

# News release

Executive Director 60/2016  
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## **SDC continues fight to protect businesses at Wellesbourne Airfield**

Stratford-on-Avon District Council is continuing its fight to help save businesses at Wellesbourne Airfield from closure.

Last week the Leader of Stratford-on-Avon District Council, Cllr Chris Saint met with local businesses from the site and following the meeting wrote to Central Government seeking help and guidance in order to retain the site as an operational airfield, despite strong planning policies being in place to prevent any change in use.

Cllr Saint has written to Rt Hon Greg Clark MP the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and Margot James MP the Parliamentary Under Secretary, Minister for Small Business, Consumers and Corporate Responsibility seeking options to continue to help support the established aviation businesses that operate at the airfield.

Cllr Chris Saint, Leader of Stratford-on-Avon District Council says: "There is nothing to be gained by destroying businesses that employ more than 200 people at this time. The Council policy has the support of the national Planning Inspectorate and it is not a realistic option that demolition of operational buildings will make it easy for the owners to build a big housing estate at the airfield.

"We are confronted with an unnecessary threat to the businesses on site that would sterilise the site for any practical uses with the risk of an eyesore for many years to come, when we would not wish to put the integrity of our adopted Local Plan at risk."

Cllr Dave Riches, Enterprise and Revenues Portfolio added: "The District Council has always kept the compulsory purchase option as a last resort, with preference ideally given to help the owners and businesses flourish through support and enabling the enhancement of the existing flying facilities (as per Area Strategy 9 in the now adopted core strategy).

"Sadly, it would seem that negotiations have not progressed as we would have liked, and the site owners seem determined on the cessation of those businesses' leases, ultimately resulting in a negative impact on the local economy and jobs.

"Local authorities are empowered to do their best for the taxpayer with vehicles such as compulsory purchase being available. We must consider all options to try and save the airfield,

its businesses and their respective employees. At this point in time, compulsory purchase has now presented itself as an option we should further investigate, and are actively doing so.

"The Council are not about to immediately strengthen the landowner's position. We will use all tools at our disposal to do the best job for the taxpayer, facilitating businesses, jobs and tourism in this context."

**Ends**

**Press Office**

Stratford-on-Avon District Council  
Elizabeth House, Church Street,  
Stratford-upon-Avon, CV37 6HX  
Tel: 01789 260105

**Press officer e-mail:**

beverley.hemming@stratford-dc.gov.uk

Fax: 01789 260007 [www.stratford.gov.uk](http://www.stratford.gov.uk)