



Gatwick Airport Northern Runway Project

The Applicant's Response to ISH9 Action Point 36 –
Confirm whether an estimate of the number of asylum
seekers has been considered within the assessment

Book 1

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1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 At Issue Specific Hearing 9 (ISH9), the Applicant took an action to report back on how the number of asylum seekers in the local area had been considered within the assessment of population and housing effects.
- 1.1.2 This was raised by Charlwood Parish Council and by the Joint Local Authorities (JLAs). Since ISH9, two further Topic Working Groups (6 August and 8 August 2024) have been held to discuss the outstanding points of disagreement including impacts on housing and homelessness.

2 Consideration of asylum seekers within the assessment

2.1 Information provided by JLAs

- 2.1.1 Michael Bedford KC, on behalf of the JLAs, noted that Crawley Borough Council (CBC) had been approached by Clearsprings for assistance in meeting the dispersal quota within the Private Rented Sector (PRS). It was verbally cited that of the 85 placements sought, Clearsprings and CBC were only successful in finding accommodation for five. It was also verbally cited that subsequently, the quota for dispersal placements has now increased to over 300.
- 2.1.2 In response, during ISH9, the Applicant requested that CBC provide this information formally so that the Applicant could consider its position. The JLAs committed to informally sharing this information prior to Deadline 8, and anything further at Deadline 8 (7 August 2024). The Applicant confirmed it would then prepare a written response for Deadline 8a (14 August 2024).
- 2.1.3 On 5 August 2024, the Applicant received an email from the JLAs summarising Clearsprings's request to CBC regarding meeting the asylum dispersal quota. This email reiterated the information provided above by Michael Bedford KC and that additional information would be provided to the Applicant at Deadline 8.
- 2.1.4 At Deadline 8, the Legal Partnership Authorities **Issue Specific Hearing 9 Post-Hearing Submission: Socio-economics** [\[REP8-167\]](#) Item 5.5 reflects the information provided to the Applicant through email and states:

“The Authorities reported that Crawley Borough Council had been approached by Clearsprings, the Home Office's appointed provider for asylum seeker accommodation. Clearsprings had sought assistance from Crawley Borough Council to meet their asylum dispersal quota

within the private rented sector, which they were contracted to fulfil. Out of the 85 placements they needed, Clearsprings only succeeded in finding accommodation for 5. The quota has since been increased to over 300. Therefore, Crawley Borough Council's experience indicates that this situation has contributed to the additional housing pressures faced by the local area. The Authorities confirmed that they would seek to provide this information informally to the Applicant ahead of Deadline 8.

"Post-Hearing Note: The Authorities shared text summarising the Clearsprings request with the Applicant by emailed dated 6 August 2024, in advance of Deadline 8."

2.2 The Applicant's response

- 2.2.1 In order for the Applicant to assess whether the number of asylum seekers would affect the conclusions in relation to the need for housing during the construction phase, the Applicant would need more detailed information on, for example, the nature of those that Clearsprings were looking to place (e.g. how many were families with children), the type, size and cost of housing that was required, and any locational criteria such as distance to schools and local facilities.
- 2.2.2 It is also not known whether the remaining 80 households were able to be accommodated in the surrounding area, noting that functional housing markets are not confined to Borough boundaries and that the Applicant's assessment of housing and population effects considers a wider geography which is relevant to the assessment of the potential impact of construction workers. It is also unknown whether the families no longer required accommodation, for example because they found their own accommodation elsewhere, returned to their country of origin, or relocated (within the UK or abroad).
- 2.2.3 While the Applicant acknowledges the challenges faced by Clearsprings in securing PRS accommodation for asylum seekers, without more detail the Applicant is unable to draw any clear conclusion on whether the difficulties faced by Clearsprings would be indicative of an overall lack of PRS supply in the Borough, or whether this is rather a misalignment between the PRS properties available in the Borough and the type, size and cost of housing required for housing asylum seekers (or other factors, such as availability of housing elsewhere). Consequently, the Applicant's conclusions about the ability of the PRS to absorb the demand from construction workers (as per **ES Appendix**

17.9.3 Assessment of Population and Housing Effects [APP-201]) remains unchanged.

3 Use of hotels to accommodate asylum seekers

- 3.1.1 With regard to potential impacts of the asylum seeker population on the supply of temporary accommodation, as was the original concern raised by Charlwood Parish Council, the Applicant notes that government policy is to end the use of hotels to house asylum seekers.¹
- 3.1.2 Further, it should be noted that within **ES Appendix 17.9.3 Assessment of Population and Housing Effects** [APP-201], the Applicant has demonstrated sufficient supply of accommodation for non-home based (NHB) workers in the construction phase within the PRS and other forms of temporary accommodation, without considering hotel accommodation. Therefore, the assessment does not rely on the availability of hotel bedspaces and the consideration of the use as hotels for temporary accommodation for asylum seekers would not alter the conclusions of the assessment. In any event, the potential peak NHB workforce (in the worst-case scenario, c.270 people) is likely to be spread across multiple sources of supply (PRS, hotels/B&Bs and other short-term accommodation, such as holiday lets/Airbnb) and represents a small proportion of those total sources of supply.

4 Homelessness Prevention Fund

- 4.1.1 After discussions on a range of matters relating to housing at the Topic Working Group sessions held subsequent to ISH9 (on 6 August and 8 August 2024) the Applicant and JLAs have reached agreement on a number of matters.
- 4.1.2 While the Applicant stands by its assessment and conclusions in relation to the effects of the Project on temporary accommodation, it is proposed that a Homelessness Prevention Fund will be established and secured through the S106 Agreement. This would be a £1 million fund in place between the commencement of Airfield Works until the ninth anniversary of the Commencement of Dual Runway Operations, to be used towards enhancing the Crawley Deposit Scheme, enhancing the Crawley Repairs and Renovations Scheme, and meeting homelessness costs. Draw downs from the Fund will be

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/asylum-hotels-exit-summary-information/asylum-hotel-summary-and-faq>

based on evidence demonstrating impacts on homelessness caused by the non-home-based workers used as part of the Project.

- 4.1.3 This commitment provides a contingency to mitigate any potential homelessness impacts which unexpectedly arise as a result of the Project. In addition, whilst, for the reasons stated above, the Applicant does not consider the potential housing demand of asylum seekers to be of material significance to its assessment conclusions, the Applicant considers that the provision of the Homelessness Prevention Fund provides additional comfort that any impact which does unexpectedly materialise from this source could nevertheless be addressed.