

## 14. Airport Accessibility Strategy

### 14.1 Introduction and Overview

The purpose of Warwickshire's Airport Accessibility Strategy is to set out our approach to the issue of improving access to the two airports that lie within or close to the County boundary. Birmingham Airport (BIA) is the principal aviation facility for the West Midlands, and serves a wide catchment area. Coventry Airport has principally been used in the past for cargo flights to and from Europe, although passenger services operated by Thompson used the facility during part of the last decade. The main airport operator went into receivership at the end of 2009 and although a new owner has recently been found we are awaiting clarification regarding the future plans for the airport.

While many people travelling to and from Warwickshire make use of a variety of UK airports, issues concerning longer distance travel are more appropriately addressed within other Warwickshire LTP Strategies, such as Passenger Rail, Bus and Network Management. The Aviation (Surface Access) Strategy, therefore, is concerned primarily with passenger access to Birmingham International Airport.

An effective transport network is essential in order to give people, in all parts of Warwickshire, access to the opportunities and benefits that contribute to the enjoyment of a better quality of life. Surface access to aviation facilities will continue to be met by car, bus/coach, rail, community transport services, taxis/private hire vehicles, cycling and walking, or any appropriate combination of these modes. This Strategy deals with the contribution that these modes can make in providing access to aviation facilities, with the emphasis on encouraging more trips to be made by public transport. The effectiveness of transport links extends, not only to its provision, but also to difficulties in physically accessing what is provided, and other equally important issues such as the level of fares, journey time, personal security and comfort.

The overall vision of Warwickshire County Council's Airport Accessibility Strategy is to provide:

'Affordable, accessible, safe, convenient and sustainable surface access provision to airport facilities in or near the County, capable of meeting local and longer distance demand, improving accessibility and reducing social exclusion, thereby contributing to the achievement of the objectives of Warwickshire's Local Transport Plan 2011'.

This strategy will assist in the delivery of the transport objectives of both Central and Regional Government and the County Council. The timeframe of the Strategy will extend to 2026 to ensure that the needs of both passengers and freight / cargo operators, are addressed in a planned, integrated and sustainable manner.

The Action Plan is a realistic implementation mechanism in the light of the constraints, with a monitoring and review process against set targets.

### 14.2 Policy Context

The Strategy has been developed within the National, Regional and Local policy environment and aims to be consistent with the wider framework. An overview of the policy background is provided in Annex 1 of the LTP. The Government's White Paper 'The Future of Air Transport', published in 2003, endorsed a balanced approach to air transport, recognising the importance of aviation to the national and regional economy and the need to reduce or minimise the impacts of airports on those who live nearby and on the natural environment. The Air Transport White Paper Progress Report states that surface access to airports should be designed to mitigate local impacts.

The White Paper supports further expansion of Birmingham International Airport to provide the new runway capacity that is predicted to be required by 2016.

Policy T11 of the West Midlands Regional Transport Strategy which deals with airports supports the expansion of Birmingham Airport and calls for a target of 25% of trips to BIA by public transport (passengers, employees and visitors) by 2012 and 39% by 2020. Improving access to BIA / NEC, especially by public transport, is one of the Regional Transport Priorities included in Policy T12.

#### 14.2.1 Birmingham International Airport

Birmingham International Airport, which is located just outside the County boundary in Solihull Metropolitan Borough, is the fifth largest passenger airport in the UK, carrying over 9.6 million passengers in 2008 (*update when 2009 figure available*). It provides passenger and cargo flights, principally to British and European destinations, although the number of long-haul routes is steadily increasing. The airport also has some facilities for recreational flying and training. The airport has undergone an expansion of both runway capacity and passenger facilities in recent years, including the opening of a new 'International Pier' terminal building in 2009 which will allow the airport to handle up to 20 million passengers a year.

These enhancements have been accompanied by a number of transport and accessibility improvements, including:

- The provision of a new multi-modal interchange at Birmingham International rail station, integrating bus, rail and taxi services in a single facility; and,
- The provision of Air-Rail Link, a fixed-link public transport system between the railway station, the multi-modal interchange and the main passenger terminal.
- The Airport has provided support to selected bus services including an express bus to Birmingham prior to the opening of the Air-Rail Link, the 966 route between north and south Solihull and the demand responsive 24/7 "Buster Werkenbak" service for staff.
- Provision of a safer and more attractive route for cyclists out of the Airport to the south.
- Provision of a range of Airport Access, Bus, Cycle and Rail Guides.

In 2007, BIA launched its new Airport Master Plan "Towards 2030: Planning a Sustainable Future for Air Transport in the Midlands", setting out a strategy for accommodating the expansion outlined in the White Paper. The new Master Plan sets out a framework for the sustainable development of Birmingham International Airport and illustrates how the Airport intends to meet the regional demand for air travel up to 2030.

This document confirmed BIA's desire to extend the existing runway and approval was granted for this extension in 2009. It is anticipated that construction should be completed by 2012. Plans for a second runway were not included in the final strategy as a detailed review of traffic forecasts and runway capacity indicated that it would not be needed until at least 2030.

Sitting beside the new Master Plan is an Airport Surface Access Strategy entitled "Moving Together, which identifies a range of potential surface access improvements to support the proposed expansion, and the need for the Airport Company to operate in partnership with other transport agencies to deliver them. The County Council is an important stakeholder in the work to improve surface access to BIA, and continues to input to the process accordingly. The County Council's development of a new multi-modal interchange at Coleshill Parkway on the Birmingham to Nuneaton railway line was closely linked to further development at BIA and the NEC, particularly in terms of the enhanced network of bus links.

It is estimated that, by 2030, over 30 million passengers will use the airport every year. This has very significant implications for surface access from and through Warwickshire and the

surrounding area. As such, the County Council will work with BIA in the development of the next Surface Access Strategy for the Airport beyond 2012.

### 14.2.2 Coventry Airport

Coventry Airport is located at Baginton in Warwickshire, close to the County boundary with Coventry. The airport recently closed and although a new operator has recently been found we are awaiting clarification regarding the future plans for the airport. The facility is considerably smaller than BIA and was used primarily for domestic and European freight traffic, along with some recreational flying and training. In 2003/4 new owners of the airport began to operate and expand scheduled passenger services to a number of European destinations. These terminated in 2008 after planning permission for a new permanent passenger terminal was refused. At present, it is uncertain what function Coventry Airport will serve in the future under new ownership. The Strategy will therefore

## 14.3 Overview of the Current Situation

Surface access to BIA and Coventry Airport has a number of associated problems and opportunities. These are summarised below.

### 14.3.1 Problems

- The predominant mode of access to BIA by passengers is by car. However, the public transport mode share has risen from 11.5% in 2004 to 20.4% in 2007. Amongst employees, public transport mode share was 21.2% in 2007.
- Highway access to BIA can often be limited by congestion on the Motorway and Trunk road network, including the M42, M6 and A45, and through the proximity of the airport to the National Exhibition Centre;
- Highway access to Coventry Airport is constrained by its proximity to the congested A45/A46 roundabout at Toll Bar End, and a generally inappropriate local road network of 'B' and 'C' classified roads through nearby villages;
- The use of public transport is constrained by shift working patterns because public transport in the early morning and late at night is not commercially viable;
- Access by walking and cycling for employees is difficult, due partly to the airports location and lack of suitable infrastructure;
- Taxi and private hire vehicle fares from parts of Warwickshire to BIA are generally expensive, but form the only viable alternative to the car in the absence of public transport (particularly during the night); and
- Air cargo generally arrives at these facilities by road (HGV), albeit predominantly at night.

### 14.3.2 Opportunities

- Highway access to BIA has been improved following implementation of an Active Traffic Management (ATM) scheme for the M42. The impact of the opening of the M6 Toll on traffic levels on the M6 is being monitored;
- Highway access to Coventry Airport will be partially improved by the proposed major works at the A45/A46 Toll Bar End roundabout;
- Public transport access to BIA has been further improved through the implementation of the existing BIA Surface Access Strategy, the completion of the West Coast Route Rail Modernisation programme and the opening of Coleshill Parkway in 2006 including the provision of associated bus/coach links to BIA;
- A number of improvements to local bus services, walking and cycling have been implemented by BIA and its partners as part of the BIA Surface Access Strategy;
- A range of Airport Access, Bus, Cycle and Rail Guides have been developed for BIA to promote use of sustainable modes;

## 14.4 The Strategy

### Policy ASA1: Partnership

The County Council will work with airport owners, air operators (passenger and freight), adjoining Transport Authorities, the five District/Borough Councils in Warwickshire, the Highways Agency and other stakeholders to improve surface access provision to Birmingham International Airport and Coventry Airport (if appropriate).

The role of the County Council, working in partnership with the airport owners, operators, adjoining Transport Authorities, local planning authorities, the Highways Agency and other stakeholders, is to help develop and deliver sustainable improvements to airport surface access where it is feasible and desirable to do so.

### Policy ASA2: Quality of Surface Access

To meet the overall vision of the Aviation (Surface Access) Strategy, the County Council will work with the bodies and organisations set out in Policy ASA 1 to encourage the provision of improvements to surface access that are Accessible, Available, Acceptable and Simple to Use.

#### a. Accessible

The design of multi-modal interchange and remote check-in facilities at airports must enable passengers to board or alight from the vehicle unaided or with a reasonable level of assistance. Interchange infrastructure should provide for 'seamless' changes between transport modes.

Public transport services to aviation facilities should be co-ordinated to encourage interchange consistent with the aims of the County Council's Public Transport Interchange Strategy, Bus Strategy, Passenger Rail Strategy and Community Transport Strategy, with the object of increasing the range of travel opportunities and options for travellers.

Pedestrian and cycling routes to aviation facilities shall accord with the standards set out in the Walking Strategy and the Cycling Strategy.

#### b. Available

Public transport services to aviation facilities should provide a coverage and level of service that reflects the access needs of airport passengers and employees, both during the day, and at night.

#### c. Acceptable

Interchanges facilities at airports and remote check-in facilities should provide reasonable shelter, comfort, suitable heating (where appropriate) and ventilation for the season of the year, and facilities to address personal safety and security issues.

Staff at these interchange facilities should be helpful and courteous and preferably have received customer service training.

Where possible, the journey time by public transport to aviation facilities should be similar to the equivalent journey by car.

#### d. Simple to Use

Public transport timetables, routes and fares should be readily available, easy to understand and be simple to use.

Integrated ticketing between modes including rail, bus and community transport services should be available where it is necessary to use a combination of different modes to complete a journey.

### Policy ASA3: Implementation of Surface Access Strategies

The County Council will continue to work in partnership with Birmingham International Airport and Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council to implement the current BIA Surface Access Strategy and develop a new strategy beyond 2012. In line with the requirements of Policy T12 of the Warwickshire Structure Plan, the County Council will require a Surface Access Strategy to be prepared and implemented for Coventry Airport should passenger flights resume from this airport and exceed a specified level .

## 14.5 The Action Plan

The Airport Accessibility Action Plan is geared towards addressing the key issues within the context of the known constraints and opportunities.

The delivery of surface access initiatives to aviation facilities involves a wide range of stakeholders. For each specific initiative set out in the Action Plan below, the likely timescale for delivery is identified as short, medium or long term. By their very nature, most of the actions below are ongoing.

Policy	Action	Partners involved	Time-scale
ASA1: Partnership	Work with partners to secure funding through the Local Transport Plan and other appropriate sources of funding (including contributions from airport owners and operators) towards improvements to surface access services and facilities at BIA and Coventry Airport (if appropriate).	Local authorities, airport owners, bus operators, train operators, community transport providers.	Ongoing
ASA2: Quality of surface access	Work with partners to improve the co-ordination of public transport services to aviation facilities to improve multi-modal integration, consistent with the aims of the Public Transport Interchange, Bus, Rail and Community Transport Strategies.	Local authorities, airport owners, bus operators, train operators, community transport providers.	Ongoing
	Work with partners to improve pedestrian and cycling routes to aviation facilities consistent with the standards set out in the Walking and Cycling Strategies.	BIA, local authorities.	Ongoing

	Work with partners to improve the coverage of public transport services to aviation facilities to better reflect the access needs of airport passengers and employees, both during the day, and at night.	Local authorities, airport owners, bus operators, train operators, community transport providers	Ongoing
	Work with partners to improve the reliability and punctuality of public transport services to aviation so as to improve passenger confidence.	BIA, bus operators, train operators and community transport providers	Ongoing
	Provide enhanced facilities for airport passengers at public transport interchanges consistent with the aims of the Public Transport Interchange Strategy, in terms of reasonable shelter, comfort, suitable heating (where appropriate) and ventilation for the season of the year.		Ongoing
	Continue to maintain the public transport information pages on the County Council's website to provide readily available, easy to understand, and simple to use information regarding public transport access to BIA.		Ongoing
	Work with partners to develop proposals for integrated ticketing between modes including rail, bus and community transport services, where it is necessary for airport passengers and employees to use different modes to complete a journey.	Local authorities, airport owners, bus operators, train operators & community transport providers	Ongoing
ASA3: Surface Access Strategies	Work with partners to develop and implement a new BIA Surface Access Strategy to support the proposed expansion of the airport.	BIA, local authorities and other stakeholders	Ongoing
	Work with partners to develop a Surface Access Strategy for Coventry Airport, should passenger flights recommence from this airport in the future.	Local authorities, airport owners and other stakeholders.	Ongoing as required

## 14.6 Targets, Indicators and Monitoring

The following indicator has been included in the Regional Spatial Strategy and is the main indicator which will be used to assess progress with the delivery of the Airport Accessibility Strategy.

Indicators	Performance Indicator	Source Data	Frequency of Analysis
Achieve an overall public transport mode share for all	Percentage mode share of trips made by	Birmingham International	Annual

journeys to BIA of 25% of trips by public transport by 2012 and 39% by 2020.	passengers and employees to BIA	Airport	
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