



KEMPSEY
Shire Council

DIRECTOR CORPORATE AND COMMUNITY SERVICES REPORT

8th May 2007

DCCS5	VIRGIN BLUE AIRLINES – SITE INSPECTION OF KEMPSEY AIRPORT FILE: 183 SJR
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SUMMARY:

Reporting on a site visit of Kempsey Airport conducted by Virgin Blue Airlines.



DESCRIPTION:

Representatives from Virgin Blue Airlines undertook a two day site inspection of the Kempsey Airport on Tuesday 17 and Wednesday 18 April 2007. The site visit was the first step in the site evaluation process following council's furnishing of an Expression of Interest to Virgin Blue.

Virgin Blue has advised that Kempsey is one of eighteen destinations selected from sixty four submissions for further investigation. It was Virgin Blue's intent to inspect facilities available on site to evaluate the capability of the airport and its associated facilities to offer a Regular Passenger Transport (RPT) service.

Mr Jim Woodrow from Virgin Blue Ground Operations attended the site on both days. On Tuesday he was accompanied by two representatives from ground operations that inspected the ground facilities with a particular focus on passenger terminal facilities, airside access points, secure baggage storage facilities, secure storage facilities for aircraft associated equipment, public address and communications equipment, car parking facilities and onsite security services.

Other items raised for clarification included the availability of toilet dump points for the aircraft, the availability of local catering firms for foodservice provision, availability of taxi services and hire cars and confirmation of freight services from the airport.

Although Virgin Blue have given an undertaking to provide formalised feedback on their site inspection within two to three weeks it was hinted on the day that consideration may need to be given to extending the passenger terminal and the provision of secured storage area with partial roof covering. The enclosure formerly set aside for secure vehicle storage was noted as sufficient although it may need the erection of roof covering to a portion of the area.

Several documents were provided to Virgin Blue as requested and these included:

- Copies of the aerodrome survey
- Diagrams of the runway and apron areas
- Airport Emergency Plan
- Bird Strike Plan
- Council/Airport contact lists
- Transport Security Plan
- Development Plans/Investigation Reports

On Wednesday 19 Jim Woodrow again attended the site in company with representatives from Virgin Blue's Flight Operations team to inspect the runway, taxiway, apron, flight approach paths and navigational aids.

The representatives made use of the Annual Safety and Technical Inspections provided each year by our airport safety consultants. These reports provided valuable survey data of the take off and landing approaches to the runway as well as dimensions of the on ground facilities. Much of Virgin Blue's requirements were for the purposes of verification of the content of specifications contained within our Expression of Interest.

Virgin Blue advised that they would prefer our runway lights to be spaced closer than is currently the case. This issue relates back to a Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) regulation which has been amended since the construction of our airport. Negotiations with CASA will be undertaken to clarify if the new regulatory requirement will be enforced or we can claim exemption.

Virgin Blue was pleased with the upgraded pavement capacity rating and the commensurate granting of a pavement concession from Council. Favourable comment was given by Virgin Blue on the presentation and maintenance of the airport by Council and our professional approach in engaging Aerodrome Technical specialists for our annual safety inspections and also making them available on the day to expand on the annual report.

The only negative comment related to hills either side of the runway on the south western departure end of the runway which limit emergency manoeuvring options in the case of engine problems on take off.

We were again advised that CASA insists that jet powered services must provide a passenger and baggage screening facility within the terminal for all flights and accordingly our terminal would most likely require extensions to be allow this service

Local media including the Macleay Argus and Prime TV attended on Wednesday for news reports and comment on behalf of Virgin Blue was provided by Amanda Bolger, Public Relations Officer.

We await a formalised response from Virgin Blue within two to three weeks which will be reported to Council.

REPORT IMPLICATIONS:

- *Environmental*

Nil

- *Social*

Nil

- *Economic (Financial)*

Nil

- *Policy or Statutory*

Nil

- *Directors Review*

Nil

RECOMMENDATION:

That the information be noted.

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G B Snape
DIRECTOR CORPORATE & COMMUNITY SERVICES