

4. EDINBURGH AIRPORT 'AIRSPACE CHANGE PROGRAMME' CONSULTATION

The committee heard a deputation by Helena Paul and Ian Mate from Edinburgh Airport Watch in respect of the Edinburgh Airport “Airspace Change Programme Consultation”. They raised concerns in relation to the financial impact to the Scottish economy caused by Scottish tourists going abroad on holiday, airport management on the ground due to the frequency of flights and the fact that aircrafts were now bigger and noisier. Further concerns raised included the serious effects on health and education and the life changing consequences for residents in West Lothian.

Particular concerns were raised with regard to the complexity of the consultation paper and it was alleged that information was flawed and missing from the original TUTUR consultation. Population figures were also miscalculated as consideration had not been given to the new build proposals in Winchburgh. It was also noted that the status quo had not been considered as an option.

Finally, the deputation recommended that the council appoint an independent aviation consultant as an independent adviser during this process.

Following conclusion of the deputation the committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration advising that the second consultation on airspace change had now been issued by Edinburgh Airport Ltd and confirmed that work had commenced on preparing a response to be submitted by West Lothian Council by 30 April 2017.

The report recalled the 2011 Edinburgh Airport Masterplan which laid down the development trajectory for the airport and highlighted the potential future increase in airspace capacity to cope with traffic growth by introduction of new technology.

In summer 2015 Edinburgh Airport carried out a trial of an additional new instrument based western departure flight path, known as TUTUR. This took air traffic over Uphall and the Bathgate hills, neither of which had been significantly exposed to air traffic previously. The trial was intended to gather data for a possible further permanent westbound departure flight path from the airport. The airport operator identified that additional flight paths were required to increase available runway capacity at the airport. Edinburgh Airport subsequently stated that it viewed the trial to have been successful but acknowledged there to be noise issues and alluded to taking a more comprehensive look at all flightpaths.

In June 2016, Edinburgh Airport launched “Let’s Go Further” consultation process, the aim of which was to examine the potential impact of altering flightpaths to allow for maximum operational benefits and to minimise community impact. Following initial activities, the airport embarked on a two phase public engagement and consultation process. The council’s

response to phase 1 consultation was attached as an appendix to the report. Phase 1 consultation response would be used as a point of reference when responding to phase 2 consultation, although it was noted that the second phase proposals had a change in emphasis therefore additional points would also be considered.

Phase 2 consultation had only recently been issued therefore had not yet received full consideration. Similar themes to the earlier response of minimising impact and promoting that on ground solutions were investigated to improve the desired efficiency prior to changes in airspace.

The report concluded that the second phase of the airspace change consultation had now been released with a response deadline of 30 April 2017.

The Environmental Health and Trading Standards Manager then responded to questions from members of the committee. He also advised that whilst concerns existed over noise and other environmental impacts, it must also be recognised that the proximity of Edinburgh Airport provided an economic benefit to West Lothian.

The committee members raised a number of concerns in respect of the consultation which they recommended should be taken into consideration when reporting to Council Executive. The following concerns were highlighted:

- Residents in Winchburgh had not been involved in the Phase 1 consultation process and therefore not given the opportunity to comment. Information regarding the population of Winchburgh was also understated as the new homes being built were not taken into account;
- The impact on children's health, wellbeing and education due to aircraft noise;
- Concerns about the high level of pollution in Broxburn Main Street and the impact the additional flights would have on pollution levels;
- Why West Lothian in particular was the main participant of new flight paths which did not have the same impact on the City of Edinburgh?;

Members of the committee made the following recommendations:

1. That the Children and Young People's Commissioner be contacted to find out if independent research had been carried out into the attainment levels of children who reside under flight paths with a high level of aircraft noise;
2. Further independent monitoring of the noise levels be carried out, delegated to the Head of Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration in advance of the final routes being identified to ensure that sufficient data was available;
3. That council should consider appointing an expert aviation consultant

to provide independent advice; and

4. Due to the complexity of the consultation document, it was recommended that officers should provide community councils with the advice and support required to assist them to complete Phase 2 consultation response.

The Local Area Committee was asked to note the launch of the second phase of consultation on the Airspace Change Programme and the intention to submit a proposed response to the consultation to the Environment PDSP and Council Executive for approval.

#### Decision

- To note the terms of the report;
- To note the comments raised by the deputation;
- To agree that member's comments and recommendations would be taken into consideration when the Phase 2 consultation response was being finalised for submission to Council Executive for approval.