

## Extract from 21 January 2008 Board minutes

### 5 AIRPORTS

Claire Gibson introduced the Board paper by highlighting the detailed discussion held on the Agency's policy on airports last November. The new paper set out a revised Agency policy on airports which drew on the previous Board discussion as well as DfT's *UK Air Passenger Demand and CO2 Forecasts* report and the national policy on airports (as set out in the Air Transport White Paper published in December 2003). The new policy included more detail and clarity on where the Agency could invest in airports (namely, in the Convergence area); the "green" measures that the RDA was supporting; more detail on the RDA's approach to expansion at Heathrow and the associated access to the airport; and the hypothecation of air passenger duty.

The following points were raised:

- In response to questions raised about surface access to Newquay Airport, it was confirmed that Cornwall County Council was currently developing a Travel Plan.
- The issue of forecasting future growth in aviation was considered in some detail. While there was agreement that the methodology was robust there remained a concern about the assumptions underlying the forecasts. It was widely agreed that air passenger duties and fuel price rises would inevitably have an impact on growth forecasts.
- The Board asked about travel times from Reading and Woking to Heathrow with the implementation of AirTrack.
- The importance of Newquay Airport as a driver of economic performance in Cornwall was underlined.

#### **Board Decision**

The Board agreed the revised policy as outlined in the paper. Namely, that it should be consistent with the Air Transport White Paper, the Regional Economic Strategy and the Regional Spatial Strategy, and that the South West RDA:

- should not make any further investments in airports for the purpose of increasing passenger capacity;
- should actively support measures that 'green' airport operations and improve surface access, particularly by public transport;
- should specifically lobby for the delivery of AirTrack, to improve rail connections from the South West to London Heathrow; and
- should lobby for continued hypothecation of the Air Passenger Duty to reduce emissions from air travel.

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The Board requested that the Agency worked with other RDAs and the Department for Transport to ensure that future revisions of national air passenger demand forecasts reflected market conditions.