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Press release

British International Helicopters plan for St. Erth Relocation

British International Helicopters (BIH) Ltd is aiming to move its existing Heliport on Jelbert Way, Penzance, to a site just outside St. Erth.

The sale of Penzance heliport site to Sainsbury's Supermarkets Ltd and the proposed move to St Erth releases the capital tied up in the land at Penzance and enables BIH to strengthen its business position in difficult economic times.

It also secures the future of the vital helicopter passenger service to the Isles of Scilly, which would otherwise have to close.

If planning permission is granted, it is hoped that the new heliport will be operational by April 2012.

The site, south of the A30 off Station Approach, was chosen for its suitability on a number of fronts:

- Principally, it is well connected to major road and rail transport routes and within short walking distance of St Erth Railway Station, allowing more sustainable forms of travel

- It is located next to Cornwall Council's proposed Park and Ride scheme, so the two facilities will complement each other and create a public transport hub

- It is also next to land which is allocated for employment development, such that it would form part of a larger comprehensively developed area, rather than being an isolated development in the countryside

The relocation of the heliport will mean BIH can directly secure 66 jobs in the local area, many of them highly skilled, as well as jobs throughout the construction phase. The site will include a passenger terminal building, hanger and car park with a capacity for 286 vehicles. Planning permission pending, the land, which is owned by St Aubyn Estates, will be leased to BIH.

Tony Jones, Chief Executive of BIH, commented on the move: "The site at St Erth is suitable for a number of reasons and was selected after a wide ranging search in the area.

"This move allows us to strengthen our business and to secure the future of the helicopter lifeline service from West Cornwall to the Isles of Scilly.

"We hope to see many members of the community at our public exhibition on 7th and 8th September and to hear their opinions on the plans which we can use to frame our planning application."

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Fact Sheet

The Heliport

The heliport will have two principal buildings, the hangar (max 9m in height) and the terminal building (max 5m in height). The new heliport will be a more modern replica of the current heliport in Penzance.

The hangar will be of a size to accommodate two Sikorsky S 61N helicopters and two fire appliances. It will have workshop and office space as well as shower/toilet facilities and a staff room.

The passenger terminal is in the final stages of design, and will comprise passenger check-in facilities, baggage handling area, buffet for passenger use, seating, pre-departure safety briefing lounge, and male and female toilets. It will have a floor area of around 2250sqft.

In compliance with Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) regulations the heliport requires a 400m Final Approach and Take Off (FATO) strip. This strip of grassed land does not act as a runway but is required for safety purposes.

Flights

Take offs and landings

During the summer months (between April – October) there will be 12 departures and 12 arrivals a day between 7.30am and 7.30pm. During the winter months (between November-March) there will be four departures and four arrivals a day which will run between 8.30am and 4.30pm. There will be no flights on Sundays. We expect any future planning permission to be subject to a condition controlling this.

When the helicopters are on the ground we expect noise levels to be no greater than road traffic from the A30. Noise from the helicopters in flight will depend on their altitude. Helicopter pass overs are very short in duration, typically 20-30 seconds, and as the helicopter moves away and gains altitude the noise levels will drop.

We are recommending an acoustic barrier forms part of the length of the FATO (Final Approach and Take-off Strip), which will go some way to reducing any noise impact from activity on the ground.

Flight paths

There are two proposed flight paths which helicopters will take from the St Erth site to the Isles of Scilly, designed to avoid residential properties. The use of the two flight paths will depend on the weather generally and the wind direction specifically. The prevailing wind

direction is south-westerly and therefore 85% of the flights will fly directly south west from the site into the wind. The second route will only be used if the wind direction changes which is only likely to occur for the remaining 15% of the time. This would take the helicopter in a climbing loop which avoids flying over the village of St Erth and any other houses before joining the south westerly track to the Islands.

We expect any future planning permission to be subject to a condition controlling flight paths.

The Isles of Scilly route will be the only service operated from the site. It will not be used as a commercial heliport and private helicopters will not be permitted to use it. The only other allowable site users would be the emergency services. No fixed wing aeroplanes can use the site.

Transport

The vehicular access to the heliport will be on Station Approach/Treloweth Lane. As part of the proposed Park & Ride scheme, Cornwall Council will make junction improvements including traffic lights and a new filter lane off the A30 onto Station approach.

The site's proximity to St Erth Railway Station and the proposed Park & Ride will encourage sustainable modes of transport such as rail and bus travel.

Safety

Safety is BIH's number one priority both for its passengers and those living in the vicinity of the heliport. The company has been in existence in its present form since May 2000 and has an accident free record in the air and on the ground. The proposed heliport is designed in full compliance with Civil Aviation Authority regulations and will be built to the same safety and operational specification as the current heliport in Penzance.

Surveys

In preparing this planning application ecology, noise, flood risk, air quality, lighting, transport, trees and hedgerows, archaeology and land stability assessments have been carried out. These show that there are no insurmountable obstacles that would prevent the proposed development. The reports will all be submitted as part of the planning application.

Timescales

We are currently engaging with statutory consultees and key stakeholders in the area. During the 7th and 8th September we are holding our public exhibition.

We hope to submit a planning application in late September. If approved, we aim to have the heliport operational for the April 2012 season.

Once the planning application has been submitted, people will have the opportunity to send comments to Cornwall Council either via their website or by writing to them. The progress of our development is, however, dependent on the success of the current Sainsbury's planning application for a store at the current heliport site.