



**Southend-on-Sea Borough
Council & Rochford District
Council**

**London Southend &
Environs Joint Area Action
Plan - Submission Version**

**Sustainability Appraisal Non-
Technical Summary**

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1 Introduction

1.1 The sustainability appraisal

1.1.1 This report is the non-technical summary of the combined sustainability appraisal (SA) and strategic environmental assessment, of the submission version of the London Southend Airport and Environs Joint Area Action Plan (JAAP).

1.1.2 This non-technical summary intended to provide an overview of the findings of the appraisal. More detail of the process and outputs included in main report and this is available on the JAAP website.

1.1.3 The main purpose of carrying out an SA is to assess what the impacts might be of development proposed in the JAAP on the economy, the environment and local communities. Where potential negative effects are identified the SA then makes recommendations for how the JAAP could be modified, or controls put on development, to avoid or mitigate against these. This is part of a process where successive stages of the emerging JAAP are appraised to inform the plan preparation process.

1.1.4 The full SA report is a public document and its purpose is to show the relationship between sustainability development and the content of the JAAP. The SA report allows readers of the plan to:

- Get an idea of how effective the JAAP might be in delivering more sustainable development;
- Where there might be adverse impacts and how the JAAP proposes to mitigate these;
- Where there is potential for the JAAP to go further in seeking sustainable development; and
- Residual sustainability implications of development proposed in the JAAP.

1.1.5 Proposals for the airport are already quite well advanced meaning the JAAP can only have limited scope in influencing how it will grow in the future. Development is already underway at the airport that would allow for its expansion to accommodate 2 million passenger per annum, including an extended runway and new terminal buildings. However, the JAAP does set the principles that will be used to manage and regulate this growth, for instance setting noise and operation limits. The JAAP also sets the framework for development in the airport environs, which includes the growth of several business parks.

2 Sustainability appraisal stages

2.1 The Sustainability Appraisal

2.1.1 The SA is a process that continues throughout the preparation of the JAAP. So far, the appraisal has included several stages and reports, some available for public comment and some not. These demonstrate the feedback process between plan making and the sustainability appraisal, allowing sustainability considerations to be integrated into the JAAP during preparation.

2.1.2 The SA reports from earlier stages of appraisal are available on the Southend-on-Sea Borough Council Local Development Framework (LDF) website.

2.1.3 **Scoping report:** The original scoping report was prepared in January 2008 by Halcrow Consultants. This sets report sets the context for the sustainability appraisal by identifying the main sustainability issues in the development area. The report was updated by Baker Associates in 2010.

2.1.4 **SA of Issues and Options:** The purpose of this stage of the appraisal was:

- to contribute to the development of a sustainable preferred option for the Airport and Joint Area regeneration
- to identify key issues to be addressed at later stages of the Action Plan, including the preferred option stage
- to ensure compliance with procedures and practices for undertaking sustainability appraisal.

2.1.5 At this stage of the SA each of the options for proceeding with the JAAP was assessed using the sustainability objectives against a seven point scale. This scale ranged from having a Very Positive impact against sustainability objectives, through having a Neutral effect to having a Very Negative impact. This stage was also undertaken by Halcrow.

2.1.6 **SA of the preferred options JAAP:** This was the first stage of SA completed by Baker Associates, now Peter Brett Associates, and began with a review of material to date. The SA was of the February 2009 'preferred options' version of the JAAP. Due to the timing of the appraisal the SA report prepared was not a public consultation document. Instead, this SA report was used as a tool to inform plan makers and ensure that sustainability considerations were full taken into account in the JAAP.

2.1.7 The appraisal at this stage appraised each policy area to identify the main sustainability impacts.

2.1.8 **SA of the Submission version:** This is the current stage of the SA, where the content of the proposed submission JAAP is the subject of sustainability appraisal. This was initially prepared as a draft report in September 2010, with further revision in November 2011, revised again in September 2012 and then this SA report of a further revision of the

submission in February 2013. At each of these stages of SA a version of the report was prepared in time to allow plan makers to take into account the findings of the appraisal.

- 2.1.9** The SA report also considers the implementation and delivery plan for the airport. This plan is a vital component of securing sustainability benefits and avoiding impacts.

2.2 Other appraisal and assessment

- 2.2.1** In addition to this SA, the airport planning application has also been subject to other environmental and sustainability appraisals. Additional assessment has been necessary evidence to support the planning application, and has included Environmental Impact Assessment and ecological assessment.

- 2.2.2** Developing JAAP proposals has also included site-wide environmental assessments, including on noise, ecology, and flood risk assessment. There is also need to ensure there will be no significant adverse impacts of airport development on internationally designated wildlife sites and the species of importance found on them.

3 The sustainability objectives

3.1.1 A set of sustainability objectives have been developed for the sustainability appraisal (SA). These objectives are based on agreed national definitions of sustainable development, but adapted using the information gathered at scoping to tailor them to the needs of this SA and airport development. They cover a range of sustainability issues related to the protection of the environment and natural resource, the economy and society.

3.1.2 The purpose of the objectives is to provide a consistent definition of sustainable development for the SA process. The emerging objectives, policies and proposals of the JAAP are then tested against them as part of a process of systematic appraisal. Table 1 shows the sustainability objectives.

Table 1: Sustainability objectives

Topic	Objective
Economy	
Local economy	To improve the vitality and viability of the airport, and to achieve sustainable levels of prosperity and economic growth
Employment and Wealth Creation	To maximise economic benefits of the thriving airport, enhance wealth creation factors and emphasise local strengths and qualities to attract investment.
Environment	
Biodiversity	To maintain and enhance areas of importance for wildlife and nature conservation including species diversity, as an integral part of economic and social development.
Water	To maintain and enhance the quality of ground water and sustain good quality water resources, wherever possible
Impacts of climate change	To reduce the effects of climate change
Flooding	To reduce the risk of flooding on and off-site
Material assets	To improve the quality of development through use of local sourced, recycled and efficient building materials
Soil	To protect greenfield land as well as enhance quality of soils, wherever possible.
Air	To ensure high quality environment for local communities and other sensitive receptors
Noise	
Waste	To reduce the use of primary resources and the quantity of waste going to final disposal
Energy and climate change mitigation	To increase opportunities for renewable energy generation.
Accessibility and	To enable people to have similar and sufficient levels of access to

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accessibility to key services Transport	services and promote sustainable transport measures
Landscape and Townscape	To maintain the quality and setting of landscapes and townscapes
Social	
Safety/ Health and Risk	To improve overall levels of health, create safe environments by creating healthy places to live and by reducing crime/fear of crime
Education and skills	To improve the education and to assist people to gain skills and fulfil their potential and increase their contribution to the community.
Community (cross cutting theme linked to accessibility to services)	To nurture a sense of belonging in a cohesive community where people live and work
Housing	To provide opportunity for people to meet their housing needs

4 Findings of the sustainability appraisal

- 4.1.1** This SA has been undertaken under the expectation that the expansion of the airport operations will take place to accommodate 2 million passengers per annum by 2030, with numbers increasing annually to that date.
- 4.1.2** Expansion will take place as a result of a lengthened runway, which already has planning permission, allowing the use of more modern planes favoured by airline operators. Other development will include the expansion of the airport terminal, new business parks in Rochford and Southend and expanded maintenance, repair and overall (MRO) facilities at the airport, as well as relocated public open space and road improvements.
- 4.1.3** The Joint Area Action Plan (JAAP) has an important role to play in bringing development forward and setting out the criteria to control airport operations to reduce impacts. The JAAP objectives are to deliver planned development so as to minimise impacts on local communities and the environment.
- 4.1.4** Based on an assessment of the characteristics of the JAAP area the sustainability appraisal (SA) identifies a number of topics the plan should address. These topics are:
- Operational controls of the airport to reduce disturbance to local residents and other sensitive receptors;
 - A strategy for delivering economic growth in the airport environs, meeting the needs of the resident workforce (and potential workforce);
 - Delivering a strategy that minimises transport impacts on communities in Southend and achieves a mode shift away from car use;
 - Set measures to ensure the natural environmental environment is protected and enhanced wherever possible, despite the loss of greenfield land; and
 - Makes sure new development makes more sustainable use of resources, including energy, water and materials.
- 4.1.5** The expansion of the airport will have inevitable adverse impacts on sustainable development through encouraging air travel. The extended runway can accommodate more fuel efficient and quieter planes. However, expansion will mean more flights and therefore an overall a greater impact than at present. The JAAP also provides for growth of the employment areas around the airport and associated infrastructure enhancement.
- 4.1.6** The SA identifies a number of potential sustainability impacts from development proposed through the JAAP. These impacts are:

4.1.7 Environment:

- **Climate change** from the greenhouse gas emission from aircraft and their associated contribution to global warming; the impacts will result from increased UK airport capacity and therefore may not be solely from aircraft using London Southend;
- **Increased surface transport** from additional passengers and employees of the airport and associated business parks;
- Greater **noise** impacts on residents in Southend; even with quieter planes there will be an increase in the number of planes;
- Airport expansion and employment growth could increase congestion on already busy roads, leading to a deterioration in local **air quality** with adverse impacts on health, wellbeing and possibly economic growth and biodiversity;
- Loss of **greenfield** land could have adverse impacts for biodiversity. Several parts of the JAAP site have been identified as having the potential to support protected species.
- There will also be a loss of **arable land** and new built development will change the settlement character;
- Increased development increase surface water runoff that has the **potential to pollute** the water courses that cross the site;
- Several proposed development sites are at high risk of **flood**; and
- The JAAP is not specific on **design** requirements for new development, meaning there is a risk of development having adverse impacts on the built environment character.

4.1.8 Economic:

- Benefits for the Southend and Rochford economies from **employment growth**;
- Possible **risks to economic growth** in other parts of Rochford and Southend from employment focus at this location; and
- Opportunities for **skills training** as part of development, allowing local people access to skilled jobs in the aviation industry.

4.1.9 Social:

- Public transport, walking and cycling **access improvements** to the JAAP site, including existing business parks;
- Runway extension has resulted in the park south of the airport being bisected by a **new road**, this may have reduced the quality of the park for recreation;

- Impact on the **historic heritage** including the Grade I listed Church of St Laurence and All Saints and Grade II listed Cherry Orchard House;
- Impacts from the relocation of the **Westcliff Rugby Club** to an alternative site; and
- Impacts on local communities from a **change in character** as a result of a change in the character of the place where they live from urban fringe to more strongly urban.

4.1.10 The major positive impacts of the JAAP will be from securing economic growth with benefits for the economy of the wider South Essex area. Identifying land for employment in this area will help retain businesses in the area as they grow as well as providing attractive space for inward investment. The JAAP also allows control policies to be put in place that will help manage the effects of airport expansion and continued operation.

4.1.11 The SA identifies several ways in which the sustainability performance of airport expansion and employment development proposals could be enhanced and impacts mitigated against. Possible measures to mitigate impacts include:

- The airport meeting operational controls and conditions set through Section 106 Agreements;
- Additional site specific assessment, such as Flood Risk Assessment or ecological assessment where it is required;
- Measures to help reduce car use, including preparation of the Airport Surface Access Strategy, Travel Plans and improved walking and cycling connectivity;
- Freight and network management proposals will help reduce the impacts of congestion on the local environment, with benefits also for attracting businesses;
- Release of some of the employment proposals after 2021 could help control the supply of employment land and help deliver economic development elsewhere in the two districts;
- Use of developer obligations to fund infrastructure and other improvements;
- Preparation of developer guides, including a site-wide Masterplan and developer information pack; and
- Preparation and implementation other strategies and plans, such as the South Essex and Southend Local Transport Plan.

4.1.12 The SA recognises the importance of the JAAP not repeating higher tier policy, but the JAAP policies can a useful layer of site specific detail. JAAP policies can also be used to fill possible policy gaps in other tiers of policy and provide a coherent policy for area for the two local authorities. The SA suggests ways that additional JAAP policy or a site-wide Masterplan could help achieve sustainability benefits and mitigate adverse impacts. Further considerations for the JAAP and the preparation of the Masterplan could include:

- Details on how surface water drainage could be used to avoid increasing flood risk, as well as a way of managing pollution impacts of surface water run-off,
- Unified design codes for new buildings to fit the surroundings to benefit the urban fringe area;
- Measures for nature conservation protection and enhancement, such as protection of green linking features and habitat enhancement measures identified through the ecological assessment ;
- Implementation of measures to protect internationally designated wildlife sites, as recommended in the HRA report;
- Protection of heritage features and their settings wherever possible, including listed buildings;
- Setting an area-wide renewable or low carbon energy target, this could include requiring all new development to be built for future connectivity to a district combined heat and power system;
- Operational controls to manage noise from MRO activities and/or site specific noise mitigation measures;
- Links to South Essex green grid and creating new multifunctional green infrastructure, with benefits for biodiversity, access, healthy lifestyles and landscaping;
- Requirements for airport expansion proposals to undertake a health impact assessment, to look at the wider impacts on health from airport growth;
- Lighting, including requiring a lighting strategy for all new development and night time airport operation;
- Details of co-ordinated initiative for local skills training;
- Greater detail of joint working possibilities to co-ordinate development in the JAAP area to reduce impacts and maximise benefits;
- Road network management to avoid congestion; and
- Carefully designed new roads and routes, to include measures to naturally slow traffic and segregated safe routes for cyclists and pedestrians.
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