be a game-changer, and we will completely revise our Strategic Economic Plan in that event.

1.7 Similarly the *Crawley 2030 Local Plan*:

'The Airports Commission is considering proposals for additional airport capacity, including at Gatwick, but the Local Plan can only reflect the latest available national policy position at the time of writing. It is difficult to pre-empt what recommendations the Airports Commission will make... Depending on the recommendations of the Airports Commission, the policies may need to be reviewed to reflect the latest national aviation policy.'

Methodology

- 1.8** In assessing the strength of alignment with existing plans and strategies, we have considered the following four questions:
- **What is the strategic vision for London and the South East? How does this vision fit within the wider national and international context? What is the place of the shortlisted airports within this vision?**
 - **How will the strategic role of Gatwick and Heathrow change to 2030, including as a result of planned surface access investment? How might airport expansion drive further change?**
 - **How do the economic impacts of airport expansion (in particular impact on jobs, businesses, housing and other development) align with existing plans? Can the expansion impacts be accommodated alongside existing plans?**
 - **How do the social and environmental impacts of airport expansion align with existing plans? Can the expansion impacts be accommodated alongside existing plans?**
- 1.9** The Commission's analysis has suggested that airport expansion schemes could be operational from 2025 (Gatwick Second Runway) and 2026 (Heathrow North West Runway and Extended Northern Runway). A number of local plans and strategies set out ambitions for this time period and have been considered as part of this work
- 1.10** In addition we have considered strategic economic plans produced by a number of local enterprise partnerships (LEPs).
- 1.11** The *London Plan* and the *Mayor's Economic Development Strategy for London* include details of development plans and along with the *National Planning Framework* and *Aviation Policy Framework* provide important wider strategic context for all schemes.
- 1.12** A literature review of a number of plans has been undertaken for this report as well as for other appraisal modules, including local economy and place. This report references conclusions from other relevant appraisal work, including particularly the local economy report and does not repeat analysis in detail.
- 1.13** The paper considers the alignment of proposals for expansion at Heathrow and Gatwick in turn. In the case of Heathrow where issues of alignment are affected by the choice of expansion option between the Extended Northern Runway and the new North West Runway, this impact is highlighted.

- 1.14** The views of local authorities and local planners will be of particular benefit to the workstream as it is they who are best placed to consider how the impacts of airport development will affect local plans and priorities. As such it will be valuable to consider this work in the light of consultation responses.

2. Analysis and conclusions

1. What is the strategic vision for London and the South East?
How does this vision fit within the wider national and international context? What is the place of the shortlisted airports within this vision?

The Vision for London

- 2.1 The *London Plan* (2011) as well as the *Mayor's Economic Development Strategy for London* (May 2010) provide a strategic vision for London's development to 2031. A key feature of the vision is recognition of London as a **'global city'** and one that must commit to **growing its economy** to meet future challenges.
- 2.2 The Mayor's stated ambition in the *London Plan* is for London to:
'retain and build upon its world city status as one of three business centres of global reach. It must be somewhere people and businesses want to locate, with places and spaces to meet their needs. This economic dynamism is vital to ensuring the prosperity Londoners (and the rest of the United Kingdom) need, to maintaining the world-beating innovation increasingly needed to address global challenges, and to secure the highest quality development and urban environments.'
- 2.3 Similarly the *Economic Development Strategy* states its first object to be:
'to promote London as the world capital of business, the world's top international visitor destination, and the world's leading international centre of learning and creativity.'
- 2.4 The *Strategy* discusses the wider trends that support this conclusion, including the importance of London's trade with the rest of the country and the world; the continued trend towards globalisation that has helped London become a 'magnet for inward investment and talent' and the expected rise of China and India as part of the new world economy which London 'must fully exploit' if it is to retain its leading position.
- 2.5 In addition, London's **'internationalism'** is noted as a key strength, with its workforce drawn from across the world, its extensive trading links, including major export of services and its role in attracting overseas investment and tourism.

- 2.6** London's **growing and changing population** is identified as a factor which underpins the need for a growing economy, with the number of households predicted to rise from 3.32 million in 2011 to 3.99 million for 2031.
- 2.7** The London Plan is also clear that growth within the capital must be **sustainable** and that **quality of life** is an important consideration. It sets out six objectives that embody this commitment to sustainable growth:

'Ensuring London is:

- *A city that meets the challenges of economic and population growth*
- *An internationally competitive and successful city*
- *A city of diverse, strong, secure and accessible neighbourhoods*
- *A city that delights the senses*
- *A city that becomes a world leader in improving the environment*
- *A city where it is easy, safe and convenient for everyone to access jobs, opportunities and facilities'.*

- 2.8** Spatially, the London Plan and Economic Development Strategy describe how the Mayor will seek to promote growth particularly in specific **Opportunity Areas** and **Intensification Areas**, widely spread across the Capital. Collectively these are identified as having the potential to support around half a million new jobs by 2031.

- 2.9** Priority areas for regeneration are also identified, predominately in **the east of the city**, where the need to promote greater convergence of social and economic chances with the rest of the capital is identified and where the most substantial accumulative growth opportunities are identified along the Thames Gateway.

- 2.10** The Strategy describes an **'East West axis [that] will be an engine for growth'** where: *'the Thames Gateway corridor links through central London to the 'Western Wedge' whose growth opportunities include the wider Heathrow area'*. As such, the new east-west spine running through central London that Crossrail will provide is identified as vital to the economic future of the city and the UK.

- 2.11** The 'Western Wedge' is also identified in other strategies as an economically strong area of the country with potential for further growth. For example the Thames Valley Berkshire LEP *Strategic Economic Plan* notes that:

Against the backdrop of London, Thames Valley Berkshire is the UK's economic powerhouse. Built around the post-war infrastructure of Heathrow and the M4,

some of the biggest global technology companies have chosen it as a strategic gateway to developing markets in the Americas, Europe, Africa and Asia.

Wider Regional and National Strategies

- 2.12** The London Plan recognises that as a ‘world city’ London: *‘fulfils functions and attracts investment that other cities in the United Kingdom – and in Europe – do not. It has a distinctive role to play in the spatial development of the country and continent as part of a polycentric network of cities and urban areas, and the Mayor recognises the importance of ensuring London does this in ways that promote sustainable success at European, national and city region level’.*
- 2.13** Whilst London has unique economic specialisms such as finance, business and law, its success is recognised as being *‘inextricably bound up with that of the United Kingdom as a whole’* and the Mayor *‘strongly supports working with the other nations, cities and regions within the UK to help ensure that London’s success supports that of the country as a whole, and that it makes its proper contribution to a sustainable and balanced polycentric network of core cities.’*
- 2.14** The commitment to sustainable economic growth seen in London is shared by a number of economic strategies set out by Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) in the South East and throughout the country. At a national level, the *National Infrastructure Plan 2013* sets out the Government’s commitment to:
- 2.15** *‘grow a global economy: the UK is both competing and collaborating with an ever increasing number of countries around the world, attracting business and skilled labour, and trading in goods and services - if the UK wants to remain and grow as a global player it needs to have modern infrastructure networks, particularly in ports, airports and communications’.*
- 2.16** The Plan also notes that:
- ‘Air travel plays a key role in the UK economy, allowing us to connect with the rest of the world and function as a key hub for international business. Heathrow is one of the busiest airports in the world, bringing visitors from overseas and allowing easy access to the financial centre of London...the major South East airports, including Heathrow and Gatwick, are forecast to be full between 2025 and 2050, meaning that levels of future demand are currently forecast to be in excess of capacity.’*
- 2.17** The *National Planning Policy Framework* also carries the theme of the need for sustainable development stating that: **‘a presumption in favour of sustainable development ... should be seen as a golden thread running through both plan-making and decision-taking’**, and highlighting the economic, social and environmental role that developments should play.

The role of shortlisted airports within these strategies

2.18 The strategic importance of existing airports to London in terms of international connectivity is noted. The Economic Development Strategy states:

'The capital is a major international transport hub with five international airports (Heathrow, Gatwick, Stansted, Luton and City), with Heathrow catering for more international passengers than any other airport in the world'

2.19 And the London Plan:

'Heathrow is currently the UK's only hub airport, and the Mayor recognises its critical importance to the London economy and the central place which it plays in London's international competitiveness and status as a world city.'

2.20 Whilst the Mayor has supported proposals for a new 'hub' airport in the inner Thames Estuary to the east of London which would replace Heathrow, the Airports Commission has, after careful deliberation, rejected such schemes. The Commission's decision on this matter is set out in its *Summary and Decision Paper*, published in September 2014. While the Commission recognised the need for a hub airport, it believes that this should be a part of an effective system of competing airports to meet the needs of a widely spread and diverse market like London's. The increasing concentration of capacity in a single location proposed by an inner Thames Estuary scheme could reduce the London airports system's flexibility to respond to future changes in the structure and operation of the aviation industry.

2.21 The importance of international connectivity provided by the UK's hub airport is also identified in a number of strategies across the UK which identify the importance to their areas of flights to Heathrow, including:

- *Swindon and Wiltshire LEP Strategic Economic Report* (March 2014);
- *Greater Cambridgeshire Strategic Economic Plan 2013*
- *National Planning Framework for Scotland – (Monitoring Report 2012)*

2.22 In turn, the potential for airports and the connectivity they provide to stimulate local economic growth is widely recognised in a number of strategies and plans. In some cases this has prompted planners and strategy-makers to call for airport expansion as set out below:

Gatwick

2.23 The benefits of Gatwick to its local economy is recognised in local economic strategies, including:

- The *Coast to Capital LEP – Strategic Economic Plan* (March 2014) notes that Gatwick Airport is, and will continue to be, an important driver of economic growth across the Coast to Capital area and supports its proposal for a second runway:

‘Gatwick Airport, with the support of Coast to Capital LEP and the Coast to Capital business community is proposing that a second runway should be developed to cater for the long-term growth in the UK’s international trade. However, we also believe that a second runway at Gatwick must be accompanied by a corresponding investment in housing, transport and other infrastructure, skills and business development so that the airport can grow sustainably.’

‘If the Davies Commission recommends a second runway for Gatwick, it will be a game-changer, and we will completely revise our Strategic Economic Plan in that event.’

- The *South East LEP Growth deal and Strategic Economic Plan* (March 2014) notes that: *‘Gatwick plays an important economic role for East Sussex, not least offering employment but also as an international hub and has an important part to play in attracting and retaining business interest in the county. A second runway at Gatwick Airport would significantly enhance the attractiveness of East Sussex for business.’*
- *Crawley 2030: The Crawley Borough Local Plan 2015 – 2030 (Submission Consultation Draft)* September 2014 highlights that *‘the economy of Crawley is buoyed by the presence of Gatwick Airport. 75% of Crawley’s employment (by employment numbers) is in distribution, hotels, transport, communications, banking and finance of which Gatwick Airport accounts for approximately 25,000 jobs directly. Crawley is the main place of residence for airport employees with 26.9% of the workforce living in Crawley.’*
- *The Croydon Local Plan – Strategic Policies* (adopted April 2013) sets out an ambition to promote Croydon as *‘Airport City’*, promoting *‘businesses and employment opportunities which capitalise on Croydon’s proximity to Gatwick, Heathrow, London City and Biggin Hill Airports and central London’* as part of *‘Croydon’s objectives to remain and grow as the principal point of business, major retailing, leisure and education in South London’*. In addition, the London Plan identifies Croydon as an Opportunity Area with excellent transport links but impaired by a lack of investment in recent years.

2.24 An area around Gatwick Airport has been identified as the **‘Gatwick Diamond’**, stretching from the coast to the edge of London and linking Brighton, Croydon,

Tunbridge Wells amongst others. The *Gatwick Diamond – Local Strategic Statement* (July 2011) states:

'Gatwick Airport is and will remain a key driver for the local economy. As the second largest airport in the UK, it is not only a major provider of jobs but also a factor in the location of many businesses. Whilst the Diamond Strategy looks to see a diversification of the economy to give it broader strength in the knowledge based industries, the strength of Gatwick is critical. Although over the years the mix of flights and passengers has changed and will continue to do so as aviation evolves, it continues to play an important role in both business and tourist travel.'

- 2.25** The London Plan includes a commitment to help coordinate the development and implementation of policies for corridors that have been identified as being of importance to London and the wider city region. This includes the Wandle Valley corridor through south London and outwards towards Gatwick Airport.

Heathrow

- 2.26** The role that Heathrow currently plays as a driver and catalyst for economic activity and its importance to future plans for economic growth is widely acknowledged:

- The *Hounslow Local Plan (proposed submission 2015-30)* notes that *'the stimulus of Heathrow Airport and innate entrepreneurship and innovation of Hounslow's diverse peoples will continue to underpin local economy, with improved access to a range of jobs and skills for local people.'* The plan anticipates that *'the economic stimulus of Heathrow will continue to be respected; with optimal supply chain opportunities and continued major representation of international companies, distributive and support functions based on the proximity relationship with Heathrow Airport secure.'*

- The *Hillingdon Local Plan (submission core strategy July 2011)* notes that Hillingdon has prospered from the presence of Heathrow and includes a commitment that:

'the role of Heathrow Airport as a key employment area will be strengthened, whilst ensuring that only airport-related development will be located on the airport and the continuing demand for associated freight handling and commercial floorspace within the airport boundary will only be met as long as environmental conditions are improved and maintained. The aim is to maximise the economic benefits of Heathrow whilst mitigating the negative environmental and social impacts.'

- 2.27** As stated above the Mayor's *Economic Development Strategy* identifies an 'East West axis' that links the Thames Gateway in the east to the 'Western Wedge',

including the wider Heathrow area as an ‘engine for growth’. This ‘Western Wedge’, and the role of Heathrow within it, is also identified in other strategies as an economically strong area of the country with potential for further growth. For example the Thames Valley Berkshire LEP *Strategic Economic Plan* notes that:

Against the backdrop of London, Thames Valley Berkshire is the UK’s economic powerhouse. Built around the post-war infrastructure of Heathrow and the M4, some of the biggest global technology companies have chosen it as a strategic gateway to developing markets in the Americas, Europe, Africa and Asia

2.28 In addition, the growth Opportunity Areas identified the London Plan include the **Heathrow Opportunity Area**, which is described as having indicative capacity for 12,000 jobs and 9,000 new homes. The Plan states:

In Hillingdon, Heathrow ‘north’ (including the A4 corridor) will continue to benefit from airport related growth, particularly with regard to transport and logistics, business and hotels and leisure/tourism. Stockley Park has a particular draw for a diverse range of offices including marketing and R&D, and for prestigious national and European headquarters. Uxbridge is set to grow significantly with the redevelopment of the RAF Uxbridge site, together with potential in the bio-science sectors and creative/media support services in the Uxbridge Business Park. The Hayes-West Drayton corridor contains redevelopment opportunities for a range of potential uses, including small business parks, logistics and mixed-uses. Hayes town centre offers considerable scope for the creative/media sector and for SME workspace. In Hounslow, there is capacity to continue the rejuvenation of Feltham as a town centre and to develop the borough’s strategically important industrial offer’.

2.29 In addition, proximity to Heathrow Airport is identified as a strategic advantage to the Old Oak Common Opportunity Area (including Park Royal and Willseden Junction).

2.30 Several Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) have set out economic strategies that underline the economic importance of Heathrow:

- The *Enterprise M3 Strategic Economic Plan* (March 2014) notes that expanding capacity at Heathrow, to maintain its status as the UK’s hub airport, through the provision of additional runway and terminal capacity, with associated surface access improvements ‘is fundamental to supporting jobs and attracting and retaining businesses within the area’.
- The Oxfordshire LEP (OXLEP) *Strategic Economic Plan* (March 2014) notes that the county has ‘close strategic links to international networks via London Heathrow, Europe’s premier global hub airport, which is fundamental to

competing in international markets. Oxfordshire's close proximity to Heathrow makes it a great place to do business.'

- The *Thames Valley Berkshire Strategic Economic Plan* (March 2014) identifies proximity to Heathrow as a significant local asset and part of the strong foundation on which the locality's economic is built. In particular, it has been instrumental in the LEP securing greater inward investment than any other LEP outside London. Continued uncertainty as to the future of Heathrow is identified as a barrier to greater investment in the future.

Summary

2.31 In summary, an overview of existing plans and long-term strategies reveals common themes. The need to grow the economy, including to support a growing population in London and the South East is identified. London's role as a 'global city' is seen as a strategic strength to be built upon and the role of existing airports in facilitating this role is highlighted. Sustainable development must be advanced to enable greater economic growth and improve quality of life.

2.32 Spatially, the London Plan and Mayor's Economic Development Strategy describes a growth plan around an 'East-West axis' with Opportunity Areas identified throughout the Capital and strategic corridors linking to the wider region.

2.33 Individually, the importance of Gatwick and Heathrow airports to local and regional economies is recognised in a number of existing plans and economic strategies.

2. How will the strategic role of Gatwick and Heathrow change to 2030, including as a result of planned surface access investment? How might airport expansion drive further change?

2.34 Investment in surface access has the potential to change how accessible airports are from different areas of London and the South East, including areas identified for growth, and from the country as a whole. As set out elsewhere in the Commission's analysis, airport expansion at Gatwick or Heathrow may entail further investment in surface access to accommodate increased passenger numbers. The alignment of these changes with existing strategies is considered below:

Gatwick

2.35 In the period to 2030, surface access to Gatwick airport is expected to change with or without airport expansion, including:

- Thameslink Southern Great Northern (TSGN) rail franchise post 2018 will provide more frequent trains to a greater range of destinations directly connected to the airport, including more distant destinations such as Cambridge and Peterborough for the first time. At peak time, trains would run towards London every 2½ minutes; Farringdon connectivity to Crossrail will also be a benefit to Gatwick's general connectivity across the west and east of London.
- Brighton Main Line (BML) upgrades: as part of the extended baseline, there are plans to implement a number of improvements including the re-modelling of the Windmill Bridge Junction, improved London Victoria platform access and further redevelopment around Clapham Junction, amongst others. These improvements will provide further benefits to all passengers travelling over the BML.
- Roads – improvements to the motorway network around Gatwick, including smart motorways adapting to changing demand and an improved M23 junction 9 to access the airport. A potential lower Thames crossing is also anticipated to improve access from the east of London, relieving the Dartford crossing bottleneck.

2.36 These changes will have a notable impact on the accessibility of Gatwick, including by enabling links to new infrastructure such as Crossrail and HS2 and so widening the connectivity web. Nonetheless average journey times will remain at approximately 50 minutes for most passengers, reflecting the wider catchment area the new services provide.

2.37 By connecting with Crossrail at Farringdon, the enhanced TSGN service will enable Gatwick to connect to identified priority growth areas along London's east west axis; this will also provide better connectivity for passengers from Canary Wharf.

2.38 The Government has set out plans to transform the economic geography of the country with HS2 connecting London, Birmingham, Leeds and Manchester. Whilst HS2 will terminate near Euston, through connectivity to Crossrail at Old Oak Common, and TSGN at Farringdon, Gatwick will be substantially 'closer' by public transport to more regions of the UK, as set out in the Commission's surface access appraisal.

2.39 The Commission's analysis has found that these already committed improvements such as the high speed TSGN timetable post 2018 and a number of additional schemes which are likely to be needed regardless of expansion will suffice to meet

the additional demand that would be associated with a second runway at Gatwick. Similarly the committed and planned Highways Agency improvements to the Strategic Road Network by 2025 will provide enough capacity to accommodate airport users as well as background demand.

2.40 Therefore, compared to the 2030 baseline, there should not be significant change to the surface transport situation for many residents of the Gatwick assessment area.

2.41 The need to improve surface access around Gatwick airport, including aligned to any potential airport expansion is highlighted in some local strategies:

- The Enterprise M3 LEP *Strategic Economic Plan* includes a commitment to work with neighbouring LEPs to improve surface access to International Gateways at Heathrow and Gatwick and the ports of Southampton and Portsmouth;
- The *Coast to Capital LEP – Strategic Economic Plan* (March 2014) states that *‘a second runway at Gatwick must be accompanied by a corresponding investment in housing, transport and other infrastructure, skills and business development so that the airport can grow sustainably.’*
- The South East LEP, *Strategic Economic Plan* argues for upgrades to the A27 and A21 corridors to connect with the A23/M23 corridor that connects Brighton, Gatwick and London.

2.42 Croydon’s Local Plan, particularly identifies its role in making surface access links to Gatwick as part of a wider surface access strategy as a key economic focus:

‘the Strategic Interchange concept, in partnership with the Mayor, aims to improve orbital public transport travel opportunities, in particular linkages between outer London town centres, to ease pressure on the central London transport system, and passenger dispersal pressures at London’s rail termini. East Croydon has the potential for a future link to the High Speed 2 train network via Old Oak Common Station, which would also improve access to Crossrail; there is also an opportunity to facilitate Gatwick stopping services, as well as Thameslink improvements that will provide longer and more frequent trains.’

Heathrow

2.43 In the period to 2030, surface access to Heathrow airport is expected to change significantly with or without airport expansion, including:

- Western rail access to Heathrow (WRAtH)
- Piccadilly line upgrades, with more trains per hour and new, air-conditioned trains.

- Crossrail, effectively providing an upgrade to Heathrow Connect whilst serving a larger catchment area to the east including the City and Canary Wharf.
- HS2, connecting Birmingham and the North to Crossrail and Heathrow Express rail (HeX) via a new station at Old Oak Common.

2.44 These investments will have a significant impact. Including:

- Crossrail will support development along the east-west axis identified in London Plan connecting the Western Wedge to potential growth areas in the Thames Gateway. In this way Crossrail will link Heathrow airport directly to key growth and opportunity areas in London, including Old Oak Common, Paddington and the Lower Lea Valley including Stratford.
- HS2: the Government has set out plans to transform the economic geography of the country with HS2 connecting London, Birmingham, Leeds and Manchester. HS2 will connect to Heathrow airport via a link at Old Oak Common. HS2 will be a significant factor in connecting the North to Heathrow, reducing journey times from a number of major cities, potentially making Heathrow a more plausible choice for flying despite being further away.
- WRAtH will connect the airport directly from important conurbations in Surrey and along the M4 corridor, such as Slough. This will improve connectivity for passengers from the west who currently have to perform a U-turn by travelling to Hayes and Harlington or Paddington first before travelling to Heathrow via Heathrow Connect or HeX and will significantly reduce journey times.

2.45 If the airport were to expand its capacity additional investments to surface access would be required. In the case of Heathrow Airport North West Runway this would mean the M25 would be redirected and put into a tunnel. For Heathrow Airport Extended Northern Runway a slightly different package would be required, with a different tunnelling of the M25 required under the extended runway.

2.46 The Commission has also considered separately proposals for a Hub Station at Heathrow which would require the construction of a new hub station on the Great Western Mainline (GWML) and an associated automated people mover connecting the airport.

2.47 These investments would have a further transformative effect on the accessibility of Heathrow. In particular, outside the baseline, but nonetheless a likely possibility with an expanded Heathrow, Southern Rail Access (SRA) will provide for a 'third' link from central London (besides underground, HeX and Crossrail on GWML), connecting passengers and employees traveling via Waterloo, Clapham Junction or Staines.

- 2.48** Taken together these investments would significantly improve accessibility of Heathrow Airport, including from the Midlands, the North and from the west of the airport.
- 2.49** Improving rail access to Heathrow from the west and south is identified as a goal in a number of existing plans and strategies, including:
- OXLEP *Strategic Economic Plan* notes that ‘direct western rail access to Heathrow will provide faster and reliable access, connecting businesses with global markets’, reducing journey times by up to 30 minutes and creating up to 6,000 jobs;
 - The Enterprise M3 *Strategic Economic Plan* notes that ‘surface access to Heathrow airport by public transport modes needs to be improved from the west and south west to help encourage the use of public transport to access the airport from these directions. We support the Western Rail Access to Heathrow project, as this has the potential to improve rail access to Heathrow from north Hampshire, via interchange at Reading. This chimes with the recent National Infrastructure Plan, which is taking forward measures proposed by the Airports Commission by introducing a package of surface access improvements and setting up a new study into southern rail access to Heathrow. This should further enhance the connectivity of Enterprise M3 businesses to Heathrow in the medium term and one of our key asks’;
 - Thames Valley Berkshire’s *Strategic Economic Plan* argues that western rail access to Heathrow will deliver economic benefits of over £2 billion create 42,000 new jobs and is ‘crucial to TVB’s growth ambitions’;
 - The Hounslow *Local Plan* supports new southern rail access to Heathrow airport;
 - The *Bracknell Forest Core Strategy Development Plan Document (2008)* noted that the area would benefit from better links in Heathrow.
- 2.50** Local roads impacts are also highlighted as a concern. Heathrow has good access to the M25, M4 and M40, but high levels of congestion forecast on these routes may constrain the airport’s road links. The Thames Valley Berkshire *Strategic Economic Plan* identifies the importance of road access:
- 2.51** ‘By 2026 the majority of the M4 to Reading, parts of the M3 and the western sections of the M25 will have reached severe congestion levels and will present a significant barrier to reliable road travel. Based on current usage trends, and without significant infrastructure investment, the Thames Valley alone could lose £34 billion worth of output over the next 20 years.’

Summary

2.52 The outcome of planned investment in surface access in the period to 2030 is likely to strengthen the strategic role of Gatwick and Heathrow airports.

2.53 In the case of Gatwick, more frequent services, newer trains and wider onward access via HS2 and Crossrail will benefit the airport's catchment area substantially. Whilst road access should also improve, the majority of rail access to the airport will be dependent on the BML.

2.54 In the case of Heathrow, multiple baseline rail improvements will provide enhanced access routes to the airport, boosting connectivity from the west, the north and across London. With airport expansion and anticipated Southern Rail Access programme, access from the south will also be improved via Clapham Junction. Road improvements with the "two-front-door" policy at the airport should improve access to the more simple terminal arrangement, but pre-existing concerns over congestion on strategic roads may continue.

3. How do the economic impacts of airport expansion (in particular impact on jobs, businesses, housing and other development) align with existing plans? Can the expansion impacts be accommodated alongside existing plans?

2.55 The economic impacts of airport expansion associated with the proposed schemes have been considered as part of the economy and local economy appraisal modules. These modules have considered how expansion of each airport may result in the airport serving more passengers, employing more staff and in turn supporting more direct, indirect and induced jobs in their local areas. In addition, the enhanced international connectivity resulting from airport expansion may support greater catalytic impacts and resulting economic growth. A feature of greater levels of economic activity around airports as a result of expansion may be increased demand for new housing in the area and other related development. The local economy report analysed the likely extent of these impacts and in doing so took into account existing plans for housing and economic growth. High level conclusions for each airport are set out below.

Gatwick

2.56 Gatwick Airport has 24,900 direct employees as of 2011.¹ The Commission has assessed that expansion of capacity at airport via an additional runway could support between close to 0 and 17,100 additional direct jobs in 2030. On top of this there could be 200 to 1,500 additional indirect jobs and 300 to 5,100

1 PwC Local Economic Impact Literature Review.

additional induced jobs supported in 2030. Catalytic effects would also arise from the improved connectivity and reduced generalised costs of international travel that could result from airport expansion.

- 2.57** The Local Economy report concludes that these growth impacts could be accommodated within the local area. The increases in the number of indirect and induced jobs, equivalent to fewer than 60 jobs per local authority per year, would be unlikely to cause a significant level of pressure to the local area or significantly affect business mix. In addition, flexibility in the local labour market, including the distances people travel to work, allow local authorities around Gatwick to function as part of the larger London employment area, suggesting that under Gatwick expansion new jobs could be fairly easily absorbed.
- 2.58** The analysis also concluded that airport expansion at Gatwick could increase housing demand by 0 to 18,400 more homes by 2030. This amounts to up to 130 additional housing units per local authority per year in the Gatwick area.
- 2.59** A review of local authority plans indicates that many authorities expect to face challenges in delivering adequate housing provision by 2030, even in the absence of airport expansion. This is a result of a combination of factors - growth from within the current population, changes in household sizes and numbers, and in-migration from neighbouring areas and elsewhere in the country. For example:
- Croydon aimed for a target of 27,000 additional new dwellings by 2013, which it failed to hit, only building 20,200 homes due to limited land available for development. Limited supplies of land exist for new homes without eroding the Metropolitan Green Belt, Metropolitan Open Land and locally protected open spaces, leading Croydon's local authority to plan for 7,300 homes in the borough's Opportunity Area, with a further 5,600 homes to be built outside of this area.
 - Crawley's local plan, *Crawley 2030*, notes that: '*Crawley's development as a new town, in addition to the influence of Gatwick Airport, has significant implications for the future of the town in terms of population growth; and the need to accommodate development remains a key challenge for Crawley. By 2030, to meet the needs of its growing population, the town would need a further 8,100 new homes. Accommodating even some of this need involves difficult decisions and invariably places pressure on some of the key features that define Crawley's character*'
- 2.60** Additional housing would also require the provision of additional social infrastructure such as schools, hospitals and leisure centres. Analysis suggests that additional housing of the scale required would need to be supported by up to a maximum of

25 primary schools and 3 secondary schools and 30 additional GPs over the local area to 2030. There would also be a need for additional parks or open spaces.

2.61 The Local Economy assessment concludes that although some local authorities in the Gatwick area are currently struggling to meet their housing provision targets, the additional housing required is not of a scale which is likely to significantly increase housing pressures and will be manageable across the whole area, although perhaps more challenging for some local authorities. Local authorities could act to increase housing density, providing more homes on the same footprint and therefore accommodating most of the expected growth, without increasing the amount of land required or elevating densities to levels regarded as ‘high’. Environmental issues, including potential impact on Green Belt land are considered in the next section.

Heathrow

2.62 Heathrow Airport employs 84,400 workers as of 2011.² The different expansion proposals would have differing employment impacts. As set out in the Local Economy report, the Commission’s assessment is that in 2030, airport expansion at Heathrow would support 17,500 to 41,400 additional direct jobs under the HAL scheme and 17,500 to 35,400 under the HH scheme.

2.63 The schemes would also support additional indirect and induced jobs as set out below:

Assessment		Airports Commission – LHR NWR	Airports Commission – LHR ENR
2030	Additional Indirect jobs	10,800-25,600	10,800-21,900
	Additional Induced jobs	19,100-45,400	19,100-38,800

2.64 Catalytic effects would also arise from the improved connectivity and reduced generalised costs of international travel that could result for airport expansion.

2.65 The report suggests that the 14 local authority areas around Heathrow could be well placed to take advantage of any new jobs or business opportunities created due to demographics, skill mix, relatively high business density and commuting behaviour.

2.66 The relatively high number of businesses per head indicates the flexibility of the area for future employment, which is supported by the population demographics, with

² Ibid

Heathrow's local authorities currently having predominantly working age populations with higher than average number of people at the younger end.

2.67 Labour market flexibility is also supported by a reasonable level of out-commuting at the current time, suggesting potential for workers in the Heathrow area to switch to a job closer to home. The travel to work area is likely to expand following planned surface transport improvements, potentially widening the pool of available labour. This flexibility could reduce problems associated with a labour supply constraint or excessive housing or land pressures.

2.68 The report concluded that the additional housing impact of airport expansion would be as set out below:

2030	Low	high
AC estimate for total additional households LHR NWR	29,800	70,800
AC estimate for total additional households LHR ENR	22,900	60,600

2.69 These figures could amount to up to 200 to 500 additional new housing units per local authority per year in the Heathrow area. With housing growth to 2030 already projected and planned for, these additional numbers would not be of a relative scale which is likely to constrain the area's development or require transformational policies to be achieved.

2.70 Many local authorities currently struggle to meet their housing provision target and the report acknowledges that there may be some localised constraint but expects sufficient flexibility in the area as a whole given the relative scale of the changes. Use of high density housing and redevelopment of brownfield land, as encouraged in the London Plan could reduce the amount of land required

2.71 Additional housing would also require the provision of additional social infrastructure such as schools, hospitals and leisure centres. Analysis suggests that at a high-end estimation, the additional housing of the scale required would need to be supported by the provision of up to a maximum of 50 primary schools (under LHR NWR scheme) across all 14 local authorities as well as 6 secondary schools and 28 additional health centres and primary care centres per local authority to 2030. There would also be a need for additional parks or open spaces. Environmental issues, including potential impact on greenbelt land is considered in the next section.

Summary

- 2.72** In summary, the local economic impacts of airport expansion would broadly travel in the same direction as existing economic plans and strategies. Airport expansion would serve to expand or accelerate these plans. The local economy analysis has found that the likely scale of expansion in each case would not be undeliverable alongside existing plans, but may present some challenges.
- 2.73** At a detailed level, plans would have to be adapted to accommodate the change in circumstances in the event of airport expansion at Gatwick or Heathrow. However this should be no surprise, indeed it would be rather surprising if detailed local plans had been drawn up to accommodate airport expansion at this time. Analysis suggests that there is sufficient flexibility within local economies to achieve this, given the relatively small scale of change to existing plans around Gatwick and Heathrow.
- 2.74** Adapting existing development plans and strategies in this way could have increased social and environmental impacts. This is considered in the next section.

4. How do the social and environmental impacts of airport expansion align with existing plans? Can the expansion impacts be accommodated alongside existing plans?

- 2.75** Plans for airport expansion will have land take implications and wider impacts on local environment and communities. Development of the local areas around Heathrow and Gatwick is to be expected with or without airport expansion. The purpose of this assessment is to consider the marginal impact airport expansion will have and how this aligns with existing plans and strategies.
- 2.76** A key current strategic policy with regard to land use in the outer London area is the metropolitan Green Belt. Government policy on the Green Belt is set out in the *National Planning Policy Framework* (March 2012):

'The Government attaches great importance to Green Belts. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence...'

...Local planning authorities with Green Belts in their area should establish Green Belt boundaries in their Local Plans which set the framework for Green Belt and settlement policy. Once established, Green Belt boundaries should only be altered in exceptional circumstances, through the preparation or review of the Local Plan.'

2.77 Green Belt covers more than 5000 square kilometres outside London and although it is commonly thought there are not large urban centres in the Green Belt there are in fact fifteen towns or cities with over 50,000 residents located in London's Green Belt already.³ 14% of Green Belt is built up but development opportunities are statutorily limited. Despite housing demand and planning policy encouraging higher density residential development the housing in Green Belt typically has low density, with an average density of 420 people per square kilometre.

2.78 Aviation noise is a commonly cited factor in considering the environmental and social impact of airports and the national strategic position set out in the Government's *Aviation Policy Framework* (March 2013) is worth considering:

The Government continues to expect airport operators to offer households exposed to levels of noise of 69 dB LAeq, 16h or more, assistance with the costs of moving.

The Government also expects airport operators to offer acoustic insulation to noise-sensitive buildings, such as schools and hospitals, exposed to levels of noise of 63 dB LAeq, 16h or more. Where acoustic insulation cannot provide an appropriate or cost-effective solution, alternative mitigation measures should be offered.

If no such schemes already exist, airport operators should consider financial assistance towards acoustic insulation for households. Where compensation schemes have been in place for many years and there are few properties still eligible for compensation, airport operators should review their schemes to ensure they remain reasonable and proportionate.

Where airport operators are considering developments which result in an increase in noise, they should review their compensation schemes to ensure that they offer appropriate compensation to those potentially affected. As a minimum, the Government would expect airport operators to offer financial assistance towards acoustic insulation to residential properties which experience an increase in noise of 3dB or more which leaves them exposed to levels of noise of 63 dB LAeq, 16h or more.

Any potential proposals for new nationally significant airport development projects following any Government decision on future recommendation(s) from the Airports Commission would need to consider tailored compensation schemes where appropriate, which would be subject to separate consultation.

3 ³ 'The tale of two regions', LSE cities, 2011

Gatwick

2.79 The proposal for expansion at Gatwick would have land take implications. The Commission has calculated these as follows:

2.80 702Ha, with Crawley the most affected borough. Land take would include the loss of 168 residential buildings with a further 37 potentially impacted by surface access, 6 educational buildings and a park could be lost.

2.81 This includes a small infringement on Green Belt land (60Ha in Reigate and Banstead and Tandridge) There is potentially some localised pressure at the top end of the range of additional homes required which could require de-designation of Green Belt.

2.82 The environmental impacts of airport expansion at Gatwick are set out in detail across the Commission's consultation documents. Changes in technology and demographic changes as well the airfield redesign and increase in passenger numbers that would result from airport expansion mean that the environmental impacts of an enlarged Gatwick, would be different to today. Nonetheless, how existing strategies seek to address the current and anticipated environmental impacts of the airport is worth considering:

- The Tandridge District *Core Strategy* notes that aircraft noise from Gatwick Airport has an impact on local communities and sets out policies to:

'[prevent] residential development in the area covered by the Gatwick Airport standardised noise contour band LAeq_(16hour) 66-69dB current at the time the application is made.'

'[work] with BAA Gatwick on the development of the airport up to the projected 45 million passengers per annum of the single runway and oppose expansion beyond its current agreed capacity.'

'Gatwick Airport also affects the District in that there is pressure for off-airport parking in the vicinity of the airport. The Council wishes to see any identified shortfall in provision for parking provided within the airport and not through the establishment of new car parks or extension of existing sites within the Green Belt. Restrictions on airport parking will also support the aim of increasing access to the airport by public transport. The Council will work with BAA and the adjoining local authorities to monitor airport parking and to consider development proposals.'

- The Mole Valley District *Core Strategy* (2009) notes that Gatwick Airport has *'an impact on the District through disturbance from aircraft noise on the ground*

and in the air; increased traffic on the rural road network of the south east of the District; and, the gradual expansion of the airport's activities on the land to the north side of the airport where it abuts Mole Valley.'

Heathrow

2.83 The proposals for expansion at Heathrow would have land take implications. The Commission has calculated these as follows:

LHR NWR

- 906Ha (including 43Ha for flood storage), land take would include the loss of 783 residential buildings with a further 289 potentially impacted by surface access, 1 educational building and a small number of public open spaces could be lost. There is substantial impact on Green Belt land (694ha) particularly in Hillingdon. This will act as a constraint to further development unless there is a change to planning policy and may further add to land pressure. There are examples of development on Green Belt land, such as Bluewater in Dartford, which is not to say it would be easy to deliver but it is possible.

LHR ENR

- 724Ha (including 58Ha for flood storage), land take would include the loss of 242 residential buildings with a further 165 potentially impacted by surface access, a small number of public open spaces could be lost. There is substantial impact on Green Belt land (580 ha) particularly in Spelthorne, Slough, Windsor and Hillingdon. This will act as a constraint to further development unless there is a change to planning policy and may further add to land pressure. There are examples of development on Green Belt land, such as Bluewater in Dartford, which is not to say it would be easy to deliver but it is possible.
- It is noted that the current HH master plan does not include land south of the perimeter road for commercial development. HH have noted they believe this will develop elsewhere and should be considered through the local planning process, rather than through the Commission's process. There is clearly a risk that if there is a large increase in demand for new offices or distribution centres for example that businesses which depend on a location very close to the airport may not find suitable sites available.

2.84 As previously noted, the land take associated with additional housing demand resulting from airport expansion could be challenging for individual authorities and potentially require de-designation of areas of Green Belt. Each borough council's plan contains a theme of greenfield land preservation; an intention synonymous with that of the development of town centres for housing purposes. While most

local authority plans have shied away from Green Belt development, this strategy may need to be considered given the potential housing pressures and limited alternatives. This being said, the low numbers per local authority rule out land supply as a barrier to airport expansion and realising the benefits associated with that expansion.

- 2.85** The environmental impacts of airport expansion at Heathrow are set out in detail across the Commission's consultation documents. Changes in technology and demographic changes as well the airfield redesign and increase in passenger numbers that would result from airport expansion mean that the environmental impacts of an enlarged Heathrow, whether under HAL's or HH's proposals, would be different to today. Nonetheless, how existing strategies seek to address the current and anticipated environmental impacts of the airport is worth considering:
- 2.86** The *Hounslow Local Plan* sets out that in recognition of environmental impacts it will '*oppose the future expansion of Heathrow, including additional runway and terminal capacity*' and '*consider the outcomes of the Government's Airports Commission with regard to Heathrow Airport and respond by revising the borough's spatial strategy if necessary*'. The Plan includes a commitment to seek to reduce the impact of noise from aviation and that it will expect development proposals to be outside of the 69 db LAeq 16h noise contour of Heathrow Airport where noise sensitive uses are proposed.
- 2.87** The *Hillingdon Local Plan* sets out that the council will not support 'any proposals that could lead to an increase in demand for flights from Heathrow, an increase in road congestion or significant adverse local environmental impacts', noting that:
- 'Airports are a major source of emissions that can have a damaging impact on local air quality as well as contributing to climate change. These impacts can be generated directly by aircraft, as well as the associated activities that occur on the ground... All development exploiting the benefits of Heathrow contribute to the poor air quality in the area. Further growth will exacerbate the problem. All new development associated with Heathrow should be challenged to minimise its impacts on air quality as far as possible.'*
- 2.88** The *Slough Core Strategy* (Dec 2008) also notes that proposals to build a third runway at Heathrow '*would result in a worsening in noise and air quality in the eastern part of Slough as well a general increase in congestion. The council has taken account of this as a possible constraint in preparing the Core Strategy.*'
- 2.89** The *Richmond Local Plan Core Strategy* (April 2009) suggests that further expansion at Heathrow would impact on residents and businesses through

increased development pressure, traffic congestion as well as increased noise and air pollution and set local policy to support:

- *maintenance of the 480,000 limit on total air transport movements;*
- *maintenance of the current system of segregated mode;*
- *maintenance of the current noise preferential routes;*
- *the discontinuation of night flights; and*
- *restrictions of the use of private cars and improvements to public transport including a southern rail link.*

2.90 The *London Plan* sets out that the Mayor,

'strongly opposes any further expansion at Heathrow involving an increase in the number of aircraft movements there, due to the adverse noise and air quality impacts already being experienced by residents and others in the vicinity of Heathrow and its environs'

Summary

2.91 In summary, the perceived impacts of airports in local residents and environment is identified an issue by local plan and strategy makers. Around Gatwick this has led to some concern over potential airport expansion. Around Heathrow, opposition to airport expansion owing to perceived environmental impacts is voiced in a number of strategies, including the London Plan.

Conclusions

2.92 An overview of existing plans and strategies is instructive in considering the place the airports currently occupy in strategic thinking and planning.

2.93 Airport expansion at Gatwick or Heathrow, alongside surface access investment already in progress such as Crossrail and HS2, would have the potential to substantially alter the role played by airports. This may include expanding potential economic benefits nationally and locally, increasing airport catchment areas and having an effect on the composition and size of local communities and businesses. Technological changes would combine with the impacts of airport expansion to alter the shape and scale of environmental impacts which are an important concern for local planners. Wider demographic trends will also play their part.

2.94 It is necessarily true that adding airport expansion to the range of factors which planners and strategy makers have considered in drawing up existing plans would

require some revision of those plans. The Commission has sought to consider the feasibility of such changes and whether and how airport expansion could serve broadly to support the strategic direction set out.

2.95 Expansion at Gatwick has the potential to align well with local and regional development strategies, providing potential increased employment and supporting economic development in the Wandle Valley corridor identified in the London Plan. Its growth could help foster development of the Gatwick Diamond. The impacts on the surrounding area of expansion (noise, environmental and potential housing growth) would need to be considered carefully in line with local concerns.

2.96 Expansion at Heathrow has the potential to align well with local and regional development strategies, providing significantly increased employment and housing in the surrounding boroughs and supporting economic development in the Heathrow Opportunity Area and Western Wedge and along an east-west axis in the Capital, identified as an 'engine for growth'. The impacts on the surrounding area of expansion (including noise, environmental and housing growth) would need to be considered carefully in line with local concerns. Perceived environmental impacts have been cited as a reason to oppose airport expansion, including in the London Plan.

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