

London Ashford Airport (Lydd) Call-In Inquiry

**Supplementary Statement of Common Ground
Ditch Mitigation Strategy**

PINS ref: APP/L2250/V/10/2131934 & APP/L2250/V/10/2131936

LPA ref: Y06/1647/SH (New Terminal Building), Y06/1648/SH (Runway Extension)

between London Ashford Airport Limited and Natural England

April 2011

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Supplementary Statement of Common Ground ("**SoCG**") is between London Ashford Airport Limited (the "**Applicant**") and Natural England ("**NE**"). This SoCG is supplementary to:-
- 1.1.1 the Statement of Common Ground dated April 2011 between (1) the Applicant and (2) NE on Great Crested Newts;
 - 1.1.2 the Statement of Common Ground dated March 2011 between (1) the Applicant and (2) NE on Air Quality;
 - 1.1.3 the Statement of Common Ground dated February 2011 between (1) the Applicant (2) NE and (3) the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds; and
 - 1.1.4 the Statement of Common Ground dated January 2011 between (1) the Applicant and (2) NE on Air Quality.
- 1.2 It deals with matters relating to a ditch mitigation strategy that are agreed between the Applicant and NE in relation to the development comprised in the Applicant's planning applications for a runway extension (Application Ref. Y06/1648/SH) and a new terminal building (Application Ref. Y06/1647/SH) (together the "**Applications**").

2. PURPOSE OF THIS SOCG

- 2.1 The purpose of this SoCG is to define the parameters of both construction and operation of the proposed 1300m replacement ditch length and in particular to maximise ecological niches within the ditch, whilst retaining the hydraulic design previously presented in CD1.42a and the Revision Note in Appendix 5 of LAA/9/E.
- 2.2 The mitigation strategy agreed in this SoCG clarifies and expands a number of issues presented in LAA/9/A LAA/9/C, LAA/9/D and LAA/9/E, and addresses all of the concerns raised by NE presented in NE/2/A and NE/2/D on the loss of ditches in the SSSI in relation to (i) ditch design and (ii) aquatic invertebrates in the ditches.
- 2.3 The mitigation strategy agreed in this SoCG improves the integration of hydraulic and ecological ditch functions and addresses species-specific design issues. This document also contains proposals on ditch management, and establishes a framework of post-construction monitoring and remediation of impacts, to maximise ecological value within the drainage system.
3. Following a series of iterative discussions between the Applicant, NE, and the Romney Marshes Area Internal Drainage Board ("**RMAIDB**") the following alterations in ditch design are agreed between the Applicant and NE:
- 3.1.1 The section profiles of the ditch have been designed to provide greater variety and diversity than previously. The 1300m ditch design has been divided into segments of roughly 100m, and a profile assigned to each segment. The incorporation of shelves into the bank profile will allow shallow margins to develop and will provide runs to species such as water vole and common lizard. Southerly facing sections are designed to produce particularly shallow margins. The positioning of most shelves on the Airport side is mindful of operational management requirements of the RMAIDB. The plan and section drawing of this revised design are contained in Figures 1 and 2 of Appendix 1 to this SoCG.
 - 3.1.2 Delivery of this design will result in good habitat for medicinal leech (shallow, warm water) and water vole (steep bank sections in which to burrow, with adjacent marginal vegetation for cover). The design will also provide similar habitat to current ditch habitat for grass snake and common lizard. It will also result in a

significantly greater length of available habitat for these species and aquatic invertebrates.

- 3.1.3 Figure 2 of Appendix 1 shows reduced control structures and improved connectivity (Ditch 7 will be connected, whilst Ditch 2 (currently blind-ended), will remain so, and not be connected; for ditch number references see NE/2/A, Figure 1).

3.2 Construction Phase

- 3.2.1 It is agreed that if the Applications are approved, a detailed design, Land Drainage Consent and construction method statement would be required. Nevertheless, principles during construction have been agreed at this stage of planning, in relation to safeguarding key wildlife species and groups.

- 3.2.2 The following chronology is agreed in respect of closing the ditches affected, and creating and connecting the new ditches.

- (a) whilst the Applicant and NE agree that the invertebrate ditch surveys contained in Appendices 1 and 2 to CD1.23g are sufficient to inform the Secretary of State's decision on the Applications in relation to aquatic invertebrates in the ditches, the Applicant and NE agree that before any ground works related to the SSSI ditch works are carried out, appropriately timed, supplementary surveys for medicinal leech, water vole, grass snake, and common lizard will be conducted, and reports submitted to the Local Planning Authority for appraisal and discussion (in consultation with NE). Advice on the protection and possible translocation of fish species should be sought from the Environment Agency and RMAIDB.
- (b) whilst the Applicant and NE agree that the surveys carried out by the Applicant are sufficient to inform the Secretary of State's decision on the Applications in relation to ditch vegetation, the Applicant and NE agree that supplemental surveys of the aquatic emergent and bank vegetation of the ditches within the Airport boundary will be conducted with identification of higher plants, macrophytes and including the duckweed *Wolffia arrhiza*. The amounts and distribution of each plant species shall be assessed using the DAFOR system and % cover, estimate of constancy of occurrence, and density including height of plant growth and the methodology for the surveys shall be agreed with the Local Planning Authority (in consultation with NE) prior to the carrying out of the surveys.
- (c) The results of these supplemental surveys will be used to inform a species protection plan for medicinal leech, and the duckweed *Wolffia arrhiza* (if present), being designed to protect animals and plants from construction activity. These plans will include the provision to control ditch water levels, modify habitats, and/or design translocation. These plans would be drawn up in consultation with NE and will follow published best practice at the time that survey/appraisal is carried out.
- (d) It is agreed that survey and assessment would take place in spring/summer, and that construction activity be carried out in autumn/winter, allowing medicinal leech species protection plans to be activated during summer/autumn.
- (e) The new ditches would be excavated, in accordance with an approved detailed design specification, Land Drainage Consent, and construction method statement. The construction method statement will follow the following sequence:

- (i) Excavation of new ditches off-line to broad shape and form, as detailed in Appendix 1, with varying bank and terraces leaving final profiling and trimming, and existing drain connection for later. Incremental trimming and profiling of new ditch with excavated topsoil.
 - (ii) Controlled stockpiling for re-use and excess disposal of topsoil and subsoil in designated areas
- (f) Having safeguarded the species in c) above, the ditch lengths to be infilled would be closed via:
- (i) Construction of new control structure on Mockmill Sewer and temporary closure of existing ditches using either clay stanks or stop-boards as appropriate.
 - (ii) Construction of IDB access culverts to the existing eastern tributary ditches (Mockmill sewer upstream, and the Petty School sewer) with penstock/stop-boards to allow for temporary closure.
 - (iii) Removal of existing redundant control structures and restoration of banks and beds using approved natural material stockpile.
 - (iv) Construction of clay stank (or equivalent) to temporarily close the up and downstream ends of abandoned ditches and retain water for impoundment.
- (g) Transfer sediment to the new ditches and incremental trim and profile the new ditches with exposed sediment and detritus from existing ditches.
- (h) Capturing of aquatic invertebrates by drag netting and translocation directly to the new ditches
- (i) Translocation of aquatic and ditch-margin macrophytes from the existing ditch to the new ditches.
- (j) Translocation of species in the species protection plans under (c) above.
- (k) Connection of new ditches with existing, retained ditches and allowing water flow by draining down from sections of abandoned ditch in turn and controlled opening up of culvert penstocks/stop-boards. Transferal of any impounded invertebrates after drain-down prior to backfilling of abandoned ditches.
- (l) The abandoned ditches will be backfilled after full translocation sign-off using a detail approved by the RMAIDB (typically granular fill with porous pipe beneath the runway extension and site won material with a French drain bed outside of the runway extension).

3.3 Operational Phase

- 3.3.1 The Applicant and NE note that the ditches, at the Airport, will be maintained by the RMAIDB, which will operate the same management regime as is currently operated across the SSSI ditch network (see RMAIDB statement in Appendix 2 to this SoCG).

- 3.3.2 Once operational, neither the new 1300m ditch length nor the remaining SSSI ditch lengths will be netted against birds and the Applicant agrees to this requirement because the RMAID requires the ditches to be left open.

3.4 **Monitoring and remedial actions**

- 3.4.1 It is agreed that invertebrate assemblages will be assessed using the Species Conservation Status Score (SCSS) as the assessment methodology. This colonisation survey work will run for 8 years starting from the first summer following completion of the 1300m ditch, to allow a long time series of colonisation to take place. This would allow whole community assessment and establishment to be tracked, and would allow direct comparison with the assemblage score calculated for ditch data from 2007.
- 3.4.2 It is agreed that mitigation success will be evaluated by SCSS values, using a range of scarce or rare species. SCSS values should cluster around the median value of 1.38 as a minimum, though it would be desirable for this value to rise, and for the 1.5 scores to become more prevalent.
- 3.4.3 It is agreed that physico-chemical water quality monitoring within the 1300m ditch network will take place and may be complementary to, though should not overlap, with any necessary monitoring arising from Land Drainage consent from the Environment Agency. The additional factors to be monitored and acted on will be agreed between LAA and the Local Planning Authority (in consultation with NE and the RMAIDB), but would include pH, biological oxygen demand, turbidity, and NPK concentrations.
- 3.4.4 It is agreed that there will be a requirement for the preparation of a remedial action plan if the monitoring surveys show that the mitigation is not successful. This will include a review of any adverse factors which are judged to be impacting on the ecological success of the new ditch network. Any factors impacting on the ecological function and development will be identified and agreed with the Local Planning Authority (in consultation with NE) and will form the triggers to action if they exceed defined levels, also to be agreed.
- 3.5 It is agreed between the Applicant and NE that the revised ditch mitigation strategy contained in this SoCG constitutes acceptable mitigation for the loss of ditches in the SSSI in relation to (i) ditch design and (ii) aquatic invertebrates.
- 3.6 It is agreed between the Applicant and NE that the surveys carried out by the Applicant in respect of aquatic invertebrates in the ditches (Appendices 1 and 2 to CD1.23g) and ditch vegetation are sufficient to inform the Secretary of State's decision on the Applications in relation to the loss of ditches in the SSSI in relation to (i) ditch design and (ii) aquatic invertebrates.

4. **THE APPLICANT**

- 4.1 The Applicant agrees that it will accept conditions (i) to secure the implementation of the agreement contained in this SoCG and (ii) in the form set out in Conditions 16 and 17 of the proposed runway extension planning permission in CD 17.2 subject to such further amendments necessary to incorporate the agreement contained in this SoCG and the changes sought by NE on Conditions 16 and 17 of the proposed runway extension planning permission in CD 17.2 as set out in the document submitted for the conditions session on 24 March 2011.

5. **NE'S REVISED POSITION**

- 5.1 On the basis that the proposals noted above will be undertaken by the Applicant, and be secured by condition and/or section 106 legal agreement, NE accepts that, for the purposes of the consideration of the Applications by the Secretary of State, the impacts of the

development on ditch habitats and species can be adequately addressed and that the proposals are acceptable in relation to (i) ditch design and (ii) aquatic invertebrates.

6. **STATEMENT FROM RMAIDB**


- 6.1 The RMAIDB is the body responsible for the management of the new ditch and therefore have been consulted throughout the planning process and most recently during the design presented herein. A statement letter in respect of this document is appended at Appendix 2 to this SoCG).

This SoCG is prepared jointly and agreed by:

SIGNED: 

Indigo Planning Limited (on behalf London Ashford Airport Limited)

DATED: 06/04/11

SIGNED: 

Natural England

DATED: 06/04/11

Appendix 1 Figures

Figure 1. Ditch Cross-sections Types (Drawing Number WSP 1559-RP-01-A)

Figure 2. Ditch System Plan (Drawing Number WSP 1559-GA-02-C)

DO NOT SCALE

KEY

- NEW DITCH
- DIRECTION OF FLOW IN DITCH
- DITCH TO BE REMOVED
- OUTFALL CONNECTION INTO DITCH SYSTEM FROM RUNWAY DRAINAGE
- EXISTING DITCH TO BE TERMINATED HERE
- RELOCATED CONTROL STRUCTURE (INC STOPBOARDS)
- NEW CONTROL STRUCTURE (INC STOPBOARDS)
- NEW RAMP ACCESS
- FOR DITCH PROFILES SEE 1559-RP-01A

REV	DATE	BY	DESCRIPTION	CHK	APP
B	04/03/11	DK	LOUPE AMENDED		
A	04/03/11	IP	FIRST ISSUE		

FOR INFORMATION ONLY



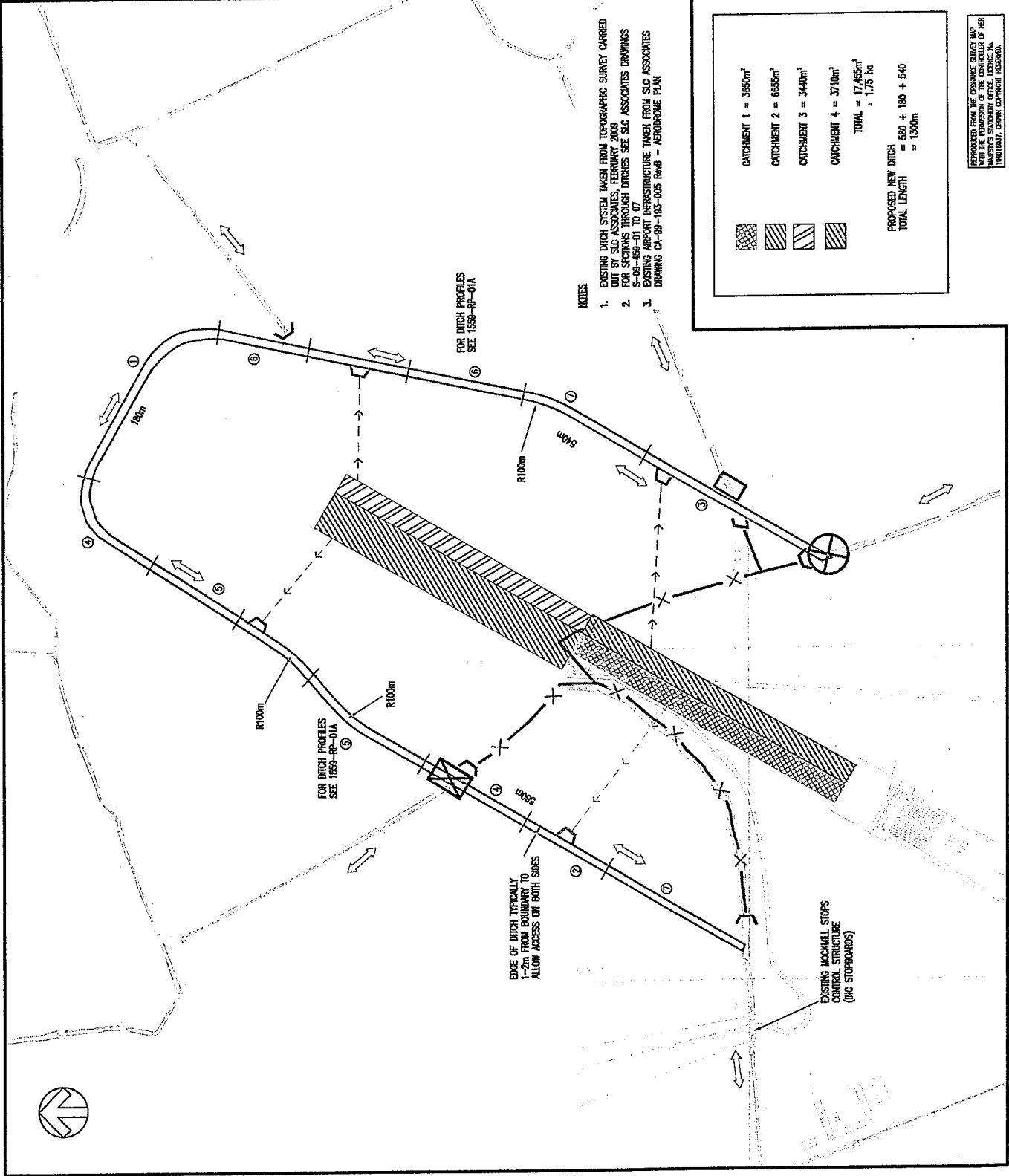
Kent House, Romney Place, Maidstone, Kent ME16 6LP
Tel: +44 (0)1622 760800 Fax: +44 (0)1622 760801
<http://www.wspgroup.com>

LONDONASHFORD AIRPORT
LYDD

DRAINAGE STRATEGY
PROPOSED DITCH SYSTEM

SCALE @ A/C	1:2000	CHECKED:	APPROVED:
DRAWN BY	1559-GA-02-C	DESIGNED BY	NR
PROJECT NO	11111559	DATE	March 2011
		TOWN PLAN NO	1559-GA-02
		REV	C

© WSP Group plc



- NOTES**
- EXISTING DITCH SYSTEM TAKEN FROM TOPOGRAPHIC SURVEY CARRIED OUT BY SLC ASSOCIATES, FEBRUARY 2008
 - FOR SECTIONS THROUGH DITCHES SEE SLC ASSOCIATES DRAWINGS S-08-458-01 TO 07
 - EXISTING AIRPORT INFRASTRUCTURE TAKEN FROM SLC ASSOCIATES DRAWING CI-99-193-005 RevB - AERODROME PLAN

	CATCHMENT 1 = 3650m ²
	CATCHMENT 2 = 6655m ²
	CATCHMENT 3 = 2440m ²
	CATCHMENT 4 = 3710m ²
	TOTAL = 17,155m ²
	± 1.75 l/s 1% PROPOSED NEW DITCH = 650 + 100 + 540 TOTAL LENGTH = 1300m

EXTRACTED FROM THE DRAINAGE STRATEGY MAP WITH THE PERMISSION OF THE CONTROLLER OF HER MAJESTY'S STATIONERY OFFICE. LICENSE NO. 10010027. CROWN COPYRIGHT RESERVED.

Appendix 2 Statement from RMAIDB

Romney Marshes Area Internal Drainage Board

I.D. Oliver
Clerk/Engineer to the Board

Telephone: 01303 872142
Fax: 01303 874788
E-mail: info@rmaidb.co.uk

New Hall
New Hall Close
Dymchurch
Romney Marsh
Kent
TN29 0LF

Our Ref: C4 LAA

Your Ref:

To Whom it May Concern

31st March 2011

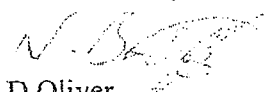
Dear Sir/ Madam

STATEMENT OF COMMON GROUND REGARDING WATERCOURSES AFFECTED BY EXTENSION OF RUNWAY AT LYDD AIRPORT.

The Romney Marshes Area Internal Drainage Board supports the wording of the Statement of Common Ground on Ditch Mitigation Strategy drawn up by Natural England and Indigo Planning regarding works to watercourses at Lydd Airport. All works will be subject to the land drainage consent of this Board.

Secondly the Board can confirm that the new ditches would be managed in the same manner that ditches in the SSSI are currently managed. In brief, these watercourses are subject to an annual mechanical weedcut within a two week period in October/November, weather permitting, resulting in a cut sward of 3 to 4 inches. Desilting will take place on an "as required" basis; due to mechanical weedcutting this is unlikely to occur any more frequently than every 10 to 15 years.

Yours faithfully


I D Oliver
Clerk/Engineer to the Board