

# New boost for Lee-on-Solent

Designation as an Enterprise Zone makes the future even brighter for the former RNAS Daedalus, as **Pat Malone** reports

Lee-on-Solent airfield, lately saved from destruction by the relentless efforts of the Lee Flying Association, has now been designated by the government as an Enterprise Zone, which makes it eligible for tax breaks designed to attract new business and encourage growth.

The designation was met with delight by aviators at Lee and is a cause for celebration for all pilots. New money will be invested in upgrading the airfield and its runways with a view to attracting businesses in the aviation, aerospace and marine fields. It is planned that between 38 and 45 businesses will move to the airfield, employing 650 people by 2015 and 3,500 by 2026.

Robert Hill, the AOPA rep at Lee, said: "This is fantastic news. A lot of people – Frank Thompson of Phoenix Aviation, the airfield flight training school, Peter Dalby, the B-N Airfield Manager who runs EGHF, and Jon Butts of Lee Flying Association have worked diligently on behalf of us all to achieve this great success for the future of the airfield."

A great deal of work has been done behind the scenes. In order to ensure that money from the Regional Growth Fund (RGF) will be allocated to supporting the expansion of small and medium enterprise at what is now to be called The Solent Enterprise Zone at Daedalus Airfield. (Daedalus was Lee-on-Solent's name when it was an RNAS station).

Funding from the RGF bid, submitted by the Daedalus Business Partnership with the backing of the Solent Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), will be invested in upgrading the airfield. It is hoped that this

upgrade will allow the runway to be licensed, and attract a long-term private sector partner.

The money also gives business support for SMEs already based at Lee or planning to move there, allowing them to expand their operations. The 'Daedalus Marine and Aviation SME Expansion Fund' is expected to help up to 20 companies.

The designation means that companies will enjoy a 100 percent business rate discount worth over £275,000 over five years. They also get government help to simplify planning procedures in the Zone. The incentive for the local authority is that they get to keep the increased business rates resulting from expansion, rather than having to hand them over to central government.

The designation was welcomed from all sides. Gary Jeffries, the Solent LEP Director, said: "We put Daedalus forward for consideration as an Enterprise Zone knowing the enormous potential which could be unlocked. The announcement that the Enterprise Zone benefits will now be combined with RGF investment brings the site one step closer to becoming the world-class advanced

manufacturing centre we are aiming to create."

Gosport MP Caroline Dinenage added: "The new jobs created by this government funding will be a major benefit for the local community and I look forward to the Daedalus Enterprise Zone flourishing as a centre of aviation engineering and marine excellence in its own right."

Jon Butts, Chairman of Lee Flying Association, says: "We believe this is good news for the long term prospects of the airfield and aviation at Daedalus, given the need for investment in the aviation infrastructure including runway, and utilities and services. It is important for the lighter end of general aviation that it is fairly considered, represented and developed as the airfield moves forward. Your continued support of, and help with where possible, Lee Flying Association is invited."

Britten-Norman is responsible for the management of Lee on Solent under a two-year agreement. The airfield manager, Peter Dalby, managed Bembridge aerodrome from 2002 to 2010. The airfield was established in 1917 as a naval seaplane training school and came under RAF control the following year when the Royal Naval Air Service and Royal Flying Corps merged to form the RAF. It reverted to the Royal Navy in 1939, and was decommissioned in 1996 during another round of defence cuts. Plans to close it down have been fought off by a group comprising AOPA members Malcolm Barton, Mike Cross, Jon Butts, Frank Thompson, Steve Cockshott and many others, under the umbrella of the Lee Flying Association.

If you'd like to visit – and you'd be very welcome – have a look at the website [www.eghf.co.uk](http://www.eghf.co.uk). Then get a briefing on circuit procedures, because the airfield is shared with gliders, search and rescue helicopters and a flying school. You need to be aware of procedures applicable to the adjoining Fleetlands ATZ. They'll also give you information about the Southampton Zone. You can use the listening squawk 0011 and tune to 120.225 for Solent Radar. ■

**Register Your Interest**

**THE SOLENT ENTERPRISE ZONE AT DAEDALUS**

Land at Daedalus, a former MoD site based at Lee-on-Solent, Hampshire, has been designated by government as an Enterprise Zones (EZ). This provides a unique and exciting opportunity for a sustainable, high quality mixed-use development with potentially far-reaching benefits for the Solent area. The EZ has the potential to revitalise and transform an area with a strong legacy and Aviation sectors.

**Enterprise Zone Benefits**

- A 100% business rate discount worth up to £275,000 over a five year period, for businesses that move into an Enterprise Zone during the course of this Parliament;
- All business rates growth within the Zone for a period of at least 25 years will be retained and shared by the local authorities in the LEP area to support their economic priorities;
- Government and local authority help to develop simplified planning approaches in the zone;
- Government support to ensure superfast broadband is rolled out in the zone.

**The Solent Enterprise Zone at Daedalus Airfield – a profile**

**Size:** One site covering 82 hectares;

**Location:** The ex-military airfield is situated in a superb coastal location between the cities of Portsmouth and Southampton. The site has marine access and retains a private operational runway that we hope will be licensed for commercial flying in the near future.

**Sector Focus:** Advanced Manufacturing (Marine, Aviation and aerospace focus)

**Job creation:** Initially it is expected that 38 - 45 businesses will locate onto the zone, creating up to 650 jobs by April 2015, and 3,500 additional jobs by 2026

**Planning:** A master planned site and the current planning applications are intended to provide outline planning consents for development over the long term;

**Investment:** Government support to ensure superfast broadband is rolled out; UKTI have expressed their willingness to support international marketing effort and to support export-led businesses who locate within the zone.

**Enterprise Zone benefits at Daedalus: Advanced manufacturing by local business Home Concepts Ltd**

**The new Enterprise Zone is off to a flying start. From left to right: Caroline Dinenage, LEP Board Member Russel King, Caroline Dinenage, Business Asia Management Ltd, Minister of State for Business and Investment, Robert Hill and Leader of Gosport Council Mark Hoob**

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