

5. EDINBURGH AIRPORT PHASE 2 CONSULTATION ON AIRSPACE CHANGE

The Council Executive considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration advising that a second consultation on airspace change had now been issued by Edinburgh Airport Ltd and which had a response date of 30 April 2017.

The report recalled that in 2011 Edinburgh Airport laid down the development trajectory for the airport and highlighted the potential future increase in airspace capacity to cope with traffic growth by the introduction of new technology. In summer 2015 Edinburgh Airport carried out a trial of an additional new departure route known as “Tutor” with the intention to gather data for a possible west bound departure flight path from the airport. Edinburgh Airport subsequently stated that the trial had been successful but alluded to a more comprehensive look at all flightpaths.

In June 2016, Edinburgh Airport launched “Let’s go Further”, its airspace change programme. Following initial activities the airport embarked on a two phase public engagement and consultation process with Phase 1 aiming to gather views from communities involved and Phase 2 proposing specific flightpaths.

West Lothian Council had already approved a response to Phase 1 of the consultation and a copy of this was attached to the report at Appendix 4. The proposed response to the second round of consultation would make reference to the phase 1 response, highlighting areas where opinion appeared not to have been considered.

It was to be noted that the council’s proposed response to the phase 2 consultation had been subject to much discussion through the council’s local area committee’s and policy development and scrutiny panel’s at which a number of issues were raised. These were further explored in the report and included the need for change by the airport, noise pollution, air pollution, finances, accuracy of the consultation and economic development.

The Head of Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration continued to explain that the consultation included a survey tool which allowed for the electronic recording of opinion. The survey tool also asked a series of questions all designed to give responders the option to select which route they favoured over others. It did not provide an opportunity to reject a proposal or route. Therefore with this tight restriction it was proposed that the electronic response attached to the report at Appendix 2 would be sent to the airport and where the route change did not impact West Lothian the response would be left blank.

It was also proposed that a copy of the council’s response would be copied to not only to Edinburgh Airport Ltd, but also to the Aviation Minister, Civil Aviation Authority and The City of Edinburgh Council as

Planning Authority.

It was recommended that the Council Executive :-

1. Notes the content of the report and accompanying proposed consultation response;
2. Approves the response at Appendix 1 as the council's response to the consultation;
3. Approves the proposal that a letter be sent to Edinburgh Airport Ltd, the Civil Aviation Authority and the Minister for Aviation expressing concern about the bias of the consultation, the inaccuracies of data used, the lack of a status quo option and the negative impact upon West Lothian residents; and
4. Approves that should the airport progress with a proposal to the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) to change the airspace and West Lothian were invited to comment, that the engagement of an independent consultant be considered to assist with interpretation of flight path information and impact on the community wellbeing.

Decision

1. Approved the terms of the report and the consultation response; and
2. Agreed that a copy of the consultation response be sent to the Consultation Institute, local MP's, local MSP's and Lothian list MSP's.