

<b>Committee(s):</b>	<b>Date(s):</b>	<b>Item no.</b>
Epping Forest and Commons Committee	July 6th 2009	
<b>Subject:</b> Kenley Aerodrome - Refusal of Planning Permission for Erection of a Safety Fence	<b>Public</b>	
<b>Report of:</b> Superintendent of the City Commons	<b>For Decision</b>	
<b><u>Summary</u></b>		
<p>In January 2009 your Committee received a report on a planning application submitted by Defence Estates on behalf of the Ministry of Defence (MoD) for the erection of a 1.2m high safety fence around Kenley Aerodrome. The application was recently refused by Croydon Council. This report explains the current situation.</p> <p><b>Recommendations</b></p> <p>I recommend:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That this report is noted and a further report is submitted in due course once the effectiveness of the trial barriers and any subsequent proposals submitted by the MoD, have been assessed.</li> </ul>		

## **Main Report**

### **Background**

1. Towards the end of 2008 Defence Estates submitted a planning application to Croydon Council for the erection of a 1.2m high safety fence around the perimeter of Kenley Airfield. The City objected to the application because of the detrimental impact the fence would have had upon the Kenley Common open landscape and the setting of the aerodrome, part of which is a Scheduled Ancient Monument.
2. On June 11<sup>th</sup> 2009 Croydon Council refused planning permission for the following reasons:
  - The proposed fencing would neither preserve nor enhance the quality, character or appearance of the Kenley Aerodrome



Conservation Area, and would harm the setting of Scheduled Ancient Monuments.

- The proposed fencing constitutes inappropriate development resulting in a harsh and incongruous feature detrimental to the open character and visual amenity of the Metropolitan Green Belt.
3. Croydon Council concluded that the health and safety of the general public and cadets in relation to gliding activities is a material consideration, but advised that *"a physical barrier should be a last resort"* and that there are other measures that need to be explored and exhausted first, and suggested use of a safety working group to do so.
  4. The latest application followed a similar application made by the Reserve Forces and Cadets Association for Greater London in 2007 for the erection of a 1.2m high metal palisade fence around the airfield's perimeter. This application was refused.
  5. Kenley Aerodrome is an active airfield used by the RAF 615 Volunteer Gliding Squadron (615 VGS) and Surrey Hills Gliding Club (SHGC). A large part of the airfield previously formed part of Kenley Common, but was acquired from the City by the Ministry of Defence (MoD) for the purposes of an aerodrome under the provisions of the Air Ministry (Kenley Common Acquisition) Act 1922. The MoD acquired additional land by Act of Parliament in 1939. These areas revert back to the City of London as public open space if the MOD ceases use for this purpose.
  6. Kenley Aerodrome has a long and distinguished history as an airfield and played a significant part in the Battle of Britain. Since then it has changed significantly, but according to English Heritage remains *"the most complete fighter airfield associated with the Battle of Britain to have survived."*
  7. There is no permanent physical barrier separating gliding activities from the public. The 615 VGS and SHGC are concerned that members of the public are getting dangerously close to gliders and winch cables. The Health and Safety Executive have been consulted and they require the level of assessed risk to be reduced if flying is to continue.
  8. The Kenley Safety Working Group, which includes representatives from the MoD, SHGC, the local planning authorities and the City of London, continues to meet regularly to address safety issues.

## **Current Position**



9. The MoD is trialling temporary fencing around areas used for runway and winching operations. Crowd control type barriers are positioned along the outside track to restrict the public to the perimeter of the airfield. The barriers do not form a complete loop around the airfield, and members of the public still have access around the outside.
10. The MoD and SHGC are currently monitoring the effectiveness of these barriers to ascertain whether they reduce the level of risk sufficiently to satisfy HSE requirements.

### **Proposals**

11. It is proposed that the Superintendent of the City Commons reports to you further in due course on the effectiveness of the trial barriers and any subsequent proposals submitted by the MoD.

### **Strategic Implications**

12. This report supports the City Together Strategy as follows:
  - Protects, promotes and enhances our environment

### **Conclusion**

13. The recent planning application for the erection of safety fencing at Kenley Aerodrome has been refused. The Superintendent of the City Commons will continue to work with the Kenley Safety Working Group to monitor the effectiveness of the temporary fencing, and will report back on any further proposals submitted by the MoD.

### **Background Papers:**

Epping Forest and Commons Committee report of 12<sup>th</sup> January 2009 entitled 'Kenley Aerodrome – Ministry of Defence Planning Application for Erection of a Safety Fence'

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