

**TO: PLANNING COMMITTEE – 26<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2004**

**SUBJECT: COVENTRY AIRPORT**

**FROM: HEAD PLANNING AND ENGINEERING**

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 An application for a terminal building at Coventry Airport is currently being assessed. Once the assessment is complete and a full report can be finalised it will be brought to the first available Planning Committee. In order to complete on a number of technical matters, responses are required from external consultees. At this point I anticipate that the first available meeting that a report should be ready for will be that of March 9<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup>.

2. Meeting Arrangements

This application has raised unprecedented levels of public interest, both within the District and beyond. I am aware that there is likely to be a very high level of public attendance at the relevant Committee. I believe that it is appropriate for particular arrangements to be put in place for this item in order that the public's desire to be engaged in the process can be met. This is particularly relevant in the context of public speaking becoming a feature at Planning Committees from April onwards.

- 2.2 Because of the circumstances, I propose a set of arrangements that will apply to the consideration of this application only that will not set a precedent for any others. The arrangements are proposed in order to ensure the public can be fully aware of what is happening and be involved within a structured framework that all understand.

It will be necessary to consider the following issues:-

- (a) Committee venue
- (b) Site visit issues
- (c) Committee process

(a) Committee Venue

In view of the numbers involved, it would be appropriate to hold the Committee meeting at a venue where a large attendance of the public and press can be properly accommodated. It is proposed that an alternative venue to the Council Chamber be used for this, together with audio/visual arrangements to ensure that members of the Committee and the public can see and hear and see the presentations and discussions. Locations are presently being examined and information on this will be circulated in due course.

(b) Site visit

Normal procedure is for members to have a full presentation on an item and then decide whether or not to undertake a site visit. If Members were to choose to undertake a site visit in the usual way in this instance the following possible consequences need to be considered:-

- (i) public uncertainty at the Committee. Many members of the public are likely to be in attendance and there may be disappointment in that the expectation of a debate and discussion will not be met. In addition, there is the issue of whether public speaking (if allowed – see later) should take place before or after such a decision; and if so, if it would be repeated at the return meeting.
- (ii) The site visit itself would be likely to generate considerable public interest and the management of such an event, particularly in relation to selecting representatives to speak (as per current practice) may lead to practical difficulties.

For these reasons, it may be preferable for members to consider in advance if they wish to have a site visit and, if so, if it could be held the Saturday before the Planning Committee. For the anticipated Committee of 9<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> March, this would mean a site visit on 6<sup>th</sup> March. Such a site meeting would be held for Members viewing only and public speaking would not be allowed (if allowed at Committee – see later).

An advance decision to undertake a site visit is a very unusual one, but in the circumstances of this particular application, I consider it an appropriate course of action.

(c) Committee Process

With the forthcoming public speaking arrangements in April it might seem unreasonable to deny the opportunity for such public contribution on such a high profile application. I suggest it would be appropriate, therefore, to allow public representations to be made at Committee. Because of the unusual nature of the proposal, in that its consequences are considered by many to impact upon a wide part of the District and beyond, it would seem reasonable to permit public speaking for this application beyond the limits that are proposed within the public speaking regime. Such an approach would still have to be properly structured, but should allow for reasonable representation.

Suggested Approach

I suggest that an approach could be as follows:-

- (a) The meeting to be held in a location that will allow greater numbers of the public to be in attendance than in the Council Chamber (venue to be finalised).
- (b) The item to be considered on its own on the reserve night (10<sup>th</sup> March as present target).
- (c) A separate Agenda to be prepared and circulated for this item to avoid any confusion and to accommodate the different venue.
- (d) The meeting to be held in a location that will allow greater numbers of the public to be in attendance than in the Council Chamber (venue to

be finalised).

- (e) Public speaking to be permitted at the meeting on the following basis:-
  - (i) A representative of the applicant
  - (ii) The Ward Councillor – from within Ward of application (Stoneleigh Ward)
  - (iii) Parish Council representatives:-
    - one from the Parish (Baginton)
    - a further Parish which may include one from outside the District.(for selection process, see later)
  - (iv) Residents Group/Action Groups
    - one Residents/Action Group – from within the District.
    - Another from within or outside the district
  - (v) 4 Individuals – one of whom may be from outside the District.

No individual will be allowed to speak for longer than 3 minutes (except Ward Councillor). No presentational material will be allowed.

#### Selection Process

Parishes, (except local Parish) Groups and individuals wishing to speak will be selected by lot. Application to speak from any group or individual within the categories above will need to be submitted to Members Services by 12 noon on the last working day before the Committee.

A draw will be made at 1 pm on the working day before the Committee. The draw will be undertaken Under the supervision of the Monitoring Officer.

Successful groups/individuals will be notified immediately.

It will be possible for another individual/Group/Parish to substitute for the one drawn. This must be by agreement between the parties who will both need to inform Members Services of any such agreement by the Monday before Committee.

### 3. Conclusion

This is an unusual set of procedures for the Planning Committee to undertake. However, because of the widespread interest and concern over the proposal I consider it appropriate to put in place a particular framework for Members consideration of this application. It should not set a precedent for the operation of the Planning Committee.

4. Recommendation

That the Committee agrees to the arrangements for public involvement in the Committee process for the consideration of the application for a terminal at Coventry Airport as set out above.

That the arrangements be agreed for this application only and do not set any precedent for the manner in which other planning applications are considered.

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