

LOCAL PLAN COMMITTEE

21 MAY 2025

UPDATE SHEET

ITEM 5 – EAST MIDLANDS AIRPORT – SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PLAN CONSULTATION

Since the report was published East Midlands Airport has advised that the consultation period for the plan has been extended until 30 June 2025.

RECOMMENDATION

No change to the recommendation

An email has been received from Councillor Sutton which has also been sent to all members of the Committee. A copy of the email is attached to this update sheet.

General points

The comments from Councillor Sutton raise concerns regarding the adequacy of the response, especially on environmental matters such as noise, air quality and wastewater. In preparing the report, the Council's Environmental Protection Team were consulted, but "did not have any comments to make as it was very generic and did not go into detail".

The issue of noise is covered by a separate Noise Action Plan, to which a direct link is provided from the online version of the SDP. The Noise Action Plan is quite a large document in its own right and sets out a series of 40 actions. It would assist any interested person if the SDP provided at least a high-level overview of the Noise Action Plan rather than relying upon a separate link.

It is suggested that that the following comment be included in the response to East Midlands Airport:

Section 9 of the SDP addresses a wide range of environmental related issues. It is considered that the addition of more information regarding noise and air quality would help any interested person to have a better understanding of the current performance of EMA on these issues. This should include a high-level overview of the actions set out in the Noise Action Plan together with more information on matters such as actual air quality and noise monitoring levels recorded at the airport.

Strategic context

Further to Councillor Sutton's comments, the SDP notes that the long-term objective of EMA "remains to limit and reduce where possible the number of people affected by noise as result of the airport's operation and development". It also notes that it is proposed to increase the number of aircraft which use a Continuous Descent Approach from 95% to 98%.

The airport is subject to a planning condition regarding nighttime noise contours. It should be appreciated that the Council's ability to seek further restrictions through the planning system can only be achieved as part of any future development.

Policy framework

It is not considered necessary for the SDP to refer to specific policies in the emerging Local Plan as these could change, even if only in terms of the policy number.

Environment

In terms of water management this is the responsibility of the Environment Agency and Lead Local Flood Authority. In the event of any proposals for development which require planning permission, then the issue of water management will be a legitimate consideration. However, it is suggested that the following comment be added to the Council's response:

The Council wishes to remind EMA of its responsibility for ensuring that the management of water complies with all regulations and permits in order to ensure that the environment is not adversely impacted.

RECOMMENDATION

No change to the recommendation outlined in the report subject to also adding in i) the further comments stated above in relation to Section 9 of the SDP and (ii) the comment in relation to water management.

EMAIL FROM COUNCILLOR SUTTON

Ahead of the meeting, here are my thoughts:-

In general the paper for this item summarises the SDP quite well. However, the proposed comments are insubstantial, or even weak, in challenging the Airport, especially on environmental matters like Noise, Air Quality and Waste Water Management. They are a reminder of weaknesses in the proposed policies in the Draft Local Plan. Why does the Draft Local Plan not have a separate Environment Policy on Noise?

The way EMA operations and growth impact on local communities requires a statement of intent and references to how changing and emerging policy and regulation will be applied. References are to sections in the paper:

4. Strategic Context

4.7/8 Without specific proposed measures to lower noise thresholds as planes are increasingly better designed and a recognition by NWLDC increased government concern about the impact of noise on health and well being there is no protection for our residents.

The Summer night noise contour area is one technical measure that was deployed as a condition of an earlier planning condition and it needs to be reviewed in order to raise standards.

Are we happy that EMA sets its own rules and accepts the very oldest freight planes, albeit fining the companies for night use in a limited number of cases? Why not say that we expect EMA to adopt a night noise and aircraft type regime the same as, or better than, the regulations at the 'designated' airports ie Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted?

5. Policy Framework

5.4 The date change for the Draft Local Plan is needed as mentioned.

However, there is no reference to the additional policies in the Draft Local Plan. Does the District Council wish to highlight the omission in the SDP of NWLDC policies relevant to EMA them even though they lack teeth [eg Ec8 of the Draft Plan, referring to new development, states the NWLDC weakly as 'incorporate measures to ensure the impact of noise on local residents satisfies relevant standards' . What measures? Day or night? What relevant standards?

9. Environment - which includes Noise, Air Quality and Water Management

9.9 See above. The challenge to use modern and low emission aircraft is welcome but the paragraph needs to be rewritten to indicate NWLDC's current view on noise regulation, changing times since the last SDP ten years ago and the standards to be applied and reviewed, especially for night operations. The response might show, for example, how NWLDC Environmental Protection would be applied in respect of a planning application near to or below a flight path.

9.12 Accepted that EMA's practice and intent on Air Quality are good, but should not NWLDC be emphasising the cumulative impacts from vehicles and aircraft in the vicinity of

EMA and the increasing health research concern about the impact of small particle air pollution?

[NB A separate thought: Is there enough monitoring of AQ by LCC/NWLDC in the light of increasing concerns?]

Finally, Water Management is not mentioned in the proposed comments but requires more scrutiny, not least in the light of the impending fine resulting from EMA pleading guilty to breach of its Environment Agency permit for discharge into the River Trent and news only last week of a farmer alleging a comparable private case against EMA for discharge into the Diseworth Brook.

Page 82 of the SDP begins confusingly. Paragraph 2 talks of public mains water separately from rain water and surface water and by implying that most of the drainage is to the Severn Trent Sewer. NWLDC should ask directly what percentage of all waste water does not go into the sewer and why Severn Trent do not take 100%, including polluted surface water. Paragraph 3 on pollutants invites a comment about benchmarking with other airports. How does our airport compare in severity and practice with others? Does NWLDC believe that EMA is doing its best? The paragraph ends confusingly about reducing water usage and encouraging efficiency

I am the NWLDC rep on the Airport Consultative Committee and have been involved at that level for three and a half years. I have been a member of the Monitoring, Environment, Noise and Track Keeping subcommittee for all of that time. For much of the time I have been part of a working group set up to monitor progress with Surface Water Management in the light of concerns raised at increasingly high levels over a ten year period about the impact of discharges to the Trent and the Diseworth Brook.

I am happy to advise officers further and I hope committee members will offer some support for some or all of these hastily put together and somewhat garbled comments,

With Good wishes

Cllr Ray Sutton (Ind)

Kegworth ward