AIRPORTS AND PLANNING

1. Worried about an airport expansion?
2. What are an airport's impacts? (2.95MB)
3. How are airports planned?
4. How do I respond to a planning application?
5. How do I comment on a plan or its assessments?
6. How do I comment on an environmental statement?
7. Is appropriate assessment needed?
8. How do I present at a public inquiry?
A. What does the Air Transport White Paper say about my airport?
B. What is the status of my airport's masterplan?
C. What nature conservation sites lie close to my airport? (5.25MB)

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Photos: http://en.wikipedia.org/, http://www.aidan.co.uk , http://www.airport-int.com, http://www.glasgowarchitecture.co.uk
http://www.stopstanstedexpansion.com, http://www.airportbournemouth.co.uk, http://www.bristolairport.co.uk, http://www.belfastcityairport.com

1. WORRIED ABOUT AN AIRPORT EXPANSION?

1.1 Introduction

By the time the diggers roll into the field near your house to build an airport extension, it is too late to stop the extension. You can lie down in front of the tractor, phone the police or local council, or set up camp for a while in one of the trees that will be knocked down. All of these things may make people more aware of what is happening and how you feel about it. But ultimately none of them will stop the airport extension from being built.

http://www.aidan.co.uk

The way to really influence what happens at airports in the UK is through the planning system, years before the airport operator even checks on what diggers are available: by commenting on the planning application for the extension and, just as importantly, on the plans which underlie the decision of whether the extension will be permitted or not.

This handbook explains how you can use the planning system to tackle the environmental consequences associated with airport expansions and airport-related development, or at least to try to avoid their worst impacts. This chapter gives an overview of what the key airport-related planning decisions are and who makes them. It also summarises the main ways in which you can influence these decisions, and where in this booklet you can find out more about each of these. Subsequent chapters explain what the main environmental and social impacts of airports and flying are; discuss the policy context for airport-related development; and give more information on different techniques you can use to influence airport planning.

If you know what tasks you want help on, then Box 1.1 shows what sections of this handbook deal with specific tasks. If you are concerned more generally about airport development in your area, then you may want to first find out about the current status of 'your' airport and when you can next work within the planning system to influence it. Box 1.2 lists some questions to help you with this.

Box 1.1 What action do you need help with?

Do you want to comment on:	See Sec. ... of this handbook
an airport operator's *planning application for airport expansion or airport-related development*?	2, 3.4, 4 and 6
an *airport masterplan* that has been prepared for your airport?	2, 3.4, and 5
what your local authority's draft *Core Strategy or other Development Plan Document* says about airports?	2, 3.4, and 5
what your *Regional Spatial Strategy* say about airports?	2, 3.3, and 5
a future *National Infrastructure Policy on airports*?	2, 3.2, and 5

Box 1.2 Finding out about the current planning status of 'your' airport

If you have access to the Internet, you should be able to find most of the following documents by doing a web-search (say on Google) using the terms provided. If you don't or the web-search doesn't work, your local authority planning department will be able to provide you with the information.

1. Has an airport masterplan been prepared for your airport? This is a plan which says what changes the airport operator proposes to make to the airport up to 2030. If yes, it will give you an indication of when the airport operator will be asking for what kind of planning permission. If not, find out when a draft masterplan will be prepared and when you can comment on it.

websearch: airport name + masterplan.

2. Has the airport operator recently put in a planning application to extend the airport or for some other kind of airport-related development? If they have done so within the last (roughly) two months, you should be able to comment on the application before the local authority makes its planning decision.

websearch: local authority name + airport + planning application

3. *What does the Air Transport White Paper say about your airport*? The white paper provides the national framework for airport expansion in the UK, and you can expect that airport operators will aim to achieve the expansions shown in it.

websearch: http://www.dft.gov.uk/about/strategy/whitepapers/air/

4. What do your local authority's Development Plan Framework (in particular the Core Strategy) and your region's Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) say about the airport? If there is an adopted Core Strategy and RSS, then they will tell you what (if any) additional land is being set aside for airport development, what 'material considerations' will be considered when deciding on airport-related planning applications etc. If the plans are not yet adopted, you may still have a chance to comment on them. Contact your local authority to find out when and how to comment.

websearch: local authority name + Core Strategy; region name + Regional Spatial Strategy

1.2 Engaging in the planning system

In theory, citizens can be involved in planning for airport-related developments in a wide range of ways, from being only passive receivers of other people's decisions to having active control over the decisions. Box 1.3 shows the level of citizen involvement in airport planning in the UK: generally it is on the more passive end of the scale.

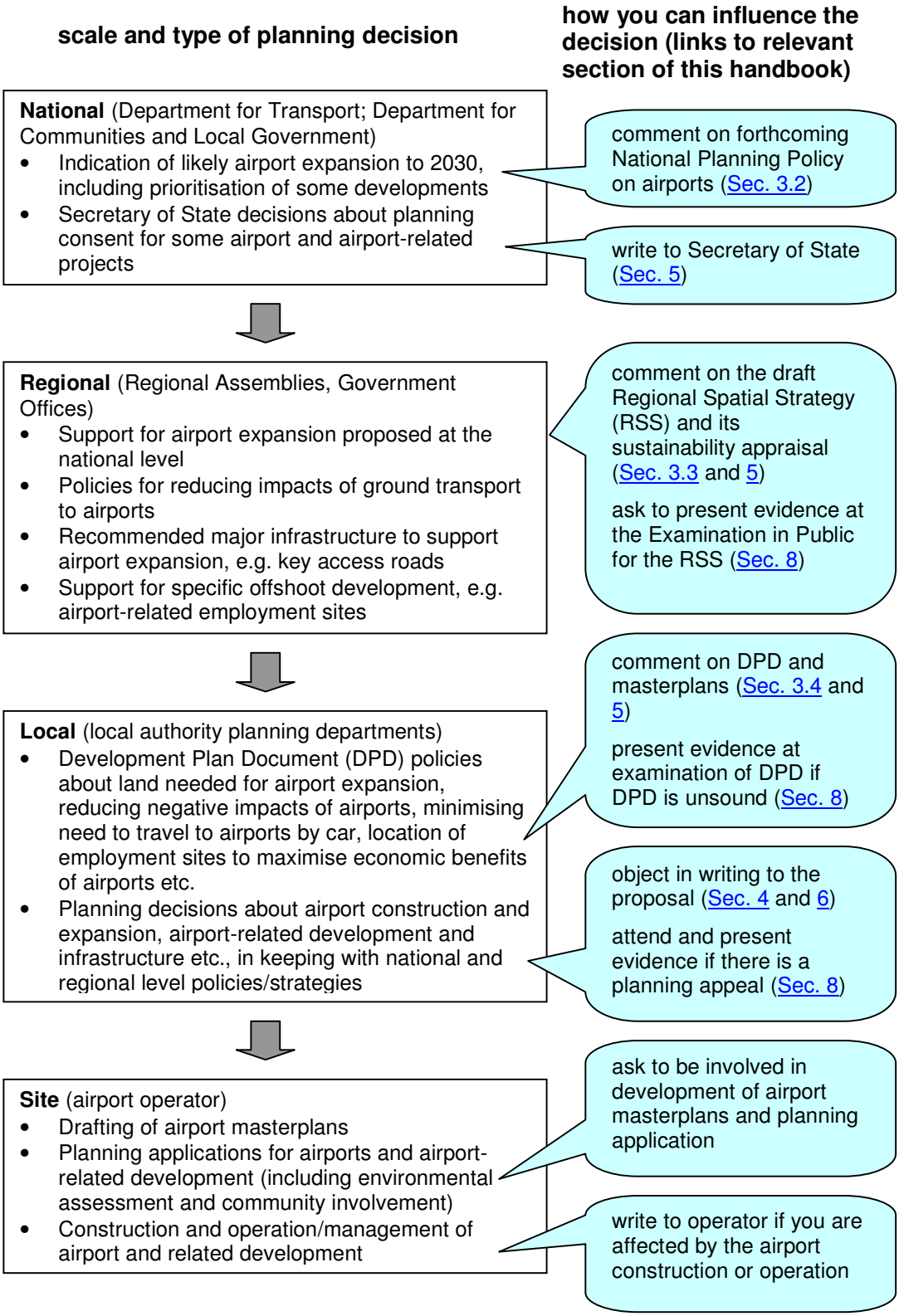
Where citizens feel that formal/official channels won't take account of their views, they may step outside of the planning system and start protesting. This is often more therapeutic than effective, although the large grassroots protests against road building of the 1990s did probably help to change the government's approach to road planning. That said, there is nothing wrong with both working within the system *and* protesting!

This handbook focuses on what can be done by working inside and with the planning system. Box 1.4 summarises this.

Box 1.3 Citizen involvement in airport planning

In 1969, an American woman called Sherry Arnstein came up with a 'ladder of citizen participation' to describe different levels of public involvement in decision-making. The 'Arnstein ladder' is still often used to describe levels of public involvement. It shown below, along with comments about the level of citizen involvement in UK airport planning.

Arnstein's ladder		Citizen involvement in UK airport planning
	Citizen power • Citizen control • Delegated power • Partnership	For individual planning applications, citizens can object and make representations at public inquiry
	Tokenism • Placation • Consultation • Informing	Airport White Paper, Regional Spatial Strategy and Local Development Documents: citizens can send in comments during the formal consultation stage and make representation at inquiry. In practice, citizen comments carry less weight (closer to 'informing'
	Non-participation • Therapy • Manipulation	Where people feel that their voices are not being heard, they may go outside of the system and start protesting

Photos: Stop Stansted Expansion; BBC News; http://www.uwex.edu

Box 1.4 How you can influence planning decisions