

Statement of 30/9/21 by Paul Webster (Rep: PBD976)

1. My answers are “No” and “No” to the Inspector’s two questions in MIQ 177.
2. NPPF paragraph 35 states: “Plans are ‘sound’ if they are: ... **Justified** – an appropriate strategy, taking into account the reasonable alternatives, and based on proportionate evidence”.
3. Cheshire East Council’s [CEC’s] Policy INF 4 is not justified. Its strategy is not appropriate. To make the SADPD sound, a reasonable alternative is to modify the Policy as proposed in my PBD976 representation¹.
4. NPPF paragraph 16 states: “Plans should ... contain policies that are clearly written and unambiguous, so it is evident how a decision maker should react to development proposals”.
5. Policy INF 4 is unclear and ambiguous and is not an effective basis for decision taking.
6. In its Regulation 20 Statement, CEC re-states the same strategy (ie “supportive”), adding: “The plan is intended to be read as a whole, and all relevant policies will also apply”. CEC’s response is vague and lacks information of help to the decision maker.
7. Policy INF 4 ‘usually permitting’ implies inadequate consideration of issues of potential relevance to a decision, and inadequate consideration of appropriate mitigation, planning conditions and/ or s106 obligations. By contrast, my proposed modification for CEC to give “due consideration” to proposed development and uses would enable such consideration without CEC’s decision making having been prejudiced by ‘usually permitting’.
8. Contexts²:
 - NPPF paragraphs 35 and 16, and 2 - a Plan-led planning system;
 - significant economic, social and environmental impacts of Manchester Airport on the Sustainable Development of Cheshire East and beyond;
 - estimated/ forecast increased passenger throughput at the Airport³ implies incrementally improved facilities, presumably some requiring planning permission.
9. My recommended Modification is a matter of substance, not merely semantics.

¹ That states: “The Manchester Airport operational area is shown on the adopted policies map. In the operational area, as elsewhere in respect of proposed development and uses at Manchester Airport, Cheshire East Council will give due consideration to applications for planning permission for proposed development and uses. In the operational area these types of development and uses are likely to include operational facilities and infrastructure; passenger facilities; cargo facilities; airport ancillary infrastructure; landscaping works; and internal highways and transport infrastructure.”

² NPPF paragraph 5 refers to nationally significant infrastructure projects [NSIP]. With there being no proposal to increase capacity at Manchester Airport by over 10 million passengers per annum, NSIP is not relevant to consideration of Policy INF 4. (Planning Act 2008 s14 and 23 define NSIP as including the construction, extension or alteration of a runway or building at an airport expected to be capable of increasing by at least 10 million per year its passenger throughput. Applications for such developments would be determined by the Secretary of State through the Development Consent Order process.)

³ Passenger throughput in 2018 was 28 million. Pre-pandemic estimate/ forecast was around 50 million by 2030. (Source: MAG.)