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NEWS RELEASE

Plans to minimise airport project impacts

PUBLIC Services is working with the island's leading ecologists on plans to reduce the environmental impacts of extending the safety areas at Guernsey Airport.

The Department has commissioned Environment Guernsey to help identify projects that can help offset environmental losses from the planned essential maintenance and improvements at the airport.

The proposals include the creation of new hedgerows along the northern perimeter of the airport, tree and shrubbery planting schemes on various other States-owned properties, and the extension of a rare wetland habitat area at the L'Eree headland Ramsar site.

Other schemes being considered include the restoration of derelict former vinery sites, to return the land to agricultural use. This could replace the majority of the current fields within the new safety area to the west of the airfield.

No decision has yet been made on the choice of projects, but Public Services has allocated £150,000 to progress schemes identified by Environment Guernsey.

The company's managing director, Jamie Hooper, said the proposals would have a significant benefit.

'Although there are clearly limited opportunities for environmental offsetting in Guernsey, we believe that these proposals will significantly reduce the environmental impacts of the airport project,' he said.

'We are particularly encouraged that those impacts of high ecological importance, including the loss of some earthbanks and an area of species-rich marshy grassland, are substantially compensated for.'

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Environment Guernsey was first commissioned last year to carry out an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) on the project. This looked at the likely effects on the local ecology, natural resources and landscape character from creating the new runway end safety area (RESA) at the western end of the current airfield.

Its report recommended that suitable projects should be considered to offset some or all of the impacts identified. These included the loss of agricultural land, an area of rare marshy grassland, and the removal of existing hedgebanks within the new RESA site.

Public Services Minister, Deputy Bernard Flouquet, said the Department had taken on board the findings of the EIA, and had been working with Environment Guernsey to address these.

‘The environmental impact of the works required at Guernsey Airport has been identified as a concern to many islanders, and it is a concern that the Project Board has taken seriously. These proposals reflect that, and we believe that the schemes that have now been put forward will address these impacts,’ he said.

The proposals include using soil removed from the airfield, as part of the required levelling works, to create a new earthbank along the northern perimeter. This would be up to 600 metres in length, to offset more than half of the hedgerows within the existing RESA site.

Additional offsetting for this could also include planting of hedges at a number of Housing Department properties, and on Guernsey Water land.

The loss of marshy grassland within the RESA site could also be offset by removing spoil from the Colin Best Nature Reserve, within Guernsey’s only internationally-recognised Ramsar site.

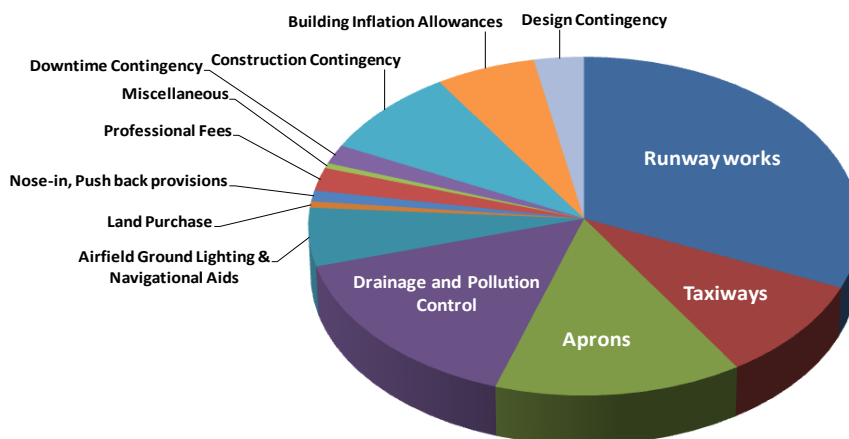
Key findings of the Environmental Impact Assessment are on display in the Guernsey Airport terminal concourse, and can be accessed online at www.gov.gg/Airport 2040.

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- 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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