

**Report to the Asset Management and
Economic Development Cabinet
Committee**



**Epping Forest
District Council**

Report reference: AMED-012-2015/16

Date of meeting: 10 December 2015

Portfolio: Asset Management and Economic Development

Subject: North Weald Airfield – Air Show

Responsible Officer: Derek Macnab (01992 564050)

Democratic Services: Jackie Leither (01992 564756)

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

- (1) That the Cabinet Committee consider the feasibility of hosting a major Air Show at North Weald to be held in 2017 and recommend to Cabinet accordingly; and**
- (2) That the Cabinet Committee supports the programme of activities planned to celebrate 100 years of flying at North Weald Airfield and encourage the inclusion of an aviation element in the planned Community Day event.**

Executive Summary:

The Local Strategic Partnership Tourism Board have developed a proposal to host a Centenary Air Show at North Weald Airfield in September 2016. Specialist aviation event management advice was commissioned to undertake a feasibility and develop a business case. Unfortunately the tragic accident at of the Shoreham Air Show and the ensuing restrictions and review of display flying implemented by the CAA, has introduced a degree of uncertainty around the management of future events,. This would present an unacceptable risk to the Council for an Air Show in 2016. However, for future years, an event may well be feasible. It is proposed, as on previous occasions, to host a Community Day with an aviation element which will form part of the North Weald Airfield Centenary Celebrations in 2016.

Reasons for Proposed Decision:

The Council is committed to generating additional aviation related income in order to reduce the current subsidy for flying. The hosting of an Air Show could not only achieve this objective, but also generate additional benefits for other Tourism/Day Visitor related businesses.

Other Options for Action:

To discount the idea of having an Air Show at North Weald.

Report

1. The Council's Airfield at North Weald has hosted a number of successful Air Shows in the

past, with the “Fightermeet” events receiving national recognition. However, it has been a number of years since such an event was held, albeit the annual Community Day organised in conjunction with a number of partners and aviation tenants, has contained an element of display flying.

2. With the demise of Southend Air Show, an opportunity has arisen to provide an Air Show at North Weald, to complement the annual programme of Air Shows across Essex e.g. Clacton, Duxford.
3. The Local Strategic Partnership “One Epping Forest” has a pro-active Tourism Board. The Board has recognised that an Air Show at North Weald has not only the potential to generate additional income for the Council (to offset the cost of operating the Airfield), but also deliver wider economic benefits for tourism/visitor related businesses. The support of Visit Essex has been forthcoming, who also recognised a unique opportunity to launch the Air Show, given the Centenary of flying at North Weald (1916-2016). The issues and options paper prepared by the Tourism Board is attached at Appendix One. This report addresses key considerations in organising and providing an Air Show and gives some indicative cost estimates.
4. Informal soundings amongst stakeholders at the Airfield and District Members suggested that the idea would be positively received. On this basis, given that the District Council would be taking on the role of organising the event, achieving the benefits, but also carrying the risk, a brief was prepared to obtain specialist external advice. Slipstream Events were appointed to develop a robust business case and establish the availability of display aircraft. It must be understood that there is an active calendar of events both within the UK and Europe with a finite number of aircraft who display on the Air Show circuit. Identifying suitable dates well in advance, is clearly a key consideration (Brief attached Appendix 2).
5. This feasibility work commenced in early Summer with a view to being completed week commencing 15 August 2015, to enable a report to be considered by the Council’s Cabinet Committee on the 3 September 2015. However, on Saturday 22 August 2015 a major incident occurred at Shoreham Air Show involving a vintage Hawker Hunter aircraft (based at North Weald Airfield) which resulted in the tragic loss of life of 11 people as the aircraft crashed into the A27 Trunk Road.
6. The investigation into the circumstances of the fatal incident, have yet to conclude. In the immediate aftermath of the accident, the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) implemented significant restrictions on flying displays over land, by heritage jet aircraft. In essence, such aircraft, (the restrictions do not apply to military aircraft such as the Red Arrow RAF Display Team) have been limited to flypasts, prohibiting high energy aerobatics. In the aftermath, the CAA conducted additional risk assessments of all the remaining events during the summer of 2016 and has recently commissioned a full review of civil air display safety. The review is likely to take a number of months to conclude. The outcomes, whilst currently unknown, are bound to have implications for organisers of future events.
7. Given the extent and consequences of the Shoreham incident, it was decided that it would not be appropriate to take a report to Cabinet in September 2016, seeking authority and funding to host an Air Show. Given the passage of time, it is now felt opportune, given that there is still considerable interest in an event being held at North Weald in the future, to seek Members’ views.
8. Officers believe that due to the uncertainty of the review being undertaken by the CAA, combined with the lack of aircraft and available dates, that for 2016, the focus of celebration of the Airfield Centenary, should be the Community Day. This could still contain an aviation element, but would not be in the form of a full blown Air Show. However, if Members of the

Cabinet were keen to proceed, this would allow sufficient time for the implications of the CAA review to be addressed, the business case developed and practical arrangements to be put in place for a date in the summer of 2017.

Resource Implication

Whilst there is potential to generate a surplus for the Council, a Full Business Case will need to be developed and depending on the outcome, funding sought to practically organise and underwrite the event would need to be secured in the 2017/2018 budget.

Legal and Governance Implications:

Insurance for the event and contracts with exhibitors, will be significant considerations.

Safer Cleaner Greener Implications

No specific.

Consultation Undertaken

“One Epping Forest” Tourism Board.

Background Papers

Issues paper produced by Tourism Board.

Risk Assessment

Any event will need to be fully risk assessed and a multi-agency Safety Advisory Group formed.

Due Regard Record

This page shows **which groups of people are affected** by the subject of this report. It sets out **how they are affected** and how any **unlawful discrimination** they experience can be eliminated. It also includes information about how **access to the service(s)** subject to this report can be improved for the different groups of people; and how they can be assisted to **understand each other better** as a result of the subject of this report.

S149 Equality Act 2010 requires that due regard must be paid to this information when considering the subject of this report.

No specific consultation.