

SOUTH EAST ENGLAND COUNCILS EXECUTIVE MEETING



Date: 24 March 2017

Subject: **Heathrow expansion: Draft Airports National Policy Statement**

Report of: Heather Bolton, SEEC Director

Recommendations:

Members are asked to:

- i. Support a SEEC response to Government consultation on a Draft Airports National Policy Statement, highlighting the need for infrastructure investment before any airport expansion.
- ii. Provide comments **by 18 May 2017** on the points suggested below for inclusion in a SEEC response. The Chairman and Deputy Chairman will approve the final response.

1. Background

- 1.1 In 2016 the Government backed proposals for a new third runway at Heathrow, located to the northwest of the existing runways. In February 2017 the Department for Transport launched consultation on an underpinning document: *Draft Airports Policy Statement: new runway capacity and infrastructure at airports in the South East of England*. Consultation runs until 25 May 2017.
- 1.2 During the airports debate, SEEC members have broadly supported expansion as a way to maintain global competitiveness and maximise the potential for South East and UK economic growth. Views remain mixed on the merits of expansion at Heathrow or Gatwick but there is clear consensus on the need for significant infrastructure investment in advance of any new runway. The current consultation provides a further opportunity for SEEC members to press the case for investment that will mitigate the impacts of airport expansion for South East residents, businesses and the environment.

2. Suggested points for consultation response

- 2.1 Building on SEEC previous work (eg input to the Airports Commission) suggested consultation response points are set out below:
 - i. **Need for additional airport capacity**
 - Broad SEEC support for expansion to help maintain South East and UK global economic competitiveness and support new job creation.
 - ii. **Government's preferred option: Heathrow northwest runway**
 - Member opinion remains divided on the merits of expansion at Heathrow or Gatwick.
 - iii. **Impacts and requirements**
 - There is a need for greater investment in surface access – especially public transport – for all South East airports. There are concerns that current surface access proposals lack ambition. A step change in investment is required to reduce transport congestion and the negative impacts this has on South East residents, businesses and air quality.
 - There is also a need to invest in a fully integrated, wider strategic transport network to ensure non-airport traffic has access to viable alternative routes to avoid adding to congestion around airports. This should include investment in better transport links to other South East global gateways, such as Dover, Portsmouth and Southampton.
 - There is a need to invest in wider community infrastructure – for example the schools, health and local services that will be required to support the new housing needed for additional airport/ supply chain employees moving to the South East.
 - There is a need to protect the environment and avoid degrading the quality of life of South East residents. This could include:
 - Measures to ensure protected National Parks, AONB and Green Belt are not irrevocably damaged by airport expansion.
 - Detailed proposals on how increased aviation capacity could reduce the need for night flying to lessen noise impacts for residents under flight paths.
 - Measures to incentivise technical and operational changes in the aviation sector that will reduce aircraft noise and pollution, alongside penalties for missing Government-set targets.

- 2.2 Member comments, suggestions or additions are welcome on the outline consultation response points above. Please email heatherbolton@secouncils.gov.uk by 18 May 2017.