

Birmingham Airport Draft Master Plan – Frequently Asked Questions



This document provides responses to frequently asked questions relating to our draft Master Plan and associated consultation. Should you have any additional questions beyond those contained in this document, please include these in your consultation response, or contact us by email at: masterplan@birminghamairport.co.uk

General

1. Why is a new Master Plan needed?

Since our 2018 Master Plan (covering the period up to 2033) was published, the context for aviation, regional development and sustainability has changed considerably. This includes changes in demand, airlines, and the types of aircraft being used. This draft Master Plan responds to these changes and will guide the Airport's growth over the next 15 years.

2. Why is this a 'draft' Master Plan and what does this mean?

This version of the Master Plan is a 'draft' because it is important that we hear your views to inform the final version, which will be published in early 2027.

The consultation therefore runs from **8 October to 4 December 2026** as an opportunity to seek your feedback. We will review all feedback received to identify key issues and suggestions to help us finalise the Master Plan. A consultation report will also be published summarising what we have heard and how feedback has influenced the final Master Plan.

The Master Plan provides a strategic direction for future development at the Airport as a reference point for stakeholders. It is not a component of a planning application, application for development consent, or a policy document, and therefore this consultation is not part of a formal consenting process. Consent will be sought for proposals within the Master Plan, as necessary. The consenting process will provide associated environmental assessments, detailed designs, and further engagement and consultation opportunities. Our Master Plan is therefore different to the plans and associated consultations undertaken by Luton Airport and Gatwick Airport as they sought development consent for their respective major expansion works.

Airport development

3. How does the Master Plan align with the Airport's existing planning permission?

The Airport's existing planning permission for the extended runway (application reference: 2008/22/S, granted in 2009) allows for up to 205,400 aircraft movements per year. The anticipated increase up to 180,000 annual aircraft movements by 2041 would therefore fall well within the conditions of the existing planning permission.

The legal agreement (Section 106 Agreement) associated with the existing planning permission, provides the framework for how we will manage and mitigate environmental, community and transport impacts associated with development at the Airport. For example, it requires that noise impacts do not exceed those assessed in the Environmental Statement that accompanied the planning application.

4. How does the Master Plan align with national policy?

The UK Government has consistently recognised the strategic importance of the aviation sector within the national economy, and its role in supporting economic growth, regional development and international competitiveness. This is reflected in the Department for Transport's 2018 policy statement: *Beyond the Horizon the Future of UK Aviation: Making Best Use of Existing Runways*

(thereafter the 'Making Best Use' policy). The policy supports airports making better use of their existing infrastructure to accommodate growth, subject to appropriate consideration of environmental, community and surface access impacts. This approach is also largely reflected in the National Planning Policy Framework (2026). The "Making Best Use" policy is still applicable, as confirmed by recent planning decisions relating to London Luton and London Gatwick airports.

In accordance with the Making Best Use policy, the Master Plan explains how future passenger and cargo demand can be accommodated through making best use of our existing infrastructure, by optimising use of the current runway and ensuring we use our existing operational land sustainably and to maximum efficiency.

5. Does Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council's (SMBC) emerging Local Plan support the Master Plan?

SMBC's emerging Local Plan includes a draft policy which supports development at the Airport and we are continuing to engage with the Council to closely align the Local Plan and Master Plan requirements.

The Council's emerging Local Plan is being consulted on at the same time as our draft Master Plan, but the consultations are independent of one another. Please refer to the Council's website for further details about its Local Plan consultation.

6. Two of the sites proposed for Airport development (Land at Damson Parkway and HEELMP) are located on Green Belt land. What rights does the Airport have to develop on these sites?

The Master Plan identifies areas of land to accommodate our requirements for ancillary uses, including parking and environmental mitigation. We have needed to carefully consider land outside our operational boundary as we have a number of physical constraints to navigate. This includes the railway line, existing business uses and highway infrastructure which limit how and where we can develop our core aviation infrastructure, including aircraft stands and the terminal building, which are required to achieve our growth aspirations (see page 45 of the Master Plan for the size of the Airport compared to other UK airports).

The Land at Damson Parkway has already been partly developed by Jaguar Land Rover, and the Airport owns a small area of the site. It is proposed to be released from the Green Belt in SMBC's emerging Local Plan to accommodate the Borough's employment development needs (including potential airport-related uses). The UK Central Hub plans also identify this area for development. The Master Plan aligns with these plans to bring forward development that delivers regional growth and benefits.

The Historic Environment, Ecology and Landscape Management Plan (HEELMP) site is owned by the Airport, and we have carefully considered its future role in developing the Master Plan. In addition to identifying it as a possible area for off-site parking, the Master Plan also identifies its potential role in delivering Biodiversity Net Gain as part of new development.

Development of land in these areas would be subject to environmental surveys and assessments, permitting requirements, planning permission and negotiation with landowners.

7. What is currently on the off-site areas proposed for the Airport's ancillary uses?

The Master Plan identifies the following three sites as possible locations for parking, other Airport uses and environmental enhancements.

The **West Car Park** (located between the Airport and Birmingham International Station) is an existing car park currently operated by AirParks. The draft Master Plan shows Bickenhill Lane being realigned to pass through this site. This would create more space next to the terminal to help accommodate Airport growth. It would also help to enable delivery of a second Airport access road and potentially reduce the volume of non-Airport traffic which currently passes through Bird Island.

The **HEELMP site** is comprised of around 42 hectares of Airport-owned land south of the A45, which includes the Bickenhill Meadows SSSI and Castle Hill Farm Meadows Local Wildlife Site. The Plan sets out how we look after the nature, landscape and heritage on this land.

The **Land at Damson Parkway** (Site UK2) has been partly developed by Jaguar Land Rover and is identified for employment uses (including potential airport-related uses) in SMBC's emerging Local Plan.

As described in Question 6, development on these sites would be subject to environmental surveys and assessments, permitting requirements, planning permission and negotiation with landowners.

8. Will you need to compulsorily purchase any land or buildings? If so, how will this be approached?

Our preference is to acquire any land required through agreement with landowners. The Airport has access to compulsory purchase powers in certain circumstances, but no decisions have been made on whether these would be required. Any potential future acquisition would be considered as proposals develop and would follow the appropriate statutory processes.

9. Do you have plans to add a second runway?

No, the Master Plan does not propose introducing a second runway. Instead, the Master Plan focuses on maximising the use of the existing full-length runway, which aligns with current UK Government policy.

10. Will the Master Plan require changes to local flight paths?

The Master Plan itself will not require changes to flight paths, or to the routes that planes take immediately after take-off and before landing. If, however, there are schedule or destination changes, the use of existing flight paths may change, i.e. more or less aircraft using a given route, when compared to the current arrangement.

The Master Plan also allows us to consider changes to how aircraft fly along these existing routes, such as using the full length of the runway for take-off, to help reduce noise. Please see Question 27 for more detail.

11. There has been ongoing construction at the Airport in recent years. Does the Master Plan mean there will be continuous construction work and disruption to staff and passengers?

Future improvement works will be carefully planned to keep disruption to both employees and passengers to a minimum. Works will also be phased to enable key facilities to remain open throughout.

Where feasible, early works will make use of space outside of the current terminal to create additional floorspace, so that less activity occurs in areas used by passengers.

Once the works are completed, passengers will benefit from simpler and less-congested routes through the terminal. Check-in, security and baggage reclaim will gradually be brought together in one place, and there will be more space in the departure lounge, with additional retail, places to eat and seating.

Whilst it is recognised that there may be some disruption during the works, the result will ultimately provide a significantly improved passenger experience, which is considered to outweigh the temporary disturbance.

Forecasts

12. Which other airports were considered in your forecasts?

Our forecasts consider growth at most airports in England, including the London airports, Manchester and Bristol. They look at how busy each airport is today, how much room it has to grow and any plans to expand. This includes considering Heathrow's third runway in 2039 and the existing expansion plans at Gatwick, Stansted and Luton.

13. What if demand doesn't grow as quickly as is forecast?

We have tested a range of forecasts, including slower economic growth scenarios, and higher fuel costs (accounting for the costs of carbon permits for airlines and the higher price of Sustainable Aviation Fuel). Even our lower forecast shows the Airport continuing to grow. Most of our passengers travel for holidays or to visit friends and family. Whilst only around 12% of passengers travelled for business in 2025, business travel is starting to grow again following the fall during the pandemic. New airport facilities will be built in phases, and only when demand demonstrates that they are needed.

Economic growth

14. What type of jobs will be created at the Airport and local area?

Growth at the Airport will create more jobs across the whole airport community, and in the local businesses that supply it, across all skill levels.

The number of people working at the Airport is expected to increase from around 9,300 today to over 13,000 by 2041. Jobs will grow across airlines, operational and technical work (such as ground handling, security, engineering and maintenance, cargo, fire services and air traffic control), as well as in customer-facing roles (associated with shops, and food and beverage offerings).

We will also continue to invest in apprenticeships, training and career pathways so that local people can transition into higher-skilled roles.

Beyond the Airport, growth will also support jobs associated with our local suppliers, in tourism and in construction, as we invest more than £2 billion in new facilities.

Improved connectivity will make air journeys more convenient and will help attract new business to the West Midlands as well as making existing businesses more productive. This will in turn attract more inward investment creating more jobs and generating economic activity.

In total, it is anticipated that nearly 52,500 more jobs will be generated across the West Midlands Region by 2041 when all the elements are taken into account.

Surface access

15. How will the Master Plan affect the local road network?

Traffic on nearby roads comes from many sources, not just the Airport. Several large developments are planned nearby, including Arden Cross and the UK Central Hub site, the HS2 Interchange Station and the National Exhibition Centre's (NEC) future plans. All of these developments will be required to assess the impact of traffic associated with their delivery,

providing improvements as necessary. Airport traffic is usually busiest at different times to the typical morning and evening highway peak periods.

We want fewer people to travel to the Airport by car, but more passengers will still mean more Airport-related traffic. As such, when individual Airport projects come forward, the associated planning applications will likely include traffic assessments that take account of other planned developments in the area. Any road improvements linked to the Airport would be agreed through the planning process with Solihull MBC and other relevant stakeholders. Construction works will also be carefully planned to keep disruption to a minimum.

16. Where is the proposed secondary access road into the Airport and why is it required?

The Master Plan proposes a possible second access road on the eastern side of the Airport. It would be created by realigning part of Bickenhill Lane through the West Car Park, between the Airport and Birmingham International station, which opens up possibilities to provide new Airport access.

This would help to maintain Airport access, make Bird Island less attractive as a shortcut for other non-Airport traffic, and help us carry out future works at the Airport with less disruption. It is one possible option which would require discussion and agreement with landowners and decision makers and which would be subject to the planning process.

17. How will you encourage more people to use public transport when travelling to and from the Airport, and rely less on private cars?

The Airport is already very well connected by motorway and rail links, but we aim to increase the share of passengers using public transport from around 16% today to around 29% by 2041.

To help achieve this, we will work with the West Midlands Combined Authority, Transport for West Midlands, Solihull MBC, Network Rail, HS2, Midlands Connect and transport operators to improve the public transport options available. The introduction of HS2 is expected to open up the potential for improved local and regional rail services. We would seek to explore the introduction of Sprint bus routes, more frequent buses and other opportunities the planned West Midlands bus franchising system offers. In the longer term, these improvements could include earlier rail and bus services for passengers travelling on early morning flights as well as Airport employees working shifts.

At the Airport, we will make public transport easier to use, with bus and coach stops close to the terminal and improved walking and cycling links.

18. When will HS2 train services be available?

HS2's delivery programme is set by the Government. The most recent update estimates that the first train services running between west London and Birmingham will be available between 2036 and 2039. The full route to London Euston is expected to be operational between 2040 and 2043. The HS2 Interchange Station, which will serve the Airport, is on this route. As such, we expect HS2 to open within the 15-year period covered by the Master Plan.

The existing Air-Rail Link will keep running until HS2's Automated People Mover (APM) opens, which will connect the Airport to the HS2 Interchange Station via stops at Birmingham International Station and the NEC.

Our demand forecasts do not rely on HS2 to attract more passengers to the Airport.

19. How does the HS2 Automated People Mover (APM) compare with the current Air-Rail Link and how will it be accessed?

The APM will run on a raised track from the HS2 Interchange Station to the Airport, stopping at the NEC and Birmingham International Station along the route. It will connect passengers to existing

rail services and HS2.

At Birmingham International Station, the APM stop will be located next to the station. A raised footbridge will link the APM stop to the existing station building, much like the Air-Rail Link today.

At the Airport, the APM stop will be raised above the ground, just south of the current terminal, with lifts and escalators providing access to and from the ground level. We will continue working closely with HS2 to discuss the design of the walking route between the APM stop and the terminal.

The existing Air-Rail Link will continue operating until the APM opens, and will then be decommissioned.

20. How many extra parking spaces will there be, and why are they needed?

We are committed to encouraging an increase in the number of passengers and colleagues who travel to the Airport by public transport. However, the forecast growth in passenger numbers means that some additional car parking will be needed to meet demand. It is expected that 9,000 additional passenger car parking spaces will be required by 2041.

In addition to these new parking spaces, some existing car parks will be affected by new aircraft stands, and these parking spaces will need to be replaced. Additional parking spaces for Airport colleagues will also be required.

Any new areas of parking would be delivered in phases to meet demand, and to minimise disruption to passengers, colleagues and local communities. .

The local community and environment

21. Will the proposed development at the northern end of the airfield affect the noise bund at Marston Green?

The noise and visual bunds are an important screen between the Airport and Marston Green and have been a key consideration in developing the Master Plan. Changes at the northern end of the airfield are expected to be at least five years away. When they happen, parts of the bund may need to be reshaped on the Airport side only. The works will be planned in stages so that noise and visual screening is maintained throughout.

22. What is a Noise Envelope, and how will it benefit local communities?

A Noise Envelope is a management framework that would set clear limits on how much noise the Airport can make and how noise is monitored and reviewed as we grow. It would also encourage airlines to use quieter aircraft and other new noise control technologies, to reduce noise impacts for communities. The Civil Aviation Authority's modelling shows that by 2041, the areas affected by daytime and nighttime noise will be broadly similar to today. The detailed noise limits, including how they apply in the years before 2041, will be developed and consulted on as part of our future proposals.

23. How much quieter are new-generation aircraft?

New-generation aircraft, such as the Airbus A320neo and A350, and the Boeing 737 MAX and 787 Dreamliner, are noticeably quieter than the older aircraft that they replace, particularly for departures. Their noise performance is independently measured and certified by aviation authorities against international standards. These aircraft will also often carry more passengers, meaning that fewer flights are required to meet passenger demand. To encourage airlines to use new-generation aircraft, we charge lower landing fees for quieter, cleaner aircraft. Our proposed Noise Envelope will also help incentivise the transition to quieter, cleaner aircraft.

24. How can noise impacts in 2041 be no worse than today when the number of flights will nearly double?

The number of flights is forecast to grow from just under 100,000 per year today, to around 180,000 per year by 2041. This is well within the limit of 205,400 flights per year allowed for by our current planning permission.

The way that noise is assessed takes account of both how loud each aircraft is, and how many flights there are. As more of these flights will be made by quieter aircraft, the Civil Aviation Authority's modelling shows that the area affected by noise in 2041 will be broadly similar to today. The forecast 2041 noise-contour area (shown on pages 62 and 63 of the Master Plan) will also remain smaller than the area allowed for by the existing planning permission.

We know people also notice how often they hear aircraft, not just how loud each one is. We are therefore looking at ways for aircraft to fly higher over nearby communities, such as using the full length of the runway for take-offs.

We will continue monitoring and reporting our noise levels, and any future planning applications will include noise assessments.

25. What is the Sound Insulation Scheme and which areas does it cover?

The Sound Insulation Scheme provides sound-reducing glazing for homes most affected by aircraft noise. Eligibility under the current scheme is based on the daytime noise contour produced in 2002. Aircraft have since become quieter and the equivalent contour is now smaller, but the Airport continues to use the larger 2002 area so that more homes remain eligible. More than 7,600 homes have been insulated so far, and every eligible home that has applied has received insulation.

In the future, we expect more flights to operate just before and after the nighttime restriction period, which runs from 11:30pm to 6am. The Airport will therefore look to extend its Sound Insulation Scheme, with a view to protecting more households and potentially offering air conditioning installation, as well as sound-reducing glazing. The details, including which areas would be covered, will be consulted on as part of our future proposals.

To check whether your home is covered by the current scheme, or has already been insulated, please email sustainability@birminghamairport.co.uk.

26. Will the Airport's operating hours change, and if so, how will this affect flight patterns and noise levels?

The Master Plan does not propose changing the Airport's operating hours. Flights can operate overnight, but movements between 11:30pm and 6am are controlled through the Night Flying Policy. The policy limits the number and noise characteristics of aircraft operating during this period and places additional restrictions on night departures.

As the Airport grows, we also expect additional flights during the periods immediately before and after the Night Flying Policy period. To reduce the impact on communities, the Airport will therefore look to extend its Sound Insulation Scheme accordingly (as described in Question 25).

27. What actions are you taking to reduce the Airport's noise impacts?

We are committed to reducing the Airport's noise impacts. Please find a summary of the actions we are taking below:

In the air: Aircraft take-off and land into the wind where possible, so the direction the runway is used on any day depends mainly on wind and weather conditions. Today, around 6 - 7 in 10 departures already start their take-off from the very end of the runway. The others join the runway part-way along, which shortens their taxi route but leaves less runway available for take-off. This is

generally only possible for lighter aircraft. Aircraft cannot all start from the end today because each runway end has only one full-length entry point and little space to hold and sequence aircraft.

We are considering changing how the runway is used so that aircraft fly higher over nearby communities, to reduce noise levels. Where safe and practicable, all departing aircraft could start their take-off from the end of the runway, so they are flying higher when they pass over homes.

When the runway is being used towards the south-east (Runway 15), aircraft landing from the East Birmingham side of the Airport could also touch down further along the runway, so they stay higher in the air as they come in.

These changes would be made possible by introducing new taxiways and aircraft waiting areas at each end of the runway, so aircraft can queue and be sequenced without joining part-way along. We will be undertaking further investigation into the feasibility of these changes as part of implementation of the Master Plan, including how they fit with future airfield works and the timing of renewing the runway's landing guidance equipment. Any change to flight paths would be subject to the formal airspace change process.

On the ground: More than 9 in 10 of our aircraft parking stands have an electrical power supply, so parked aircraft can switch off their engines. The noise and visual bunds along the edge of the airfield screen nearby homes from noise. We will continue to look after them as the Airport grows, and improve them where they need to be reshaped (as described in question 21).

Monitoring and reporting: We track aircraft noise and flight paths, and manage noise through our Noise Action Plan, which is updated every five years and includes working with local communities. We will add any new measures from the Master Plan to future Noise Action Plans, so that progress is reviewed and reported regularly.

28. Passenger numbers will almost double by 2041, will this mean twice as many flights, twice the road traffic and twice the noise?

It is correct that passenger numbers are expected to almost double, growing from around 14 million per year today to around 30 million per year by 2041. However, the quantity of flights, road traffic movements and noise levels will not double. The reasons for this are set out below.

Flights: Aircraft will be larger and fuller and therefore each flight will carry more passengers. Flights are expected to grow from just under 100,000 a year today, to around 180,000 by 2041. This is well within the limit of 205,400 flights per year already allowed for by our existing planning permission.

Road traffic: We want many more passengers and employees to travel to the Airport by train, bus and coach. Today around 8 in 10 passengers arrive at the Airport by car or taxi. We aim to reduce this to around 7 in 10 passengers, or less if possible. Generally, the peak periods of traffic associated with the Airport do not coincide with traditional highway peak periods, which will help to reduce the impact of growth in Airport traffic.

Noise: Newer aircraft are much quieter than older aircraft. Research has shown that the best indicator of community disturbance combines the noise of each aircraft and the number of flights during the day and night. The Civil Aviation Authority's modelling demonstrates that the noise impact in 2041 will be broadly similar to today. This is because the transition to quieter new-generation aircraft balances the increase in impact caused by the additional flights.

29. If you are growing and almost doubling the quantity of flights, how can you still achieve Net Zero by 2033?

Full flight emissions are regulated by central Government, in accordance with the Jet Zero policy, using the Emissions Trading Scheme for flights, new aircraft technologies, and carbon offsetting. We will contribute through the Master Plan by supporting the increased use of Sustainable

Aviation Fuel (SAF) in line with the Government's SAF mandate, and by maintaining flexibility to accommodate future aircraft technologies (such as hydrogen and electric aircraft). We will also continue to work with research and industry partners.

Like all airports, our commitment is to reach net zero for our direct emissions and we have already reduced our direct emissions by 38% since 2019. We will continue progressing towards net zero by 2033 by transitioning to electric heating and cooling, local power generation through more solar panels, and zero emission vehicles.

30. How will the Master Plan proposals impact air quality?

Our air quality monitoring demonstrates that Airport-related emissions are currently below relevant air quality objectives, and are predicted to remain below relevant thresholds throughout the Master Plan period.

The Master Plan seeks to minimise air quality impacts through a combination of operational and aircraft measures, as set out below.

Airport operational measures: This will include increasing public transport use, reducing reliance on private cars, improving operational efficiency and expanding the use of low-emission and electric vehicles and equipment.

Aircraft measures: This will include encouraging the uptake of newer and lower-emission aircraft, reducing engine use, and supporting the use of SAFs.

Future development proposals will be supported by detailed air quality assessments to ensure they comply with policy requirements and do not give rise to unacceptable impacts on local communities or the environment. We will continue to review our air quality monitoring arrangements and consider opportunities to strengthen monitoring in line with emerging guidance and best practice.