



THE HERITAGE OFFER AT HEYFORD PARK

OUR STRATEGY

CONTENTS

The Vision

The New Heritage Offer

Defining the DNA of Heyford Park

Part 1: Increased Accessibility

Part 2: Maintaining and Managing

Part 3: A New Tour Offer

Part 4: Heritage Tourism

A VISION FOR THE NEW HERITAGE OFFER AT HEYFORD PARK

The allocation of additional development at Heyford Park has provided a unique opportunity to consolidate and expand upon the obligations that were set out in the first masterplan.

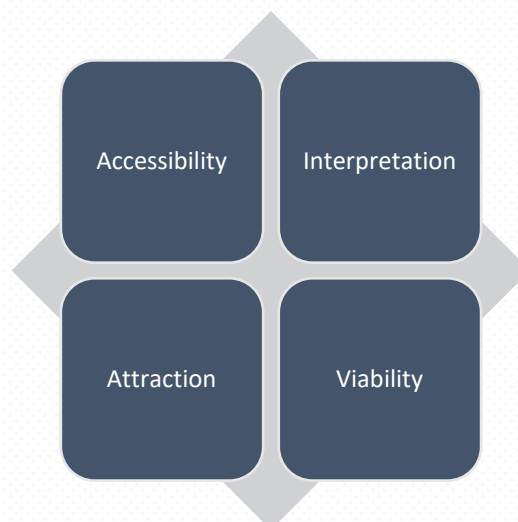


The key opportunity that this masterplan is able to provide is the ability to deliver increased public access and appreciation of the heritage at Heyford Park.

Our philosophy in designing a new heritage offer at Heyford Park has focussed upon the following:

1. Combining the heritage with leisure uses so that the residents and employees of Heyford Park can regularly access the asset of the airfield as part of day to day life, and increase visitor numbers to experience the heritage at Heyford Park.
2. Identifying the key themes regarding the history of the site, such as Technology and Aviation Innovation, Spying and Espionage and National Identity, all of which have been prominent at any point during the history of the base and considering how these are best interpreted for others.
3. Contemplating the best way to attract new audiences to the site in order to broaden the current appeal that Heyford Park has.
4. Finding viable new uses for key structures that will enable their refurbishment and long-term preservation.

To summarise, the new heritage offer at Heyford Park will focus on the following



THE NEW HERITAGE OFFER?

To deliver the vision set out above, it is proposed that the physical offer at Heyford Park should be divided into the following four categories:

1.

- Significantly increased accessibility to the core of the Flying Field for residents, visitors and employees
- Provision of a substantial public park with associated free leisure trails and accessible views

2.

- Maintaining and managing existing points of interest
- Ensuring the elements with the highest historical interest are well maintained and managed

3.

- A dynamic heritage tour offer
- A varied tour offer that emphasises and provides access to the most important structures and heritage across the site

4.

- Heritage tourism offer
- A commercial heritage offer that focusses on widening audiences



HERITAGE: DEFINING THE DNA OF HEYFORD PARK

The analysis that follows had been drawn from the conclusions of a number of reports prepared by heritage specialists over the past 10-12 years. They include:

- Cold War – Building for Nuclear Confrontation 1946-1989 by Wayne D. Cocroft and Roger J.C. Thomas (Edited by P. S. Barnwell), First published by Historic England 2003.
- The September 2005 ‘Former RAF Upper Heyford Conservation Plan’ Volumes One-Three prepared by The Tourism Company, Oxford Archaeology and ACTA.
- The April 2006 ‘RAF Upper Heyford Conservation Area Appraisal’ by the Cherwell Valley District Council.
- The 2006 ‘Cold War Structures at the Former Upper Heyford Airbase: List Entry Summary’ (original entry 2006).
- A Strategic Consideration of the Cold War Heritage of the former RAF Upper Heyford Base, 31st July 2017, by Colonel James P Cook OBE
- Historic England’s ‘Former RAF Upper Heyford, Cherwell Oxfordshire: A reassessment of the flying field Conservation Area – research report Series 74-2017. Dated Nov 2017.
- The various Planning Application Documentation and Evidence submitted as part of the previous planning applications and appeals.

As a result of reviewing these documents, it is possible to identify a number of key themes and attributes that reflect the character and personality of Heyford Park. This includes:

- 1) During its 100 year history as a military aviation base it constantly evolved and was adapted to meet the prevailing needs of the time in order to make it relevant to contemporary strategic requirements.
- 2) As a result, Heyford was often at the forefront of technological and design innovation, as well as testing.
- 3) Heyford has a long history of being a training base for new skills in a wide range of disciplines associated with flying, technology, advanced engineering, design, electronic intelligence and reconnaissance.
- 4) Throughout its history, Heyford has welcomed international personnel. This has been seen from the very inception of the site when the original airfield was utilised by the Canadian Royal Air Force immediately post WW1 as a training base for nationalities from all Commonwealth.
- 5) It was a ‘secretive’ place with limited access around which there was a considerable amount of speculation and mythology created about ‘what was going on’.



- 6) It was a place of cultural and social exchange between different nationalities and local people – it truly was Little America in Big Oxford, so evokes questions about both British and American identity.

In summary, therefore, Upper Heyford should be regarded as a site that has been and still is:

- CONSTANTLY EVOLVING, ADAPTIVE, ALWAYS RELEVANT
- INTERNATIONAL IN OUTLOOK AND MAKE UP AND GLOBALLY INFLUENTIAL
- INNOVATIVE, AND AT THE LEADING EDGE
- A CENTRE FOR TRAINING AND NEW SKILL DEVELOPMENT
- A CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE

These key attributes or the 'DNA' of Heyford Park have been considered when designing the new heritage tourism offer for the site. By focussing on the DNA of the Heyford Park site, rather than purely on the military and aviation story of the site, there is the ability to widen the potential audience that Heyford Park may have.

PART ONE: INCREASED ACCESSIBILITY

The goal

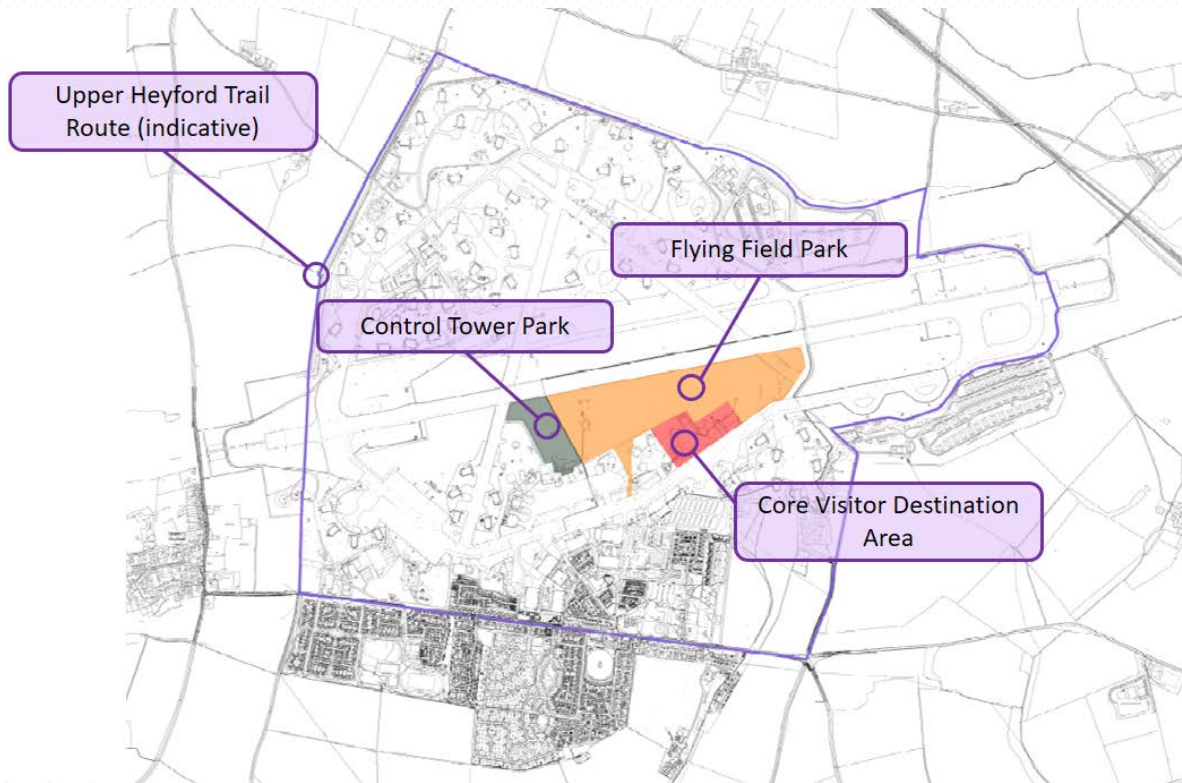
- In order to ensure that there is a heritage offer that is engaging for all users, as well as ensuring that there is a heritage offer that is accessible at all times, our goal is to provide increased access to the wider site for residents, employees or visitors.
- Establishing heritage leisure trails which will be focussed on leading walkers and cyclers to the most important buildings and facilities, as well as highlighting key views or vistas that will help to interpret the site.

The Proposal

In order to facilitate the key aim of providing increased accessibility to the wider site its heritage, a network of managed, public and semi public parks and trails will be created across the wider Site, including the following:

- 1) A substantial public Flying Field Park covering some 20.3 hectares within the core of the Flying Field. It will include be an informal landscape, and include a range of amenities and facilities for casual and informal use by visitors and the local residential and commercial community. The Flying Field Park will have strong green connectivity from the Trident, ensuring it becomes well-utilised leisure and amenity space for residents.
- 2) We intend to provide an additional area towards the Control Tower of 4.1 hectares which will be maintained and managed as the Control Tower Park, which could be used as an area for events in association with the Control Tower building itself.
- 3) We are still committed to providing the Upper Heyford Trail, which is an obligation from the first masterplan. This will comprise of a circular walk around the Flying Field perimeter that will include at least eight interpretation boards so that walkers can gain knowledge on their route. We envisage that this will be a popular and well utilised route. During our recent Masterplan consultation exercise, where we revealed plans for the heritage trail to the public and local residents, this was very well received as local people feel there is a lack of suitable walking routes around Heyford Park at the moment. We have also done more to increase green connectivity into Heyford Park from surrounding villages based on this feedback. Thus, it is conceivable that this route will be utilised not only by residents and visitors, but also by neighbouring communities.
- 4) A new elevated vantage point will be provided at the western end of the runway on the bunded gun station adjacent to the QRA.
- 5) Connectivity and new routes through the new residential and commercial areas will allow direct public access to new areas of the site and buildings of interest which were previously private and inaccessible.
- 6) New interpretation boards will be located throughout both the Flying Field Park, Control Tower Park and along the Upper Heyford Trail which will provide information on the site, its history and key views and buildings.

By combining a key part of the heritage with leisure uses that are accessible to a broad range of our local population, we are fulfilling our vision by entwining heritage into everyday life for those in our community.



PART TWO: MAINTAINING AND MANAGING

The goal

- To consolidate the obligations that are in the original masterplan in order to ensure we maintain and manage the existing structures and artefacts that have the greatest historical importance.
- To prevent the further deterioration of key structures or artefacts via a commitment to maintenance.

The Proposal

We also wish to bring forward and extend the following obligation in the first masterplan in order to ensure the key historic buildings across the site remain in a stable and wind and water tight condition.

The existing commitment to undertake a quinquennial review survey of the retained buildings on the Flying Field, which will also include the Command Centre and Telephone Exchange, to ensure these remain wind and watertight will be brought forward and the rolling programme of repair will continue.

Additional buildings, which were previously to be left unused and be vacant, will be refurbished and brought back into beneficial use to ensure their long-term preservation. As set out below, this will also include some key heritage buildings which will form part of the new Core Visitor Destination Area.

We also wish to digitally archive the historic plans of Heyford Park that are currently being stored in Building 100, with the physical copies to be available on request and to be archived in a new facility. Digital archive facilities are to form part of the enhanced Heritage Centre specification and the archiving of the historic plans will form part of an ongoing project led by the Heritage Centre

In addition, the already completed Building Recording Report (which details over 150 building and structures which have now been demolished) alongside the photographic schedule of Heyford's wall art, will be made available digitally, and in hard copy within the Heritage Centre, for the public to view.

PART THREE: A NEW TOUR OFFER

The goal

- To review the current tour offer as laid out in the original masterplan, and to commit to a more dynamic and varied offer that will create a broader audience for the tour.
- To ensure that any tour offer focusses on the key heritage themes as indicated at the start of this document, and also focusses on providing access to the structures that are of the greatest importance.

The Proposal

With regards to the tours that are currently operating, recent feedback that we have received is that a shorter and more dynamic tour, which is aimed at an audience with little prior knowledge would also be desirable. Analysis regarding who has taken a tour at Heyford indicates that participants are generally either an ex-service man or a resident of Heyford Park who is keen to find out more. By broadening the appeal of the site via the inclusion of the Heritage Tourism offer, it is likely that more and more visitors will arrive at Heyford Park with only a basic understanding of the site's heritage. Thus, we would like to develop two types of tour. One shall be aimed at service men or enthusiasts with a deeper understanding of the heritage, and who are likely to enjoy a longer and more comprehensive tour. The other will be aimed at local residents or heritage tourism visitors who will be looking for an engaging introduction to the site.

Whilst the detailed routes of each tour will need to be carefully considered, access to the following buildings and structures will form the key structure of each of the tours:

1. The Command Centre including internal access to the building
2. The QRA including the Hardened Aircraft Shelters
3. The Northern Bomb Stores
4. Main Runway
5. Control Tower
6. Nose Dock sheds (outside only)
7. Avionics Building (outside only)

In addition, it is envisaged that the tour will include the ability to view the opening of the doors of one of the Hardened Aircraft Shelters within the QRA (Building 3009) which will also allow visitors to see the wall art within the building and appreciate the vast space of the hanger.

As per our obligations in the original masterplan, Dorchester are committed to providing transport for these tours. Whilst, it will be possible to undertake self-guided tours of the public areas via both the Upper Heyford Trail and the network of new open spaces.

PART FOUR: HERITAGE TOURISM

The Goal

- Dorchester’s ambition is to create a tourist attraction that will provide an innovative range of attractions, services and amenities that will celebrate Heyford’s DNA by successfully interpreting the heritage story of the site for a wide range of audiences.
- To ensure that the heritage centre is able to evolve and expand beyond the ambitions of the first masterplan, but yet still is able to provide the core obligations that formed the original Heritage Centre Management Plan
- The emphasis of the attractions will be about delivering creative, immersive, experiences ranging from the thrilling and adrenalin driven, to the discovery and educational. By exploring themes such as Technology Innovation, Social History and Espionage in this exciting and immersive way, we can attract a wider audience than would normally be expected of a site of this nature.
- By combining the heritage of the site with a commercial tourism offer we have increased the viability and facilitated the provision of an extended offer that finds sustainable uses for more buildings.

The Proposal

Located adjacent to the new public Flying Field Park, there will be a range of attractions and activities in the Core Visitor Destination Area. The schedule of attractions and facilities is described below and will be supported by a selection of cafes, restaurants and retail outlets, selling dedicated souvenirs relevant to the destination as well as associated and relevant merchandise. The attractions will be as follows:

1. **Building 366 (the Fuel System building)** - this will be refurbished as the new Heritage Centre that, alongside the museum exhibits and archive storage, will also contain a conference space and research facility called “*The Heyford Park Research Centre for Cold War and Contemporary Peace Studies*”. The existing Heritage Centre currently housed in Building 103 will be relocated into this space. This will consolidate the offer into a more defined geographical area and will also ensure the Heritage Centre can expand with the greater offer.

We have high ambitions for an updated heritage centre, whilst the building will be changed, as it is now likely that the Heritage Centre will be relocated in order to position this in the heart of the new destination, there are obligations that we will bring forwards in order to honour the previous commitments as minimum contributions.

The new centre will contain as a minimum:

- Exhibition boards
- Cold War artefacts
- Video presentation room to accommodate 30 people
- Reading room/study area
- Archive room/Digital archive facilities
- Refreshment area and gift shop

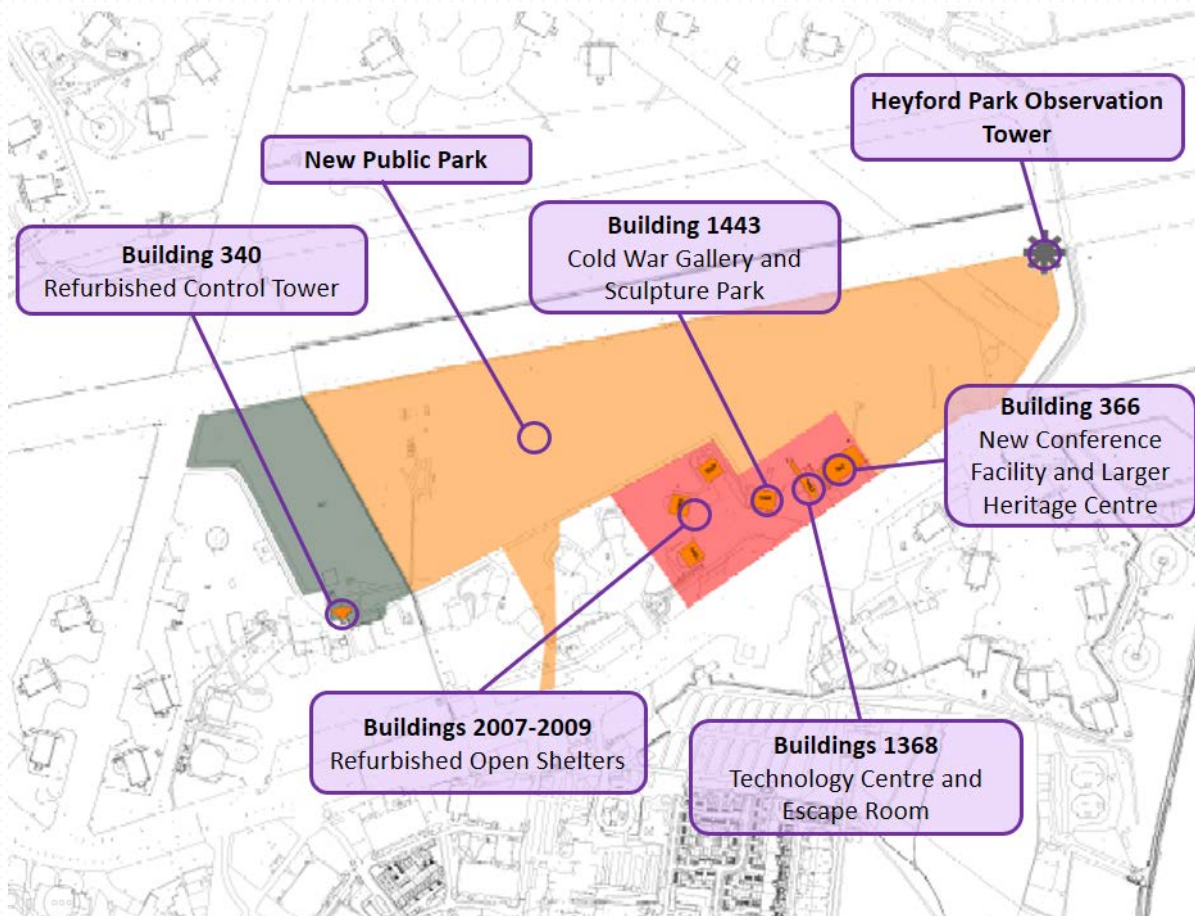
We also commit that the new Heritage Centre in 366 will be open to the public no less than 4 days a month as per the current obligation, and Dorchester will provide staffing to assist with this. However, it is likely that this will be increased as visitor numbers demand.

Once the facility has relocated from 103 into Building 366, we would guarantee that it will operate for at least 5 further years. If the centre is not viable after 5 years in its new location, Dorchester will attempt to transfer this to a new operator or Trust, otherwise the building can be converted under a change of use.

2. **Heyford Park Observation Tower** - we aim to construct a new build observation tower (up to 30m in height) that will have the potential to also contain a zip line. Not only will the Observation Tower provide an opportunity to experience views west across the main runway and core of the Flying Field from above, but the zip line is a fun interpretation of how it would have felt to land on the runway at Heyford Park. The intention is to locate this adjacent to the north east end of the runway.
3. **Building 340 (The Control Tower)** - we will refurbish the Control Tower as part of our S106. Whilst the final end use is still being explored, the eventual offer is likely to be a café/restaurant to serve users of the public park, with some further function space to facilitate larger events.
4. **Building 1443 (Engine Testing Cell)** - our intention is to repair and refurbish the building to provide an exhibition space which could be utilised to home exhibitions such as a Cold War Gallery and Sculpture Park, and also feature on the Heritage Site Tours. By focussing on the art of the cold war, this brings a new audience to Heyford Park and broadens the cultural understanding of our visitors.

The intention currently is to provide the above items as part of Dorchester's S106 obligation. However, subject to additional viability and commercial assessment the following may also be brought forward as additional facilities.

1. **Victor Alert Area**- It is intended to refurbish three of the open shelters (Buildings 2007-2009) into an adrenaline park to include a climbing wall, skate park and public picnic seating area. This viably incorporates these structures into the Core Visitor Destination Area, and also provides recurrent leisure uses that will ensure local residents will continuously utilise this part of the site. In addition, a Flight Simulator could be installed within one of the open shelters and work with a software company to ensure an experience is created that will simulate landing a Heyford Bomber at Heyford Park.
2. **Building 1368 (the Hush House)** - our suggestion is that in the future, half of this structure could be utilised as an educational science and technology hub that focusses on spying and espionage, and the other half becomes a commercial code breaking "escape" room. Again, this immersive experience will encourage new audience for the destination, but will also ensure schools and other educational establishments can become regular users of the destination.



We have discussed the above concept with Experience Oxfordshire, who are fully supportive of our plans so far. Indeed, Experience Oxfordshire has identified that North Oxfordshire has an issue in retaining foreign visitors as there is a lack of attractions in this part of the county that encourage visitors to spend more than half a day here. Thus, the plans above are seen as relevant and vital to the tourism expansion strategy that Experience Oxfordshire has for this part of the county.

SUMMARY TABLE

Obligation	Current Commitment	Future Commitment
Heritage Centre	Use of Building 103	Enhanced
	Kept in Wind and Water Tight Condition	Maintained
	To be part of Quinquennial Survey	Maintained
	Approval of external Paint Scheme	Maintained
	Guaranteed minimum use of the Heritage Centre for 5 years from when it opens to public	Enhanced
	Heritage Centre Building to be transferred to organisation or trust prior to opening of Heritage Centre	Maintained
	If after 5 years there is no interest in the following 3 months from an interested Trust or organisation to independently run a heritage centre then a change of use of the building may be applied for	Maintained / Enhanced
	Heritage Centre to contain: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exhibition Boards • Cold War Artefacts • Lecture/video presentation room to accommodate 30 seated school children • Archive room • Reading Room/ Study Area • Refreshment Area & Gift Shop • Toilet 	Enhanced

Obligation	Current Commitment	Future Commitment
	Open for minimum of four days per month from 10:00 – 16:00 and by arrangement for school visits	Enhanced
	Employment of a Heritage Centre Manager for 4 days a month for the initial 5 year period	Enhanced
Building 126	To be open to public during the tours	Maintained
	Kept in Wind and Water Tight Condition	Maintained
	To be part of Quinquennial Survey	Maintained
	Approval of external Paint Scheme	Maintained
	Building 126 to be transferred to organisation or trust prior to opening of Heritage Centre	Maintained
Building 129	External Access	Maintained
	Kept in Wind and Water Tight Condition	Maintained
	Approval of external Paint Scheme	Maintained
	To be part of Quinquennial Survey	Maintained
Building 3008/3009	Monumentalised and to form part of tour	Maintained/Enhanced
Guided Tours	To include the following buildings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QRA • Northern Bomb Stores (outside only) • Main Runway • Control Tower (outside only) • Nose Dock Sheds (outside only) • Avionics Building (outside only) 	Enhanced
	Secure the use of suitable travel for guided tours for 5 years	Enhanced

Obligation	Current Commitment	Future Commitment
Cold War Park	Provision of Cold Way Park comprising of Buildings 3052, 3053, 3054 and 3055	Replaced and Enhanced
Upper Heyford Trail	Circular Walk around perimeter of Flying Field	Enhanced
	Provision of 8 interpretation boards	Enhanced
	Provision of 2 new Vantage Points	Enhanced
Quinquennial Survey	Undertake condition survey of Flying Field Buildings ever 5 years	Maintained
	Contribution of £450,000 (index linked) for wind and water tight repairs	Maintained
Photographic Survey of Wall Art etc	Undertake photographic survey of all wall art and features of interest	Maintained
Building Record	Undertake Building record of Buildings to be Demolished	Maintained / Enhanced
Building 140 (Control Tower)	Wind and Water Tight	Enhanced – Refurbished and reused
Building 366 (Fuel System Building)	Wind and Water Tight	Enhanced – Refurbished and reused
Building 1433 (Engine Test Cell)	Wind and Water Tight	Enhanced – Refurbished and reused
Creation of Flying Field Park	---	Enhanced - New Commitment
Creation of Control Tower Park	---	Enhanced - New Commitment
Public Access to Flying Field	Part of bookable tour offer	Enhanced
Digital Archive	---	Enhanced – New Commitment