

*Expiry: The content and quotes in this media release must not be used after one week from date of issue.*

16 November 2011

## **NEWS RELEASE**

### **Four two-day closures announced for airport**

GUERNSEY Airport will be closed for eight days next year to enable key elements of the planned essential maintenance and improvements to be carried out.

All the closures will take place on a Tuesday and Wednesday, to coincide with the least disruptive period for travel. The airport will operate as normal until 9pm on the Monday evening, but not reopen again until 6am on Thursday.

The closures include Liberation Day, which is one of the quietest periods of the year for travel. The others will be in March, November and December.

Airlines have confirmed they have very few passengers booked to travel on the first two closure days in March. Alternative arrangements will be made for post and national newspapers.

Public Service Minister, Deputy Bernard Flouquet, said the timing had been agreed with airlines to avoid key travel dates. The March closure was also scheduled to avoid peak postage around Mother's Day.

'We carried out a consultation in 2009 with airlines, businesses, freight operators and other travel operators, as well as inviting comments from islanders. This identified that midweek closures were likely to prove least disruptive, and provided sufficient notice was given alternative arrangements could be made for most essential travel,' he said.

Once the Department's main contractor, Lagan Construction, indicated its preferred dates, there was a further round of consultation with airlines. This identified Liberation Day would be a suitable, given the traditionally low levels of travel coinciding with the 9 May Bank Holiday.

The project is expected to take around two years to complete, and for the majority of this time the airport will remain operational. Work on the runway and associated areas will take place at night, and the concrete aprons and other systems being carried out during the day.

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The first closure will be on 20 and 21 March, to enable the removal of contaminated soil from the airfield. This is in areas close to the runway, and cannot be completed in the nine hours the airport is normally shut at night.

Likewise the removal of existing concrete strips either side of the runway, which are being restored to grass. This will be carried out on 8 and 9 May.

The project also involves constructing a new 120m section of runway at the western end, so that a longer safety area can be provided at the east. One of the existing taxiways, which provide the link between the aircraft parking areas and the runway, therefore has to be realigned to join up with the new western end. This will be done on 27 and 28 November.

The final closure will be the following week, on 4 and 5 December, when the new section is connected to the existing runway.

Airport Director Colin Le Ray said as well as carrying out these key elements, the contractor will be looking to complete as much work as possible during the closures. This may mean that operations that were normally daytime only, such as transporting aggregate, may also have to take place at night. However efforts will be made to minimise any disruption.

‘The purpose of these closures is to complete certain elements that cannot be completed during a normal night-time closure. However Lagan will be looking to maximise the opportunity, and complete as much work as possible during these times,’ he said.

‘We will make every effort to minimise any disruption, but in any case these will be short-term and will reduce the overall duration of the project in the long-run.’

Mr Le Ray said anyone who has already booked should contact their airline to arrange alternative travel arrangements.

ENDS

For further information, contact:-

**Public Services Department**

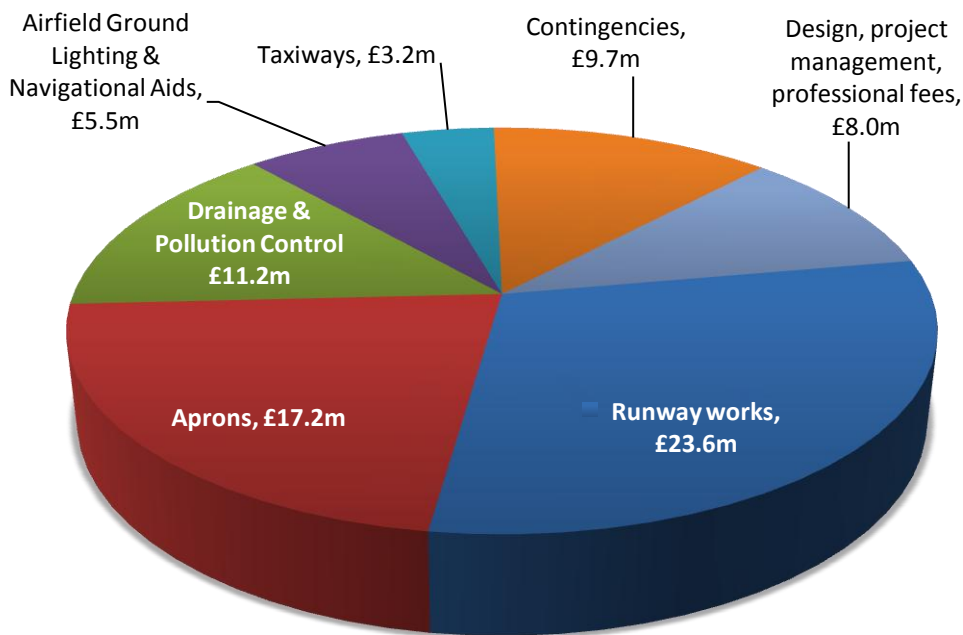
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**Notes to editors:-**

- Guernsey Airport opened in 1939, and today provides a gateway to the island for nearly one million business or leisure travellers each year.
- In 2009, the States approved a major programme of essential maintenance and improvements, aimed at equipping the current airport to serve the island for the next 30 years.
- The runway was last resurfaced in 1974, and would normally be expected to last between 15 and 30 years. Other areas are of similar age - in some cases older - and also need replacing. These include the concrete apron areas where the aircraft park; the drainage system; and the airfield ground lighting, which is obsolete. The taxiways linking the aprons and runway also require overlaying, levelling, and realignment.
- In July 2011 the States approved Public Services’ preferred contractor, Lagan Construction. The company has completed more than 35 airfield projects worldwide in the past 10 years, and was one of four firms invited to tender for the contract.

• **Project Budget:**



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- **Lagan Construction** consistently delivers innovative, high quality civil engineering and building solutions internationally to public and private sector clients through a network of local offices. Lagan Construction’s specialist teams have expertise in a range of sectors including roads, airports, water, defence, marine, power and rail, where they undertake infrastructure, capital and maintenance projects through a variety of procurement routes.