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NEWS RELEASE

10 September 2009

Airport project will protect Guernsey's vital links

ESSENTIAL refurbishment will enable Guernsey Airport to meet current aviation standards and ensure major work on the same scale is not required for at least the next 30 years.

Public Services will this month ask the States to approve a comprehensive £81 million upgrade of the airfield. It is not proposing extending the runway, which would cost around £23 million extra, but under its preferred option this could be incorporated in the future.

The proposed works include resurfacing and displacing the existing runway to the west, and reconstructing all of the concrete apron areas around the terminal. The aircraft taxiways will also be realigned and resurfaced, and the existing drainage and lighting systems replaced.

The budget also includes an estimated £4 million for new pollution control measures, which include dealing with ground that has been contaminated by fire-fighting foam in the past.

If the States approve the proposals, construction would be expected to start in January 2011 and take around two years to complete. Allowances for inflation between now and the commencement of works on site are included in the budget.

The current runway, last reconstructed in 1974, was expected to last between 15 and 30 years. The proposed works will mean it should not have to be resurfaced again until around 2028.

The newly reconstructed apron areas, which include the aircraft stands, would be expected to last at least 30 years.

The airport will remain operational while construction is carried out, which will require work on the runway and taxiways at night, and reinstatement each morning.

Public Services Minister Deputy Bernard Flouquet said the proposals reflected the extensive maintenance and upgrading that were now essential.

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‘Guernsey Airport has served the island well since May 1939, however in its current form it no longer complies with modern aviation regulations. This is something that we have to address, to protect the vital lifeline services that are essential to the island,’ he said.

‘The condition of the runway and other airfield surfaces has inevitably deteriorated over time, despite the routine maintenance and repair that has been carried out. This has now reached a critical stage, and work to rehabilitate these surfaces must proceed without delay.’

Several options have been considered by Public Services since its last report went to the States in December 2008, which outlined a ‘baseline’ scheme costing around £85 million.

Since then extensive consultation and planning has been carried out, as a result of which the Department is now proposing a slightly revised scheme. This will greatly reduce the amount of materials required to upgrade the runway to current aviation standards, and minimise the potential disruption during the construction phase.

‘The report that we presented to the States last December represented the work that we had undertaken on this project up until that stage. We have continued to develop the proposals and consider additional options, in consultation with various different stakeholders,’ said Deputy Flouquet.

‘As a result the project has progressed to a more advanced stage, and we are now able to come back to the States with revised proposals that reflect the additional planning and consideration that has been carried out.’

The proposed scheme, known as Option C, requires the current runway to be displaced to the west to provide a longer run-off safety area within the current airport boundary to the east. This is essential to meet current international aviation standards, which have to be addressed as part of any major refurbishment at Guernsey Airport.

A shortlist of contractors has now been drawn up, comprising five companies with previous experience in airfield projects.

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Four other options are also detailed in the Billet, although only one other of these options proposed would be acceptable to the Director of Civil Aviation, who is responsible for regulating and licensing Guernsey Airport.

One of these options would involve maintaining the runway at its current length and within the existing boundaries, but incorporating an ‘arrestor bed’ within the safety areas at either end.

However the system that has been considered is not yet approved for use by the Civil Aviation Authority, and would also cost an additional £10 million. It would also have to be replaced on a routine basis, at a cost of £6.5 million.

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