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NEWS RELEASE

Airport exhibition continues its tour

VISITORS to Beau Sejour will have the chance to learn about the essential maintenance and improvements planned for Guernsey Airport.

The project, which was approved by the States in October 2009, is expected to cost more than £80 million and represents the most extensive development at the airfield since it opened in 1939. Construction work is due to begin in 2011 and will take two years to complete.

The essential maintenance involves the reconstruction of the runway and other hard surfaces and the replacement or refurbishment of the drainage system, airfield lighting and other key operational systems.

It also includes the provision of longer grass safety areas at the either end of the airfield, which are designed to protect passengers and aircraft in the event of a plane running off the runway on take-off or landing.

An exhibition detailing the project will be in the Beau Sejour entrance hall throughout December. It has previously been on display in the Airport terminal, as well as the Royal Court building, the Performing Arts Centre and in the Inner Street at the Markets.

Public Services Minister Deputy Bernard Flouquet said the recent disruption due to the cold weather and problems at Jersey Airport had highlighted again how important the island's air links are.

Operations at Guernsey Airport directly contribute more than £30 million a year to the local economy, but its overall contribution to the island is much greater.

'The airport is essential to the island's infrastructure and economy, providing lifeline links not just for islanders but for businesses and the local leisure and tourism industry. This project aims to safeguard these vital links for the next 30 years,' he said.

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The exhibition also includes the findings of a comprehensive environmental impact assessment (EIA). This looked at potential effects of the development, which in most cases were negligible, minor or moderate, and also identified possible mitigation measures.

The study was carried out by Public Services' project consultants RPS, in conjunction with La Société Guernesiaise's environmental management consultancy, Guernsey Water, the Environment Department and Guernsey Museums.

It included the archaeology of the area; traffic and transport; air quality; and noise and vibration. Light pollution; flood risk; the local ecology, environment and landscape; and socio-economic factors were also considered.

Deputy Flouquet said every aspect of the project was being planned in great detail, and this included assessing any impacts during the construction phase and longer term.

'This is one of the most complex and extensive engineering projects the island has ever seen. The proposals approved by the States last October were the culmination of several years planning, and that process has continued in preparation for appointing a contractor,' he said.

Four construction firms have submitted tenders for the project, and a contractor is expected to be appointed next year.

ENDS

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 existing runway was last resurfaced in 1974, and would normally be expected to last between 15 and 30 years. Other areas of the airport are of similar age - in some cases older - and also in need of replacement. These include the concrete apron areas where the aircraft park; the airfield ground lighting, which is now obsolete; and the entire drainage system. The taxiways leading from the aprons to the runway also require overlaying, levelling, and realignment.

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