

APP/L2250/V/10/2131934 & APP/L2250/V/10/2131936

SECTION 77 TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 – REFERENCE OF APPLICATIONS TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (INQUIRIES PROCEDURE) (ENGLAND) RULES 2000

**SUMMARY PROOF OF EVIDENCE OF
TIM MASKENS BA (Hons) MA (Cantab.)**

AIRPORT OPERATIONS

In respect of:

Planning Application Reference: Y06/1647/SH (New Terminal Building)

Planning Application Reference: Y06/1648/SH (Runway Extension)

relating to land at London Ashford Airport, Lydd, Romney Marsh, Kent, TN29 9QL

1. Introduction

- 1.1 My name is Tim Maskens. I am the Senior Air Traffic Control Officer (SATCO) and the manager responsible for Air Traffic Services at London Ashford Airport (the "Airport").
- 1.2 My professional Air Traffic Control (ATC) qualifications are: Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) Aerodrome Control and Approach Control Procedural ratings, with On-the-Job Training Instructor endorsement, and a Meteorological Observer's Certificate. I have been an air traffic controller for over 20 years, starting at the Airport in 1989, followed by 12 years at London Biggin Hill Airport, before taking up my current post in 2004.

2. Scope of evidence

- 2.1 My evidence compares existing and proposed operations at the Airport and explains why a runway extension pursuant to the Applications is required to overcome fundamental limitations.
- 2.2 I will demonstrate how the ES flight paths were derived and presented, taking into account various factors such as airspace, weather, aircraft types, pilot abilities, as well as compliance with legislation and aviation practice.
- 2.3 My evidence will address Rule 6 Party comments, particularly those of Lydd Airport Action Group ("LAAG"). I reserve the right to respond to any detailed or additional comments in rebuttal evidence.
- 2.4 I shall compare proposed planning restrictions and obligations relating to Airport operations with the current unrestricted operations to demonstrate

that any potential environmental effects arising from the Applications can be dealt with or contained and that the Applications will in fact benefit the Airport and its surroundings.

3. Existing Airport Operations

3.1 The Airport caters for a wide range of aircraft types including private and training light aircraft, executive jets, military and commercial air transport aircraft. Annual passenger numbers have in the past exceeded 250,000 and aircraft movement numbers of over 60,000 have been recorded.

3.2 The largest aircraft that can use the current runway length of 1505m is a B737, but it can only operate as a short-range private executive or empty positioning flight as the current runway length of 1505m is too short for commercial passenger operations in this aircraft.

3.3 The Government has ruled out new runways at London airports and instead requires existing airports to maximise efficiency and for airlines to fly with fuller planes. The runway extension will enable the Airport to make a contribution to runway capacity and deliver that increase in efficiency by:

3.3.1 Allowing B737 type aircraft to fly with a full payload of passengers from the Airport;

3.3.2 Extending the range that other aircraft can fly from the Airport;

3.3.3 Maximising the availability of routes and aircraft choice to operators;

3.3.4 Improving the efficiency of aircraft runway operations; and

3.3.5 Providing a useful diversion airport.

4. Proposed operations pursuant to the Applications

4.1 My evidence describes some of the technical terms used in conjunction with the proposed runway extension such as instrument strip, clear and graded area, runway end safety area (RESA) and starter extension. The dimensions of the existing and proposed instrument strip, clear and graded area, RESAs and starter are in accordance with the CAA document CAP 168 'The Licensing of Aerodromes'.

4.2 Only the proposed runway extension and starter extension are hard standing. The instrument strip, clear and graded area and that portion of the RESA that does not overlap the starter extension will either remain as grassland or be restored to grassland. The remaining, existing length of the runway and its safety areas require no alteration.

5. Flight paths

5.1 The flight paths used by the current and future range of types of aircraft in operation at the Airport (the largest being the size of B737), are represented in the ES as lines on a simple diagram superimposed on to a local area map.

5.2 The flight path diagrams take a number of technical factors into consideration such as aircraft size or speed, direction of landing or take-off, intended route, airspace and published CAA instrument or visual procedures.

5.3 The ES diagrams were designed to cater for a wide range of stakeholders with different backgrounds and interests and to strike a balance between

presenting pertinent information in such a way to make it comprehensible yet retain sufficient technical accuracy.

- 5.4 The flight path track allocations indicated in Appendices 5 and 6 to my Proof are currently usable by the existing mix of aircraft (the largest possible aircraft being B737) operating at the Airport and will continue to be used when the runway is extended for the proposed commercial air transport operations with the Applications. There will be no requirement for the creation of any additional flight path tracks as a result of the runway extension.
- 5.7 The ES submitted with the Applications already accounts for the repositioning of the runway 21 landing threshold by 329m north-east from its current position as demonstrated, for example, in the identification of the consequential noise contour (CD1.41a and CD1.41b) and in the air quality impact assessment diagrams (CD1.34c).

6. Design and approval

- 6.1 The UK CAA Directorate of Airspace Policy (DAP) designed and published the Airport's instrument approach procedure charts and is also responsible for classifying the Dungeness Restricted Area and the Danger Areas encompassing the Army firing ranges. The DAP has therefore taken these airspace designations into account during the design of the Airport's flight procedures.
- 6.2 The Airport's operations are further regulated by the CAA Safety Regulation Group (SRG). The Airport infrastructure, staff, equipment, procedures and documentation are audited annually to ensure ongoing compliance with safety requirements. Failure at any time to maintain the

required standards could lead to revocation, suspension or variation of the Airport's CAA Licence.

7. Assumptions for the ES

7.1 In constructing the flight operational inputs for the ES, a conservative approach was taken so that any environmental effects could be reasonably described as the likely 'worst-case' and that in reality any effects would be less and within acceptable limits.

7.2 In terms of airspace, Danger Areas D141 and D044 (the Army firing ranges approximately 10km NE and 3km SW of the Airport, respectively), were assumed to be always active for the purpose of impact assessment, so aircraft movements were only allocated to flight paths that remain clear of the Danger Areas. In reality, the firing ranges are not always active, and the airspace over them may then be utilised by aircraft which has the consequence of reducing any noise footprint in the vicinity of Lydd Town.

7.3 In relation to aircraft types, the fleet mix for the ES contained some older types of aircraft which are now being phased out and replaced by newer, quieter, more fuel efficient aircraft types. In addition, the older types of air aircraft being phased out have worse climb performance than the newer generation of aircraft which are being introduced, thus any environmental effects will be further improved in reality in the future.

7.3 The ES assumed a high rate of growth in traffic to 500,000 passengers per year. In reality, growth in passenger numbers and flight movements will be more gradual and consequently the rate of change of any environmental effects would be more gradual.

8. Rule 6 Party comments – Lydd Airport Action Group (LAAG)

- 8.1 LAAG has asserted that serious flaws remain in respect of the Applications relating to flight paths and runway utilisation. I do not consider this assertion to be justified. The Airport has in fact presented a comprehensive appraisal of flight paths and fleet mix allocations for the Applications in question.
- 8.2 LAAG has also previously claimed that certain new flight procedures have been ignored. This is inaccurate and the ILS approach remains the procedure of choice for the foreseeable future because of its greater precision.
- 8.3 LAAG has also asserted that the Airport has operational shortcomings that they claim will make it unviable. There is no justification for these assertions, particularly when the Airport's operations are compared with other airports.
- 8.4 LAAG has also previously claimed that the Airport's activity is decreasing compared with the ES baseline year. However, LAAG's statistics are incomplete and, in 2010, movements of the larger aircraft above 5.7 tonnes more than doubled compared with 2009. Despite the current economic climate, the Airport is in fact steadily increasing business rather than contracting.
- 8.5 LAAG has sought to raise issues in relation to Dungeness Power Stations. There are in fact no objections to the Applications from the relevant safety regulators; the operator of Dungeness Power Station is not a Rule 6 Party; the Airport was given permission for the same type of development but with more aircraft movements in 1992, and Dungeness B is scheduled to close in 2018. I consider LAAG's objections to be completely unjustified.

9. Planning obligations and conditions relating to Airport operations

9.1 Planning Conditions and Section 106 planning obligations are proposed with these Applications specific to the operation of aircraft which will introduce for the first time restrictions on the Airport including: the number of flight movements, the number of helicopters, the number of passengers or the amount of cargo; flight path restrictions; a restriction on the largest aircraft permitted to operate; and a limitation of maximum hours of operation for take-offs and landings to 0700-2300 i.e. no night-time flights.

10. Summary and Conclusion

10.1 In my evidence I have identified that:

10.1.1 There are operational reasons why the runway extension is needed in order to maximise efficient use of the Airport by B737 size and other aircraft, having regard to the limitations that the current infrastructure imposes upon commercial air transport operations;

10.1.2 The methodology used in compiling the flight paths and operational information for the ES has been in accordance with recognised standard practice;

10.1.3 The Applications would be compliant with regulatory requirements for the construction and operation of the runway extension;

10.1.4 The assumptions as to the operations of the Airport in the ES are reasonable, conservative and likely to assess the 'worst-case' scenario so that the actual impacts of the proposals will be less than that assessed and therefore the proposals are realistic and achievable; and

- 10.1.5 The effect of the Airport's operations will be mitigated and/or improved in any event through the introduction of a comprehensive list of conditions and S106 obligations which will introduce restrictions on the Airport's activities for the first time.
- 10.2 I consider that there are therefore strong and compelling reasons in terms of Airport operations for the Applications to be approved, and no good reason in these respects for planning permission to be refused.