

Report to the Cabinet

Report reference: C-039-2010/11
Date of meeting: 25 October 2010



Portfolio: Legal and Estates

Subject: Use of part of North Weald Airfield for park and ride facilities during the 2012 Olympic Games

Responsible Officer: J Gilbert (01992 564062)

Democratic Services Officer: Gary Woodhall (01992 564470)

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

- (1) To approve the use of part of the North Weald Airfield by the Olympic Development Agency as a park and ride facility during the white water canoeing events; and**
- (2) To make a bid for £4,000 from the District Development Fund in 2011/12 to alleviate the expected loss of income.**

Executive Summary:

The Olympic Development Agency (ODA) has approached the Council seeking its consent to enable the use of part of the airfield as a park and ride facility for the 5 day duration of the white water canoeing events scheduled to take place in late July early August 2012. No payment for the use will be forthcoming given the non profit nature of the ODAS and the Organising Committee of the London Olympic Games (Locog). The location would be required by ODA/Locog for 2 to 3 weeks in total.

Whilst there is no disruption to the Saturday market at the Airfield, there would be disruption to sports car activities and HGV training with some loss of income (circa £4,000). All other park and ride facilities for the games are being provided by site owners at no cost to the ODA/Locog. ODA/Locog are committed to ensuring that the land use is fully reinstated following its use for park and ride.

Reasons for Proposed Decision:

North Weald is a very convenient location for such a facility to support the white water canoeing events taking place at the White Water Centre taking place on the borders of Broxbourne and Waltham Abbey. The games are intended to be the "greenest" ever, with all spectators being required to use public transport and/or park and ride to access the various venues. Agreement for the use of the Airfield demonstrates this Council's support for the overall success of the Olympic Games in 2012. the loss of income is minimal and the Saturday market will not be affected.

Other Options for Action:

The other options for action are:

- (a) reject the approach of the ODA and refuse consent for park and ride facilities; or
- (b) agree to the approach but only if any income loss to the Council is recompensed.

Neither are recommended since both will result in the ODA/Locog not pursuing their approach and the Council may be seen as not supporting the Olympic Games.

Report:

1. The white water canoeing events for the 2012 Olympics will take place at the newly constructed white water centre at the showground on the borders between this District and Broxbourne Borough Council. The land concerned is owned by the Lee valley Regional Park Authority. Whilst the main event complex is wholly within BBC, the proposed park and ride and taxi set down facilities at the venue are wholly within this District. A plan is attached setting out the basic layout of the venue.

2. One of the fundamental principles of the 2012 bid was that these were to be the "greenest" ever Olympic Games. Therefore, no venues will have facilities for the parking of spectator cars and all spectators will be expected to arrive on foot, by public transport or via strategically located park and ride facilities. The venue has a capacity of 12,000 with around one third of those expected to arrive via the train, a similar number via park and ride and around 20% by direct coach. Tickets for events will include details of and the cost of public transport.

3. There are two proposed park and ride venues for the white water centre, one to the west of the site in Hertfordshire and the other at North Weald Airfield. Space for approximately 3,500 cars has been requested, and the site proposed is that immediately in front of the control tower. The buses and set down areas are to the left of the control tower on the hardened area between the tower and the market site. A plan is attached setting out the approximate proposed locations.

4. The ODA will be responsible for:

- (a) all costs in connection with its operations on site;
- (b) making good damage caused during its occupation;
- (c) collection and disposal of all litter during occupation including setting up and taking down;
- (d) reinstatement of the site to the same standard as when originally occupied; and
- (e) obtaining any statutory consents and the installation of signage etc.

5. Officers, in discussing the proposal with the ODA made it clear that the operation of the market could not be compromised, especially in view of the income it generates. The event itself takes place from Sunday 29 July to Thursday 2 August inclusive. The ODA have indicated that would like the site at North Weald at least a week in advance and for up to a week after to enable them to properly close the facility down and make good etc making the total let from 22 July to 9 August 2012.

6. All parking activity takes place on the dead side of the airfield and therefore there will be no disruption to aviation activity. However, the area proposed for the pick up and set down is used by HGV trainers and "Carlinit" a company which arranges for high speed driving of

owner driven sports cars. There will be a small loss of income from curtailing these activities during the park and ride operation.

7. The proposed route from the park and ride to the venue is currently:

- NWA to M11 via the A414;
- M11 to M25;
- M25 to junction 26;
- Honey Lane and Farm Hill Road to Waltham Abbey;
- Crooked Mile and Abbeyview to Station Road; and
- Station Road to park and ride at the venue.

8. The frequency of buses depends upon whether single or double deckers are used and also the arrangements at the venue for turning them around. At present it is suggested that frequencies will fall between 4 and 6 minutes, with peak operation being between 10.30 and 13.00.

9. The Airfield Events Support Group (ESG) has looked carefully at the proposals and can see no reason why it should not proceed, subject to Member approval and relevant legal processes being completed. The Group has considered all aspects of site access (for facility users and normal airfield users, welfare arrangements (WCs, first aid etc) and security.

Resource Implications:

Since the market is not affected by the proposals, the financial effects are limited to the loss of income related to the HGV training and sports car operations. The scale of this has been estimated at around £4,000. In addition to this there may well be some additional staffing costs arising from the need to maintain a higher level of Operations Officer presence than would normally be required at the Airfield.

All income from ticketing etc is retained by Locog. They are a non profit making organisation with the proceeds of any profit being divided:

- 20% to the British Olympic Association;
- 20% to the International Olympic Committee; and
- 60% to the "general benefit of sport" (no specific detail available).

ODA/Locog have provided a number of examples where landowners have made their facilities available for park and ride and related activities at no cost. In the case of private/commercial owners they are doubtless hopeful of an economic benefit in other ways and with respect to public sector owners all are content to waive a fee/income share as part of their contribution to the overall success of the Olympic Games.

Legal and Governance Implications:

There are no specific legal or governance implications other than to ensure that any agreement entered into with the ODA fully covers any risk to the Council's assets and other users of the Airfield.

Safer, Cleaner and Greener Implications:

It could be argued that the Council should be seen to support the principle of the Games being the "greenest" ever. To that end a park and ride arrangement is certainly preferable to many vehicles being handled at the venues themselves. The site will be kept clean by ODA/Locog and all litter collected and removed from the site. The intention is that all waste should be recycled.

Keeping large numbers of vehicles away from the venue and the adjoining streets and residential areas is important. Parking is at a premium in Waltham Abbey and tensions could well arise if widespread visitor parking took place during the 5 days of the event. Furthermore, the use of park and ride buses will reduce the likelihood of congestion on local roads, reducing noise and air pollution and enabling the local community to continue its normal lifestyle without undue disruption.

Consultation Undertaken:

Meetings have taken place with the ODA to discuss planning and operational matters. The outcome has been set out in the main body of the report. Further detailed meetings will have to take place should Cabinet agree to the use, co-ordinated with BBC in respect of access to the venue and local park and ride set down areas.

Background Papers:

Plans of park and ride and venue layout.

Impact Assessments:

Risk Management

The ESG has carefully considered the proposals and is satisfied with the proposed arrangements, especially with regard to any possible conflicts with other users on the site including the market and aviation.

Agreeing to the request would send a clear message that the Council is fully supportive of the Olympic Games and in particular the successful outcome of the white water canoeing events in BBC/Waltham Abbey. A refusal to agree, especially given the modest income loss involved could have an adverse impact on the Council's image and reputation.

Equality and Diversity:

Once the site is handed over to ODA/Locog they are responsible for ensuring that the operation meets all statutory requirements. This should be straightforward since it is a key requirement for the management of the Olympic Games in general.

Did the initial assessment of the proposals contained in this report for relevance to the Council's general equality duties, reveal any potentially adverse equality implications? No

Where equality implications were identified through the initial assessment process, has a formal Equality Impact Assessment been undertaken? No

What equality implications were identified through the Equality Impact Assessment process?
N/A.

How have the equality implications identified through the Equality Impact Assessment been addressed in this report in order to avoid discrimination against any particular group?
N/A.