

Committee: Council
Date: 14 October 2003
Agenda Item No: 8
Title: Stansted/M11 Corridor Development Options Study
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Introduction

- 1 The purpose of this report is to inform Members, and seek any initial response from the Council to the recently published consultant's report ' Stansted M11 Corridor Development Options Study'.

Background

- 2 The report was commissioned by Essex, Hertfordshire and Cambridgeshire County Councils, Government Office for the East of England (GO EAST), East of England Development Agency (EEDA), East of England Regional Assembly (EERA) and the Countryside Agency. The following were included in its aims :
 - to identify jobs and housing associated with growth at Stansted
 - to recommend a development strategy to accommodate all growth arising from the existing runway and one, two and three additional runways
 - to assess the impacts
- 3 The results are to be used in the preparation of new regional planning guidance for the East of England, which will set out a sub regional strategy for the London/Stansted/Cambridge corridor. This has been identified by the Government as a growth area.
- 3 4 The consultants are currently seeking views by 31 October 2003 from a number of stakeholders on its draft final report. These include regional and sub regional organisations representing business, environmental, health, housing, rural, transport and water industry interests and the voluntary sector; district, borough and county councils and some town and parish councils. EERA has stressed at presentations that the report explores possible options and "what if" scenarios for Stansted. It does not represent a draft sub regional strategy, nor seek to suggest specific sites for development. There will be full public consultation on draft regional planning guidance in Spring 2004 by the Government Office for the East of England, and subsequently on site specific proposals in local development documents prepared by District Councils.

Initial response

- 5 It is important to emphasise that it is a consultants' report and that the Council has had no direct involvement in its preparation. However, it is equally very important that the Council and others respond robustly to the report. Officers will be preparing a full technical appraisal of the report. The Council's response will be determined by the Environment and Transport Committee at its meeting on 4 November. Officers have sought confirmation that the Council's formal response will be accepted after the meeting.
- 6 The concern within the community is understandable when, unexpectedly, maps appear in the media with quite precise areas identified for possible major development. And at the same time there is no effective nor reasonable consultation. To assist in trying to explain the situation the Council has:
- issued a press release/letter advising people where to get information and the address to which comments should be sent
 - arranged a meeting with town and parish councils and other local bodies to explain the situation, to seek views and, in the meantime, offered assistance wherever possible.
- 7 The summary report is technical and not easy to understand which does not aid consultation. Much of it deals with the possibility of one or more new runways at Stansted. This is all premature and very unhelpful when consultation on The Future of Aviation (SERAS) has been completed and a Government announcement is expected at the end of the year on this matter. Furthermore the new regional guidance is being prepared on the basis of the full use of one runway and any further developments at Stansted would require a review of the guidance which is being published next February.
- 8 It is fair to say that those preparing this new regional guidance are being put under tremendous pressure by the Government to complete the process in a very limited timescale. It seems to run counter to laudable objectives of community engagement and adequate studies to ensure a fair and comprehensive process has been achieved.

Conclusion

- 9 Members may wish to express certain views at this stage before its formal response on the consultants' report.

Background Papers: Stansted/ M11 Corridor Development Options Study
Draft Final Report (Consultation Draft) September 2003