

EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL COMMITTEE MINUTES

Committee: North Weald Airfield and Asset Management Cabinet Committee **Date:** Monday, 22 April 2013

Place: Council Chamber Civic Offices, High Street, Epping **Time:** 7.00 - 7.37 pm

Members Present: Mrs A Grigg (Chairman), R Bassett and Mrs E Webster

Other Councillors: D Stallan and G Waller

Apologies: Ms S Stavrou and C Whitbread

Officers Present: J Gilbert (Director of Environment and Street Scene), D Macnab (Deputy Chief Executive), C O'Boyle (Director of Corporate Support Services), J Nolan (Assistant Director (Environment & Neighbourhoods)), J Leither (Democratic Services Assistant) and S Mitchell (PR Website Editor)

Also in attendance: Susan Lynch (Drivers Jonas Deloitte)

23. WEBCASTING INTRODUCTION

The Chairman reminded everyone present that the meeting would be broadcast live to the internet, and that the Council had adopted a protocol for the webcasting of its meeting.

24. MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 29 October 2012 be taken as read and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

25. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest pursuant to the Council's Code of Member Conduct.

26. NORTH WEALD AIRFIELD - UPDATE REPORT

The Director of Environment & Street Scene presented a report updating the progress of the Strategic Review of North Weald Airfield.

The Director reported that the consultancy exercise for the review of the Airfield was now well underway. There had been three Project Team meetings involving the Council's officers and the consultants as well as one Cabinet Workshop, attended by all but one of the whole Cabinet.

Good progress was being made, with the consultants having completed most of the required stakeholder interviews, including a meeting with the full North Weald Parish Council. All of the views of the stakeholders would be incorporated into the final report.

The project remained on schedule to report to Cabinet at the meeting on 22 July 2013. This was one Cabinet cycle later than originally envisaged, but the time line for the local plan development had been extended, to allow for additional work on matters such as population data, and it was therefore prudent for this additional time to be utilised, providing more time for consideration of the eventual recommendations. There was currently a meeting of this Cabinet Committee scheduled for 11 July 2013, just ahead of Cabinet. Following consideration by the Leader, and on the basis that the Cabinet agenda would have to be published before that Cabinet Committee was held, it was recommended that the meeting on the 11 July be cancelled to avoid duplication.

Runway condition survey

The Director of Environment and Street Scene reported that Members would recall that following receipt of the last Halcrow report on the Airfield, a decision was made to commission an assessment of the main runway (02/20). Halcrow were appointed to undertake this work and their final report had now been received, the executive summary was appended to the agenda.

In summary, the findings were that:

Given the size and loadings of the aircraft currently using NWA it was considered that the strength of the existing runway pavement is adequate to support the present level of operations, provided that movements by heavier aircraft were restricted to occasional use only and standard pavement inspection and maintenance procedures were adopted.

Given the age of the runway and the nature of the maintenance undertaken, this was not an unexpected outcome, and in fact it reflected well upon the maintenance procedures which had been adopted at the Airfield, since the underpinning condition of the runway had seemingly changed little since the last major assessment back in 1998.

The Halcrow report set out the technical details of runway pavement strengths, which were not repeated in this report. What was important to note was that for the vast majority of aircraft currently licensed to use the Airfield, the runway remained entirely suitable, provided that current basic maintenance was continued. However, there were some jet aircraft using the Airfield which could be more vulnerable than others to "Foreign Object Damage (FOD)", that being loose material being blown up and into the aircraft frame and/or engines. On that basis the Council sought the advice of their insurers regarding the use of the runway, and although the Council had yet to receive the insurers formal response, they have not reacted adversely to the procedures put into place which were set out below:

- (a) that the runway be regularly inspected in accordance with the suggested process set out in appendix D1 of the Halcrow Report; and
- (b) that the aircraft exceeding the pavement strength should be allowed to use the runway, but operators should inform the airfield operations team of that intention so that additional runway inspections could be undertaken. All operators on the Airfield had been informed of the situation.

Although some operators had expressed their concerns regarding these limitations, officers believed that very little inconvenience would be caused by these requirements and that it was in the best interests of all users of the main runway that the Council would put safety considerations first and foremost, and the Council ensured that their Insurers were content with the arrangements.

The Director reported that the recent spell of cold weather had taken its toll on the runways and taxiways, and a lot of unexpected maintenance had to be undertaken. At the present time this was being contained within existing budgets.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the current status of the Deloitte review of North Weald Airfield be noted;
- (2) That the meeting of the North Weald Airfield & Asset Management Cabinet Committee scheduled for 11 July 2013 be cancelled; and
- (3) That the contents of the Halcrow review of the condition of the runways at North Weald Airfield, and the actions taken by Officers in consequence, be noted.

27. ASSET MANAGEMENT CO-ORDINATION GROUP UPDATE REPORT

(1) Langston Road Retail Park

Outline planning approval had now been granted and the Section 106 Agreement had been signed by EFDC, Essex CC and Polofind Ltd. Negotiations were ongoing with Polofind Ltd regarding a development agreement to jointly develop the site. Sainsbury had applied for a Judicial Review regarding their servicing arrangements for the Debden store which had been deferred to 1 August 2013 and it was understood that they would be making a planning application to vary this by the end of April. If granted then this would mean that the Judicial Review would not be required.

(2) Oakwood Hill Depot

A planning application had been submitted and was being processed. A meeting had been held on site with London Transport which would require minor amendments to plans.

(3) Pyrles Lane Nursery

The planning application for a residential development was progressing following the re-design of the road junction sight lines.

(4) St John's Road

Essex County Council, Epping Town Council and Epping Forest District Council, together with their professional advisers had met to agree a way forward which kept options open but allowed the market to be tested for levels of interest, financial offers and potential ideas.

(5) Waste Contractor's Depot

Heads of terms were awaited from three landlords with potentially suitable sites.

(6) North Weald Airfield

The consultants were making good progress and had held meetings with a number of airfield tenants and key stakeholders including the Parish Council. The project team had held three meetings and Cabinet Members also attended a consultant facilitated workshop.

(7) Torrington Drive

There had been no further progress with Stobart Properties regarding redevelopment of the Sainsbury site. Stobart's agent had said however, that they were close to agreeing a new lease with Sainsbury which would mean that the existing unit shops would be demolished for increased car parking and the external façade of the store would be refurbished.

(8) Winston Churchill Public House

A local developer had entered into an option agreement with Spirit Pub Group and discussions were currently taking place regarding development of the site.

(9) Broadway Car Parks/Burton Road Depot

A number of commercial and residential proposals were being considered in conjunction with the larger sites mentioned above but there were no firm proposals at this time.

(10) Lindsey House Epping

The leaseholders had indicated a wish to surrender the lease back to the Council at no cost to the Council. The Council's agent was preparing a schedule of dilapidations.

(11) Town Mead Depot

The Council architect was currently considering advice from Peter Brett Associates regarding their Strategic Flood Risk Assessment with regard to layout drawings.

(12) Church Hill Former Car Park

There was no progress to report on this site.

(13) Leader Lodge

The tender process had been completed and a report sent to the portfolio holder for discussion.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the quarterly monitoring report on the development of the Council's property assets be noted.

28. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

It was noted that there was no other urgent business or consideration by the Cabinet Committee.

CHAIRMAN