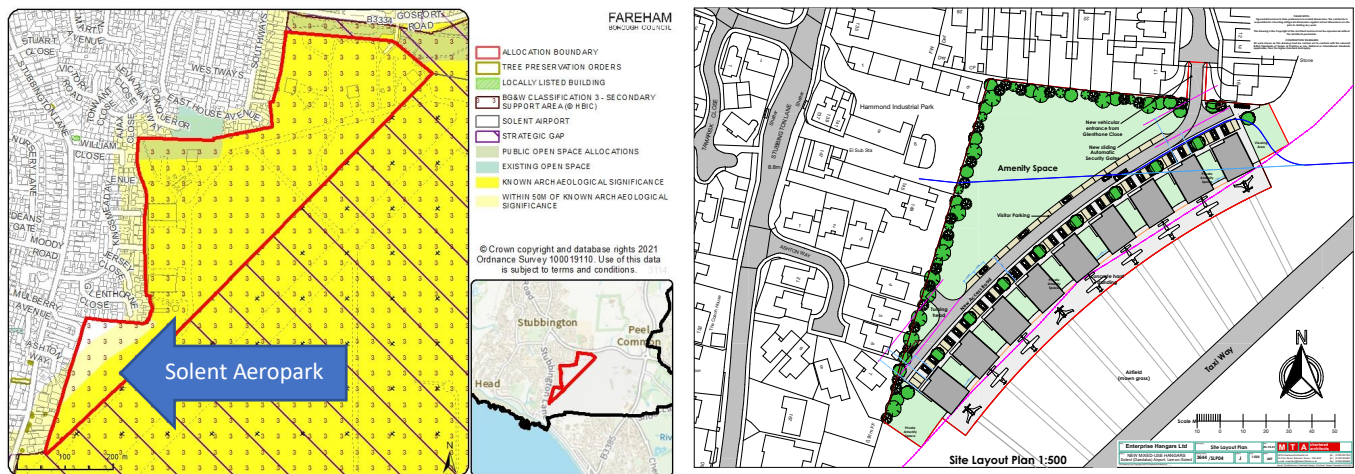


## The Case for Solent Aeropark



[https://www.fareham.gov.uk/PDF/planning/local\\_plan/RevisedPublicationLocalPlan.pdf](https://www.fareham.gov.uk/PDF/planning/local_plan/RevisedPublicationLocalPlan.pdf)

Page 191 of the above Revised Fareham Local Plan shows that Swordfish Business Park will take up the **whole** of Daedalus West, as shown on the site plan to the left above, which would be accessed from Gosport Road to the north, although when it will be developed is yet to be determined.

As can be seen from the site plan, the area to the west of the future Swordfish Business Park is entirely residential. However, the larger area to the north may be developed for aviation use with airside access, but **could** end up being used by **non-aviation** companies, as with parts of Faraday Business Park on Daedalus East, and extend to the southern part, which would **adversely** impact on adjoining homes.

If allowed, Solent Aeropark would have nine mixed-use hangars, accessed from Glenthorne Close, along with a large **amenity space and viewing area**, which would **not** be available with Swordfish Business Park. Solent Aeropark would also help to **safeguard** the airfield because it requires an **active** runway, as well as make it more **sustainable** as each unit would contribute **financially** to the airport operation.

The local residents would prefer the status quo with **nothing** on the proposed site, but this is **not** an option. Either Swordfish Business Park will extend to that area or Solent Aeropark could be built. The question is, which option is best for the local tax-payer, businesses, airfield and adjoining residents.

### Employment

Both Swordfish Business Park and Solent Aeropark would be **employment-led** developments, but the Employment Report shows that the units on **Solent Aeropark** have a **50% higher** Employment Density than existing business units with airside access, and meet a need for **aviation-related SMEs** that does not exist on Solent Airport. The nine units would create a **micro-community** of aviation-related businesses that would 'feed off each other' and enable them to thrive without the additional cost of renting an office, workshop and hangar. More importantly, these **unique** mixed-use hangars would also **blend** in with the residential area, unlike that of a conventional business park like Faraday or Swordfish.

### Income

Whilst there would be no rental income from Solent Aeropark, neither would there be the costs of development. Instead, Fareham Borough Council would not only benefit from capital raised from the **sale of the land**, but also **income** from **business rates** and **council tax** on the nine mixed-use hangars. In addition, each unit would pay a **landing card** (currently about £200 pm) to the airport operator for airside access, which amounts to over £21,000 per annum, something that is **unique** on the airport.

### Safety & Security

In an email dated 18<sup>th</sup> October 2021, both the **CAA Aerodrome Inspector** (Graeme Ritchie) and the **Airport Manager** (Martyn Francis) **approved** the procedures set out in the Safety & Security Report:

*“Based on the diagrams, the design and proposed operation as presented complies with the aerodrome regulatory requirements and should not have any operational impacts. I had a conversation with Martyn Francis and I understood from the aerodrome operator perspective that there should not be any operational issues arising that would prevent implementation.”* Whilst the Council considers residential use on the airport to be a risk that cannot be mitigated against, this view is **not** shared by **independent** bodies that are **qualified** to make that judgement, namely the **CAA** Aerodrome Inspector, the Airfield Advisory Team (**AAT**), the General Aviation Awareness Council (**GAAC**) and the Aircraft Owner and Pilots Association (**AOPA**). Also, there are nearly 700 Residential Airparks worldwide, most of which are in the USA. Of these, **55** of them are on **licensed public airports**, such as Solent, which is overwhelming evidence that having residential use on them **does not** compromise its **operation** or **safety** and **security**.

### **Residential use**

Page 180 of the Revised Fareham Local Plan (Section 6.4.c) accommodates ‘live-work’ units, stating: *“Being flexible to accommodate needs not anticipated in the plan, allowing for new and flexible working practices (such as live-work accommodation), and to enable a rapid response to changes in economic circumstances”*. The pandemic has demonstrated that more people will be working from home in the future, and these mixed-use hangars go further by enabling owners (and staff) to run their businesses from home, whilst adding nine **unique** residences to the **housing shortfall** in the area.

### **Impact on local house valuations**

The independent Valuation Report has confirmed that the commercial buildings on Swordfish Business Park, if they are anything like those on Faraday Business Park, as shown below left, would **adversely** affect the value of the adjoining houses on the southern part of Daedalus West, whereas the units on Solent Aeropark, because they look more like houses from the road, and the shared amenity space, would likely improve the area and therefore the value of adjoining homes, as shown below right.



It is **because** Solent Aeropark has a residential element, albeit only **40%** of the floor area, that these mixed-use hangars are not only more **eco-friendly**, but **blend** in with the residential area, and **enhance** property values because of the **shared amenity space and viewing area**. In conclusion, **Solent Aeropark** is a much **better** option for the southern portion of Daedalus West, for a number of reasons:

- It would provide **50% higher Employment Density** than other businesses with airside access
- It would provide **suitable** units for **aviation-related SMEs** that are **not** available on the airfield
- It would help to **safeguard** the airfield and make it more **sustainable**
- In addition to business rates and council tax, **income** would also accrue to the **Airport Operator**
- **Independent** bodies: **CAA, AAT, GAAC and AOPA** have **no** concerns over **Safety & Security**
- Some residential use (**live-work**) is accommodated by the Revised Fareham Local Plan
- The development adds nine **unique** homes to the **housing shortfall** in the area
- The units are much more **eco-friendly** than conventional business units or conventional homes
- **Positive** impact on house values compared to **negative** impact from Swordfish Business Park

I would urge the Council to allow **Solent Aeropark** alongside that of Swordfish Business Park on the rest of Daedalus West for the above reasons and also because it could be the **first** of its type in the UK.