

New Leader of the Airport Management Team



Will Curtis has just completed his first six months in the job as Managing Director of the airport company. Behind him is a successful international career spanning 30 years in

business aviation as a pilot and in senior management appointments. His Air Transport Pilots Licence, the highest level for professionals, is fully current today, so he knows what he is talking about at all levels.

Two key components of his new responsibilities at Biggin Hill Airport are inward investment and jobs.

“We must encourage more aircraft engineering and service companies to establish a base here. Just like the car manufacturers, business jet manufacturers have to provide their customers with a global chain of service centres and each centre might employ up to 300 staff – many of them skilled jobs” he said.

“But we don’t expect a massive growth in air traffic in the coming years. In fact the number of take-offs and landings has fallen significantly over the past 15 years and the mix of the traffic has changed, too. So we are confident in our ability to create more valuable benefits and opportunities for the local community without a noticeable increase in noise levels” says Mr Curtis.

As the service side of the airport grows, Will Curtis predicts that the growing local economy will support good jobs for local people and the creation of 2,300 additional jobs by 2031.

“It is important that young school leavers are able to find a decent job close to home. Today there are 62 businesses employing around 1,000 people at the airport and each year we welcome new companies as stakeholders for the future of aviation at Biggin Hill. Aviation is a 21st century business and the jobs that go with it are mainly skilled and thoroughly worthwhile” Mr Curtis says.



Consultation on Bromley’s Local Plan

Bromley Council has published its Local Plan Draft Policies and Designations – the latest iteration of its blueprint for how the Council sees development across the Borough for the next fifteen years.

The Plan is out for consultation and the Council is seeking comments with a closing date of 24th March 2014. Details of how to respond to the consultation are available at <http://bromley-consult.objective.co.uk/portal/lpdpd/lpdpc>

Bromley Local Plan

The draft Plan confirms Biggin Hill's status as a Strategic Outer London Development Centre (SOLDC) and one of just three 'Strategic Priority Areas' for economic growth in the Borough. The draft Plan earmarks Biggin Hill for increased support for economic growth including aviation-related activities, with the provision of associated business infrastructure and amenities. The Plan's focus for its Strategic Priority Areas is to bring forward "adequate development capacity, the co-ordination of public and private investment, and the delivery of enabling infrastructure".

The Plan's policy for Biggin Hill states it will seek to develop the SOLDC as **"an important sub-regional hub for aviation and related high-tech industry, achieving sustainable economic growth whilst protecting the environment"**. It states that it will want to prepare a Master Plan – a more detailed blueprint for development – to guide the location, mix and amount of development.

The draft Local Plan puts forward high-level indications on the types of uses suitable for different parts of land – West Camp, South Camp, East Camp. It seeks to focus West Camp as a business destination, but with airside land

retained for airport uses – the policies recognise the need for flexibility and viability factors to be taken into account in identifying a solution for the historic buildings. For South Camp it identifies aviation businesses, but with general manufacturing on non-airside plots. East Camp it restricts to airport and aviation activities.

However, the Plan's proposals are very much interim 'place holders'. The Council is currently working with the Airport to develop a shared understanding of the proposals and justification for different types of development at Biggin Hill,



including whether there is scope to justify removal of the existing Green Belt designation on some areas of land, a proposal previously made by the LoCATE partnership. This work is ongoing and its outputs will be reflected in the next iteration of the Plan, expected later in 2014.

LOCATE Response to Bromley Consultation

We broadly welcome the latest draft of the Local Plan. The document picks up where the last Plan left off, by continuing to support economic growth at Biggin Hill and, if confirmed, it can provide the platform for future investment in infrastructure and job creation. LoCATE will be making a detailed response to the Plan before the March 24th deadline.

There is clearly more work to do on the Plan. It does not yet contain detailed proposals on how planning constraints - such as Green Belt - can be reduced to enable Biggin Hill to compete effectively with airports overseas in attracting high-tech aviation-based companies. This will be vitally important. The Airport needs to be able to use

the Local Plan to present inward investors with a clear, simple planning framework that confirms what types of development can be permitted expeditiously in existing and future development areas. The Airport is discussing what land is likely to be needed and how the policies are best framed with the Council. The Plan's reference to preparing a Master Plan to guide development will need to ensure that any Master Plan is not excessively prescriptive and that the process of preparation does not hold up the Airport's ability to offer sites to potential inward investors.

LoCATE also believes the Plan could say more about how wider access improvements could be made in the Borough to support job creation at Biggin Hill.

Airports Commission supports BUSINESS AVIATION AND RELIEVER AIRPORTS

The Airports Commission, led by Sir Howard Davies, published an Interim Report in December 2013, which included a range of recommendations for the short and medium term, as well as a short list of long term options. Included in the short and medium term measures was a comment on the role of reliever airports and business aviation, which had been put forward by Biggin Hill Airport as one way of coping with demand over the next 10-15 years.

The Commission noted that the business aviation market generally appears to be functioning well, and then recommended that “Government policy should promote the benefits of smaller airports in the

London and South East system for accommodating business and general aviation”. It went further and said that local authorities should support the development of smaller local airports, giving consideration to the positive benefits they can bring to the local and regional economy alongside their environmental impacts.

A response is awaited from Government to these recommendations, but given that the options for the longer term could not be implemented for at least 10 years, the positive support for business aviation and smaller airports is very helpful recognition of the role that airports like Biggin Hill can play, especially in terms of the effect on the local economy.

CASTLE AIR

A specialist helicopter company, Castle Air, established a new facility at Biggin Hill in 2013 as an extension of their HQ facility at Liskeard, Cornwall. Their arrival to Biggin Hill Airport brings an additional 23 jobs.

Renowned for over 30 years for their aerial filming for broadcasting companies, today Castle Air specialises in the operation and maintenance of Agusta 109 and Bell 206 series helicopters for the full range of rotary wing tasks. The company is an AgustaWestland Authorised Service Centre, fully approved under the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) provisions.

Helicopter charter is provided by a fleet of turbine-powered Agusta 109 with seating for up to six passengers. In sales and leasing, Castle Air is one of the largest dealers of AgustaWestland helicopters in the world.



SIGNATURE FLIGHT SUPPORT ACQUIRES JETS FBO BUSINESS



Signature Flight Support, one of the world's leading companies for executive handling, has acquired the FBO business of JETS (Biggin Hill) Ltd.

Signature will retain the JETS FBO team and the well-appointed lounge, which is to be appropriately re-branded. The facility provides meeting rooms, showers, a refreshment area and WiFi for their passengers as well as operational facilities for flight crews. Their new facility at Biggin Hill secures 6 existing jobs, with more anticipated.

Further Information

If you would like to receive further information on investment opportunities in the Biggin Hill area please contact either:



Paul Le Blond Project Manager

LoCATE at Biggin Hill
c/o Biggin Hill Airport
Main Road, Biggin Hill
Bromley, South London TN16 3BH

Tel: 07715 771552

Email: paul_le_blond@hotmail.com



Robert Walters Business Development Manager

Biggin Hill Airport
Main Road, Biggin Hill
Bromley, South London TN16 3BH

Tel: 01959 578530

Email: business@bigginhillairport.com

LoCATE Stakeholders

Autoflame Engineering
Avalon Aero
Biggin Hill Business Association
Biggin Hill Residents Association
Bromley & Orpington College
Bromley Residents Federation
Castle Air
Clarkson Wright & Jakes
Coba Asset Management
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Croydon Chamber of Commerce
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Falcon Flying Services
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