1. Introduction

1.1 As the Council are aware, BHBoBT has been working for some time on a scheme for the Leavesden site in line with the Executive’s meeting in April 2011 which set a deadline of 31 March 2012 for all funding and a viable business plan to be in place.

1.2 Following the appointment of a full-time Chief Executive in September 2011, a project plan was produced alongside a headline fundraising strategy and development budget based upon the Leavesden site (presented to the Council’s Working Party on 3 November 2011). A number of housekeeping issues have also been addressed in order to improve governance, efficiency and capacity within the Trust.

1.3 After a brief induction period, meetings and discussions were held with a number of potential funding bodies known to the Chief Executive to determine the likelihood of financial support, including Sainsbury’s Family Charitable Trust, Westminster Foundation, and the Garfield Weston Foundation.

1.4 A significant number of study visits and meetings were also held with comparable museums and heritage attractions to gather background information and comparative data. In addition, a number of meetings and discussions were held with a wide range of stakeholders and patrons (including Jo Johnson MP and Bob Stewart MP) and Council officers.

2. Site

2.1 In October, the Trust held informal discussions with the RAF which quickly opened up the prospect of developing a Heritage Centre within the RAF enclave as opposed to the Leavesden site. A map showing both sites is appended at Appendix I.

2.2 On 22 November, representatives of the Trust held a very positive meeting with representatives from the RAF and the MoD (Defence Infrastructure Organisation) along with observers from the local ATC and Bromley Council. A number of practical considerations were discussed along with a couple of options as regards process.

2.3 Following that meeting, the Trust has drafted a Heads of Terms (attached at Appendix II) which has now been agreed with the RAF and MoD. This allows for the freehold or long leasehold of the entire RAF enclave to be transferred to the Trust once the site has been redeveloped according to an agreed scheme. Prior to commencement of works, a binding legal agreement will be put in place between the MoD and the Trust (the MoD will draft this).

2.4 It has already been agreed by the RAF and MoD that Biggin Hill is no longer required for operational purposes. Subject to Ministerial approval, MoD (DIO) will therefore dispose of the site. As the site is of historic interest and the “buyer” (the Trust) intends to preserve and maintain it, MoD have confirmed that the site will be disposed of by private treaty rather than through an open tender.
2.5 It is the view of the Trust that the development of a Heritage Centre on the RAF enclave site would be preferable than the Leavesden site:

- Secures the future of the Memorial Chapel and the ATC as the site is now on the MoD disposals list because it is no longer operational;
- Puts the Heritage Centre at the centre of the historic site and creates a very strong link between the Chapel, the Heritage Centre and the ATC;
- Places the Heritage Centre “air-side” which may allow future potential development with Kent Spitfire operations;
- Builds on the existing Battle of Britain market and visitor numbers to the Chapel (currently c.12,000 per annum) to enhance financial viability;
- Is a larger site than Leavesden (2.11 acres against 1.73 acres);
- Offers a better shape and space for development with no hidden or awkward corners and no neighbouring properties that are likely to object to a planning application;
- Frees up Leavesden site for other development with any financial value realised possibly enhancing the fundraising pot for the Heritage Centre;
- Allows better, greater and safer public access as there would be no need for pedestrians or vehicles to cross a busy and dangerous main road at a blind bend with the potential to have extended hours due to presence of ATC on site;
- Minimises development costs as all services are present with little need for groundworks unlike Leavesden which may have contamination issues and has, as far as we can ascertain, no existing services;
- Likely to be a quicker development than Leavesden because capital fundraising will be a lot easier and quicker as it meets a wider range of criteria of a significant number of charitable trusts and foundations as well as the Heritage Lottery Fund and opens up other possibilities such as youth funding through, for example, the Big Lottery Fund (both HLF, Sainsbury’s Family Charitable Trust and the Westminster Foundation have already signalled strong interest in funding this site).

2.6 Perhaps the greatest advantage offered by the RAF Enclave is that it allows for a range of development options and phasing according to the availability of funds. The Trust has identified three potential options all of which are achievable within the available land and which have considerable merits:

2.7 **Option 1** - demolish all existing buildings (apart from the Memorial Chapel) and construct a new-build Heritage Centre and ATC facility (Appendix III).

2.7.1 Under this option, all existing buildings would be demolished and replaced with one or more new buildings that would be as multi-functional as possible in order to provide for a Heritage Centre, the ATC and other community usage.

2.7.2 This option would allow greatest flexibility and freedom in design and size as well as the greatest flexibility in phasing. This could be important as the existing buildings will almost certainly not meet with modern standards particularly in relation to BREEAM. Although it would normally be anticipated that this would be the most expensive option, it could, in practice, therefore prove not to be as refurbishment costs may be unexpectedly higher.

2.7.3 It would, however, seem rather odd to the public (and, indeed, potential donors and funders) if the Trust were seen to be destroying that which Adolf Hitler could not, in order to build the Heritage Centre. Without these historic buildings, the centre would lose connection to the historical period which is a key USP for the centre on
this site. The Trust is also concerned by the possible precedent this could set for others intending to demolish historic buildings in the borough and the impact this may have on any planning application.

2.7.4 The breadth of design possibilities are such that this option would almost certainly be the slowest to be realised.

2.8 **Option 2** - convert existing buildings to house the Heritage Centre and construct two new buildings to link the existing buildings (Appendix IV).

2.8.1 In this option, it is envisaged that the buildings will mark a chronological trail starting at the northern end of the site (building A) with the early history of RAF Biggin Hill and the development of wireless technology. Visitors would then progress through Building C (new) that would house a multi-purpose hall and AV room (possibly combined) on the ground floor with offices and stores above. Building B would deal with the Battle of Britain and WWII. Visitors would then progress through Building D (new) housing the shop, café and flight simulators to the Chapel via the Garden of Remembrance.

2.8.2 A minimum of two classrooms with AV facilities would be built into either Building C or D (preferably Building D) for the use of school parties or other groups.

2.8.3 This option allows for the greatest amount of development yet also allows for the restoration and conservation of the existing buildings with minimal alteration. It allows a neat chronological story to be told thus allowing visitors to go straight to the area which interests them if necessary. It also allows a significant area for further redevelopment; potentially allowing, for example, air-side access for the Kent Spitfire (in the event of that being linked with the heritage centre in due course). It would bring together the Chapel, the Heritage Centre and the ATC in a coherent strategy and provide a modern, multi-use community facility.

2.8.4 This could, however, potentially be the most expensive option as the existing buildings will need significant works to bring them up to modern BREEAM standards. It would also require two new buildings to be constructed alongside the existing buildings. This option, however offers the best opportunity for phasing; for example conversion of the existing buildings could provide a relatively low cost Phase 1 .

2.9 **Option 3** – retain existing buildings as they are and construct a new-build Heritage Centre to the rear/side of the Memorial Chapel (Appendix V).

2.9.1 In this option, the ATC would remain in situ and would, in all likelihood, simply be sub-tenants of the Trust. The Chapel would be integrated into the Heritage Centre which would be housed within a new building to the rear and side of the Chapel. In this scenario, it is envisaged that the interior of the Heritage Centre – although scaled back in size - would be broadly similar to that outlined for Leavesden.

2.9.2 This could potentially be the cheapest and quickest option as there would be no major alteration works and only one new building erected. The ATC, however, would be disconnected from the rest of the site with the strong potential that it would still be evicted once the site is disposed of by MoD and it would put the Heritage Centre in the worse possible location hidden from view to the rear of the site and with no room for expansion. It would also suffer from the same major problem as Leavesden.
and Option 1, namely, that there would be no conservation, preservation or regeneration of historic buildings which would have a significant and debilitating effect on fundraising.

2.10 In all options, the Memorial Chapel and Garden of Remembrance would be retained with guaranteed free entry. Further discussions will be held with the RAF Chaplaincy, local Anglican and Catholic clergy, and the Friends of the Chapel to identify the optimum operational arrangements going forward.

2.11 The ATC would also be retained on site in all options, presenting unique opportunities to maximise usage and develop a wider, more sustainable community facility. As noted, retention of the ATC on site will also open up additional streams of both capital and revenue funding for the facility thus facilitating fundraising and future viability.

2.12 The key issue moving forward will be the development of an operational model and a design scheme which creates appropriate, communal facilities that support the operation of a heritage centre during the day and a popular ATC squadron in the evenings. Work has already begun here with the ATC being requested to compile a schedule of requirements for consideration and negotiation by the Trust and its appointed architect. However, there are immediately identifiable synergies such as a combined café and mess hall, communal classrooms, combined drill hall and main auditorium.

2.13 Given the size of the site and its current level of usage, the Trust firmly believes that a workable design and operational scheme can be developed to meet the needs of the ATC and the Heritage Centre. It is the Trust’s view that Option 2 is most likely to facilitate this.

3. Content

3.1 The objective of the Heritage Centre is to create a place where visitors can learn about the history of RAF Biggin Hill particularly the early development of wireless technology and the Battle of Britain and the base’s significant role in it as well as its contribution to the history of the borough.

3.2 Within the Leavesden site, it was envisaged that that history would be told through a series of displays, installations, and a scattering of objects with an AV suite, education facilities, and archive and collections stores.

3.3 Whilst this “stable” museum methodology has its benefits, the reality is that the technology available now makes this rather old-fashioned and, for all but the ardent enthusiast, boring. Whichever option is chosen needs to present the history of RAF Biggin Hill in a way that captures the imagination of the public and which uses modern technology in an innovative and exciting way.

3.4 There will, of course, be a place for historical artefacts and objects but these need to be set in context and tell the story of the people of RAF Biggin Hill. Indeed, it is the people of RAF Biggin Hill who should be the focus of the heritage centre. Thus, the centre should have digital displays which tell the story of as many people who served at RAF Biggin Hill as possible (where they came from, how they ended up at Biggin Hill, where they went to afterwards, etc), it should collect and display as much oral history as possible, and it should tell of the daily struggles to live and survive.
3.5 The centre should build upon the existing ATC simulators on the site and provide a number of these (possibly at an extra charge to generate revenue) akin to that housed within the London Transport Museum which draws both young and old in their thousands. Under Option 2, it is envisaged that the corridor linking the two halves of Building B would become a 3D tunnel that would place the visitor up in the sky in a Battle of Britain dogfight. A key exhibit could be a plotting room but, instead of looking at an inert display, visitors would be invited to utilise technology to plot incoming aircraft and manage the ensuing battle or dogfight.

3.6 A further aim would be to build two classrooms at the end of Building D for the use of school groups. These could simply be used to reflect and explore further particular themes or education topics. Or, they could even be used to build DIY radios or even model aircraft (it is intended to seek corporate donations to provide DIY radio kits or model aircraft kits for all school groups) tying into the national curriculum – principally CDT and science but with cross-themes, for example, in history, literacy, numeracy and art.

3.7 At present, these are only outline sketch ideas and will need to be explored further as the concept and design evolves, and a budget line has been included to employ a specialist heritage consultant.

4. Capital Costs

4.1 No cost plan has yet been prepared for the RAF enclave. This is a key piece of work needed for the business plan; from a fundraising perspective, however, overall capital costs should ideally not exceed £3m. It is the Trust’s view that this is achievable on all three options however it will be subject to a full survey, design scheme and initial cost plan.

5. Fundraising

5.1 Assuming a £3m maximum capital build cost, a total of £2.2m would need to be raised in addition to the S106 funds.

5.2 The Trust with the invaluable help of the Supporters Club has, so far, raised some £30,000 itself to match the release of S106 funding.

5.3 The Trust has held meetings or discussions with a number of potential funding bodies, including the Heritage Lottery Fund, Sainsbury Family Charitable Trust, Garfield Weston Foundation, Westminster Foundation, and the Wolfson Foundation. It is the Trust’s intention to seek to raise the majority of funding from these organisations, all of whom have expressed a strong interest in funding the capital development of the Heritage Centre with both the Sainsbury Family Charitable Trust and the Westminster Foundation already requesting outline proposals. From experience, this is eminently achievable and well within the funding range and interests of each of these organisations.

5.4 The Trust is also talking with a number of high net worth individuals who have an interest in this field whether aviation, historic, military or geographic. A public campaign will also be launched aimed at reminding people of the importance of Biggin Hill during the war and, it is hoped, raising further funding.

5.5 Significantly, however, incorporation of the ATC within the Heritage Centre also opens up a much wider fundraising field, including the Big Lottery Fund and a host of bodies which predominantly fund youth provision and activities.
5.6 The RAF has confirmed that no endowment can be offered from RAF budgets for the future upkeep of the Chapel. Discussions are on-going with the MoD in this regard.

5.7 The emerging business plan will identify as far as possible fixed and variable running costs and will set out a range of financial options based upon differing factors such as visitor numbers, entrance fees, etc. Further discussion will also take place with the MoD and the RAF to clarify existing maintenance costs and with the ATC and RAF Chaplaincy regarding existing revenue costs. For the avoidance of doubt, it should be noted that the Trust will not take on responsibility for the running costs of the ATC or the costs of religious services within the Chapel.

6. Timetable

6.1 The next step is for the Trust to appoint an architect and other relevant professional advisers and to procure a design scheme. A new, detailed project plan will also be prepared so that progress can be meaningfully measured against a set of timetabled objectives. In the meantime, a headline plan is set out here:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RIBA stage</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Development</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Appointment of professionals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Initial design</td>
<td>B - D</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Planning application</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepare technical designs &amp; specifications</td>
<td>E</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production information</td>
<td>F</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tender documentation</td>
<td>G</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Contract</td>
<td>J</td>
<td>18 mths ➞10/14</td>
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<tr>
<td>Business planning &amp; concept development</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fundraising</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

(Assumes that LBB will agree the release of sufficient funding by early-February to allow initial development work)

6.2 The architect will, with input from all stakeholders and relevant professionals, produce a new fully-costed design scheme by end-May 2012 that accords with relevant LB Bromley planning policies and meets the needs of all parties. The architect would be supported by a heritage consultant who will also support the CEO in developing funding applications, particularly for the Heritage Lottery Fund.

6.3 At the same time, the Trust will produce a viable business plan by end-May 2012 that will be submitted to the Council’s Executive Committee for approval in June 2012. There will be a formal review in September 2012 to allow for any alterations as a result of the planning process.

6.4 The Trust has previously requested that the fundraising deadline be extended to 31 October 2012 based on the Leauesden site, but now feels that an extension to 31 January 2013 would be appropriate. This will allow the Trust 12 months to raise the necessary funding, procure
an acceptable design solution, gain all necessary consents, and produce a realistic and viable business and operational plan as well as complete all legal issues relating to the land transfer. This is an entirely reasonable and realistic timescale for a project of this size and nature.

6.5 This would allow the Trust to appoint contractors to start on site in March 2013. It is anticipated that the build programme will take approximately 18 months and be completed by November 2014 allowing for a formal opening in 2015 to tie in with the 75th anniversary of the Battle of Britain.

7. **Budget**

7.1 At this moment in time, the Trust is working to the assumption that capital costs for development of the RAF Enclave are likely to be similar to those of Leavesden, ie. £2.5m with an additional allowance of £500,000 for content. This is based solely upon experience and will need to be clarified in the months ahead as a design scheme develops. However, as noted, a great strength of the RAF enclave site is the ability to phase development works according to the availability of funding.

7.2 A new development budget has been prepared based upon experience and the necessary work that will be required to get to construction stage:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Development budget to 31 May 2012</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>INCOME</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donations</td>
<td>31,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grants (S106 funds)</td>
<td>56,045</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>87,845</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **EXPENDITURE**                  |       |
| Capital works                    | 0     |
| VAT                              | 0     |
| Professional fees                | 85,332|
| Staff costs                      | 45,800|
| Premises                         | 0     |
| Marketing                        | 2,250 |
| Office costs                     | 2,270 |
| Governance & Finance costs       | 15,800|
| **TOTAL**                        | 151,452|

**BALANCE** -63,607

7.3 This demonstrates a need for additional development funding of £63,607 by end-May 2012 before the project can proceed and the Trust is therefore formally seeking Council approval for the release of this additional amount from S106 funds.

7.4 It is acknowledged that the release of further funding from 31 May 2012 to 31 January 2013 will be subject to Council’s approval of the business plan to be submitted by 31 May 2012 and in line with a detailed development budget which will be submitted at the same time.
Funding beyond January 2013 will be subject to confirmation that all necessary funds to complete the development are secured. It is further acknowledged that anticipated that all funding would only be released upon submission of invoices and appropriate claim forms.

7.5 As set out in the detailed budget previously submitted to the Working Party, funds will be used to pay legal and valuation fees as well as necessary consultants and professional advisers, including an Architect, Surveyors, and Engineers plus specialist consultants such as Planning Consultants and Heritage Consultants. This is necessary if the project is to progress any further and a realistic business plan is to be produced by end-May in readiness for a planning application in June 2012.

8. Conclusion

8.1 The Trust would like to remind the Council that the establishment of a Heritage Centre in Biggin Hill remains a strategic priority and that a significant amount of progress has been made over the past two months:

- A widely-acknowledged better site has been secured, subject to legal agreements;
- The Trust has employed a full-time CEO who has substantial, relevant experience;
- Governance and administration within the Trust has been reviewed and strengthened;
- Progress is being made on defining the concept and shape of the Heritage Centre;
- A clear capital and development budget has been prepared;
- A clear project plan and fundraising strategy has been prepared;
- The Supporters Club has deposited its agreed donation of £20,000 into the Trust’s bank account and there have been further donations of over £10k;

8.2 The Trust is confident that a workable scheme can now be delivered and further feels that the RAF Enclave provides a very exciting opportunity to create a vibrant multi-use community and heritage facility which could link with plans that might emerge for West Camp thus providing scope for further growth in the future.