



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Development Committee
Subject:	Consultation: DfT scoping document on the development of a new UK Aviation Framework
Date:	27 September 2011
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1	Relevant Background Information
1.1	The Department for Transport (DfT) has recently issued its "Sustainable framework for UK aviation: Scoping document." This document aims to define the debate and gather views for a long-term policy for UK aviation. The document is structured around three themes: aviation and the economy, aviation and climate change, and aviation and the local environment.
1.2	The overall objectives of the Framework (that will be developed following consultations) are to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- set out the Government's aims for aviation and the parameters within which they can be delivered;- take account of the positive and negative impacts of aviation, and achieve a sustainable balance between them;- integrate aviation policy with wider Government objectives, including delivering sustainable economic growth, combating climate change and protecting the local environment;- build consensus among those who rely on and are affected by aviation; and- provide industry with the clarity it needs to invest in the UK over the long term.
1.3	There are 49 questions for the consultation. The most relevant to Council appear to be: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- The benefit of the aviation sector to NI; including economic growth and social well-being. (Questions 2).

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The importance of international and domestic air connections (Questions 9 – 15). - The importance/benefits of a UK hub rather than a foreign hub airport (Questions 9 – 15). - The merits of a hub versus a point to point airport. (Questions 9 -15). - What scope there is to influence people and industry to make choices aimed at reducing aviation’s climate change impacts? (Question 39). - Views on the concept of setting a “noise envelope” within which aviation growth would be possible. (Question 43).
1.4	The full consultation document is attached as Appendix 1. Locally, the Department for Regional Development (DRD) is coordinating responses from interested parties.
1.5	The deadline for the submission of comments to DfT is 20 October. The Department for Regional Development has asked interested parties in Northern Ireland to advise them of any key issues by 23 September 2011.

2	Key Issues
2.1	The document is an initial discussion paper rather than a draft framework. The draft framework is due to be published for consultation in March 2012 with further consultation running until June 2012.
2.2	There are two major issues associated with this consultation. Firstly the economic aspects of inward investment and tourism. Both are extremely important to Belfast especially as we try to recover from the economic crisis. Belfast's position is also very different to the GB cities covered by the aviation framework as we have direct competition from Dublin Airport, which is subject to different targets and taxes, particularly Air Passenger Duty (APD). Belfast would also not benefit from the alternative forms of transport discussed, such as high speed rail connections to GB cities.
2.3	Secondly the framework covers environmental issues. Some key pointers on this have been provided by officers within the Health & Environmental Services Department.

3	Equality and Good Relations Considerations
3.1	There are no specific equality and good relations considerations attached to this report.

4	Recommendations
4.1	Members are asked to approve the draft BCC response to the consultation and raise any additional issues, relating to the consultation document, that they would like to be included.

5	Decision Tracking
Draft Response to be forwarded to DRD on approval by this Committee, subject to Council endorsement.	

6	Key to Abbreviations
DfT – Department for Transport DRD – Department for Regional Development	

7	Documents Attached
Appendix 1 - Developing a sustainable framework for UK aviation scoping document, March 2011 Appendix 2 - Draft Sustainable Framework for Aviation Consultation Response	