

REPORT TO: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE - 13TH JANUARY 2003

REPORT ON: ACQUISITION OF ELECTRIC AND DIESEL GROUND POWER UNITS FOR DUNDEE AIRPORT

REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

REPORT NO.: 16-2003

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 The purpose of this report is to request approval for the acquisition of ground power units for Dundee Airport.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 It is recommended that a Houchin C690 Trailer-Mounted Diesel Ground Power Unit and a Houchin Transformer/Rectifier Ground Power Unit should be purchased from the TT Electronics Division of Houchin Aerospace Limited, Hilton Road, Ashford, Kent, at a total cost of £37,629 including delivery, commissioning, and training, but excluding VAT.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 The UK Department for Transport has agreed to provide an increased level of Capital Borrowing Consent for Dundee Airport in 2002-03 to enable this project to proceed.

4. LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS

4.1 None.

5. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

5.1 None.

6. IMPACT ON ANTI-POVERTY STRATEGY

6.1 None.

7. REPORT

7.1 The main aircraft stands at Dundee Airport have been provided with mains electric power terminals to permit aircraft starting to be carried out using mains-electricity transformer/rectifier units. This is the most environmentally friendly way to provide starting power in terms of both noise and air quality. However the two transformer units currently in service are being stretched to their technical limits by the demands placed upon them by new aircraft types recently introduced into service at Dundee Airport. This is simply a matter of particular engine technologies that make greater starting power demands.

- 7.2 As a result, the current Ground Power Units are starting to experience reliability problems. Spare parts are also proving difficult to obtain because the units are of American origin. It is therefore considered that, to protect the reliability of scheduled services, new ground power units should be acquired as soon as possible. The preferred strategy at this time is to buy one new enhanced-performance transformer/rectifier unit to provide mains-electricity starting power, but also to buy a trailer mounted diesel starter unit. The reasons for this combination are firstly that the technology involved in mains powered aircraft starters, while very environmentally friendly, is not yet mature. So some reliability issues are inherent in Dundee Airport's commitment to use electric starting for the bulk of its needs, in order to prevent noise and air pollution. Thus it is considered that the airport should have a mobile diesel ground power unit as back-up and as a means of providing ground power to aircraft that have to be parked on stands away from the terminal building.
- 7.3 With this problem having arisen at short notice, financial resources had not been programmed into the capital plan for ground power unit replacement at this time. However consultations with the Government have established that additional capital consent can be made available to deal with this issue in Financial Year 2002-03, - but not in Financial year 2003-04 within which the available capital expenditure consents already appear to be fully committed. On the basis that the need can be met now, - but not otherwise for another 18 months, it is recommended that the ground power upgrade should proceed immediately.
- 7.4 Mains power for aircraft-starting is not common at airports in the UK, with diesel generators being the norm. Sufficiently powerful electric transformer units are therefore very hard to source. It is recommended that the electric-transformer unit to be purchased should be a new up-rated model from the Houchin Aerospace Group, of Ashford, Kent. This is regarded as the only design with sufficient power output for the required task, which also offers the reasonable likelihood of ready spares availability.
- 7.5 It is recommended that the diesel ground power unit should also be purchased from Houchin Aerospace Limited, which is the dominant supplier of ground power to the UK aviation industry. The Company has also given an assurance that it can build and deliver the unit in the short period left until the end of the financial year. The specification and price reflect the incorporation of optional high-quality noise attenuation measures.
- 7.6 It is accordingly being requested that this contract be awarded directly to the TT Electronics Division of Houchin Aerospace Limited without resort to competitive tender, on the grounds firstly that the transformer equipment is regarded as the only suitable model for the task, and secondly that the diesel unit would be coming from the dominant UK supplier of such equipment, with advantages for spare parts and maintenance, and with some assurance of the ability of the supplier to complete the order before the end of the financial year.

8. **CONSULTATIONS**

- 8.1 The Chief Executive and the Director of Finance have been consulted over the terms of this report.

9. **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 9.1 No background papers, as defined in Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to any material extent in preparing the above report.

**DOUGLAS A A GRIMMOND
DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

DATE: 6TH JANUARY 2003