

North Tyneside Council response to consultation on Newcastle International Airport Masterplan 2035

September 2018

Introduction

This is the response of North Tyneside Council (“the Authority”) to the consultation on the draft Newcastle International Airport Masterplan 2035 (“the draft Masterplan”), which is being undertaken by Newcastle International Airport Ltd (NIAL). The Authority welcomes the opportunity to comment on the proposals.

[Note. North Tyneside’s Cabinet Member delegated decision to submit a response to the consultation was taken on 10 September 2018. Since such decisions may be subject to a ‘call in’ process, this response should be treated formally as a draft until confirmation is received in due course.]

Outline of Response

The Authority is fully aware that Newcastle International Airport plays a vital role in linking people in the North East to the rest of Europe and worldwide, enabling visits to the region for business and tourism, and underpinning the region’s economy by enabling employers in the North East to do business internationally. This level of connectivity is specifically recognised in both the North Tyneside Local Plan and the North Tyneside Transport Strategy that the Authority has recently adopted.

You will see from our response that the Authority acknowledges the strategic aims of the Masterplan and notes the proposals to enable growth. The Authority would like consideration to be given to its comments which, in broad terms, relate to the approach to managing the environmental impacts, the measurement of the economic projections relating to jobs and passenger numbers, and ensuring strong joint working with Nexus.

Comments on Chapter 3 – Opportunities for Growth

North Tyneside is a great place to live, work and visit. We seek to support the development of tourism in our area and encourage visits to the borough’s attractions, and we recognise that the Airport’s plans to encourage inbound tourism represent an opportunity to secure increased visitor numbers, which will support the local economy.

Across the North of Tyne and the North East Combined Authority (NECA) we will work with Transport for the North (TfN) to explore opportunities to introduce long-haul flights to international hubs which could enhance opportunities for North East businesses to connect to new markets.

Comments on Chapter 4 – Masterplan Objectives

It is appropriate that the objectives of the draft Masterplan include the aim of facilitating inbound tourism as well as generating additional Gross Value Added (GVA) and becoming a greater contributor to the North East economy.

The Authority would request that sustainability considerations be given more emphasis in the objectives: specifically, the Authority would suggest that additional wording should be included as shown below:

“And ensure that: -

- 5. The Airport can grow sustainably and will appropriately **minimise and mitigate** our impact on the environment and our neighbours;*
- 6. We work closely with partners to deliver improved surface access infrastructure **which favours the use of sustainable transport** to support growth.”*

Comments on Chapter 5 – Policy, Regulations, and Guidance Review

Chapter 5, which covers policy review, should highlight the following relevant policy documents, all of which are currently referred to only in Chapter 10 on airport growth:

- i. the Government’s long-term vision for noise minimisation as set out in the Noise Policy Statement;
- ii. the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) document ‘Guidance for Airport Operators to produce noise action plans under the terms of the Environmental Noise (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended)’ (July 2013); and
- iii. the Environmental Noise Directive, which requires the adoption of Noise Action Plans to manage environmental noise and its effects.

The section (5.21-5.22) on the [National Planning Policy Framework](#) (NPPF) should note the NPPF’s requirement that planning policies and decisions should mitigate and reduce to a minimum potential adverse impacts resulting from noise from new development, and avoid noise giving rise to significant adverse impacts on health and quality of life.

This section makes reference (in 5.29) to the North Tyneside Local Plan. The Local Plan sets a Vision for 2032 for the borough to have “excellent transport links, and particularly with Newcastle city centre, Northumberland, South Tyneside, Newcastle International Airport and the Port of Tyne”, and notes (in section 10.19) that the priorities for the plan period include strengthening transport links, for both passengers and freight, to key locations including the regional transport hubs of Newcastle Central Station, Newcastle International Airport and the Port of Tyne. The Local Plan also notes (in section 8.76) that the Airport is a potential source of noise pollution to the north-west corner of the Borough, an area which is crossed by the flight path.

The North Tyneside Transport Strategy sets out the Authority’s aim to ensure that North Tyneside’s transport links remain competitive at national level, with the rest of Europe and internationally. It contains objectives to connect people with jobs and economic opportunities, to support the travel needs of tourists and visitors, and to improve environmental sustainability and local air quality and assist in reducing carbon emissions.

Comments on Chapter 6 – Forecast Airport Growth

It is noted that the forecast figures in the draft Masterplan for passenger numbers and aircraft movements are based on the higher growth forecast and the strategic rationale is understood.

Please see the response to Chapter 7 for our views on the stated forecasts.

Comments on Chapter 7 – Economic and Social Benefits of Growth

The Authority recognises the wider economic impact of the Airport and the international connectivity it provides in supporting the provision of more and better jobs in the North East, in line with the Strategic Economic Plan (SEP).

The Authority recognises that the draft Masterplan aims (under the higher growth scenario) for highly ambitious growth in the number of direct and indirectly supported jobs across the region from 18,900 in 2017 to 27,800 by 2035.

The Authority also notes that the draft Masterplan forecasts that (again under the higher growth scenario) the number of on-site jobs would increase by 38%, to 4,775, by 2035, partly as a result of the proposed development of further land around the airport site, within Newcastle and Northumberland, mainly for employment use. It is noted that over 70% of airport employment is ground-based, with the remainder provided by the airlines.

The Authority would wish to see more detail surrounding the profile of the economic data (i.e. jobs growth and economic impact) and the link with the predicted growth in passenger numbers. It would be helpful if confirmation can be provided on how these figures will be measured and reported on as the development of the Airport proceeds.

As more employees are taken on, the Authority would encourage the Airport to work with local organisations to promote recruitment opportunities to people in the local area, particularly those from communities which suffer concentrations of deprivation – this acts as a barrier to being able to gain a good job or accessing employment at all.

Comments on Chapter 8 – Development Plan

In this Chapter (in 8.7), the draft Masterplan reinstates the prospect of extending the Airport's runway (which it notes was proposed in the first Airport Masterplan in 2003 but removed in the 2013 revision), and consequently proposes to safeguard land for a 700m eastward runway extension.

The Authority understands that the proposal to safeguard land for a possible runway extension does not necessarily represent an intention to build one (8.12), and that the document expresses the hope that aircraft technological advances might negate the commercial need to extend the runway. The Authority also understands that the proposed runway extension would involve the development of Green Belt land. Should a planning application for an extension be brought forward, this will be dealt with in accordance with the planning process.

The Authority would wish to see more detail on how the noise contours are calculated and the assumptions made surrounding the anticipated expansion of them over time. Furthermore, because of the wider impacts on planning, the Authority would request that the predicted noise contours be updated on a frequent basis i.e. more regularly than the five-year Masterplan cycle. It would be helpful if confirmation can be provided of how frequently this will be updated and how it will be reported.

The Authority notes that the draft Masterplan specifies that, even without a runway extension, the specific area affected by noise levels above the level of 54 dB(A) would gradually increase. This affects a specific area in the north-west of North Tyneside as well as neighbouring areas of Newcastle and Northumberland.

Please see the response to Chapter 10 for further discussion of noise.

Comments on Chapter 9 – Surface Access Strategy

Travel to the Airport

The Authority notes that this Chapter constitutes the Airport's Surface Access Strategy, which involves setting targets to increase the use of more sustainable modes of transport for travel to the airport.

Encouraging a shift to more sustainable modes of transport is one of the key aims of North Tyneside's Transport Strategy that it developed and adopted during 2017.

The Authority notes the commitment (in 9.13) that the Airport will plan for how car-based travel can be made more efficient and sustainable. It is also noted that part of the role of a Surface Access Strategy is to demonstrate that the Airport's growth can be achieved without causing undue adverse local impacts and congestion.

The Authority notes that the draft Masterplan anticipates a 40% increase in peak daily vehicle movements to and from the Airport (Fig 27). Additional car journeys generated by the Airport have an impact on the local road network in our area, as well as contributing to air pollution. Clarification should be provided on whether the predicted growth is based on a continuation of current modal split, or whether it assumes that the targets for increased sustainable transport usage (Table 4) will be achieved in full.

Existing travel to the Airport is heavily car dominated, with 86% of passengers arriving in some form of motor vehicle (while 12% arrive by Metro and 1% currently use a service bus – Fig 21) and 92% of staff travelling by car (with 4% using Metro and 1% bus – Fig 23). Targets for the percentage of passengers and staff using all 'sustainable transport' modes, including car sharing, are set for 2025, 2030 and 2035. (Table 4 should be rearranged for clarity, as its layout currently gives the impression that percentages are for different modes of transport rather than different years.)

However, the stated actions do not appear to match the level of ambition set out in the growth targets. For example, on bus travel it commits by 2025 only to "explore options" to provide better incentives for staff to commute by bus; and there is currently no mention of e-bikes (electrically assisted bicycles), which could be an attractive alternative to the car particularly for staff who work shifts and have limited public transport options.

As a regional-scale destination which provides substantial employment and aims to expand, we consider that the Airport should be taking energetic steps to promote more sustainable transport to its customers and employees. The Authority therefore recommends the following steps:

1. The Airport should firmly commit to achieving its targets for the percentage of passengers and staff that use more sustainable transport, and make a commitment to resource its sustainable transport activities sufficiently to ensure that the targets are met.
2. A more detailed target, for people using each mode of transport, should be set for a year in the near future, e.g. 2021: this would enable effective monitoring of progress towards the 2025 target, and highlight where the Airport should introduce additional measures to support the use of specific modes of more sustainable transport.
3. In 'Key actions', references to providing "additional car parking in line with demand" need to be tempered to recognise the need to promote sustainable travel.

Bus and cycle access to the Airport site

Buses can currently only serve the Airport terminal via a circuitous route, entering and leaving the Airport at the same junction: hence only one bus service serves the Airport terminal itself (service 42A, which links to destinations in North Tyneside), while other bus routes stop some distance from the terminal.

The Authority would expect the Masterplan to commit to providing convenient through access for buses across the Airport site as areas of the site are redeveloped (this would also allow for the provision convenient, direct and protected routes into the site for cycling and e-bikes). The Authority would suggest that the key action to improve bus facilities (9.52) should be "by 2025", rather than "beyond 2025".

Access to the Airport and associated employment sites

The Authority notes that one of the key actions for 2025 is to deliver the Great Park Link Road to improve employment site access: the Authority considers that this link would be valuable in improving transport connections between North Tyneside and the Airport and its associated employment sites.

Potential direct heavy rail access

The potential for a heavy rail link to the Airport is recognised in the North Tyneside Local Plan (section 10.31) and the North East Combined Authority (NECA) Metro and Local Rail Strategy. The Authority notes that the draft Masterplan's key actions for "beyond 2025" include reinstatement of the Benton Curve (South-West), which is safeguarded in the Local Plan for this purpose. The Authority is aware that the Benton Curve and rail access to the airport are being considered as part of the Transport for the North (TfN) Energy Coasts study and there may be opportunities to work with the Airport further to build the case for this.

The Authority recognises that a direct heavy rail link to the Airport could encourage a switch from road to more sustainable rail transport, for passengers and potentially for certain types of cargo. It would also offer potential for high-speed train journeys to substitute for some domestic flights, with benefits for carbon reduction, following the opening of the eastern arm of HS2, which is expected before the end of the Masterplan period.

The Authority also notes that the draft Masterplan makes reference (9.39) to the long-term opportunity cited in the Metro and Local Rail Strategy of expanding the 'depot avoiding line' at South Gosforth, which in principle could allow for direct, faster Metro or local rail services to the Airport from North Tyneside.

The Authority would however emphasise that any proposals for the introduction of a heavy rail service should ensure that it is capable of operating without any detriment to the frequency or reliability of Metro services.

Joint working on transport matters

Overall, the Authority notes there are a number of statements made within this Chapter to work with or support Nexus in the delivery a number of key actions. The Authority would like to see a firmer commitment to continued joint working with Nexus on these matters and more generally those relating to the future of public transport journeys to the Airport: for example, the potential refurbishment of the Airport Metro station, and the hours of operation of services to the Airport. We would also support the potential for direct Metro services to and from the coast.

It would be useful for the draft Masterplan to specify how this will be reported through the recognised regional governance frameworks.

Comments on Chapter 10 – Sustainable Airport Growth

Noise

It is incumbent on both on the Authority and the Airport to comply with Defra's Noise Policy Statement for England (NPSE), which has three aims:

- i. avoid significant adverse impacts on health and quality of life;
- ii. mitigate and minimise adverse impacts on health and quality of life; and
- iii. where possible, contribute to the improvement of health and quality of life.

In accordance with the NPSE, it is for the Airport to develop and comply with its Noise Action Plan.

Noise is a material consideration in the planning process, and consideration must also be given to ensure a good living environment, particularly relating to garden areas. The North Tyneside Local Plan policy DM5.19: Pollution, specifies that proposals for development should have regard to the noise impacts arising from the Newcastle International Airport flight path. The Authority expects noise considerations to be given appropriate consideration in any planning applications relating to North Tyneside.

The growth of the airport will have an impact upon noise exposure levels, notably in a specific area of the north-west of North Tyneside and neighbouring areas of Newcastle and Northumberland. Noise contours included in the draft Masterplan suggest that the area affected by noise levels above the level of 54 dB(A) would gradually increase over each five-year period, reflecting increased numbers of flights as well as (for the year 2035) the potential runway extension. Should a runway extension be formally proposed, a planning application and Airspace Change proposal would be required and would be

determined in accordance with due process. It is understood that as part of any such proposal, consideration would be given to noise levels above a threshold of 51dB(A).

Aircraft Ground Noise

The Authority notes the statement that, should a runway extension be constructed, ground noise could impact on residential areas including Brunswick Village in North Tyneside (10.25) and the Authority would expect this to be effectively addressed in any proposals which may be brought forward for a runway extension.

Air Quality

Although the draft Masterplan forecasts a gradual reduction in NO_x per passenger (Fig 35), the Authority understands that, given the forecast increases in passenger numbers, this implies a 40% increase in total NO_x emissions by 2025. The Authority notes that the draft Masterplan proposes some specific measures to limit and monitor its emissions of air pollutants (10.48). It should also include a commitment that the Airport will implement further measures if the monitoring shows that air pollution per passenger is not decreasing in line with the forecast.

The draft Masterplan should include greater detail of the Airport's plans to monitor and reduce emissions of particulate matter (please note that the standard use of the phrase 'fine particulates' is to refer to PM2.5, and not to PM10 as stated in 10.42). If possible, the final version of the Masterplan should include a forecast for future emissions of particulate matter.

Climate Change and Energy

It is noted in the document that aviation accounts for 22% of carbon emissions from transport in the UK. It is stated that the Airport will develop a carbon and energy reduction strategy (10.65). The Masterplan should specify when this strategy is intended to be produced. It is also stated that the Airport encourages the use of more fuel-efficient aircraft (10.57). More detailed wording should be included to explain what actions the Airport takes in respect of this.

It is noted that the draft Masterplan sets targets for reducing carbon emissions from its own (ground-based) operations.