

GATCOM

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AIRPORTS COMMISSION – UPDATE

REPORT BY SECRETARIAT

SUMMARY

This paper, as presented to the GATCOM Steering Group on 10 January 2013, provides an update on the composition of the Airports Commission, its terms of reference and operating protocol for members' information.

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 On 2 November, the Secretary of State for Transport announced the terms of reference for the Airports Commission along with the appointment of the group of leading academics and aviation experts who would help Sir Howard Davies.

1.2 The Commission's role will be to identify and evaluate how any need for additional capacity should be met in the short, medium and long term whilst maintaining a UK-wide perspective. The Commission will need to ensure it undertakes a thorough assessment of all the issues by considering all relevant factors including the economic, environmental and social costs and benefits and where necessary, the operational and technical deliverability.

2. THE COMMISSIONERS

2.1 The Commissioners who will support Sir Howard Davies are:

- Sir John Armitt CBE, the former Chairman of the Olympic Delivery Authority and former Chief Executive of Network Rail.
- Professor Ricky Burdett, Professor of Urban Studies at the London School of Economics and director of the LSE Cities research centre.
- Vivienne Cox, the former CEO and Executive Vice President of BP Alternative Energy and a former member of the BP Executive Management Team.
- Professor Dame Julia King, Vice Chancellor of Aston University and a member of the Committee on Climate Change, with a background in the aerospace industry.
- Geoff Muirhead CBE, the former CEO of the Manchester Airport Group.

3. TERMS OF REFERENCE

3.1 The Commission's terms of reference are:

- The Commission will examine the scale and timing of any requirement for additional capacity to maintain the UK's position as Europe's most important aviation hub; and it will identify and evaluate how any need for additional capacity should be met in the short, medium and long term.
- It should maintain a UK-wide perspective, taking appropriate account of the national, regional and local implications of any proposals.
- It should engage openly with interested parties and members of the public, providing opportunities to submit evidence and proposals and to set out views relevant to its work.
- It should seek to engage with a range of stakeholders, including with local and devolved government as well as the Opposition, to build consensus in support of its approach and recommendations.

The Commission should report no later than the end of 2013 on:

- its assessment of the evidence on the nature, scale and timing of the steps needed to maintain the UK's global hub status; and

- its recommendation(s) for immediate actions to improve the use of existing runway capacity in the next five years – consistent with credible long term options;

The assessments and recommendations in the Commission's interim report should be underpinned by a detailed review of the evidence in relation to the current position in the UK with regard to aviation demand and connectivity, forecasts for how these are likely to develop, and the expected future pattern of the UK's requirements for international and domestic connectivity.

Its assessments of potential immediate actions should take into account their economic, social and environmental costs and benefits, and their operational deliverability. It should also be informed by an initial high-level assessment of the credible long-term options which merit further detailed development.

The Commission should report no later than summer 2015 on:

- its assessment of the options for meeting the UK's international connectivity needs, including their economic, social and environmental impact;
- its recommendation(s) for the optimum approach to meeting any needs; and
- its recommendation(s) for ensuring that the need is met as expeditiously as practicable within the required timescale.

3.2 The Commission has been asked to base the recommendations in its final report on a detailed consideration of the case for each of the credible options. This should include the development or examination of detailed business cases and environmental assessments for each option, as well as consideration of their operational, commercial and technical viability.

3.3 As part of its final report in summer 2015, the Commission should also provide materials, based on this detailed analysis, which will support the Government in preparing a National Policy Statement to accelerate the resolution of any future planning applications for major airports infrastructure.

4. OPERATING PROTOCOL

4.1 An operating Protocol for the Commission has been published and is available on the DfT's website at:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/111177/operating-protocols.pdf

4.2 Formal Commission meetings will normally take place once a month. Alongside its formal meetings, the Commission intends to develop and undertake a programme of visits to inform and strengthen its understanding of operational, environmental, economic and other issues of relevance to its remit.

4.3 The Commission intends to appoint an External Advisory Panel, which will include key experts in relevant areas – including economic, environmental, operational and technical issues. The Panel will hold quarterly meetings, and members of the Panel may also be requested on an ad hoc basis to provide papers, presentations or other advice to the Committee on topics of relevance to its work.

4.4 The Commission also intends to engage openly with interested parties and members of the public, providing opportunities to submit evidence and proposals and to set out views. An invitation to attend a GATCOM meeting has been sent to the Commission and a response is awaited.

5. EVIDENCE GATHERING

5.1 The Commission will seek evidence and proposals through three key channels:

- A guidance document, to be published no later than January 2013, for those intending to make proposals for meeting the UK's international connectivity needs, setting out how and when submissions can be made and the factors that the Commission will wish to take into account in considering them. These could comprise proposals for making best

use of existing airport capacity, for new capacity, or for other approaches, and could include short-, medium- and long-term options.

- A series of working papers on thematic issues. It is intended that these will summarise the current evidence base and will provide an opportunity for interested parties to make their views known to the Commission and submit additional evidence for consideration. The first of these working papers will focus on aviation demand forecasting and will be published in January 2013. Future working papers are expected to cover issues including (but not restricted to) the economic benefits of aviation, the climate change impacts of aviation, aviation industry operating models, the local environmental effects of aviation including noise and air quality, and aviation technology development.
- Public evidence sessions at which the Commission will take evidence from invited expert witnesses on key issues, informed by the Commission's working papers and evidence provided in response. These hearings will usually be chaired by Sir Howard Davies and reports of each session will be published on the Commission's website (currently under development).

5.2 It is hoped that more detail about the way in which the Commission's work will be taken forward will become clear towards the end of January when the guidance document and the working papers on aviation demand forecasting are published.

6. LONDON ASSEMBLY'S TRANSPORT COMMITTEE INVESTIGATION INTO AIRPORT CAPACITY

6.1 Since the announcement on the Airport Commission's terms of reference, the London Assembly's Transport Committee has launched its own investigation into airport capacity in London, and is seeking views from relevant organisations to inform its investigation.

6.2 The Transport Committee's investigation is focusing on the arguments for and against changing existing airport capacity in London and the different options for addressing the issue of airport capacity in the short, medium and long-term, including more rational use of existing airport capacity and a second runway at Gatwick. The Committee will set out the findings from its investigation in a written submission to the Airports Commission. The closing date for submissions to the Assembly is 9 January 2013.

6.3 The Transport Committee's investigation will build on the Assembly's past work on aviation. In the last ten years the Assembly has frequently opposed plans for expanding Heathrow, finding there was an insufficient economic case for expansion and inadequate proposals for addressing the environmental costs and impacts. During this investigation the Transport Committee will seek to answer the following key questions:

- What are the arguments for and against changing existing airport capacity in London?
- What are the current levels of airport capacity and the current and future estimates of demand for aviation travel? What is the basis for the estimates?
- What are the options in the short, medium and long-term for addressing the issue of airport capacity?
- What issues need to be taken into account when assessing each option for addressing airport capacity?

6.4 The work of the Assembly was circulated to all GATCOM members on 6 December advising that given the options that the Assembly will be investigating, the Secretariat was of the view that it would not be appropriate for GATCOM to comment at this stage as it is unlikely that the Committee would be able to reach a consensus on whether or not there should be a second runway at Gatwick. No comments from members have been received. It is therefore suggested that GATCOM does not submit evidence to the Assembly's Inquiry.

6.5 The Secretariat will keep a watching brief on the work of the Assembly as the written submissions received will be posted on their website.

RECOMMENDATIONS agreed by the GATCOM Steering Group at its meeting on 10 January 2013:

- (1) That the terms of reference and working protocol for the Airports Commission be noted; and

(2) That the London Assembly's Transport Committee Investigation into Airport Capacity be noted and that GATCOM does not submit evidence to the Assembly's Inquiry at this stage.

Paula Street
SECRETARIAT