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16 February 2011

NEWS RELEASE

Airport project delay will cost millions

DELAYING any further decisions on the essential maintenance and improvements at Guernsey Airport will cost the island millions.

The States will be asked next week to approve the compulsory purchase of a field required for a new safety area at the western end of the airfield.

Public Services Minister Deputy Bernard Flouquet said that if the States voted for a delaying motion, being brought by Deputy Shane Langlois, or against the compulsory purchase request, the urgent refurbishment would undoubtedly be delayed.

The project, which was approved by the States in 2009, is due to begin later this year. Public Services has already chosen a preferred contractor for the works, following a tendering process that began last July.

Deputy Flouquet said if the States did not approve the compulsory purchase, the current scheme would no longer be possible. The Department would therefore have to redesign the project, and resubmit new proposals to the States before going out to tender again.

If the States voted in favour of Deputy Langlois' sursis motion, the future of the project would be even more uncertain.

'We cannot say for sure how long any delay would set the project back, but it will be several months. It will mean having to spend more money patching the existing runway, in the hope that it does not disintegrate further in the meantime and require even more extensive repairs,' he said.

'There could also be significant additional costs for redesign and potentially a new tender process.'

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The land purchase requirements were included in the proposals approved in 2009. The States has since acquired, through negotiations with owners, all but one of the fields required.

Public Services is asking the States to approve the compulsory acquisition of this one remaining land parcel. This was due to be debated in January, but the Department requested the States defer this until this month so that Deputies could consider the findings of an independent review of options for the runway end safety areas, commissioned by Treasury and Resources.

That independent report, published this month, concurred with the main conclusions Public Services had previously reached. In particular, it found that longer safety areas were required, and could not be achieved within the existing airport boundary. Other potential options were outlined, all of which would cost more than the approved scheme.

‘If, despite all this evidence, we now have to go back and redesign the project there will obviously be cost involved. That work may only take a number of weeks, but we would then have to return to the States to ask them to rescind the previous resolution for the current scheme and approve the new plans,’ he said.

‘That will take several months, before we can even start the planning application process, which in itself will take months.’

‘We would also have restart the tender process, given that it is a substantive change to the proposals. In any event the current bid by the Department’s preferred contractor expires in October, and there would be no prospect of work starting by then.’

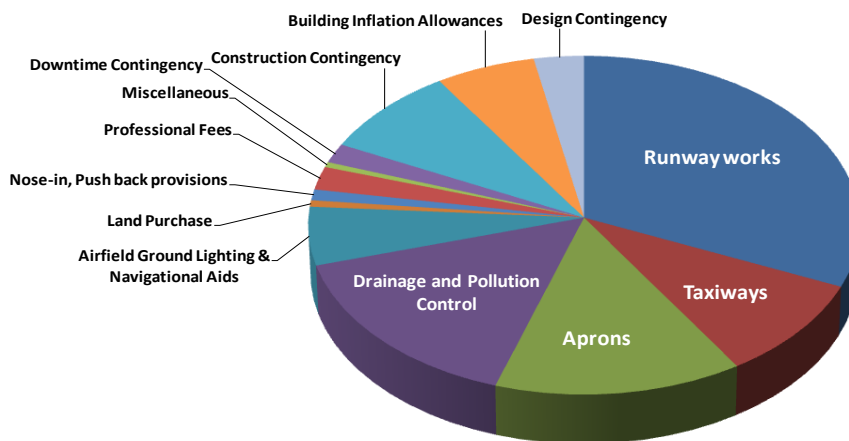
‘The technical advice received shows that the cost of these delays will run to millions, and that is before we even know the price on any subsequent scheme, and the cost of that.’

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.
- Public Services has selected Lagan Construction, one of the UK’s leading airfield construction specialists as its preferred bidder, for the project. The company, which has completed more 35 airfield projects worldwide in the past 10 years, was one of four firms invited to tender for the contract.



About Lagan Construction

- **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.

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