

# Planning Committee

10.00am, Thursday, 30 March 2017

## Airspace Change Programme: Consultation on Flight Paths

Item number	9.2
Report number	
Executive/routine	Executive
Wards	All

### Executive summary

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The purpose of this report is to approve a formal response to Edinburgh airport operator's second 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 specific issues related to the proposed flight paths with regard to the noise impact on Edinburgh residents and the impacts on habitats and designated sites of international/national importance.

### Links

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Coalition pledges	<a href="#">P15</a> , <a href="#">P28</a>
Council priorities	<a href="#">CP2</a> , <a href="#">CP8</a> , <a href="#">CP11</a>
Single Outcome Agreement	<a href="#">SO1</a> , <a href="#">SO2</a>

## Airspace Change Programme: Consultation on Flight Paths

### 1. Recommendations

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- 1.1 It is recommended that Committee:
  - 1.1.1 approves Appendix 2 as its response to the second consultation on the Airspace Change Programme; and
  - 1.1.2 refers this report to the Transport and Environment Committee for information.

### 2. Background

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- 2.1 The Airspace Change Programme: departure and arrival procedures; is a consultation paper that sets out how the Edinburgh airport operator intends to expand airport passenger traffic flows; 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 airspace routes.
- 2.2 The existing 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. An initial consultation was carried out last year seeking stakeholder views with regard to broad airspace envelopes (areas within which each flight path may be positioned). The Council submitted a response raising concerns with regard to the impact of noise on Edinburgh residents and the impacts on habitats and designated sites of international/national importance.

- 2.5 The airport operator has also recently consulted stakeholders on its revised airport Masterplan. This will replace its existing 2011 version and sets out a strategy for guiding the development of the airport from 2016 to 2040. A formal response was approved by the Planning Committee on [2 March 2017](#) which raises a number of environmental, transport and planning issues.

### 3. Main report

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#### Proposed Airspace Changes

- 3.1 Following the initial consultation on broad airspace envelopes the airport operator has now prepared a series of detailed arrival and departure flight path options for aircraft below 7000ft for consultation.
- 3.2 What is clear from the second round of consultation material is that a significant proportion of the Edinburgh urban area is outwith all the proposed airspace flight paths. 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 higher 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.
- 3.3 It should be noted that the Council has no powers to directly control aircraft noise. The airport operator is responsible for preparing noise maps and submitting them to Scottish Ministers. However, only the Secretary of State under the Civil Aviation Act can impose direct restrictions on noise. With regard to the planning system the airport operator has various permitted development rights under class 44 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Scotland) Order 1992, as amended. Where any development falls outwith the defined permitted development, the planning authority can attach conditions which are relevant to the development proposed. It is unlikely that these conditions could be linked to aircraft noise, other than in very specific circumstances, for example, in the context of a planning application for a second runway. However, in assessing an application consideration would have to be given to relevant material considerations, including the fact that the airport is a national development in NPF3.
- 3.4 In identifying flight path options the operator has sought to: minimise the number of people over flown (including known areas of new housing development), be as efficient as possible in terms of minimising CO2 emissions, meet regulatory requirements (including safety) and deliver operational requirements. Inevitably compromises have had to be made. In addition, a preferred option for each flight path is identified for each departure route.
- 3.5 It should be noted that the consultation does not set out any proposed changes to arrival routes. Although the operator is intending to publish a suggested flight

- path for each arrival route this will be indicative, as flexibility is required so that air traffic control can maintain a safe and orderly flow of arriving aircraft.
- 3.6 The operator did consider non-conventional final approaches such as steeper approaches and offset arrivals. However, research concluded that these approaches cannot be used by the majority of the airline and aircraft types using the airport, due to regulatory and weather related reasons. As a result, flights arriving from the east will continue to pass directly over Cramond, and flights arriving from the west will continue to pass directly over Newbridge, in alignment with the runway. However, it should be borne in mind that arriving aircraft make considerably less noise than departing aircraft.
  - 3.7 The preferred departure routes for aircraft exiting the main runway to the east keep flight paths to the west of Cramond, and prevent existing residents being overflown. This principle applies to all flights exiting to the east regardless of where their destination is. It is worth noting aircraft departures to the east make up just 21% of total departures, and are only necessary when the wind is coming from an easterly direction.
  - 3.8 The preferred departure routes to the west all pass directly over Newbridge and the former Continental Tyres site, before separating depending on the destination. Westerly departures make up 79% of all flights. Flights with a destination to the south (route A), or the west (route B), or the north (route C), only affect properties in West Lothian and as a result do not raise any new issues of concern to Edinburgh residents.
  - 3.9 The only flight path route that raises potential concerns is route D which is for flights with a destination to the east. The diagram in Appendix 1 shows the route options including the airport operator's preferred route. The key concern is the potential noise impact on the residents of South Queensferry. The Airport operator has sought to identify a route which avoids as much as possible the residents of Broxburn, Winchburgh and South Queensferry. The preferred route (D0) has a very tight radius, and the intention is that aircraft will pass just to the east of Winchburgh. However, in doing so, the route then passes very close to the western edge of South Queensferry, particularly once the new housing site to the west of Queensferry is taken into account. Once the route passes Queensferry it turns east and heads up the centre of the Firth of Forth.
  - 3.10 From the perspective of residents on the west side of Queensferry, option D1 looks preferable, however, as the route heads up the Forth it is in closer proximity to the northern edge of Queensferry than D0. Both route D0 and D1, would seem to have a similar impact on Winchburgh, albeit passing on different sides of the settlement. The solution to this could be a hybrid route as identified on Appendix 2, consisting of part of route D0 and part of D1 and it is recommended that the Council's response puts forward that suggestion for the airport Operator's consideration.

## **Proposed Response**

3.11 With regard to departure routes the airport operator should be commended for identifying routes, which for the most part, minimise the impact on Edinburgh residents. The attached response (Appendix 2) sets out the issues which should be taken into account by the Airport Operator prior to submitting its Airspace Change Proposal to the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA). In particular, the key issues are:

- in identifying flight path D consideration should be given to a hybrid route as set out in the response in order to reduce the impact of aircraft noise on residents in South Queensferry; and
- the consultation document does not seem to have taken account of the impact of the proposed flight paths on international designated sites in the Firth of Forth nor has it acknowledged that there may be a requirement for a Habitat Regulations Appraisal (HRA) to be undertaken by the consenting authority.

## **Next Steps**

3.5 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. Once this consultation has ended Edinburgh Airport will submit an Airspace Change Proposal to the CAA in which it must demonstrate that the proposed design changes achieve the best balance possible.

3.6 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 implementation of the proposed RNAV routes.

3.7 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.

## **4. Measures of success**

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4.1 Success can be measured by the extent to which the airport operator has taken account of the Council's comments in its submission to the CAA.

4.2 Stakeholders are kept well informed of the results of the consultation process.

## **5. Financial impact**

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

## **6. Risk, policy, compliance and governance impact**

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- 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.

## **7. Equalities impact**

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- 7.1 There is no equalities impact arising as a result of this report's proposed response. The Airport operator is preparing an equalities impact assessment which will be submitted to the CAA alongside its flight path proposals.

## **8. Sustainability impact**

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- 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.
- The proposals in this report will reduce potential carbon emissions as the proposed flight paths have been selected to ensure they are as short and efficient as possible, and allow aircraft to achieve cruising altitude as quickly as possible;
  - 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 the key purpose of which is to allow more efficient use of airspace;
  - The proposals in this report will help achieve a sustainable Edinburgh because the Council's consultation response recommends that the habitats and international and national 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;
  - The proposals in this report will help achieve a sustainable Edinburgh because the proposed flight paths aim to make more efficient use of airspace in turn enabling the expansion of airport operations. The airport provides a strong contribution to the local economy and these proposals will help generate further support for local businesses.

## 9. Consultation and engagement

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- 9.1 The airport operator published its consultation paper on 30 January for a 13 week consultation period. The deadline for comments is 30 April 2017.
- 9.2 The airport operator will consider comments received in the preparation of its submission to the CAA for approval. It will publish a Feedback report on its web site prior to its submission to the CAA.

## 10. Background reading/external references

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

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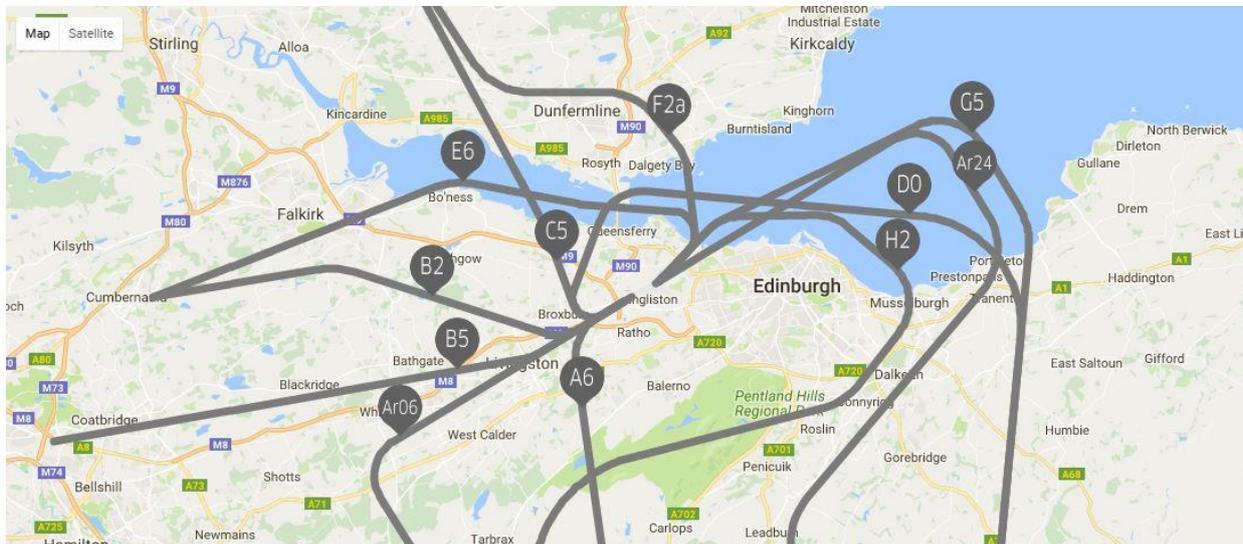
## 11. Links

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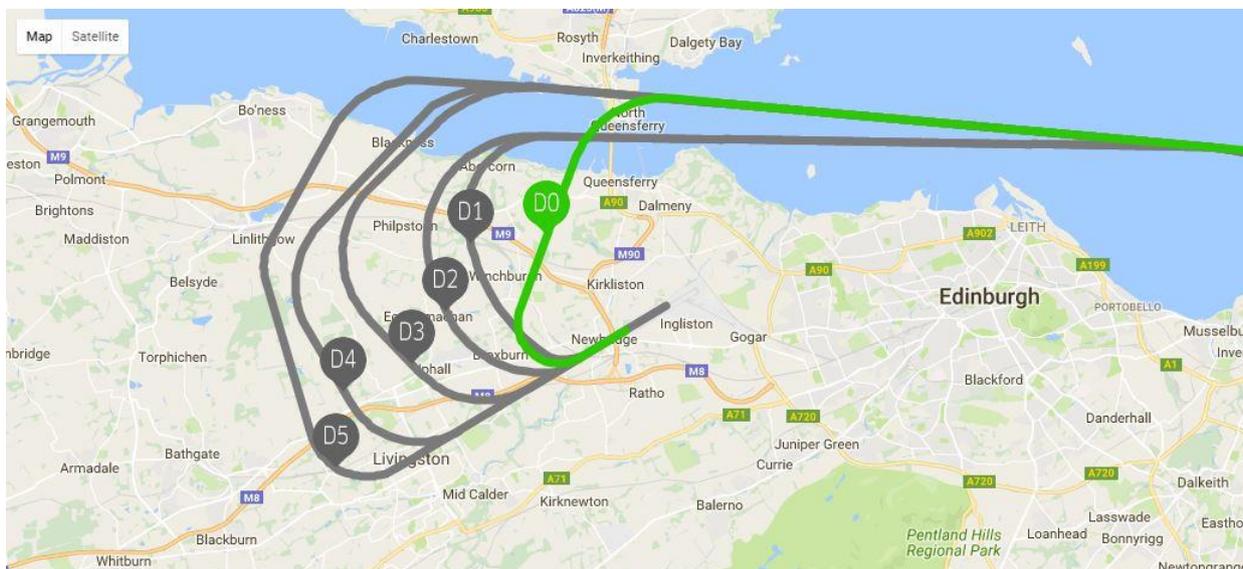
<b>Coalition pledges</b>	P15 - Work with public organisations, the private sector and social enterprise to promote Edinburgh to investors P28 - Further strengthen our links with the business community by developing and implementing strategies to promote and protect the economic well being of the city.
<b>Council Priorities</b>	CP2 - Improved health and well being: reduced inequalities CP8 - A vibrant, sustainable local economy CP11 - An accessible connected city
<b>Single Outcome Agreement</b>	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
<b>Appendices</b>	Appendix 1- Preferred Airspace Flight Paths Appendix 2 - Response to Airspace Change Programme: Consultation on Flight Paths



Preferred Airspace Flight Paths



Route D Options



### Response to Airspace Change Programme: Consultation on Flight Paths

The Council welcomes the opportunity to respond to a second consultation on proposed Edinburgh Airport airspace flight paths. The Council commends the Airport Operator for seeking to minimise the impact of noise on Edinburgh residents.

The Council considers that the proposed flight paths raise the following issues.

- 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 Council supports the proposed departure routes to the east of the Airport which have been designed to minimise the noise effects on Crammond, which is predominantly a residential area, by keeping aircraft to the west of the area.
- To the west, departing aircraft pass over Newbridge. Although the majority of routes do not affect Edinburgh residents, the Council considers route D has a potential noise impact on the residents of South Queensferry. The Council notes that in identifying route options the Airport operator has sought to identify a route which avoids as much as possible the residents of Broxburn, Winchburgh and South Queensferry. The preferred route (D0) has a very tight radius, and the intention is that aircraft will pass just to the east of Winchburgh. However, in doing so, the route then passes very close to the western edge of South Queensferry, particularly once the new housing site to the west of South Queensferry is taken into account. Once the route passes South Queensferry it turns east and heads up the centre of the Firth of Forth. From the perspective of residents on the west side of Queensferry, option D1 looks more preferable, however, as the route heads up the Forth it is in closer proximity to the northern edge of Queensferry than D0. Both route D0 or D1, would seem to have a similar impact on Winchburgh, albeit passing on different sides of the settlement. The solution to this could be a hybrid route as identified below, consisting of part of route D0 and part of D1 and it is recommended that the airport Operator's considers this prior to making its submission to the CAA.
- The second consultation does highlight some sites which have planning consent for residential use in the Newbridge area. In order to fully assess the impacts on other potential development sites as identified in the Local Development Plan an updated overall noise contour map should be produced similar to the one on the Edinburgh Airport web [site](#). This will enable the Council to see the impacts the changes may have on the LDP sites more clearly.
- The Council supports the airport operator's commitment to undertake an equalities and rights assessment for submission to the CAA along with the proposed flight paths.
- The identification of new flight paths does not seem to take cognisance of, or consider the potential affect on, international designated sites including Natura sites, namely the Firth of Forth Special Protection Area and the Forth Islands Special Protection Area. Nor has it acknowledged that there may be a

requirement for a Habitat Regulations Appraisal (HRA) to be undertaken by the consenting authority. These are issues that the Council raised in its original submission.

### Suggested Hybrid Route

