

Further Modifications Justifications Paper: London Southend Airport and Environs Joint Area Action Plan

In response to the discussion and points raised at the examination in public (EIP) into the London Southend Airport and Environs Joint Area Action Plan (JAAP) two further modifications have been proposed by Southend Borough and Rochford District Council's in addition to those detailed in the letter from the Planning Inspector dated 20th May 2014. It is considered that these further modifications will compliment as well as echo the sentiments expressed in the Inspector's interim letter to the local authorities.

During the examination process the Inspector raised a need for flexibility within the JAAP, particularly in relation to delivery of key proposal sites. This need for flexibility mirrors the approach required by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) to ensure that development may be delivered that will satisfy market signals and ensures viability and competitive return. As such the local authorities have proposed two further modifications (i) to the use classes permissible in the Saxon Business Park to support delivery of a high tech development and (ii) to align the policy related to airport growth with the Section 106 agreement for the completed runway extension, which provides the absolute position for development at London Southend Airport.

The rationale for the amendment to Policy E3: Saxon Business Park, where Area 2 now includes B2 supporting uses as well as B1 uses (please see 'Schedule of Modifications' for actual policy changes), was to accord with a need for flexibility on a large business park which is considered a practical approach, increasing viability, is common place, especially next to an expanding airport such as London Southend Airport, and is in line with national policy.

The rationale for the amendment to Policy LS1: General Policy was to align the growth of the airport to the Section 106 agreement which accompanied the permission to extend the airport runway. This allows a maximum number of air transport movements (ATM's) of 53,300 ATM's; growth will, therefore, as it has already since the runway was extended for operation in 2012, be determined by market demand that operates within these absolute parameters.

Whilst a yearly 'million passengers per annum' (mppa) is commonly used in most media to illustrate use of an airport, this is most often expressed to demonstrate the current numbers an airport has reached in its use of assets rather than an expression of absolute capacity; it may be seen as a measure of consolidated usage, and is normally not an expression of a planning or forward planning coefficient. The local authorities used mppa of 2 million by 2020 as part of the evidence base for the JAAP as well as the runway expansion to determine a likely growth scenario by a specified date (for forward planning of infrastructure to ensure the roads and junctions would be able to meet the requirements of an expanded airport. It was therefore considered more appropriate to express the capacity of the airport in its absolute capacity terms i.e. the ATM's permitted under the Section 106 agreement for the runway expansion rather than the growth scenario used as part of the evidence base to ensure infrastructure would be sustainable and meet need.

It is considered that these further modifications will provide greater deliverability and effectiveness to the JAAP policies, and therefore, will only add to the soundness of the overall plan for development of this important area for Southend, Rochford and the wider area.