

DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE – SPECIAL

FRIDAY 3 AUGUST 2012 AT 10.00 AM

PRESENT: Councillor Scarborough (Chairman), Councillors Betton (as substitute for Councillor Graham), Bloxham, Cape, Craig, Earp, McDevitt, Mrs Parson, Mrs Prest, Mrs Riddle, Mrs Warwick and Whalen

ALSO

PRESENT: Councillor Mrs Bowman attended the meeting as an observer
Councillor S Bowman attended the meeting as an observer
Councillor Hendry attended the meeting as an observer
Councillor J Mallinson attended the meeting as an observer
Councillor Morton attended the meeting as an observer
Councillor Miss Sherriff attended the meeting as an observer

DC.64/12 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor Graham

DC.65/12 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Bloxham declared an interest in accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct in respect of Application 10/1116. The interest related to the fact that he lived in the area.

DC.66/12 CONTROL OF DEVELOPMENT AND ADVERTISING

RESOLVED – That the application referred to in the Schedule of Applications be approved/refused/deferred, subject to the conditions as set out in the Schedule of Decisions attached to these Minutes.

- (1) Erection Of A Distribution Centre (Inclusive Of Air Freight And Road Haulage, And Including Integrated +3 °C Chiller Chamber, +12°C Chiller Chamber, Workshop And Offices) (Use Classes B1 And B8), Gatehouse, Canteen/Welfare Facilities, Landscaping, New Access, Parking And Other Infrastructure Works (Such As Auxiliary Fire Station, Package Sewage Treatment Works, Fire Sprinkler System And Electrical Substation) And Raised And Re-Profiled Runway 07/25, Carlisle Lake District Airport, Carlisle, Cumbria, CA6 4NW (Application 10/1116)**

The Chairman advised that a letter had been received on 2 August 2012 from Dickinson Dees, the solicitors acting on behalf of an objector. The Chairman recommended that a short adjournment should be taken to allow Members the opportunity to read and digest the information contained therein.

The meeting was adjourned from 10:05 until 10:22.

The Principal Planning Officer advised that the report was an addendum to the report presented to the Development Control Committee at the meeting on 15 July 2011 and represented a replacement of the previous addendum presented to Members on 6 July 2012, and should be read in conjunction with the report presented to Members on 15 July 2011.

The Principal Planning Officer presented slides showing a number of views of the site and the present condition of the runway. He outlined the correspondence that had been received since publication of the report, including the aforementioned letter from Dickinson Dees.

United Utilities had explained that they could meet a treatment works project completion date of 1 August 2013 for the upgrade to the Irthlington Waste Water treatment works but they would not wish to see any passenger flights or occupancy of the proposed office/freight distribution centre until after the delivery of the project. United Utilities had requested the imposition of conditions that ensured compliance with the drainage strategy and that no surface water should enter the public foul sewerage network. The latter issues were addressed in suggested condition 18 within the report.

Natural England had agreed to the reworded Appropriate Assessment although confirmation was awaited regarding Great Crested Newts and whether an existing emergency water lagoon could be used in the future by the Fire Services.

The Principal Planning Officer advised that an objector had said that the proposal affected Human Rights. Although no details specified it was presumably with regard to Article 8 and/or Article 1 of the First Protocol that the objector had in mind. In respect of Article 8 it was not considered that there would be material, let alone substantial or severe, harm to residents/third parties in terms of noise or pollution and thus there was not considered to be an interference with Article 8 rights nor with the right under Article 1 of the First Protocol to peaceful enjoyment of property. The Principal Planning Officer explained that whilst light from the development would be noticeable at night it was not considered that the harm to individual dwellings would be substantial or severe. In the case of the occupiers of Military Cottages it was considered that there would not be substantial harm in terms of residential amenity, as opposed to visual impact which would in any event diminish significantly over time as landscaping was established, and therefore not an interference.

If, and insofar as there was nevertheless considered to be an interference with the rights, such interference was considered to be lawful, necessary for the protection of the rights and freedoms of others and, weighing the potential benefits of the proposal against the harm, not to have a disproportionate effect on residents/third parties, even if the economic benefits claimed were not to be sustained in the medium to long term.

The Principal Planning Officer advised that representations had been received that repeated previous criticisms of the reports prepared by EKOS. There was clearly a difference of view between parties; the Council receiving independent advice from

ASA, and York Aviation acting on behalf of an objector. The Principal Planning Officer stated that it mattered not to the recommendation which set of forecasts turned out to be more accurate, as there was common ground (ASA and Mott MacDonald) that a permission was likely to deliver a required runway and a viable airport, at least in the short to medium term and that formed the basis of his recommendation.

The Principal Planning Officer explained that correspondence from Dickinson Dees alleged that the Council's objective was just to keep the airport open and that operations were just viable. However, it was common ground between ASA and Mott MacDonald that the proposal could keep the airport open with an updated runway and rental income. The Council's independent consultants (ASA) acknowledged that in the short/medium term scheduled services to Dublin and Southend could be profitable although the level of profit diminished over time as outlined within the report. The Principal Planning Officer further advised that there was a difference of views in the forecasts between Mott MacDonald, ASA and York Aviation. The difficulties in making forecasts were acknowledged within the report and it was because forecasts were unpredictable that the Principal Planning Officer advised Members that the proposal may not secure viability in the longer term. In effect, there appeared to be a misunderstanding and not a last minute change to the July 2012 report, there was no departure from the objective of achieving a commercially viable airport and the objective was not just to keep the airport open.

The report explained what was meant by "enabling development" and, as a general comment, in order to derive sufficient rental income it was almost inevitable that non-compliant development would be needed and it was difficult to envisage what other type of development, with less environmental effects, could generate the level of rental income required.

Dickinson Dees alleged that the proposal was a clear breach of the EU Commission Communications on Community Guidelines on Financing of Airports and Start-up Aid to Airlines Departing from Regional Airports. At first hand there appeared to be nothing in the guidelines that said to grant planning permission as enabling development constituted state aid. However there was a need to be prudent and specialist advice taken on that matter.

The Principal Planning Officer advised that suggested conditions 9, 14, 28, 29 and 30 had been re-drafted and in the case of condition 30 there appeared to be a need for flying at night time to be assessed. The said conditions were displayed on a display screen and also written copies of the same were given to Members of the Committee. The Principal Planning Officer then spoke in detail with regard to the conditions that were suggested.

With regard to the highways, the Principal Planning Officer advised that the submitted Transport Assessment identified routes for HGVs during construction and when the freight distribution centre was operating. The Transport Assessment was included as part of suggested condition 2.

In an e-mail to the Principal Planning Officer Mr Carter of the County Highway Authority confirmed that the Travel Plan Contribution should be based on the North West Mega rider Gold ticket which cost £975 per year.

With regard to landscaping the Principal Planning Officer advised that there would be woodland planting fronting the road to Laversdale to the north east of the freight distribution centre and sections of road frontage onto the A689 to the east and west of the proposed new roundabout. The Principal Planning Officer described the proposed woodland mix. The Principal Planning Officer further advised that there would also be mixed hedgerow planting as well as lime trees planted to line the access road.

In conclusion, the Principal Planning Officer advised that the proposed distribution centre was not per the development plan but runway renewal was. The Principal Planning Officer advised Members that they needed to be aware of a number of risks in that:

- if not economically viable the airport could close
- even with permission, no incentive to promote the airport for passenger movements/air freight if not particularly profitable, ie the £2m rental income may far exceed the expense of keeping the airport open and it may not be considered worthwhile to do more than keep the airport open
- there may be further applications for enabling development to try to make the airport economically viable, and
- the result could be an HGV distribution centre in the countryside.

However, on balance the Principal Planning Officer recommended in favour of the application because it would, at least, achieve runway renewal, would keep the airport open when if planning permission was refused could potentially close the day after. Furthermore, the Council's independent consultants (ASA) acknowledged, that in the short/medium term, scheduled services to Dublin and Southend could be profitable, although the level of profit diminished over time.

Therefore the Principal Planning Officer recommended that authority to issue approval of the application be granted subject to:

- the acceptance of the Appropriate Assessment/clarification on Natural England's position regarding Great Crested Newts
- the receipt of appropriate advice regarding the implications of the Commission's guidance on the "Financing of Airports and Start-up Aid to Airlines Departing from Regional Airports" and state aid
- the completion of a Section 106 Agreement with regard to keeping the airport open and the runway maintained, Travel Plan obligations, and the payment of £100,000 in order to enable the undertaking of a habitat enhancement scheme to benefit breeding waders, and
- the imposition of the suggested conditions as revised.

Mr Elliott (Objector) stated that, in his opinion, the runway should be re-orientated and that a 10° move would be achievable. Mr Elliott presented a slide that indicated the sites of accidents at other airports in relation to Carlisle airport.

Mr Elliott reminded Members that they could only grant permission on the basis of law and asked that they not be influenced by threats. Mr Elliott further reminded Members that he had won a judicial review in respect of the decision to approve a previous application. Mr Elliott had taken legal advice and stated that should the Committee approve the application he would seek a further judicial review.

Mr Elliott stated that the Town and Country Planning Act advised that an Environmental Impact Assessment had to be considered and that it must contain a description of the effects on the environment and he believed that there were omissions within the report in that regard. Mr Elliott had written to the Principal Planning Officer and outlined 15 items that argued that the Environmental Statement was flawed.

Mr Elliott advised that a bid to gain the freehold of the site would be submitted within the next two weeks and that the lease of the land to Stobart Air would be revoked.

Mr Elliott presented a slide that showed a number geese flying over the airport. He was concerned that a pilot may not see birds when taking off or landing and that if a twin engine plane was involved in an incident it would crash within a mile of the site and could land on the village of Irthington. For that reason Mr Elliott suggested that the runway should be re-orientated.

Another objector, Mr Brown, had raised a number of significant issues in the past and Mr Elliott believed that Members should consider all effects that the proposal could have on the area. Mr Elliott believed that the classification for the runway should be level 31 as a maximum figure rather than a minimum.

Mr Elliott did not agree with the proposed conditions and queried whether any potential breach of the conditions would be enforced. Mr Elliott suggested that the applicant's lease should have been revoked prior to submission of the application. Once built the runway could not be re-orientated and there was the potential for Stobart Air to submit a future application to allow larger aircraft to use the airport.

In conclusion, Mr Elliott presented a montage that showed a light aircraft flying over the village and also a 737 aircraft flying over a local school close to the airport which he believed was not acceptable. Therefore Mr Elliott requested that the application be refused and the developer be requested to submit a revised application with the re-orientation of the runway indicated.

Mr Connelly from York Aviation advised that he was representing Mr Gordon Brown in objecting to the proposal before Members. He gave his background and advised that he recognised the aspirations for the airport to play a role in the economy of Cumbria, improving efficiency and the prospects for business and tourism. Mr Connelly reminded Members that Local Plan Policy DP3 confirmed that that was the policy objective against which the development should be tested and that the development of the airport should support commercial operations in order that the airport could play a wider role in the economic development of Carlisle and the county. York Aviation's interpretation of the report was that the airport would be for general aviation and that did not provide the basis to approve the application.

Development of the airport would not be achieved merely by keeping the airport open and the airport would not fulfil its economic role unless airlines were willing to develop services in passenger and freight flight. Mr Connelly believed that the benefits had been overstated by the applicant particularly with regard to the infrastructure. Mr Connelly's work and that of the Council's advisors had raised doubts about the potential viability of commercial air services and without such services the development would be a road based haulage centre in the middle of the countryside.

Within the report, the Council's consultant had stated his views on the viability of an air service from the airport. Mr Connelly explained the relationship between Air Stobart, Aer Arran and Aer Lingus. In summary the consultant's view was that without commercial air services there would be no incremental economic benefit that could justify approval of the application.

Mr Connelly added that in the unlikely event that 100,000 passengers would use the airport the economic impact assessment submitted by the applicant was unsound. The assessment used a multiplier that overstated the GVA. With regard to additional on-site jobs, the net impact of the development would be not more than 22.5 full time posts in the local economy and an additional income of £845,000 per year.

In terms of the wider impact on the economy the report drew information from York Aviation's report of 2005 that stated that the successful development of the airport could improve the image of Cumbria as a place to do business and attract tourists to the area. However there was no hard evidence of the impact of the development within that report.

At the present time, any hope of image benefits would be non-existent as they would not bring new passenger services to Carlisle.

Another issue for consideration was whether in the longer term the airport could be safeguarded by the rent from the freight distribution centre. Taking into account costs and assuming 100,000 passengers used the airport, the combined operation would not generate sufficient funds to subsidise the airport. York Aviation's assessment that allowed for the omission of non staff operating costs and aeronautical revenue increases indicated that the airport would not be viable if costs associated with air services were incurred.

Mr Connelly did not believe that the continued operation of the airport could be controlled through a Section 106 Agreement. He stated that it would be easy for the owner to manipulate the figures of viability and it had been seen before at other airports where costs and revenues had been engineered. Mr Connelly was of the opinion that there was a high risk of a similar situation particularly given the reported uncertainty within the Stobart property portfolio and there was not certainty that the freight distribution centre would generate sufficient funds to subsidise the airport.

The Committee were in a difficult position whereby attempts to attract services would trigger the circumstances where the airport could be closed.

Therefore the Council were left with the hope that the airport would remain open for general aviation traffic. Mr Connelly added that as it was not an expectation or a likelihood that the airport would remain open and therefore did not support the enabling development argument made in the Officer's report. That could not be a sound basis for approving the application. On all the evidence submitted there was no realistic enabling argument that would support the planning policy objective of securing the economic operation of a commercial airport either now or in the future and the letter from Dickinson Dees clearly indicated the illegality of determining the application on that basis.

Mr Fox (Objector) stated that he was a local resident and from the outset had believed that the application had been characterised by uncertainty and inaccurate data and a lack of judgement in the recommendations.

With regard to sustainability Mr Fox explained that travel would increase by half a million miles per year as a result of transferring lorry trips from Kingmoor to the airport. The Travel Plan had been based on an urban model that assumed transport was available. As there was no public transport to the airport there was therefore no target and therefore no penalties and staff travel costs to the site would increase. Mr Fox asked whether Members believed that rental income would keep the airport open. He advised that Stobarts was a listed company who had forced airport users to move and made the future of the airport museum uncertain. The airport currently operated to a minimum safety standard and Mr Fox did not believe that the airport could continue when the leaseholder was only required to demonstrate that it was not capable of economic operation.

Mr Fox advised Members that when the recommendations for the purchase of the lease were put forward it was for a 460 acre site for development and suggested that the new facility would prove ongoing savings and be more efficient and reduce labour costs. The lease was currently on the market within the Stobart Group's property portfolio.

Mr Fox believed that there were a number of sites that were more suitable to such a development. He queried whether in the present economic climate, it was the right time for the Council to be selling land at the airport site while at the same time considering a major development at the site.

Mr Fox queried how many of the conditions were understood by Members and stated that it should be the Council and not the applicant that set the conditions. He urged Members not to look at the short term gains but to look at the mid to long term.

With regard to the Environmental Assessment, Mr Fox reminded Members that concerns had been expressed by two Parish Councils regarding the safety of the A689. Both Councils had given high profile to the matter within their Parish Plans. Mr Fox did not believe that the Environmental Assessment took full account of the opening of the CNDR. The preliminary figures suggested that the increase in traffic flow on the A689 was 5% but that figure was modelled on data that indicated that the A689 had capacity to take the increased freight centre traffic and that the roundabouts were big enough. There were concerns about traffic flow on the A689 with evidence of a series of convoys of large lorries. No account had been taken of

the risks at junctions on the A689. There were problems at present and there had been a number of accidents at blind junctions. Mr Fox did not believe account had been given to the junction with Walby Farm Park which had opened since the planning process had started and for which traffic had to turn off and onto the A689.

Mr Fox did not believe that consideration had been given to the impact of noise, vibration and air pollution and he requested Members not to approve the application. He reminded Members that the first application had been scrutinised by public inquiry and then withdrawn by the applicant. The second application was scrutinised by the courts and the Audit Commission. The third application required a sustainable decision and Mr Fox believed the application did not offer that sustainability.

Mr Nicholson (Parish Councillor) stated that he represented Stanwix Rural Parish Council and reminded Members of the size of the proposed building. Mr Nicholson believed that the application was contrary to a number of policies including the Local Development Plan, Climate Change Strategy, the National Planning Policy Framework and the Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change of which the Council was a signatory. Mr Nicholson stated that the proposal was viewed as an enabling development but he believed that it would only enable the airport to linger until it ceased. The applicant's agent had described the airport as "de minimis" which meant of minimum importance, but the proposal was supposed to be enabled by the proposed development in open countryside.

In a letter to shareholders the Chairman of Stobart Group had stated that the acquisition of the airport was not the primary purpose of the company acquiring the site and that the facility would reduce labour costs. Mr Nicholson believed that total employment in the area would actually fall as a result of relocation to the airport site. Mr Nicholson further believed that the development may impede the future use of the airport as the large building would impede radio signals and suggested that could be the reason that the Officer had proposed that discussions with the CAA UK Border Agency or the Department for Transport would not be carried out until planning permission had been secured.

Mr Nicholson also did not believe that the Environmental Assessment was complete as it did not incorporate any appraisal of the proposal's total embodied carbon. With regard to chemicals, the Hazard Assessment had not assessed the risks to public safety. Dangerous chemicals would be transported by HGV and stored on site. The vapour of the highly flammable liquid petroleum gas could readily ignite and explode.

The applicant had repeatedly threatened to leave the area if the application was refused or deferred but Mr Nicholson reminded Members that the Deputy Chief Executive had stated that he did not believe that the company would leave as the company's roots were in the area and it was important to Carlisle that they remained.

Mr Welch, Managing Director of Stobart Air, presented a video regarding the application the content of which was explained in detail.

With regard to the airport at Southend, Mr Welch explained the background to the airport leading to its current success and the similarities between it and Carlisle

airport. Mr Welch advised that the airport would require the property income from the freight distribution centre to cover the base costs of the airport. Mr Welch believed that the Stobart Group had a strong track record of delivery of projects. Mr Welch presented slides that showed the control tower, railway station and new road network at Southend airport, all of which had been brought about by investment by the Stobart Group. Mr Welch gave details of flights from the airport and advised that passenger figures were increasing. The success of Southend airport was due to property income and the airport would continue to grow in the future as a planning application had been submitted for an extension to the passenger terminal for which the applicant was awaiting confirmation of funds. In conclusion Mr Welch stated that investment was needed for the future of Carlisle.

Mr Greenwood (Cumbria Tourism) informed Members of the current tourism figures to both Cumbria and Carlisle in particular. He advised that growth in the area was not as rapid as in other parts of the UK and that cities with airport connections had a higher rate of growth. Mr Greenwood stated the Cumbria Tourism supported investment in the airport and believed that an upgraded airport would see growth in overseas visitors, as a weekend break destination and business passengers. Dublin airport had links to the United States and Northern Europe while an increase in business passengers would encourage business to the Lake District and Hadrian's Wall.

It was anticipated that people in the UK would holiday at home over the next three years and people from London and the south east of England would be able to fly into the region. Mr Greenwood believed that the region needed more accessible air routes.

With regard to business Mr Greenwood stated that with an airport Carlisle would have the scope to grow and improve conference facilities and the Council's intention for growth would be strengthened by a busy airport and the area would flourish as had occurred in other areas. In conclusion Mr Greenwood stated that Cumbria Tourism welcomed and encouraged the proposal.

Mr Grainger (Invest in Cumbria) explained that he was the Managing Director of Invest in Cumbria and the Enterprise and Investment Manager for Cumbria County Council. Mr Grainger presented slides and explained his support for the proposals. Mr Grainger explained how approval of the application would have a positive impact on inward investment and infrastructure. Mr Grainger reminded Members that the Stobart Group was the foremost and most dynamic indigenous brand in Cumbria and had a long track record of contributing to the GDP of Carlisle and Cumbria through its investment programme. The "Stobart effect" of attracting further investment from other companies had been demonstrated at Southend and other locations.

Mr Grainger advised that the planned links to London Southend and Dublin meant that Carlisle would have a connection to major trading areas in Europe and North America. That would significantly raise the profile of the City and its credibility as an important regional centre. Mr Grainger explained the positive impact the development would have on business and tourism and the economic climate.

Mr Price (Mott MacDonald) presented slides to the Committee the first of which showed the growth in air traffic and advised that there had been no growth in Carlisle. Mr Price reminded Members that one of the objectors had referred to the short runway, and advised that other frequently used airports such as Jersey, Guernsey and London City had shorter runways than Carlisle. The objector had stated that 50,000 passengers per annum was not viable but Mr Price confirmed that some airports had less than 50,000 passengers and were viable.

Mr Price explained the figures relating to air travel per person per year and advised that Cumbria had one of the lowest figures in the country. He queried why there were objections now when an earlier report provided strong evidence to a successful airport.

With regard to access to Carlisle, Mr Price reminded Members that recently Carlisle was cut off by rail travel due to flooding and that because there was no air service it had become isolated. There was an opinion among businesses that if you could not fly to an area you could not get to an area and it was difficult to get to Carlisle easily. He believed that Southend was a good indicator of how a small airport could be successful.

Mr Price added that the EU recognised that a small airport could not sustain costs but was vital for economic cohesion. He believed that air freight was part of the integrated value chain. Mr Price explained the Stobart Air investment in Aer Arran.

With regard to concerns about birds flying in the vicinity, Mr Price advised that there were larger reservoirs at Heathrow airport and measures were in place to alleviate those concerns.

In conclusion, Mr Price advised that the airport was licensed by the Civil Aviation Authority and therefore any amendments to the airport would be subject to their agreement. As a result that would ensure consistency of the development.

There was an adjournment of the meeting between 11:45 and 11:55.

A Member stated that he had given the proposal a significant amount of thought and had listened to all the submissions and that the application had been given serious consideration. The Member thanked those who had submitted slides. While he acknowledged that some people were against the proposal he had considered the evidence and that, being responsible to the citizens of Carlisle, the Member moved the Officer's recommendation for authority to issue approval of the application subject to the conditions stated within the report and subsequent amendments as indicated by the Officer in his submission.

A Member stated that whilst he had no issue with the airport in general he was concerned about the highway issues which he did not believe had been dealt with by the report. He welcomed the presence of Mr Walsh from Cumbria County Council Highways department but added that he did not believe the County Council had done their best by saying they had no problem with the highway issues within the application.

The report had stated that there was no significant increase in traffic on the A689 since the opening of the CNDR. As he used that road regularly, the Member believed there was a problem particularly at Newby East, Irthington and Laversdale. He agreed with one of the objectors who had stated that there were now queues of heavy lorries on the road and there had been a number of near accidents recently. In one accident a signpost had been damaged when a lorry hit it while trying to avoid a car turning at a junction.

The Member stated that the report did not specify that there would be no construction traffic through the nearby villages and whether there would be weight restrictions permanently imposed on traffic. Tractors caused a problem on the narrow roads and Stobart lorries were much larger and the County Council should have cognisance of the fact that they should not be allowed to go through the villages. As there had been restrictions imposed when nearby bridges were closed the Member believed that those restrictions should be imposed during construction and beyond.

The Member requested that conditions be imposed that would restrict the weight of vehicles and defined routes.

The Member was also concerned about the drop from the side of the road onto the grass verges which was approximately 3 feet in places. That situation was dangerous, particularly at night and it could be worse if nothing was done to improve them. The Member urged the highway authority to work with the developer to ensure those areas were dealt with. The Member was also concerned that lorries could turn off the M6 at junction 44 and take a route to the airport that would force them to travel through Irthington. In other areas work had been done to widen the road and create a centre lane. The Member suggested that the same should be done at Newby East and Laversdale.

The Member was pleased with the response from United Utilities as there were problems with the sewage works at Irthington and they would worsen if nothing was done. The Member was also pleased that United Utilities had specified that no work should be undertaken until that work was completed.

Mr Walsh responded that the traffic flow figures were taken after the opening of the CNDR and showed an increase of 5% although there had been a reduction in traffic on Brampton Road. With regard to the junctions indicated by the previous Member, Mr Walsh advised that the County Council had requested a detailed assessment of traffic throughout the process although he did not believe there was a need for restrictions to be imposed as part of the development. Mr Walsh advised that construction traffic would be part of the Construction Management Plan and that the majority of traffic would use the A689 from junction 44 but added that restricted routes could be built into the plan and the 278 agreement with regard to highway works discussed with the developer.

With regard to more general weight restrictions, Mr Walsh advised that such restrictions would be difficult to police and in his view it would be unlikely that lorries would use the back roads from the motorway to the airport.

With regard to the verges, Mr Walsh advised that the matter had been dealt with the previous day.

In response to a query from a Member Mr Walsh explained how the traffic flow figures were obtained and that there may be standard fluctuations as part of traffic flow variations. Full details of traffic flow would not be known until the end of the year when the full year details were published.

The Member advised that he would have liked to see more progress on the matter and added that unless steps were taken to improve highway safety in the area he would be obliged to vote against the Officer's recommendation.

A Member queried whether the short runway would restrict flights whether it would be possible to extend the runway in the future. The Principal Planning Officer advised that the submitted business plan had taken account of the length of the runway. If the owners wished to extend the runway at some future time an application would need to be submitted which would be considered on its own merits.

A Member reiterated the concerns about the highway issues but stated that having read the report and understood the concerns of the objectors, she believed on balance that the objections were outweighed by the potential economic benefits to Carlisle and the surrounding areas.

A Member stated that he believed that the freight distribution centre would be good for Carlisle but he was not sure that the location was appropriate and had similar concerns about highway issues as had been stated previously. The Member added that an airport would be good for the City but was uncertain about the developer's intentions to develop the airport. The Member was also concerned that the report did not mention the lack of an instrument landing system. The Member had sought advice from an amateur pilot who had advised that without such a system pilots would have to reduce their height to 600 feet before deciding whether or not it was safe to land at the airport. The Principal Planning Officer advised, although that was his understanding, he was not an aviation specialist, but added that the applicant had indicated that a GPS system would be installed in place of an instrument landing system. Aer Arran had advised that they were happy to use an airport with GPS.

A Member believed that, if the applicant was serious about the future of the airport, that issue would have been mentioned in the report and that if the applicant intended to upgrade the system, more emphasis should have been made in the application.

A Member was concerned about the impact that the proposed freight distribution centre would have on the countryside and asked for clarification of the proposed details to minimise the impact of the buildings. The Principal Planning Officer advised that there would be mixed woodland and hedgerow planting with density and species to tie in with existing planting. The Environmental Statement had stated that it was anticipated that the woodland would reach maturity by 2025.

With regard to the height of the building, the Principal Planning Officer advised that it was the intention that the building would be dug into the land and he had suggested

a condition that the site and floor levels were to be agreed before construction to minimise the impact on the landscape.

A Member queried whether information that had been passed to her during the meeting could be submitted. The Director of Governance advised that it would not be normal practice as such information had not been available to all parties for consideration and comment.

A Member requested clarification on the lease on the land that was currently on the market. The Principal Planning Officer advised that the City Council's property currently for sale was land adjacent to the airport and that clarification on the land at the airport was included within the addendum to the report. The Director of Governance advised Members needed to be aware of the distinction between leasehold and freehold. The Stobart Group's leasehold interest in the land was a different matter to the Council's freehold; the former may be on the market whilst the Council's freehold interest was not.

A Member seconded the motion to approve the Officer's recommendation as he believed that any negative issues were outweighed by the benefits. The Member welcomed the development and hoped that it would exceed expectations.

A Member queried the Officer's opinion prior to the approval of the National Planning Policy Framework. The Principal Planning Officer advised that that issue was covered within the report.

The Member queried whether a PCN level of 31 was a sufficient proposition for future use of the airport. The Principal Planning Officer advised that the standard of construction was the subject of a proposed condition and that the future maintenance of the main runway was to be covered by the proposed Section 106 Agreement. A condition was also suggested in respect of the proposed types of aircraft allowed to land at the airport.

The Member further queried whether the A69 would be de-trunked and the A689 trunked. Mr Walsh advised that the A69 was managed by contract by the highways Agency and the A689 by contract to Cumbria County Council. As there were many years remaining on those contracts it was doubtful whether there would be any changes to the status of the roads until those contracts ceased.

A Member stated that he believed the development of the freight distribution centre went hand in hand with the development of the airport to ensure the airport was sustainable and viable and therefore he supported the Officer's recommendation.

A Member also asked for support for further conditions to make the highway issues safer. Mr Walsh had referred to documents that the Member had not seen and the Member stated that for the benefit of some Carlisle residents restrictions should be out in place through villages and junctions made safer.

The Principal Planning Officer advised that recommended condition 10 covered vehicle routes during construction but not operating routes.

A Member queried whether the conditions would ensure that the airport would be sustainable and available in perpetuity. The Principal Planning Officer advised that the Proposed Section 106 Agreement had been suggested to ensure that the airport would remain open and the suggested Travel Plan would seek to address sustainable modes of travel.

Following a vote it was:

RESOLVED: That authority to issue approval be granted to the Director of Economic Development subject to:

1. the acceptance of the Appropriate Assessment/clarification on Natural England's position regarding Great Crested Newts;
2. the receipt of appropriate advice regarding the implications of the Commission's guidance on the "Financing of Airports and Start-up Aid to Airlines Departing from Regional Airports" (2005) and State Aid;
3. the completion of a Section 106 Agreement including:
 - i. an obligation on the applicant to keep the airport open and the runway maintained unless it could be shown that the airport is no longer economically viable (even with the distribution centre rental income);
 - ii. Travel Plan obligations requiring: payment of a Travel Plan Bond to the County Council as the Highway Authority calculated by using the cost of an annual Cumbria Mega rider Gold ticket multiplied by the proposed reduction in the number of employee commuting trips multiplied by 5 years; the applicant designating a Travel Plan Co-ordinator to carry out annual monitoring and reporting of results to the County Council; the payment of £2725 per year for 5 years in respect of County Council staff; and the setting up of a Steering Group to oversee the frequency of the shuttle bus service;
 - iii. the payment of £100,000 in order to enable the undertaking of a habitat enhancement scheme to benefit breeding waders; and
 - iv. the imposition of the conditions indicated in the Schedule of Decisions attached to these Minutes.

(The meeting ended at 12:35)