

EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL COMMITTEE MINUTES

Committee: North Weald Airfield Strategy **Date:** Monday, 27 July 2009
Cabinet Committee

Place: Committee Room 1, Civic Offices, **Time:** 6.30 - 7.50 pm
High Street, Epping

Members Present: C Whitbread (Chairman), M Cohen, Mrs D Collins, Mrs M Sartin and D Stallan

Other Councillors: Mrs R Brookes, Mrs A Grigg, B Rolfe and J M Whitehouse

Apologies:

Officers Present: D Macnab (Deputy Chief Executive), J Gilbert (Director of Environment and Street Scene), L MacNeill (Assistant Director (Operations, Administration & Finance)), G Lunnun (Assistant Director (Democratic Services)), T Carne (Public Relations and Marketing Officer) and C Pasterfield (Principal Valuer/Surveyor)

1. MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 28 July 2008 be taken as read and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

3. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

It was noted there was no other urgent business for consideration by the Committee.

4. AVIATION INTENSIFICATION STUDY - BRIEFING DOCUMENT AND INVITATION TO BID FOR CONSULTING SERVICES

The Committee considered a draft briefing document and invitation to bid for consultancy services in relation to a study of potential options for the intensification of aviation at the airfield. The Committee were advised that in 1999, Drivas Jonas had produced for the Council a study of possible future development options for the airfield. Six options had been identified for public consultation as a result of which another option developed by a group of aviation tenants for business aviation had been the one favoured by local residents. However, at that time the Council had decided not to proceed with any of the options in view of the possible implications for the airfield of the East of England Plan.

The Deputy Chief Executive reported that at the last meeting of the Committee in July 2008 following publication of the East of England Plan, Members had decided to

review the long term of the airfield. At that meeting the Committee had recommended to the Cabinet that a scoping report and brief be developed to examine the intensification of aviation use with business or other uses as required to make it economically viable and that a supplementary estimate be sought in order to meet the costs of engaging suitably qualified consultants to undertake the work. The Cabinet had adopted the recommendations and the Council had subsequently approved a supplementary DDF estimate of £50,000. Approval had also been given to a supplementary DDF estimate of £20,000 to review the fire fighting level required at the airfield.

Members considered a draft briefing document and invitation to bid for the consultancy services. It was noted that the brief had been developed to include a fire cover review, safety and security review and potential runway life investigation.

RECOMMENDED:

- (1) That the draft briefing document and invitation to bid for consultancy services to undertake an aviation investigation study for North Weald Airfield be approved;
- (2) That the study be undertaken in two stages with an initial scoping study allowing for the consideration of any proposals before proceeding with a more intensive level of assessment;
- (3) That, to allow for the possibility of different consultants undertaking the two stages, the documents specify that all working papers and reports prepared by the consultants for the first stage will be made available to the consultants undertaking the second stage.

5. NORTH WEALD AIRFIELD - MARKET

The Committee were advised that Hughmark International had gone into administration on 27 January 2009 and following discussions between officers, the Administrators and the Director of Hughmark International, a temporary licence, under existing terms, had been granted to Hughmark Continental Limited until April 2009. On 5 February 2009 the Cabinet had agreed that, subject to a satisfactory performance and payment record under the temporary licence, a new licence on comparable terms as the former licence be granted to Hughmark Continental Limited until 9 August 2010. Members noted that the new licence had been completed on 8 April 2009 and since that date Hughmark Continental Limited had paid all monies due in a timely manner, including the arrears of licence fee accrued under the former licence to Hughmark Intentional.

The Committee were informed that Hughmark Continental Limited was anxious to resurrect proposals initiated by Hughmark International for a new toilet block and the installation of a vehicle pay gate system on an income share basis with the Council.

RECOMMENDED:

- (1) That the present arrangements for the holding of the North Weald Airfield Market be noted;
- (2) That the performance of the present contractor be examined taking into account financial stability, management and feasibility of future proposals;

(3) That officers be authorised to approach landlords of other market operators with regards to references, financial viability and contract fulfilments;

(4) That officers submit a report to this Cabinet Committee in October 2009 on the findings of the reviews so that recommendations can be made to the Cabinet on the most beneficial and cost effective way forward to procure a market operator from August 2010; and

(5) That a report on any proposals in relation to the installation of a vehicle pay gate system be submitted to this Committee for consideration.

6. POTENTIAL ROLE FOR NORTH WEALD AIRFIELD DURING THE LONDON 2012 OLYMPIC GAMES

The Committee considered a report outlining supporting roles which the airfield could play in the run-up to and during the Olympics.

Members were advised that there were eight Central Line underground stations within the district which were well placed to carry spectators and officials to Stratford and it was 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 had been that London was going to be the "Greenest" Olympics ever and that spectators would be largely compelled to utilise public transport.

The Committee considered the implications of large numbers of car users driving to underground stations within the district with a view to travelling to the games on the Underground. Members discussed the possibility of a park and ride service at the airfield which could bus commuters or spectators to Central Line stations to help alleviate parking at those stations and in nearby residential roads. Members noted that further work would need to be undertaken as to how such a scheme could be achieved practically and that other issues such as the impact on the market would have to be considered. Also, the Department of Transport required that all plans affecting any type of transport link to the Olympics had to be approved by them.

Councillors Mrs Grigg and Stallan advised that whilst they would keep an open mind on this proposal until they had heard all the evidence and arguments they had concerns about precedents arising from using the airfield for this purpose.

The Deputy Chief Executive reported that a further possible role would be to allow for air passenger services to run during the games and allow for corporate business aviation to utilise the airfield although this would require the temporary upgrade of the airfield to licensed status. Members were advised that a full assessment of the safety, financial and environmental impacts would need to be undertaken and that the approval of the London Organising Committee for the Olympic Games would be required given the complex nature of the overall games transport plan and security arrangements.

Members requested that the assessment should include a study on the impact of air passenger operations using helicopters.

The third possible role concerned the use of the airfield as a caravan and camping centre. It was understood that London hotels were already fully booked for the period of the Olympics and that accommodation in the locality of Stratford would be at a premium. Members noted that the Council had already been approached by the

Caravan Club of Great Britain who wished to host their national rally at the airfield at the same time as the Olympic Games.

RECOMMENDED:

- (1) That the important role that the airfield could play in supporting the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games be recognised; and
- (2) That officers be authorised to undertake further feasibility work in relation to the proposals for park and ride, air passenger operations and caravan/camping on the understanding that any such roles for the airfield will be restricted to the period of the Olympic and Paralympic Games.

7. DEPOT FACILITIES

Members noted that the Cabinet had previously agreed that the land currently used for a depot in Langston Road, Loughton should be marketed for an alternative use and that the depot should be relocated, possibly to land adjoining North Weald Airfield. That land adjoining the airfield had also been identified, in part, within the Gypsies and Travellers Consultation exercise as a site for both a transit and permanent traveller site. Further there had been interest from Essex County Council in respect of the provision of joint depot facilities in this location, since the County Council did not have a long-term legal interest in their current highways depot located at Hastingwood. Members noted the current leaseholders of part of the land had expressed an interest in divesting themselves of their current lease to enable alternative uses.

The Committee were advised that whilst the rationalisation of depot use within the district fell under the remit of the Depot Working Party, chaired by the Chief Executive, the proposed review of the overall strategy for the airfield should include the relevant adjoining land and its usage. The primary matters for early consideration were:

- (a) the possible asset value of the Langston Road Depot;
- (b) the operational benefits of a depot located at the airfield including the benefits of extending the depot to include a waste transfer or handling facility;
- (c) economies of scale which might arise through joint depot arrangements with another party, such as Essex County Council;
- (d) the Gypsies and Travellers Consultation exercise; and
- (e) the impact such a development might have upon the future development of the airfield for aviation or mixed use.

RECOMMENDED:

- (1) That the status of decisions on the Langston Road Depot be noted;
- (2) That the key factors linking the agreed disposal of the Langston Road Depot with the strategic review of the airfield be acknowledged; and
- (3) That the relocation of the depot be pursued in conjunction with the strategic review of the airfield whilst accepting that there may be other

potential sites in the district which would be better suited to the relocation of the depot.

8. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED:

That in accordance with Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the item of business set out below as it would involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the paragraph of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act indicated and the exemption is considered to outweigh the potential public interest in disclosing the information:

<u>Agenda Item No.</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Exempt Information Paragraph Number</u>
10	North Weald Airfield – Extension of Existing Leases and Licences	3

9. NORTH WEALD AIRFIELD - EXTENSIONS OF EXISTING LEASES AND LICENCES

The Committee noted the terms of the existing leases and licences currently in operation at the airfield.

Members were advised that on 1 September 2008 the Cabinet had agreed that for those tenants with leases without security of tenure on renewal which were largely due to terminate in 2010 be offered new ten year leases with five years guaranteed and annual landlord break clauses only thereafter in order to ensure no future guaranteed tenure under the Landlord and Tenant Act.

The Committee gave further consideration to the five year certain lease term from 2008 with annual break clauses.

RECOMMENDED:

That the term of new leases granted without security of tenure remain at ten years from 2008 but that the term certain be reduced to four years from 2008 with a rolling six month break clause.

CHAIRMAN