20 May 2013

Dear Ms Sansom

SHEPWAY CORE STRATEGY LOCAL PLAN: PROPOSED MODIFICATIONS 2012 CONSULTATION

REPRESENTATIONS ON BEHALF OF LONDON ASHFORD AIRPORT (LYDD)

We are pleased to enclose, on behalf of our client London Ashford Airport (LAA), representations to the Shepway Core Strategy Local Plan: Proposed Modifications 2012 Consultation.

These representations are made following our previous representations at the Issues and Options, Preferred and Submission document consultation stages. These representations are made in the context of the decision on 10 April 2013 by the Secretaries of State for Transport and Communities and Local Government to grant planning permission for both the runway extension and development of a new terminal building at LAA.

The Secretaries of State (SoS) concluded that based on 500,000 passengers per annum (ppa):

"there would be no likely significant effects on the designated sites, and even if there were there is little evidence that there would be any adverse impact on their integrity as a whole. The proposals would have no significant effect on nuclear safety, landscape or tranquillity and the Airport would be safe from flooding. Any transportation effects would be mitigated. Although some properties would be affected by noise, they would be relatively few and this would not outweigh the creation of jobs, albeit relatively modest in number, and the benefits to the local economy and regeneration".

The applications for the expansion of the Airport up to 500,000 ppa has been thoroughly assessed and every aspect of the proposals and the potential for impacts on the environment have been scrutinised. On this basis, the Core Strategy Local Plan should support all commercial aviation related development up to this threshold. Any development beyond 500,000ppa should be supported in principle, subject to environmental considerations.

The Council should now review and amend its Core Strategy Local Plan Document so that it appropriately reflects the April decisions. We summarise
the key parts of the document that need to be reviewed by the Council, and our suggested amendments below.

Core Strategy Submission Document July 2011

The Submission Core Strategy provides only lukewarm support for the future role of the Airport (as highlighted in detail in LAA's last representation to the Core Strategy submitted on 23 September 2011. This was understandable when the Secretaries of States' decisions were outstanding, but not now.

Footnote 16 on page 102 states that the inquiry decisions on the applications will be fully reflected in the adopted Core Strategy. Now is the opportunity to do this.

The Submission Core Strategy sets out a spatial strategy for the Romney Marsh area. It states at paragraph 5.115 that, as part of this spatial strategy:

"The expansion of London Ashford Airport at Lydd has been regarded by Shepway District Council as an important development opportunity for Romney Marsh, with the potential to increase connectivity to southern Shepway and beyond, and to provide direct and indirect employment benefits. In line with saved policy TR15 of the Shepway District Local Plan Review, the District Council resolved in 2010 to positively support applications to lengthen its runway and build a new passenger terminal, as it was considered the benefits were significant and the specific proposals complied with the requirements of the Habitats Regulations".

Paragraph 5.116 states also that:

"Following this resolution, the applications were ‘called-in’ by the Secretary of State and are subject to a public inquiry. It is considered that the spatial strategy for the Romney Marsh featured in this document will remain applicable whatever decisions the Secretary of State makes".

LAA agrees that the Airport represents an important development opportunity for the District and that it is capable of delivering direct and indirect employment benefits. The importance of the Airport must be acknowledged and support for its expansion confirmed in the Policy CSD8.

Proposed New Amendments

Paragraphs 5.115 to 5.117 should be updated. Footnote 16 at the bottom of page 102 should be deleted.

Local Plan Policy TR15 should be not be saved and it should be replaced with a policy that acknowledges the approved expansion proposals at the Airport in the Romney Marsh Area or include the Romney Marsh Area in the scope of Policy CSD8, and rename the policy accordingly.

Whichever option the Council prefer above, the Council must incorporate positive wording, to reflect the decisions which confirmed that the Airport handling 500,000ppa would have no significant impact on internationally
important wildlife communities, nor would there be any adverse effect on other special features in the area, including the power stations.

We would recommend that the following wording be incorporated into any policy covering the strategic growth for the Romney Marsh Area.

"The strategy for the Romney Marsh Area supports the proposals for the expansion of facilities at London Ashford Airport LAA directly related to the commercial and recreational flying use in order to accommodate up to 500,000 passengers per annum.

The District Planning Authority will also support proposals for the expansion of facilities at LAA directly related to the commercial and recreational flying use over 500,000 passengers per annum provided there would be no significant impact upon the internationally important wildlife communities in the Lydd/Dungeness area."

In addition, the Core strategy should recognise in policy the role of the Airport in the Council’s Spatial Strategy (Chapter 4), Economic Growth Strategy and in the Transport Strategy (please refer to our previous representation, dated 23 September 2011, for further detail).

We trust that these representations will be taken into account and wording relating to the Airport is amended accordingly to fully take into account the decisions by the Secretaries of State.

We would be grateful for written confirmation that these representations have been taken into consideration.

Yours sincerely

Sean McGrath

Enc: Representations dated 23 September 2011
cc: Chris Lewis, SDC
    Hani Mutaq, Lydd Airport