

Department for Transport

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**Midlands New Site**

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Note on Issues Raised in  
Consultation Response

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03 RALMS 01833B

Midlands New Site - Note on Issues Raised in Consultation Response: Includes why the Midlands new site was not in the same location as the one identified in the site search study.

Printed in Great Britain on material containing 100% post-consumer waste (text), and 75% post-consumer waste and 25% ECF pulp (cover).

December 2003

Department for Transport

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Includes why the Midlands new site was not in the same location as the one identified in the site search study

December 2003

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## APPENDICES

### **APPENDIX A**

Site Search Re-Appraisal

## 1. INTRODUCTION

This note is intended to provide a response to four key issues that have frequently arisen in the responses received to the consultation proposals for the New Midlands Site. The issues covered are:

- The specific site considered in the Consultation Documents is not in exactly the same location as the site that was considered and received the highest ranking in the five stage Initial Site Search Study. Would the New Site still have been selected?
- Have the impacts on the flood plain been fully considered?
- Does the appraisal correctly identify the impacts on the heritage in the area?
- Has the threat of bird strike been adequately considered?

### 1.1 Site Selection

The Initial Site Search study identified, through a five stage sifting process, a site to the south of Church Lawford as having the greatest potential to locate a new two runway airport to serve the needs of the Midlands. Subsequently, refinement of the airport planning parameter resulted in longer runway lengths being used in the RAS option development studies than had been assumed in the Initial Site Search study. Also the traffic forecasting work during the RASCO stages of the studies also identified that, in a South East constrained scenario, the demand potentially could exceed the capacity of a two runway airport in the long term. Finally the further analysis identified that the extent of airport land likely to be needed to support such a size airport for cargo, maintenance, car parking and ancillary airport activities was also greater than had been initially assumed.

As a result of these factors the site developed in the RAS Part 3 work was substantially bigger than that anticipated in the Initial Site Search, and consequently required greater land-take and stretched across the Avon River flood plain. Prior to issuing the Midlands RCD, no substantiated work had been carried out to confirm that the Church Lawford site would still have been the highest ranked site using the Initial Site Search selection process if the RAS Part 3 site parameters and location were assessed. This appraisal has now been carried out by Scott Wilson, and is attached as an appendix to this memo. Scott Wilson concluded that the site evaluated in the RCD would still be ranked highest using the original site appraisal criteria and methodology.

### 1.2 Flood Plain

The RAS Part 3 Report identified that approximately 108.5ha of land within the 1:100 year flood plain of the River Avon would be within the footprint of the proposed earthworks platform for the airport. The construction would result in the need either to culvert the river as it passes under the airport platform or to divert the river around the site. In each case the culverting or diverted river would need to be 'engineered' so that it would have similar flow characteristics to the existing river to prevent increasing the risk of upstream or downstream flooding. Also, any of flood plain area removed as a result of constructing the airport would need to be replaced with equivalent areas either upstream or downstream, again profiled and vegetated in such a way as not to increase the flood risk anywhere along the river. Finally, surface water storage ponds would also be required to regulate runoff flows from the runways prior to disposal into the river.

In the RAS Part 3 appraisal the loss of the flood plain area was considered to be a moderate adverse impact on the flood risk as it was considered that it would be possible to mitigate the risks through the solutions described above. However, in the RAS Part 3 work, no specific work was carried out to develop engineering solutions for these mitigation measures. It was also assumed that the cost of these works would be covered within the overall 15% contingency allowance, and that any land needed to replace lost flood plain area, and the re-profiling of this land to replicate the required flow characteristics could be found with minimal impact on the environment and the surrounding population. Although we are confident that an engineering solution could be achieved that did not increase the flood risk for areas up or downstream, there are some significant uncertainties (or risks) that have not been quantified, namely:

- It may not be sufficient merely to ensure the works do not increase the risk of flooding. The existing flooding occurrences are perceived locally to be such a significant issue that it may therefore be necessary to substantially improve upon the current situation in order to get acceptance of the scheme. This may either not be feasible, be extremely costly, and/or have other impacts (e.g. land-take, visual impacts etc.) that have not been included in the assessment;
- Development of detailed engineering solutions would be required in order to establish if the costs fall within the overall cost allowances;
- Detailed solutions for the off-site flood plain replacement areas would also have to be developed to test whether they themselves have significant impacts on other aspects of the environment or surrounding residents or businesses.

### 1.3 Heritage

A number of responses have questioned the accuracy of the appraisal of the impact on the Cultural Heritage. An example is the response received by the Strategic Anti-Rugby Airport Co-ordination Group (SACG), who have suggested that there are 6 rather than 2 Grade I listed buildings within the 'Area of Interest' and 22 Grade II\* buildings not 7. This difference appears to have arisen from a difference in definition of the 'Area of Interest' or 'Study Area'. In retrospect, we fully accept that our Part 3 report does not define the parameters for this area very clearly and has switched between using 'Area of Interest' and 'Study Area' in different parts of the report when in essence this is the same area. This has understandably resulted in some confusion. Also, we have in fact used a distance of 5km from the centre of the site to define the study area, which differs from the 8km range that Scott Wilson used in their Initial Site Search study work. SACG for their assessment have based the area on an 8km range.

However, importantly, the key qualitative measures of the impact on the cultural heritage used in the appraisal are clearly stated in Appraisal Summary Table (Table 4.10m) in our Part 3 Report. These are based on ranges of up to 250m and 2km from the site. The 'Area of Interest' is only used to establish the 'Baseline Conditions'. To the best of our knowledge, the numbers are correct for the SAMs and Grade I and II\* buildings identified in the Appraisal Summary Tables and the Baseline Condition Area of Interest.

### 1.4 Bird Strike

Bird strike risk was not quantified or assessed within the scope of the New Site Option appraisal work. A number of consultation responses have indicated that, in particular, a large population of black headed gulls roost on Draycote Water, which is located approximately 4km to the west of the New Airport site. It is not possible to confirm whether this poses a risk

to safe operations of the airport if unmitigated, without carrying out specific studies of the movement patterns and population of the bird habitat. This has not been done at this stage, and therefore there remains a level of uncertainty on whether mitigation measure would need to be incorporated and what the cost and environmental impacts of this might be.

APPENDIX A

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**Site Search Re-  
Appraisal**

## A1. SITE SEARCH RE-APPRAISAL

The following statement prepared by Scott Wilson summaries their review of the RCD site location when appraised using the five-stage site search methodology.

*In the site search methodology, flood plain risk was only used as a site constraint in the Stage 1 initial sift to produce the 'Combined Constraints Map' from which the most promising Areas of Opportunity, rather than specific sites, were identified. The Avon flood envelope at Church Lawford is included on the 'Combined Constraints Map' (Figure 2 of the report) and does not alter the status of the area west of Rugby as an area worthy of further investigation.*

*Stage 3 identified more geographically precise Zones of Opportunity (ZOOs) but did not use flood-plains in the criteria and therefore the final ranking which put Zone of Opportunity 18 (containing Church Lawford) top would not be affected.*

*Church Lawford would have passed to Stage 5 for the final shortlisting because of its location in the best ZOO. The final shortlisting (see Report Table 5.1) does not explicitly use flooding as an assessment criteria. However if topography at Church Lawford was given the lowest score i.e. dropped from 3 to 1, then Church Lawford would still have the highest score (43) in the interim site list. In practice the revised location would have led to 1 extra point for Air Quality ( Appendices Figure 5e ) and 1 extra point for Travel Times so therefore the overall assessment score of the new location would have been the same as that of the original location (45), and four points clear of the next possible site.*

*Both the next two highest ranked sites, Grandborough (41) and Hampton-in-Arden (40) were similarly affected by flood plain risk and would not be preferred in any re-appraisal. The revised position of the at Church Lawford would remain the top-ranked location for a new airport site in the Midlands using the Preliminary Site Search criteria.*

