

**ABERDEEN CITY & SHIRE
 STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLANNING AUTHORITY**

Date: 22 June 2012

Title: Aberdeen Airport Draft Master Plan 2012

1 Purpose of Report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform the Strategic Development Planning Authority (SDPA) of the publication of a draft masterplan for Aberdeen Airport and to propose a response to the consultation.

2 Background

2.1 A UK White Paper '[The Future of Air Transport](#)' was published in 2003 which required the UK's 30 largest airports to produce masterplans to guide their future development, with '[Guidance on the Preparation of Airport Master Plans](#)' issued by the Department for Transport in 2004. The guidance envisaged that a master plan should provide a clear statement of intent on the part of an airport operator that will enable future development of the airport to be given due consideration in local and regional planning processes. It also required that the masterplan should be reviewed every five years.

2.2 Aberdeen Airport published the first [Aberdeen Airport Master Plan](#) in December 2006. This set out a long-term framework for the future development of the airport over a 25-30 year period and was used as a basis for engagement with communities and stakeholders.

2.3 Four major capital projects were identified in the first masterplan, three of which are now complete and one partially complete:

	Main Capital Projects	Current Status
1	Runway extension	Completed
2	International arrivals extension	Completed
3	850 new car parking spaces	Completed
4	6 new aircraft parking stands	3/6 parking stands provided to meet current demand.

2.4 The [Aberdeen City and Shire Structure Plan \(2009\)](#) supported the implementation of the 2006 masterplan as one of its 'proposals' on p26. The protection and improvement of access to the airport was also seen as essential to the economic future of the area (p13, para 4.4).

2.5 The Scottish Government's [National Planning Framework 2](#) was published in 2009 and identified improvements to Aberdeen Airport as a 'national development', focusing in particular on improvements in access by public transport; improvements to terminal facilities; and new parking arrangements.

- 2.6 SDPA officers, along with those of both Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire councils and Nestrans have taken part in a number of masterplan steering group meetings over the last few years. A joint SDPA / Nestrans seminar took place on 9 March 2012 to provide an early opportunity to be informed about the emerging draft masterplan.
- 2.7 The '[Aberdeen Airport Draft Master Plan 2012](#)' was published for consultation on 2 April 2012, with a closing date for responses of 30 June 2012.

3 Draft Masterplan

- 3.1 The draft masterplan sets out the context in terms of the airport as it is today as well as the wider legislative and policy context in which it sits. This is supplemented by an analysis of the forecast demand for air travel from Aberdeen and the economic, social and environmental impact of the airport. The masterplan looks forward to the development of the airport on two time horizons – to 2020 and to 2040, and concludes with a section on surface access and transport.
- 3.2 A range of factors are considered when identifying the changes likely to be required to the airport in the periods to 2020 and 2040 including changes to the runway and taxiway system, aircraft stands, terminal facilities, car parking, cargo and mail, aircraft maintenance, air traffic control, helicopters and ancillary facilities.
- 3.3 Changes are largely an evolution of the current masterplan, with timescales extended due to the declines in passenger numbers experienced in 2008, 2009 and 2010.
- 3.4 The majority of the development at the airport is anticipated to be confined within the current land ownership of the airport, although the draft masterplan does highlight that in the period to 2040 there may be a need to acquire the site currently occupied by Stoneywood Cricket Club to allow a southerly runway extension and associated realignment of the taxiway.

4 Proposed Response

- 4.1 A proposed response to the draft masterplan is attached at Appendix 1.
- 4.2 The proposed response welcomes the draft masterplan and the opportunity to comment on it at this stage, as well as highlighting three main issues which require consideration as the final masterplan is prepared.
- 4.3 The first main issue relates to the potential for future runway extensions at the airport. No mention is made of runway extensions in the 'Airport Development to 2020' section of the document (p36-37). If it is the case that no extension to the current 1,952m runway is likely in this period it would be useful if this could be stated explicitly to avoid any possible confusion. Although it is recognised in the 'Airport Development to 2040' section (p38-39) that the airport already has planning permission for an additional 300m runway extension, anything beyond

this will require planning permission. In order to plan appropriately for such a longer-term need, work over the next 3-4 years to clearly define the issues raised by such a possibility would help to inform the next generation of development plans and the next iteration of the masterplan.

- 4.4 The second main issue relates to surface access in both its narrow sense of transport accessibility (including the environmental implications of transport choices) but also in terms of the gateway role the airport plays for Aberdeen City and Shire and the perceptions and images people are left with following their experience of the airport.
- 4.5 The third main issue relates to the direct environmental impact of the airport and the impacts of its associated activities. This is covered largely in Chapter 6 – ‘Sustainable Development and the Environment’. Air travel is a significant emitter of CO₂ and it is recognised that the activities of the airlines are largely outwith the remit of the airport itself. However, the airport needs to build on previous actions and show leadership in addressing the impacts that are under its control or (influence) to minimise the impacts created by the expected growth in passenger numbers.

6 Financial Implications

- 6.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

7 Recommendations

- 7.1 It is recommended that the SDPA note this report and agree the consultation response attached at Appendix1.

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Appendix 1: Proposed Response

Letter to Mr Dan Peck (Head of Development, Aberdeen Airport)

Dear Mr Peck,

The Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Planning Authority (SDPA) is a partnership of Aberdeen City Council and Aberdeenshire Council whose primary objective is to prepare and keep under review a strategic development plan for the north east of Scotland. This leads to a focus on strategic and cross-boundary issues of which the future development of Aberdeen Airport is clearly one.

The airport is a key gateway to the city region and is vital for the future economic prosperity of the area. Enhanced connectivity is a key economic priority and the airport has an important role to play in this. As a consequence, the SDPA welcome the opportunity to comment on the draft masterplan prepared for Aberdeen Airport covering the development of the airport up to 2040.

The current Aberdeen City and Shire Structure Plan (2009) recognises the importance of the airport itself as well as improvements to surface access to it. The implementation of the current masterplan is identified as a proposal within the plan. The 'Main Issues Report' published in 2011 proposed that there should be more of a focus on the importance of enhanced connectivity for economic growth in the forthcoming strategic development plan and that the airport will continue to have a vital role given that Aberdeen will not benefit from the high-speed rail advantages that other cities will.

The SDPA welcome the investment BAA have put into Aberdeen Airport over the last five years since the publication of the last masterplan, including the runway extension implemented last year. This has been particularly welcome in the context of the economic uncertainty over recent years – with the strong passenger growth over the last year a welcome indication of the value of this investment.

There are three main issues to which the SDPA would draw your attention as you finalise the masterplan.

Airport Development to 2040

The first main point to raise in response to the draft masterplan relates to the issue of runway extensions. It is noted that most of the developments proposed at the airport over the period to 2040 do not differ substantially from the proposals in the current masterplan. However, the issues arising from any future need for a further runway extension in the period 2020-2040 should be given early consideration with relevant stakeholders to ensure that, if appropriate, longer-term safeguardings are put in place. The proposed strategic development plan to be published later this year will cover the period to 2035. This will be reviewed on a 4-5 year cycle and any issues raised by runway extensions should inform the next review. In addition, clarification of the situation in the period to 2020 would also be helpful in the text – although the plans at the back of the masterplan indicate that no extension is planned in this period this is not stated in the text. In a similar way, the plans does not differentiate between extensions already consented and those for which consent would still be required (which is mentioned in the text).

Surface Access

The second main observation related to surface access. Surface access to the airport is of key importance, not only in terms of convenience but also the impression it creates for visitors and the environmental impact it generates.

A number of key road schemes are highlighted in the masterplan and the SDPA shares Aberdeen Airport's frustrations around the delays that have been caused to these projects. However, it is hoped that these will be resolved over the coming months and work will be able to commence on their implementation. These will reduce journey times and increase reliability by car and public transport.

Although it is recognised that the surface access strategy will be updated in the coming year or so, it would be useful for the masterplan to provide more direction to that lower-level document.

As a key gateway to the area it would be useful for the masterplan to reflect on how the wider environment of the entrance to the airport might be enhanced as the airport develops – creating a stronger and more unified presence.

The structure plan highlights the importance of making walking, cycling and public transport attractive choices and this should be reflected more strongly in the masterplan for both staff and passengers. Reducing the percentage of journeys made by car is an important goal which will require concerted action to achieve. The increase in the use of bus services over recent years is welcome and provides a strong foundation for further aspirational targets. Issues such as alternative fuels for cars could also be highlighted, with the opportunity explored to make electric vehicle charging points available in the car parks. In all of these initiatives information provision to staff and passengers is vital, with the website providing a key opportunity.

Environmental Impact

The final point relates to the direct environmental impact of the airport and the impacts of its associated activities. This is covered largely in Chapter 6 – 'Sustainable Development and the Environment'. Air travel is a significant emitter of CO₂ and the sector is forecast to increase its emissions during a period when other sectors will have to implement significant reductions to cut emissions by 80%. In this context, while it is recognised that the activities of the airlines are largely outwith the remit of the airport itself, it is important that particular effort is made where emissions reductions can be made. The airport needs to build on previous actions and show leadership in addressing the impacts that are under its control or influence to offset the impacts created by the expected growth in passenger numbers. This section of the masterplan should explore the potential for the deployment of renewable energy on site for example (including the potential for a combined heat and power scheme), as well as targeting efficiency improvements in the way resources are currently used. Meeting these requirements of the structure plan could be set in the context of targets to reduce the airport's carbon footprint.

I trust that the above observations will be useful as you finalise the masterplan and I look forward to engaging with you further around some of these issues.