

**Report to the North Weald Airfield &
Asset management Cabinet Committee**



Report reference: *NWA-006-2012/13*
Date of meeting: *22 April 2013*

**Epping Forest
District Council**

Portfolio: Asset Management & Economic Development

Subject: North Weald Airfield – Update report

Responsible Officer: J Gilbert (01992 564062)

Democratic Services Officer: Jackie Leither (01992 564532)

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

- (1) To note the current status of the Deloitte review of the Airfield;
- (2) That the meeting of this cabinet Committee scheduled for 11 July 2013 be cancelled; and
- (2) To note the receipt and contents of the Halcow review of the condition of the runways at the Airfield and the actions taken by officers in consequence.

Executive Summary:

This short report provides information to Members on:

- (a) initial progress of the consultants in respect of the review of North Weald Airfield; and
- (b) the final version of the runway condition survey at North Weald Airfield

Reasons for Proposed Decision:

To update the Cabinet Committee on progress.

Other Options for Action:

None

Report:

Review of the Airfield

1. Members will be aware that the consultancy exercise for the review of the Airfield is now well underway. There have 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.
2. Good progress is 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 will be incorporated into the final report. Representatives from Deloitte will be in attendance at this meeting to provide an update on progress and answer Members' questions (**Recommendation (1)**).

3. The project remains on schedule to report to Cabinet at its meeting on 22 July 2013. This is one Cabinet cycle later than originally envisaged, but the time line for the local plan development has been extended, to allow for additional work on matters such as population data, and it is therefore prudent for this additional time to be utilised, providing more time for consideration of the eventual recommendations. There is 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 will have to be published before that Cabinet Committee is held, it is recommended that the meeting on the 11th be cancelled to avoid duplication (**Recommendation (2)**).

Runway condition survey

3. Members will recall that following the receipt of the last Halcrow report on the Airfield, a decision was made to commission an assessment of the main runway (02/20). Halcrow was appointed to undertake this work and their final report has now been received, and the executive summary is appended to this agenda.

4. In summary, the findings were that:

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

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

6. The Halcrow report sets out the technical details of runway pavement strengths, which are not repeated in this report. What is important to note is that for the vast majority of aircraft using the Airfield, the runway remains entirely suitable, provided that current basic maintenance is continued. However, there are some aircraft using the Airfield which may 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 its insurers regarding the use of the runway, and although we have yet to receive their formal response, they have not reacted adversely to the procedures put into place which are set out below:

(a) the runway is regularly inspected in accordance with the suggested process set out in appendix D1 of the Halcrow Report; and

(b) that aircraft exceeding the pavement strength should be allowed to use the runway, but that operators should inform the airfield operations team of that intention so that additional runway inspections can be undertaken. All operators on the Airfield have been informed of the situation (**Recommendation (3)**)

7. Although some operators have expressed their concerns regarding these limitations, officers believe that very little inconvenience will be caused by these requirements and that it is in the best interests of all users of the main runway that we put safety considerations first and foremost, and the Council ensures that its Insurers are content with the arrangements.

8. It is worthy of note that the recent spell of cold weather has taken its toll on the runways and taxiways, and a lot of unexpected maintenance has had to be undertaken. At the present time this is being contained within existing budgets.

Resource Implications:

Runway repairs being undertaken within current operational budgets

Legal and Governance Implications:

Despite the concerns of aircraft operators on the Airfield, it was important to ensure that the contents of the Halcrow report were shared with the Council's insurers and their consent sought for the steps put into place to manage the situation.

Safer, Cleaner and Greener Implications:

None at this stage

Consultation Undertaken:

Sharing of information with the Council's insurers and aircraft users at the Airfield

Background Papers:

Halcrow report – executive summary appended to agenda

Impact Assessments:

Risk Management

As stated under governance, it was important to ensure a fair balance between the needs of the aircraft operators to be able to exercise their right to use the runway normally and the legal requirements of the Council to ensure that operations at the Airfield are undertaken safely and in accordance with good practice.

Equality and Diversity:

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?

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?