



## Belfast City Council

Report to:	Development Committee
Subject:	The George Best Belfast City Airport Forum
Date:	15 October 2008
Reporting Officer:	Marie-Thérèse McGivern Director of Development ext. 3470
Contact Officer:	Shirley McCay, Head of Economic Initiatives, ext 3459

### Relevant Background Information

The George Best Belfast City Airport is an important asset which is vital to the continued development of the City. In 2007 a total of 2,177,544 passengers passed through it, bringing many business opportunities and contributing significantly to the increased number of tourists visiting Belfast. However, it also has to be recognised that a city airport such as this has to be well managed to mitigate the potential impact it can have in terms of noise, air pollution and public safety.

The Airport has an established Airport Forum (in operation since 1993) which includes representation from communities as well as both officer and Member representation from Belfast City Council and North Down Borough Council. The Member nomination to this Forum has previously been made by the Health and Environmental Services Committee and is currently Councillor Robin Newton and one officer. The Forum has an independent Chairman and comprises representatives from local authorities; residents groups; the NI General Consumer Council; the Department for Regional Development; airlines and other groups.

The aim of the Forum is to discuss all issues relating to the development and operation of the airport, including noise complaints and airport performance. Recent developments in the Forum have led to the creation of 3 Sub Groups:

1. Environmental & Technical Group
2. Economic & Services Development Group
3. Airport Development Group

Members will be aware of the Examination in Public (EIP) in June 2006 and the suggested outcomes which has led to a review of the planning agreement.

The findings of the EIP also supported the need for a stronger relationship with and enhanced role for Belfast and North Down Councils with, for example, an increased role in scrutiny over the noise management systems and increased membership on the Airport Forum.

### **Key Issues-**

The EIP recommendations for revised arrangements for the Airport Forum led to a review of the make up of the Forum and its terms of reference and this was carried out by a sub-group earlier this year. As a result the Forum Chairman, Alan Crowe, has now formally written to the Belfast City Council's Chief Executive asking for the nomination of two Members and two officers onto the revised Forum now termed the 'George Best Belfast City Airport Forum, 'GBBCAF', **see Appendix 1.**

The review recommends that each Council, Belfast and North Down has increased representation comprising two elected members of the Council and two officer observers (one from Environmental Health and one from Development). See attachment Forum Constitution in **Appendix 2.**

This report seeks the nomination of the Chair of the Development Committee to the Forum who will be supported by an officer. A further member from the Environmental Services Committee will be nominated to the Forum.

### **Resource Implications**

#### Staff and Members

An extended relationship between the Council and the Airport will have some implications in terms of both staff and Member time.

The review of the Planning Agreement between the Airport operator and the Planning Service may still entail discussions about a further enhanced role for the Council and there will be a resource impact if the recommendations are adopted. However an announcement by the Minister for the Environment is still awaited.

#### Environmental

A stronger, more comprehensive relationship should ensure that future developments consider sustainability and incorporate appropriate environmental controls in a way that sustains quality environments and has a positive effect on the local community.

### **Recommendations**

It is recommended that Members  
Support increased representation on the George Best Belfast City Airport Forum  
and  
Agree to the Chair of Development or their nominee to sit on the Forum

<b>Key to Abbreviations</b>
-----------------------------

EIP- Examination in Public
----------------------------

<b>Documents Attached</b>
---------------------------

<b>Appendix 1:</b> Letter from Chairman of Forum, Alan Crowe to the Council's Chief Executive.
--

<b>Appendix 2:</b> Belfast City Airport Forum Constitution 2008
---

**BLANK PAGE**