

Report to the North Weald Airfield Strategy Cabinet Committee



**Epping Forest
District Council**

Date of meeting: 31 July 2007.

Subject: Extension of Retail Market Agreement – North Weald Airfield.

Officer contact for further information: Derek Macnab (01992 – 564260).

Democratic Services Officer: Gary Woodhall (01992 – 564470).

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

- (1) That the current Retail Market Licence be surrendered and a new licence with amended terms be granted;**
- (2) That the length of the new Retail Market Licence be from 2007 to 2017, subject to an annual break clause from 2010;**
- (3) That the new Retail Market Licence be uplifted by £1,000 per market with effect from 2010, with annual index linking for inflation; and**
- (4) That, in addition to the existing annual Airfield Improvement Contribution and as a single additional contribution to the Airfield Improvement Annual Charge, a lump sum payment of £150,000 be contributed by Rondeau General Merchants Ltd trading as Hughmark International towards the resurfacing of the Meadow Area at the commencement of the new Agreement.**

Report:

1. Rondeau General Merchants Ltd, trading as Hughmark International, who operate what is now generally recognised as Britain's largest Saturday and Bank Holiday Market, have been longstanding tenants at North Weald Airfield. As such, positive working relationships have developed, not only with the Airfield Management, in relation to the complex practical issues in operating such a large public event, but also with Essex Trading Standards on retail issues. The market has Quality Assurance Accreditation, reflecting good management practice.

2. Over their period of tenure Hughmark have been subject to several licence fee reviews. Currently, the Market represents the most significant source of income to the Council from the site, enabling the Airfield to generate a net surplus, subsidising many of the other uses. The overall fee paid by the Market Operator is commercially sensitive, however officers can provide further information at the meeting if required.

3. The success of North Weald Market can largely be attributed to the insistence of Hughmark that a core of permanent stallholders operate all year round, coupled with their significant ongoing investment in Marketing and Promotion, along with the provision of subsidised public transport for visitors.

4. Hughmark are anxious to maintain confidence amongst their traders and have issued regular updates to stallholders, in order to dispel rumours of the Market's demise, which tend to circulate. Notwithstanding, Hughmark have formally approached the Council, seeking additional surety around their medium term future on the site, post their current Licence Agreement, which expires in August 2010. From 2007 the Council may terminate the licence. At the behest of the Council's Management Board, Officers in Leisure Services and Estates have met with Hughmark and developed the proposal as contained in the recommendations. The proposal attempts to deliver the certainty sought by the Market Operator whilst

safeguarding the Council's financial position, coupled with the retention of a degree of flexibility, should circumstances change in the future.