

Report to the North Weald Airfield Strategy Cabinet Committee



**Epping Forest
District Council**

Report reference: NWA-001-2009/10.

Date of meeting: 27 July 2009.

Portfolio: Finance and Economic Development.

Subject: Aviation Intensification Study – Briefing Document and Invitation to Bid for Consultancy Services.

Responsible Officer: Derek Macnab (01992 564051).

Democratic Services: Gary Woodhall (01992 564470).

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

That Members consider the draft Briefing Document and Invitation to Bid for Consultancy Services, to undertake an Aviation Intensification Study for North Weald Airfield, and recommend to Cabinet accordingly.

Executive Summary:

The report asks Members of the Cabinet Committee to consider and comment on the draft Briefing Document and Invitation to Bid for Consultancy Services, in relation to a study of potential options for the intensification of aviation at North Weald Airfield. The report also seeks Members' agreement to the proposed two stage approach to the Study.

Reasons for Proposed Decision:

On the 28 September 2008, the Council approved a supplementary estimate to engage a consultant to examine the intensification of aviation use at North Weald Airfield. The report seeks Members' consideration of the brief and proposed appointment process for the consultancy, to enable the matter to be progressed.

Other Options for Action:

Not to approach the Consultancy in two stages but rather to commission a wider more in-depth study examining in detail the full range of planning, transport, development and commercial considerations of increased aviation. This approach would not allow the opportunity to review the potential impact of any option at an earlier scoping stage.

Report:

1. At the meeting of the North Weald Airfield Strategy Cabinet Committee of 28 July 2008, a report was presented concerning the possible future development options for North Weald Airfield, based upon a previous study produced by Property and Valuation Consultants, Drivas Jonas in January 1999.
2. Members were reminded that the six options identified had been subject to public consultation and that an additional option, which had been developed by a group of Aviation Tenants, i.e. 6b Business Aviation, had found the most favour amongst local residents. In the event, due to the stage of development of the East of England Plan, the Council elected not to proceed with any of the options.
3. However, at the July 2008 meeting, Members recognised that the East of England

Plan had now been determined and it was appropriate to start to plan for the future of the Airfield, which was deemed to be an important asset, which the Council should be making best use of.

4. Given the previous study and consultation exercise, the Cabinet Committee recommended that in order to proceed with further strategic feasibility work, a scoping report be developed to examine the intensification of aviation use at North Weald Airfield, with limited business or other uses, including leisure, as required to make it economically viable.

5. It was also agreed that as the Council did not have the necessary technical expertise in-house to undertake such a specialist feasibility study, that additional external consultancy support would be required.

6. Cabinet concurred with the recommendations of the Strategy Cabinet Committee and sought supplementary funding of £50,000 DDF to fund the appointment of suitably qualified consultants. This was subsequently agreed by Council.

7. In the intervening period, Cabinet also received reports about the need to review the fire fighting level required at the Airfield and a supplementary funding of £20,000 DDF was secured.

8. Attached to the report is a draft briefing document and invitation to bid for consultancy services to undertake the North Weald Airfield Aviation Intensification Study. The brief has been developed to include the fire cover review, safety and security review and potential runway life investigation. This is because the topics are inextricably linked and it would appear to be more efficient to undertake the work through the one appointment.

9. It is also recommended that the study is undertaken in two stages. Firstly, an initial scoping study allowing for the consideration of any proposals at an earlier stage before proceeding with any more intensive level of assessment. This will allow for the reduction of abortive costs if Members decide, that in principle, any of the options would be unacceptable. It should also allow for increased focus for future work, if the second stage was to proceed.

Resource Implications:

A combined sum of £70,000 is available in the 2009/10 DDF budget to undertake the feasibility study. It is not envisaged that this sum will be fully utilised in the first stage study, which will be subject to a competitive bid process.

Personnel

None identified at this stage.

Land

The planning implications of any proposals identified would need to be assessed in accordance with current policy.

Legal and Governance:

The Appointment will be made in accordance with the Council's Standing Order C3 (1) (2) with regard to the engagement of Consultants as outlined in the Council's Constitution.

Safer, Cleaner and Greener Implications:

An Environmental Impact Assessment of any increased aviation will be undertaken to assess the effect on local people and the environment.

Consultation Undertaken:

It is a requirement of the Consultant's Brief that they consult with key stakeholders and the

local Parish Council.

Background Papers:

Minutes of Cabinet Committee 28 July 2008. Previous Consultant's Reports to include Drivas Jonas 1999 Strategy and Action Plan.

Impact Assessment:

As assessment of risk will be undertaken for any option to be taken forward for North Weald Airfield. Environmental Impact Assessments similarly would be undertaken.