

Planning Committee

10 am, Thursday 11 August 2016

Consultation on Airspace Change Programme

Item number	7.3
Report number	
Executive/routine	Executive
Wards	All

Executive summary

The purpose of this report is to approve a formal response to Edinburgh airport operator's consultation on planned changes to the Edinburgh's airspace flight paths.

The airport operator is planning to use more tightly define airspace flight paths by taking advantage of modern technology and to facilitate the expansion of the use of Edinburgh airport. The response identifies issues for further consideration with regard to the noise impact on Edinburgh residents and the impacts on habitats and designated sites of national/international importance.

Links

Coalition pledges	P15 , P28
Council priorities	CP2 , CP8 , CP11
Single Outcome Agreement	SO1 , SO2

Consultation on Airspace Change Programme

Recommendations

- 1.1 It is recommended that Committee:
 - 1.1.1 Approves Appendix 3 as its response to the Airspace Change Programme consultation; and
 - 1.1.2 To refer this report to the Transport and Environment Committee for information.

Background

- 2.1 The Airspace Change Programme is a consultation paper that sets out how the Edinburgh airport operator intends to expand airport passenger traffic, ensuring that it continues to support Scotland's aspirations for expansion of airport use in a safe and effective way. The key element of this proposal is the modernisation of the airport's existing aircraft arrival and departure routes.
- 2.2 The existing airspace routes used by aircraft (termed 'conventional' routes) rely on the 1950s technology of ground based radio beacons. A well established more modern and therefore accurate form of navigation is proposed, called 'area navigation' (RNAV). This uses a combination of satellite and ground-based navigation technology to permit aircraft to follow a more precisely defined path over the ground with far greater accuracy than is possible with conventional routes. This in turn enables pilots to fly pre-determined, predictable arrival and departure profiles.
- 2.3 Processes are under way at a European level which require modernisation of the route system for the UK and other European countries. If the UK is to keep pace with the changes in the surrounding countries, airspace routes need to be upgraded to RNAV standards.
- 2.4 As part of the process of modernising the airspace routes Edinburgh airport is required to carry out a two stage consultation process.

Main report

Proposed Airspace Changes

- 3.1 The Edinburgh Airport operator is planning to modernise Edinburgh City airspace as this will:
 - 3.1.1 ensure the airport can meet existing and future demand by increasing the capacity of its runway;

- 3.1.2 make improvements to routes to allow flights to depart more frequently with fewer delays;
 - 3.1.3 make efficiency improvements to the arrival routes based on a newly-positioned hold pattern;
 - 3.1.4 allow aircraft to position more accurately allowing arrival and departure routes to be flown more accurately;
 - 3.1.5 help minimise the impact to fewer people on the ground; and
 - 3.1.6 meet legal obligations to keep pace with changes across Europe.
- 3.2 The aim is to meet these requirements, maximising the benefits to Edinburgh and Scotland whilst minimising any negative impacts. Where the airport operator is seeking to change a flight path, it will be seeking to minimise the population impacted under the route. When following RNAV routes, aircraft will follow the routes more consistently than they do today. This is due to the improved track-keeping ability of RNAV. Improved track-keeping means that there will be less dispersion of aircraft either side of each route. This means a reduction in the overall area regularly overflown, albeit with an increase in the concentration of over-flights in some areas. The amount of dispersal of existing aircraft flightpaths can be seen in the illustrations from the consultation document in Appendix 1. As RNAV routes are flown more accurately, they also open up the possibility of designing route configurations to specifically address local environmental issues, such as the provision of respite routes to share noise impacts more equitably.
- 3.3 The consultation exercise is a 2 stage process. In this initial consultation the Airport operator is seeking views on broad airspace design envelopes (areas within which each flight path may be positioned). These envelopes are shown on a map base in Appendix 2. However, at this stage it is not clear where within the design envelopes the RNAV routes will be specifically placed. This initial consultation seeks local information from consultees and stakeholders that will help the airport operator to determine how to balance the benefits and impacts to provide the best solution for the region as a whole.
- 3.4 What is clear from the consultation material is that a significant proportion of the Edinburgh urban area is outwith all the airspace design envelopes. In effect aircraft circle around the urban area. This means that none of the Council's noise management areas or designated quiet areas are affected. In addition, where aircraft are at high altitudes, 4000ft or more, the noise impact for residents is significantly diminished, to the level that would be expected about one metre from an average vacuum cleaner. Therefore, the key areas of concern are at the ends of the runway from approaching and departing aircraft.

Proposed Response

- 3.5 The attached response (Appendix 3) sets out the issues which should be taken into account by the Airport Operator in developing specific flight path options. In particular, the key issues are:
- 3.5.1 The flight paths could affect international designated sites in the Firth of Forth and therefore there may be a requirement for a Habitat Regulations Appraisal (HRA) to be undertaken by the consenting authority.
 - 3.5.2 In identifying new flight paths the noise impacts on areas to the east and west of the existing main runway should be taken into account in order to minimise the impact on existing and future residential areas.

Next Steps

- 3.6 Once the consultation period has ended a feedback report will be prepared by the airport operator and published on their website. This will include details of the main issues that have been raised by stakeholders during the consultation period. Feedback from this initial consultation will then inform the detailed design process and will influence their design options for the arrivals and departure routes.
- 3.7 Once detailed route options have been developed, a further consultation exercise will take place where views will be sought on the viable route options. After the further consultation, the Edinburgh airport operator will develop an airspace change proposal for submission to the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) which must demonstrate that the proposed design achieves the best balance possible.
- 3.8 It is a requirement of the airspace change process that the Edinburgh airport operator provides the CAA with full details of the consultation (including copies of responses and correspondence) together with all documentation necessary for the promulgation of the proposed RNAV routes.
- 3.9 The CAA will then review the proposal (which can take up to 17 weeks) and reach a regulatory decision. If the proposal is approved, the implementation process could take a further twelve weeks. The target date for the RNAV routes to come into operation is summer 2018.

Measures of success

- 4.1 Success can be measured by the extent to which the airport operator has taken account of the Council's comments during the preparation of the draft flight path options.
- 4.2 Stakeholders are kept well informed of opportunities to be involved in the consultation process.

Financial impact

- 5.1 There are no direct financial impacts arising from this report.

Risk, policy, compliance and governance impact

- 6.1 Failure to submit a consultation response by the due date may result in the airport operator failing to take into account an important concern when preparing the draft flight path options.
- 6.2 The report does not raise any health and safety, governance, compliance or regulatory issues other than those set out above.

Equalities impact

- 7.1 There is no equalities impact arising as a result of this report's proposed response. However, it is recommended that the airport operator should consider their duty to undertake an equalities and rights assessment as part of the process of reviewing airspace flight paths.

Sustainability impact

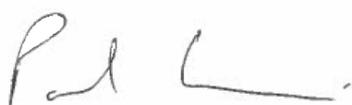
- 8.1 The impacts of this report in relation to the three elements of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 Public Bodies Duties have been considered, and the outcomes are summarised below. Relevant Council sustainable development policies have been taken into account.
- 8.2 The proposals in this report will have no impact on carbon emissions as it forms a response to a consultation to proposed airspace flight paths which have yet to be defined.
- 8.3 The need to build resilience to climate change impacts is not relevant to the proposals in this report because it forms a response to a consultation on proposed airspace flight paths which have yet to be defined.
- 8.4 The proposals in this report will help achieve a sustainable Edinburgh because the Council's consultation response recommends that the habitats and national and international designations relating to the Forth Estuary are taken into account when identifying the airspace flight paths. Social justice is not considered to impact on the proposals in this report because the report forms a response to a consultation on proposed airspace flight paths which have yet to be defined. Economic wellbeing is not considered to impact on the proposals in this report because the report forms a response to a consultation on proposed airspace flight paths which have yet to be defined.

Consultation and engagement

- 9.1 The airport operator published its consultation paper on 6 June for a 14 week consultation period. The deadline for comments is 12 September.
- 9.2 The airport operator will consider comments received in the preparation of the design options for arrival and departure routes and once detailed route options have been finalised, another consultation exercise will take place. These will be considered before submission of the final routes to the CAA for approval.

Background reading/external references

[The Edinburgh Airspace Change Programme Consultation Document](#)



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Links

Coalition pledges	P15 Work with public organisations, the private sector and social enterprise to promote Edinburgh to investors P28 Further strengthen our links with the business community by developing and implementing strategies to promote and protect the economic well being of the city.
Council Priorities	CP2 Improved health and well being: reduced inequalities CP8 A vibrant, sustainable local economy CP11 An accessible connected city
Single Outcome Agreement	SO1 Edinburgh's economy delivers increased investment, jobs and opportunities for all SO2 Edinburgh's citizens experience improved health and wellbeing, with reduced inequalities in health

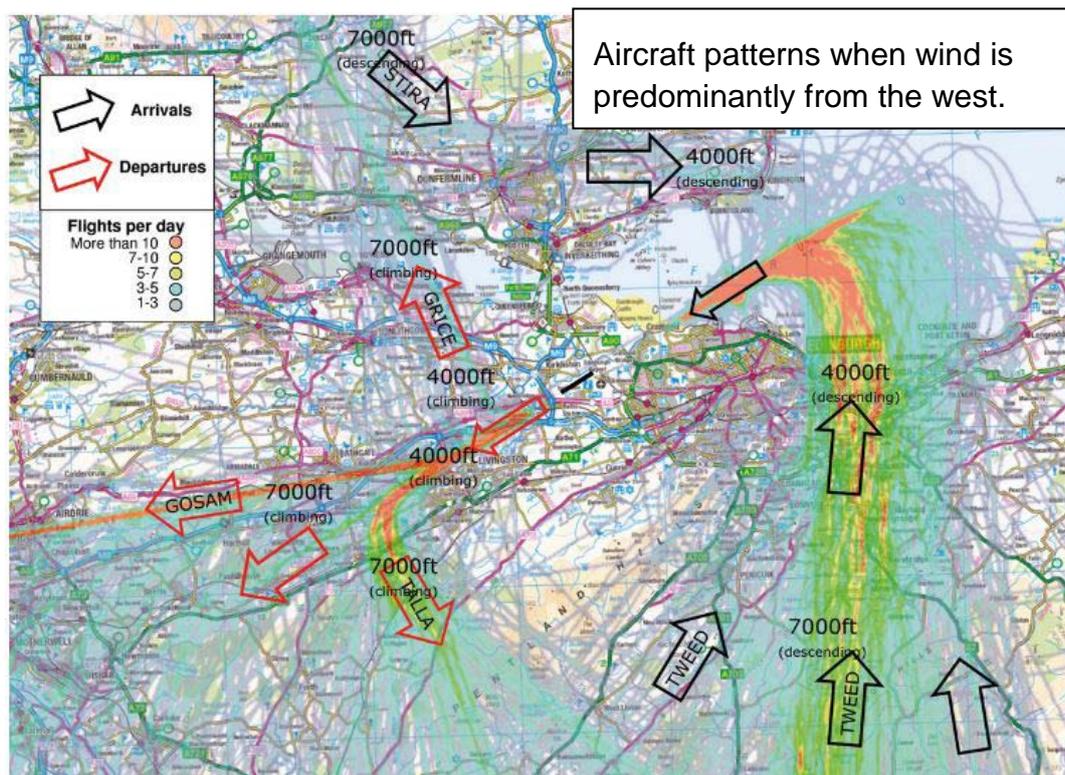
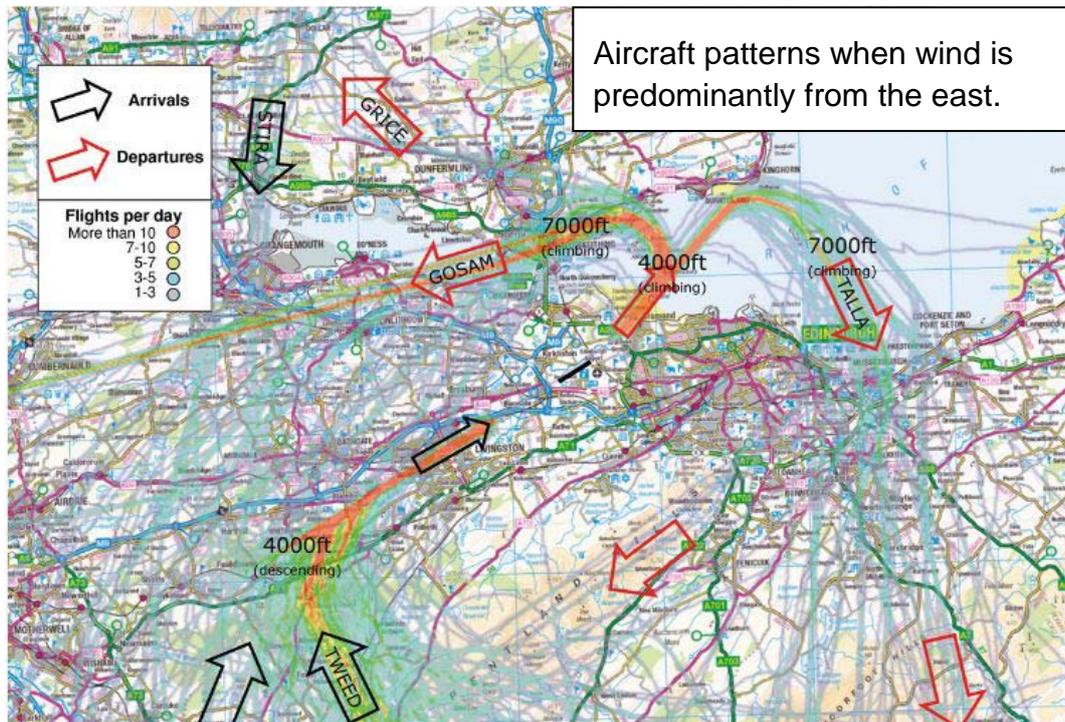
Appendices

Appendix 1: Current Airspace Flight Paths

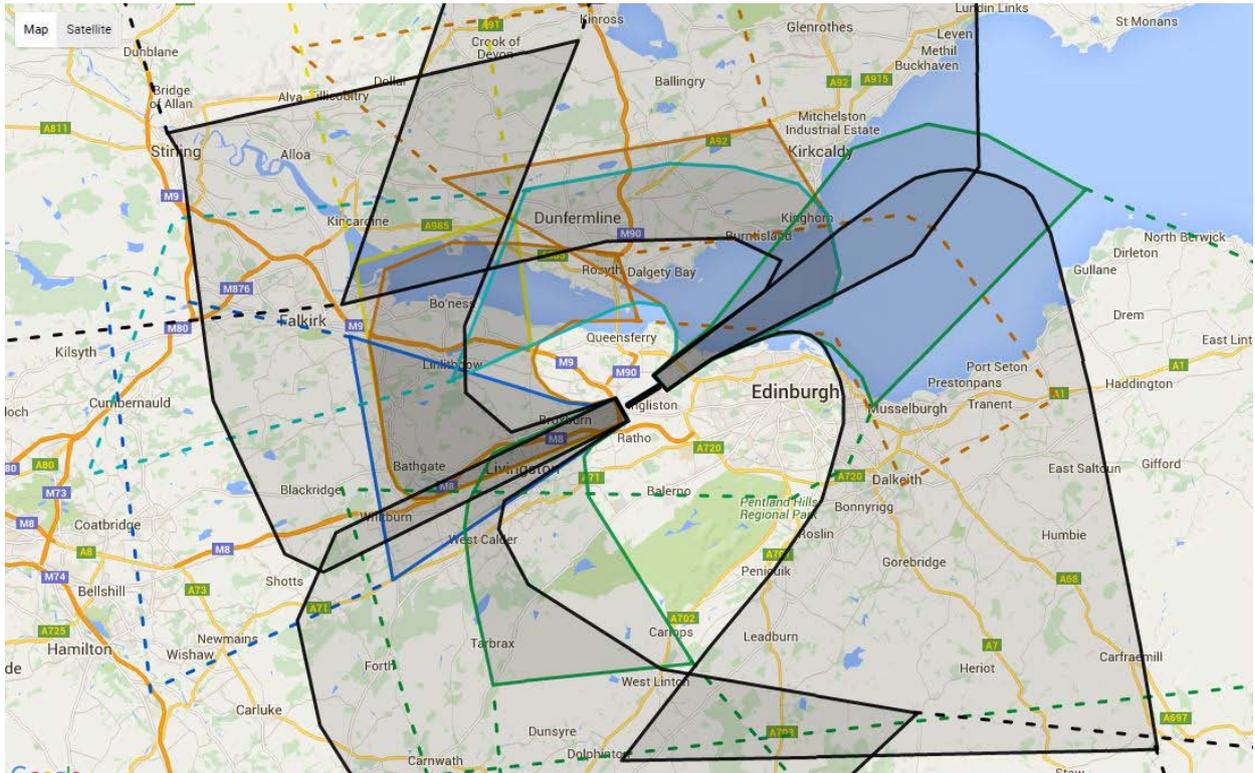
Appendix 2: Broad Airspace Envelopes for Consultation

Appendix 3: Response to the Airspace Change Programme
Consultation

Current Airspace Flight Paths



Broad Airspace Envelopes for Consultation



West routes

- Departing Yellow route RWY24 Right Turnout 1.
- Departing Orange route RWY24 Right Turnout 2.
- Departing Blue route RWY24 Straight out.
- Departing Green route RWY24 Left turnout.
- Arriving route RW06 northern.
- Arriving route RW06 southern.

East routes

- Departing Orange route RWY06 Left turnout 1.
- Departing Aqua route RWY06 Left turnout 2.
- Departing Green route RWY06 right turnout.
- Arriving route RW24 southern.
- Arriving route RW24 northern.

Response to Airspace Change Programme Consultation

The Council welcomes the opportunity to respond to a consultation on changes to Edinburgh Airport airspace flight paths. The Council considers that this is a helpful opportunity to reduce the impact on Edinburgh's residents from aircraft noise, by taking advantage of the latest technology.

In identifying the new flight paths the Council considers that the airport operator takes into account the following issues.

- The broad airspace envelopes includes areas over the Firth of Forth and therefore may have an effect on Natura sites, namely the Firth of Forth Special Protection Area and the Forth Islands Special Protection Area. Therefore, under The Conservation (Natural Habitats, &C.) Regulations 1994 as amended, there may be a requirement for a Habitat Regulations Appraisal (HRA) to be undertaken by the consenting authority. However, this would be a matter between SNH and the consenting authority.
- The areas immediately to the east and west of the main runway where aircraft are at low altitude are the areas most affected by noise, particularly when aircraft are ascending. The new flight paths should be designed to minimise the noise effects on Crammond, which is predominantly a residential area, by keeping aircraft to the north of the envelope. To the west rising aircraft pass over Newbridge. Although Newbridge is predominantly industrial in nature, there are areas of residential use and the new flightpaths should be designed to minimise the impact on these areas. It should also be noted that the former Continental Tyres site has previously been granted planning consent for residential use.
- Where it is unavoidable to locate flight paths over areas of residential use more than one preferred route should be identified to try to diminish the overall impact of noise through dispersal.
- It is recommended that the airport operator should consider their duty to undertake an equalities and rights assessment as part of the process of reviewing airspace flight paths.