

EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL COMMITTEE MINUTES

Committee: North Weald Airfield and Asset Management Cabinet Committee **Date:** Wednesday, 5 September 2012

Place: Committee Room 1, Civic Offices, High Street, Epping **Time:** 7.30 - 9.40 pm

Members Present: Councillors Mrs A Grigg (Chairman), R Bassett, Mrs E Webster and C Whitbread

Other Councillors: Councillors L Girling, Ms J Hart, Mrs C Pond, D Stallan and J M Whitehouse

Apologies: -

Officers Present: D Macnab (Deputy Chief Executive), A Hall (Director of Housing), C O'Boyle (Director of Corporate Support Services), J Preston (Director of Planning and Economic Development), L MacNeill (Assistant Director (Operations, Administration & Finance)), C Pasterfield (Principal Valuer/Surveyor) and G J Woodhall (Democratic Services Officer)

Also in attendance: S Reilly (Ernst & Young)

12. MINUTES

Resolved:

(1) That the minutes of the meeting held on 13 February 2012 be taken as read and signed by the Chairman as a correct record, subject to the following amendment:

- (a) amending the date in minute 7 (Minutes) from 2012 to 2011.

13. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

(a) Pursuant to the Council's Code of Member Conduct, Councillor J M Whitehouse declared a personal interest in agenda item 6, Asset Management Co-Ordination Group Report, by virtue of being a resident of St John's Road in Epping. The Councillor had determined that his interest was non-pecuniary and would remain in the meeting for the consideration of the issue.

14. ERNST YOUNG REPORT

The Chairman introduced a report on the Ernst and Young review of the Halcrow report.

The Chairman reminded the Cabinet Committee that Halcrow were appointed by the Council in 2010 to undertake a review of aviation intensification at North Weald Airfield, with consideration given to any supporting infrastructure that might be required. They reported to the Cabinet Committee and then to the Cabinet in March and April 2011. Subsequently, no further activity had been undertaken, due in significant part to the inter-relationship between development at the Airfield and other estate management issues such as the redevelopment of the Langston Road depot site. In mid 2011, following funding from Improvement East, Ernst and Young were

appointed to undertake an overview of the present situation, including the comments and recommendations of the Halcrow report and to recommend to the Council how it should best proceed, taking into consideration both aviation and non-aviation developments at the Airfield. It was noted that the Halcrow report had emphasised the technical aspects of aviation intensification whereas the Ernst & Young review was more concerned with the financial aspects.

The Chairman introduced Simon Reilly from Ernst & Young, who gave a short presentation to the Cabinet Committee on their report. The presentation was comprised of the following sections:

- a listing of the main activities currently taking place at the Airfield;
- an outline of the approach taken to conduct the review;
- an overview of the current operations at the Airfield;
- the key findings from the review by Ernst & Young; and
- the proposed next steps:
 - Work Package 1 – 3 months estimated delivery; and
 - Work Package 2 – 12 months estimated delivery.

A ward member for North Weald Bassett highlighted the use of the term 'Airport' to describe the Airfield at North Weald, and queried whether residents would welcome the introduction of scheduled flights by Airlines from the Airfield. In addition, there was no involvement from residents and the Parish Council in the process outlined by Ernst & Young. The Consultant from Ernst & Young suggested that community consultation could take place after Work Package 1 was complete and before Work Package 2 commenced, but the ward member felt that residents should be involved at an earlier stage, as this would be in accordance with the Government's stated aim of promoting Localism. The Leader of the Council added that consulting with local residents would be a vital element of the process, and that this should be integrated with the Issues & Options consultation for the Local Plan. The Director of Planning & Economic Development stated that the future of North Weald Airfield would be an integral part of the new Local Plan. A significant portion of the Airfield was in the Green Belt, but there were brownfield sites on the Airfield which could be re-developed.

The Cabinet Committee considered the expansion that the Airfield could accommodate before it impacted upon Stansted Airport, and whether the runway was in a sufficiently good condition. The Consultant from Ernst & Young stated that the report from Halcrow had considered the possible impact of aviation expansion at North Weald Airfield on other airports, and that the Council would have to discuss this further with the Civil Aviation Authorities. The Assistant Director of Environment & Street Scene (Performance & Operations) added that the condition of the runway was being investigated by Halcrow and the result would be known in the next two to three months. The Director of Planning & Economic Development highlighted that the site would contain contaminants, due to its previous military use and the aircraft maintenance that is currently undertaken at the site. One suggestion was for the contaminated areas to be left to revert to wildlife and not be developed further.

The Consultant from Ernst & Young concluded that the report had not offered any recommendations; the purpose of the study had been to investigate the available options and determine the best choices to maximise the value of North Weald Airfield to the Council. The Assistant Director (Performance & Operations) added that the Council now had a process to charge landing and parking fees at the Airfield, and the Council had actually earned approximately £1000 in such fees during the Olympics. The Acting Chief Executive stated that the Consultant had described the two component parts to the process. Consultation with local residents could be included at any point in the process, but it would delay the process. The importance of

integrating this work with the Local Plan was stressed by the Acting Chief Executive, and it was suggested that Work Package 1 could be completed concurrently with the Preferred Options phase of the Local Plan. The Chairman highlighted the cost of the process, currently estimated at £150,000, and that the process must include consultation with the local residents.

The Chief Estates Officer drew the Cabinet Committee's attention to the leasing restrictions and requested that the minimum terms for leases due to expire be extended to April 2015. The Cabinet Committee agreed to progress with Work Packages 1 and 2 and that this should include a period of consultation with local residents. The request to extend the minimum terms of leases to April 2015 was also agreed.

Resolved:

(1) That the Ernst & Young review of the Halcrow report on the future of North Weald Airfield be noted;

Recommended:

(2) That work package 1 and 2 recommended by Ernst & Young be recommended for implementation, with work package 1 to include consultation with local residents:

(3) That the appointment of consultants to advise on the future potential development of the Airfield be recommended for approval;

(4) That a supplementary District Development Fund estimate in the sum of £150,000 be recommended to the Council for approval, to enable the consultancy exercise to be undertaken; and

(5) That the extension of the minimum terms for leases at the Airfield to April 2015 be recommended for approval.

Reasons for Decision:

To give consideration to defining and progressing potential development options for North Weald Airfield.

Other Options Considered and Rejected:

To not consider the report at this stage, however this would delay any further consideration of the future development options for the Airfield.

15. RELOCATION OF WASTE MANAGEMENT DEPOT TO NORTH WEALD AIRFIELD

The Chairman presented a report concerning the possible relocation of the Waste Management Depot to North Weald Airfield.

The Cabinet Committee was reminded that as proposals for the redevelopment of the Langston Road depot site was progressed, it was necessary to consider how best to re-provide this facility at an alternative location. It had previously been considered that land within the North Weald Airfield boundary could be suitable, but it was now suggested that, due to the possible implications for the future uses of the Airfield, the

complications surrounding a covenant, as well as technical considerations, the proposal to relocate the depot to the Airfield should be abandoned.

A local ward member for North Weald Bassett welcomed the report and inquired whether local ward members would be informed of possible future sites. The Acting Chief Executive assured the Cabinet Committee that local ward members would be given an early indication of possible sites for the depot. One option under consideration was for the waste management contractor to provide the depot, however it would probably be cheaper for the Council to own its own depot. A new waste management contract had to be signed by November 2014, and that an alternative site had to be identified by early 2014 at the latest.

Recommended:

- (1) That the current waste management depot located at Langston Road be not relocated to land at North Weald Airfield; and
- (2) That alternative locations continue to be investigated alongside other contractual options for future depot re-provision.

Reasons for Decision:

To enable strategic decisions to be made around the future uses of North Weald Airfield without the complications that the presence of a waste management depot would bring.

Other Options Considered and Rejected:

None, other than to retain North Weald Airfield as a possible location for the re-provision of a waste management depot.

16. ASSET MANAGEMENT CO-ORDINATION GROUP REPORT

The Principal Valuer & Estates Surveyor presented the Asset Management Co-Ordination Group report.

The Principal Valuer & Estates Surveyor updated the Cabinet Committee on the progress of a number of projects at the following sites:

- Langston Road Retail Park - an agreement was expected with Polofind by Christmas;
- Oakwood Hill Depot - draft plans had been drawn up to accommodate the Council being relocated there;
- Pyrles Lane Nursery – an application for outline planning permission was being prepared;
- St John's Road – the Development & Design Brief would be considered by the Cabinet next week;
- Waste Management Depot – would not be relocated to North Weald Airfield, alternative sites were being considered;
- Torrington Drive – options to redevelop the supermarket would not incorporate the neighbouring petrol station;
- Winston Churchill Public House – discussions were ongoing about developing the site;
- The car parks at the Broadway – no firm proposals at the current time;
- Burton Road Depot – no firm proposals at the current time;
- Lindsay House, Epping – consideration was being given to the assignment of the current lease;

- Town Mead Depot – advice was being taken regarding the Strategic Flood Assessment;
- The former car park at Church Hill – no progress to report; and
- Leader Lodge, North Weald – the freehold sale of the site was being marketed.

Local ward members for the Broadway in Loughton highlighted that the development of the Winston Churchill public house would be a contentious issue in Debden, and that the Council should consider further consultation due to the unpopularity of the current proposals. In addition, a number of the shop units in the area were falling into disrepair. The Principal Valuer & Estates Surveyor responded that it was hoped the development would be an exciting one for the area, and it was a shame that the petrol station site was not being included. New agents had been appointed for the Broadway retail units. Some units would be demolished to provide additional car parking for the supermarket, although the lease for the supermarket also needed to be re-let.

Resolved:

- (1) That the Asset Management Co-Ordination Group report be noted.

17. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Resolved:

(1) That in accordance with Section 100B(4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972, together with paragraphs (6) and (24) of the Council Procedure Rules, the Leader of the Council had permitted the following item of urgent business to be considered following the publication of the agenda:

- (a) The Broadway Regeneration Action Plan.

18. THE BROADWAY REGENERATION ACTION PLAN

A report on the Action Plan for the regeneration of the Council controlled sites in The Broadway area in Debden, in pursuance of The Broadway Design & Development Brief adopted in 2008, was presented by the Director of Housing.

The Director of Housing reported that the Council's Management Board had established an Officer Working Party to monitor/facilitate developments at The Broadway by third parties, and oversee the delivery of developments by the Council in respect of land and assets under the control of the Council, in accordance with The Broadway Design and Development Brief. Appendix 1 of the report was a summary of the proposals within the Design & Development Brief. The Working Party had formulated a Draft Broadway Regeneration Action Plan, which had been endorsed by the Management Board, and was attached at Appendix 2 to the report. The Action Plan provided a "road map" for the delivery of the different sites under the control of the Council within the Design Brief, for consideration by the Cabinet Committee and subsequent adoption by the Cabinet.

The Chairman had invited the two local ward members for Loughton Broadway to attend the meeting in a non-voting capacity, and they had been provided with a copy of the report when the supplementary agenda had been published. The Cabinet Committee considered each of the sites on the Action Plan in turn.

- Site 4 – Vere Road (South)

The Director of Housing stated that the site at Vere Road (South) was too large for the Council to develop itself, but proposed that, in principle, 40% of the developed accommodation should be provided as affordable housing. The local ward members stressed that Vere Road was currently a very unattractive area of The Broadway which required redevelopment, but that it was also important that surface parking provision within the area should not be lost.

In response to questions from the members present, the Director of Housing stated that it was not unusual to have surface parking provision next to residential accommodation that was not restricted to residents, and the proposed separation of parking provision from the proposed housing would more usefully alleviate the current problems in the area than the provision of garages under maisonettes as proposed by the Design Brief.

In response to another question, the Director of Housing stated that if a particular garage block was selected for redevelopment then tenants would be notified well in advance of having to vacate their garages and would be given priority for other garages that came available in the vicinity. It was noted that the Council charged a standard rent across the whole District for its garages, although non-Council tenants were additionally charged Value Added Tax (VAT), as required by Her Majesty's Revenue & Customs (HMRC). It was emphasised that Council owned garages should only be used for the storage of cars, not for general storage by residents or local shopkeepers.

- Site 4 – Vere Road (North-West)

The Design & Development Brief at this site had proposed that the garages should be retained, however these had proved difficult to let and a large proportion of the garages were empty so the Officer Working Party had proposed that the site be redeveloped. The Director of Housing added that there had not been much response in the past at other sites when the rents had been reduced in an effort to rent out more garages.

The local ward members for Loughton Broadway requested that the density of the proposed new housing should not be so large that people would not want to live there, and also highlighted the unique architecture of the Broadway area. The Working Party's proposal was to hold the site in abeyance until the future of the Winston Churchill public house site was decided, but if this site was not required for any redevelopment of the Winston Churchill site then it should be developed for affordable housing.

- Site 4 – Vere Road (North-East)

The proposal was to provide 100% affordable housing at the site; no comments were made on the proposal.

- Site 5 – Burton Road (North) (Rear of Shops)

The main proposal for this site was to investigate the possible provision of a One-Stop Shop to provide a number of Council and non-Council services, in accordance with the Design Brief, if such a facility could not be provided as part of any development by Transport for London around Debden Station. The local ward members stated that a youth facility was urgently required for The Broadway area,

which could also help to alleviate some of the anti-social behaviour, and that this site would be ideal; although a One Stop Shop should also be provided for the area.

The Director of Housing pointed out that there was reduced funding available from the County Council for youth facilities, and a possible community facility was being investigated at Sites 6 & 7. The Acting Chief Executive added that the Council supported the provision of youth services by local churches and other private organisations, and the Local Strategic Partnership was also looking to support youth facilities at Murray Hall.

- Sites 6 & 7 – Burton Road (South) & Burton Road (East)

The Director of Housing referred to initial discussions he had had with the Special Advisor to the Archdeacon of Harlow about the possible provision of a new church /chapel and community facility on this site in partnership with the St John's Parish and the Trinity Ecumenical Partnership. No decision had yet been taken over the possible siting of the new facilities. The Principal Valuer and Estates Surveyor responded to a question from the local ward members that a number of double-sized units already existed in the Broadway, but that if all the retail units were converted into double-sized units then that raised the possibility of a number of the existing tenants being removed.

Recommended:

(1) That, following consideration of the views of the local ward members for Loughton Broadway, The Broadway Regeneration Action Plan be recommended to the Cabinet for adoption; and

(2) That further reports on the proposed way forward for each of the Council-controlled sites within the Action Plan be the subject of separate detailed reports to the Cabinet at the appropriate times.

Reasons for Decision:

To have an agreed way forward for each of the sites, and to guide Officers for the more detailed subsequent reports to the Cabinet for each site.

Other Options Considered and Rejected:

To not have an Action Plan.

To significantly amend the Action Plan from the version presented for consideration.

CHAIRMAN