

**Report to the North Weald Airfield  
Strategy Cabinet Committee**



**Report reference:** **NWA-003-2009/10**  
**Date of meeting:** **27 July 2009**

**Epping Forest  
District Council**

**Portfolio:** Finance & Economic Development.  
**Subject:** Potential Role for North Weald Airfield during the London 2012 Olympic Games.  
**Responsible Officer:** Derek Macnab (01992 564051).  
**Democratic Services Officer:** Gary Woodhall (01992 564470).

---

**Recommendations/Decisions Required:**

- (1) That the important role that the North Weald Airfield could play in supporting the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games be recognised; and**
- (2) That Members consider the three proposals in relation to Park and Ride, Air Passenger Operations and Caravan/Camping with a view to recommending further feasibility work on any of the options, considered worthy of support.**

**Executive Summary:**

London is hosting the Olympic and Paralympic Games in the summer of 2012. This report identifies a number of potential roles that North Weald Airfield may play to support the success of the Games.

**Reasons for Proposed Decision:**

North Weald Airfield is well located in reasonable proximity to the main Olympic Games site in Stratford, East London. The Airfield has hosted a range of major outdoor events and this report seeks to identify uses which could maximise its benefits, not only to the Games, but to the Council. Although the Games are still 3 years away, there is a long lead in time for the proposals.

**Other Options for Action:**

Not to consider any Olympic related opportunities and operate the Airfield as normal.

**Report:**

1. London is due to host the Olympic and Paralympic Games in the summer of 2012. The main Olympic Games venues are located at the bottom of the Lea Valley Regional Park in Stratford, East London. However, the White Water Canoe Venue, currently under construction, is located in close proximity to the District border, between Waltham Abbey and Waltham Cross.
2. Officers are actively engaged in the work of the White Water Canoe Stakeholder Group to maximise the legacy benefits of the venue. Similarly, work is already underway to celebrate the Games through activities aligned to the Cultural Olympiad.

3. However, North Weald Airfield is a significant strategic asset, which could play a supporting role in the run up to and during the Olympics. As such, three proposals are outlined for the Cabinet Committee to consider. They will all require further investigation before any final approval could be given, but an “in principle” decision is sought.

#### Park and Ride

4. The District has a number of Central Line Stations which are well placed to feed spectators, and officials into Stratford. It is anticipated that the London Region’s Tube and Rail Networks could be expected to carry up to 800,000 additional passengers per day, over the duration of the Games. A major feature of the successful Olympic Bid, was that London is going to be the “greenest” Olympic ever and that spectators will be largely compelled to utilise public transport.

5. Notwithstanding, with major events it is not uncommon for car users to try to drive as close to the venue as possible. Members will be aware that the District’s Underground Stations are already heavily oversubscribed by commuters with insufficient space to park, creating problems in adjacent residential roads. This could be severely compounded by Olympic spectators seeking to pick-up the Central Line. This is a concern shared by Essex Police.

6. One potential solution may be to have a Park and Ride Service at North Weald Airfield, which could bus commuters or spectators to Central Line Stations thus eliminating parking pressure.

7. North Weald has hosted events requiring large numbers of parked cars and has the infrastructure to support this. Further work would need to be undertaken as to how this could be achieved practically, and other issues such as the Market will need to be considered. The Department of Transport requires that all plans affecting any type of transport linked to the Olympics, has to go through them for approval.

#### Air Passenger and Corporate Business Aviation

8. The unlicensed status of North Weald Airfield does not allow air passenger operations to be hosted. However, it would be possible to temporarily upgrade to Licensed Status. This action could allow for Air Passenger Services to run during the Games and allow for Corporate Business Aviation to utilise North Weald. It has been suggested by current Aviation Tenants, that there would be a market for such services, given the pressure on other Airports likely to occur at this time. A full assessment of the safety, financial and environmental impacts would need to be undertaken. However, on face value there could be an opportunity for the Council to generate additional income as well as raise the profile of North Weald Airfield.

9. With both of these issues, the London Organising Committee for the Olympic Games will need to be formally approached and their approval required, given the complex nature of the overall games transport plan and security arrangements.

#### Caravan and Camping

10. It is reported that London Hotels are already fully booked and that accommodation will be at a premium. The Council has already been approached by the Caravan Club of Great Britain to host their National Rally at the time of the Games. North Weald has, therefore, already been identified as a potential Caravan and Camping venue. The Airfield has hosted overnight camping linked to other events and has some basic infrastructure to support this.

The potential to use the Airfield will need to be more fully explored, but again could be a useful revenue generating option, as well as providing a boost to the local economy and increasing access to the Games, for those not able to afford central London hotel prices.

**Resource Implications:**

All three options have the potential to generate revenue for the Council depending on the management/partnership options pursued.

Personnel

It will be necessary to provide additional temporary staffing resource to North Weald in the event of any, or all of the proposals proceeding.

Land

Temporary planning consents and permissions may be required.

**Legal and Governance Implications:**

Any proposals would need to be covered by appropriate contractual arrangements.

**Safer, Cleaner and Greener Implications:**

Environmental and Risk Assessments will be undertaken on any proposals.

**Consultation Undertaken:**

Informal consultation with the Olympic Delivery Agency, Essex and British Transport Police. Local Stakeholders to include the Parish Council will be consulted on the proposals as part of further feasibility work.

**Background Papers:**

Not at this stage.

**Impact Assessments:**

None undertaken.