



South Gloucestershire Core Strategy Examination in Public

Day 3 Thursday 21st June 2012

Matter 9: Filton Airfield

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On behalf of

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MATTER 9 – FILTON AIRFIELD

1 Is there any evidence to show a case can be made for retaining an operational airfield at Filton?

1.1 This has been covered by the BAE study Filton Airfield Aviation Options Report, and we have no evidence to support any case for the retention of an operational airfield.

2 Is the balance of uses proposed for this area appropriate to the needs of the North Fringe and Bristol area?

2.1 In our response to [the Filton Position Paper](#), dated July 29th 2011, we stated that the closure of Filton Airfield offers a “once in a lifetime” opportunity to get this area right and develop a sustainable ‘place’ through a comprehensive master plan for the whole area.

2.2 No decision in the Core Strategy is more important and difficult and, as the Inspector himself pointed out at the Exploratory Meeting, the Core Strategy is the place where the important and difficult decisions should be made – they should not be delegated to a later report.

2.3 We remain of that view and, whilst critical of the local planning authority’s underestimate of the housing capacity of the CPNN, we are fully supportive of the general approach to the development of mixed uses throughout the neighbourhood:

- The area needs to retain, [develop and safeguard](#) a high-quality employment focus, based around the Aerospace sector
- The area cannot just depend on the Aerospace sector to continue and needs both to allow for future changes in Aerospace and to develop a complementary business sector that will grow alongside the high-quality Aerospace employment
- The location of the airfield, [with the inclusion of](#) the DFSR land and the land to the south [of the runway](#), is in an extremely sustainable location [and should be promoted](#) to help meet the requirement for residential development in the District.

2.4 These ‘drivers’ of the area’s [growth](#) require the development of a range of social, community, cultural, transportation and leisure infrastructure, as set out in CS26. [We](#) fully support the local planning authority’s intention to secure these through a comprehensive Master Plan coordinated by the local planning authority and involving all of the key stakeholders.

3 To what extent has the Council had regard to the impact of development at the Airfield on the surrounding communities including those in the City Council’s area?

3.1 Only the local planning authority can really answer this. However, as participants in the Master Planning and Design Workshop process and in the Transport Planning process, we have witnessed the involvement of elected members of Bristol and South Gloucestershire Councils, [the](#) Parish Councils, community leaders [from](#) Bristol and South Gloucestershire communities and business representatives, [in](#) the process.

3.2 From those workshops, it is evident that the input of the communities of Henbury, Brentry and Southmead will be essential. However, it is also fair to say from our observations that the response from the leaders of those communities is, so far, less than positive and that their full engagement will be necessary if the CPNN is to be integrated successfully into the urban area.

3.3 Development in the North and East Fringes of Bristol – the key spatial strategy - will inevitably have a wide [range](#) of impacts on the host city. Many will be beneficial (green space, public transport links to existing facilities, journey reduction to employment and regional shopping etc facilities) but others are already being seen as potentially harmful by the communities of North Bristol immediately adjacent to the development area.



3.4 Loss of views, access to open space and biodiversity etc are all concerns for those communities, but the major impacts will inevitably be transport-related. [There will be a number of different solutions to these issues, including](#) a range of public transport, rail, highway and pedestrian/cycle links, [some of which will affect](#) the Bristol urban area. Some of these will undoubtedly be positive, for example, the potential development of passenger rail [services and new stations](#) on the Hallen Line and potential extension to the Metro proposal, both of which are being promoted in the CPNN process and both of which could have major benefits for existing communities. However, there also appears to be concern in the north Bristol communities that the transport impact of development could, potentially, be negative.

3.5 The design and promotion of [improved](#), new and extended infrastructure in this area will require careful, close and sympathetic working with the north Bristol communities and with the City Council.

3.6 Finally on question [3](#) as we have stated in our response to Matter 14, the relationship between the existing employment and residential areas of [the](#) North Fringe, the CPNN, the Science Park in the east and the employment areas of Avonmouth/Sevenside (known as the 'northern arc') will become a key issue in the sub-region. We believe it to be vital to examine the potential for an East/West link as part of the CPNN Master Planning process.

This offers huge potential benefits for business, and residents alike and we are not alone in recognising the need for the local authorities, [businesses](#) and the [Highways](#) Agency to work closely together to take advantage of what we continue to refer to as a 'once in a lifetime' opportunity.

4 Some businesses and organisations have concerns that development of the Airfield could undermine their existing operations. Are their fears valid?

4.1 We have no special insights to offer the Inspector in relation to this question.

5 Is the amount of land to be retained for employment purposes adequate?

5.1 In CS26, the local planning authority sets out a requirement for the allocation of c50 hectares of employment land as part of the CPNN. The latest Master Plan that we have seen promotes almost precisely this amount.

5.2 DF SR's interest lies in the creation of sustainable communities and, as part of [this](#), we naturally seek a certain amount of self-containment in terms of employment and housing. Whilst the amount of employment land reserved in the CPNN is important, it is not the only element that matters. Access to the employment areas, both existing and proposed, [within](#) the 'northern arc' and to Bristol City Centre - particularly non-car-based, will be as important – if not more important.

5.3 What is vital is that all of these elements are considered holistically [and comprehensively](#).