



Press Release – Airport Expansion

A deal has finally been struck to allow Gloucestershire Airport to expand after five years of negotiations.

The company has paid a kennels business to move just 800 yards down the road to allow its £3.8million expansion to take off. BJ Boarding Kennels & Cattery was too close to the airport for the expansion plans to meet rules laid down by the Civil Aviation Authority.

Now, the move means subject to the last hurdle of final planning permission next month, the scheme can go ahead. Former RSPCA inspector Billy Dean, who owns the business, said they had no problems in moving. Billy who is married to Gill and has two children Callum, 13, and Danielle, 10, said: “The airport has worked extremely hard to ensure we were able to keep the business trading and make it safe for them. “There is no financial gain for us at all we are just transferring one property for another. “We first started talks with the airport in January 2005 and since then it has been stop, start along the way. “We have been in constant contact and are very pleased we have finally been able to move forward.”

Final permission for the Staverton airport’s runway safety project is expected to be granted by Tewkesbury Borough Council planning committee next month .It would see the clearance area at one end of the landing strip extended and work on the project start this summer. Under the plans, buildings at Bank View Farm and Blenheim House will be removed and relocated a few hundred yards down the road. The airport entrance will be repositioned and the Gloucestershire Way public footpath will be diverted. An ‘instrument landing system’ will also be installed to make it easier for planes to reach the ground in bad weather like snow and ice. Four planning applications for the scheme were lodged with Tewkesbury Borough Council in November 2006. They were approved last year, but the council needs to rubber stamp it again due to some very minor amendments.

The airport is owned jointly by Gloucester City Council and Cheltenham Borough Council. Currently, airline Manx2.com operates passenger flights to the Isle of Man and Jersey from the Staverton-based airport. The site also houses several helicopter companies as well as a flying school. A date is yet to be set for the application to be decided. But it is expected to be May. Darren Lewington, head of operations at Gloucestershire Airport, said: “We don’t want to compete with the likes of Birmingham or Bristol we operate private planes, and that is what we want to stick to. With all of this in place and the work being able to go ahead it is very much the last piece of the jigsaw. “It is really important that we have the right environment at the end of the runway and that’s what we are trying to do. Safety is paramount and we want to get the best environment possible here.” The University of Gloucestershire analysed the airport’s contribution to the economy and found it brings £212m to the region, which traders said was vital to the area. Harold Symonds, of Gloucestershire Chamber of Commerce, said: “This airport is so important to the county and the economics of the county. “The chamber of commerce continually supports the efforts and plans it has shown over the last few years and will continue to support everything it is trying to achieve because it is so important for the economy and this county.”

However, the expansion plans have met with anger from campaigners. Last year, Plane Stupid, an environmental action group, along with other groups, stole the spot lights that illuminate the Gloucestershire Airport sign in protest to the planned expansion. A spokesman from Plane Stupid said: “Under the submitted plan the airport said it will keep emissions below 3,000 tonnes per year. “But the additional planes using the airport from the expansion will produce 7,000 tonnes. “So either their green plans or the tax payers money will go out of the window.”

Gloucestershire Airport said it was committed to controlling the adverse affect of the operations on the environment. Tewkesbury Borough Council said it expected the plans to be looked at next month.