

Equality Impact Assessment: Report and EIA Action Plan

Purpose

What is being reviewed?	Options for the future of Bournemouth Air Festival beyond 2023 including whether it is to take place or be replaced with an alternative festival/event. Cabinet report will be considered on 22 November 2023
Service Lead and Service Unit:	Commercial Operations
People involved in EIA process:	Jon Weaver, Head of Events, Stephanie Sainsbury, Events Development Co-ordinator, Amanda Barrie – Head of Commercial Operations,
Date/s EIA started and reviewed:	January 2023 onwards

The Council is legally required by the Equality Act 2010 to evidence how it has considered its equality duties in its decision-making process.

The Council must have due regard to the need to -

- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to -

- (a) remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
- (b) take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- (c) encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

A link to the full text of [s149 of the Equality Act 2010](#) which must be considered when making decisions.

Background

1. The Bournemouth Air Festival

The concept for Bournemouth Air Festival was developed in 2008 by the then Director of Tourism for a free attractor event that would attract people to Bournemouth and build on the vision at the time for Bournemouth to become an 'event full' destination. Air Shows were and still are considered some of the biggest spectator events in the calendar with the capability of attracting hundreds of thousands of people.

Bournemouth Air Festival is a prime example of an event that since 2008 has made a significant contribution to the local tourism economy, attracting several million visitors & residents and raising the profile of Bournemouth and the surrounding area. A key outcome was to help support the tourism industry, in particular the accommodation and hospitality sectors in Bournemouth by extending the shoulder season.

Unlike most other Air Shows, Bournemouth Air Festival is a free 'Festival' which runs over 4 days (Thurs – Sunday) from 10am to 10pm (6pm on Sunday) and welcomes visitors of all ages from 0 – 99 years.

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Whilst visitor numbers peaked at over 1 million in the early years, they are now stabilised at around half a million – still making it one of the biggest spectator events in the region.

2. What is being proposed and why?

It is proposed that BCP Council deliver a three-day Air Festival in 2024 with a budgeted contribution from the Council of £200,000, reduced from £397,000 in 2023, with work undertaken to shape the Festival in line with the budget available. The Council acknowledges the financial risk of achieving additional commercial income of £95,000.

A number of different options have been considered and this option has been chosen as it provides a substantial saving to the Council in 2024 whilst still enabling the Air Festival to continue as work is carried out to seek an external organisation or partner to deliver the Air Festival from 2025 onwards, with no net cost to the Council. If this cannot be achieved the Air Festival would cease after 2024.

A three-day Festival is considered to be a more viable option than a two-day event as it provides less risk in relation to the impact unfavourable weather conditions can have on the Festival. Three days also presents a more positive message to visitors and residents, than reducing from 4 days down to 2 days.

The three days would be Thursday, Friday and Saturday in order to capitalise on the business to business and extended hospitality opportunities which have been identified to help fund the Festival. This also provides for the opportunity for Bournemouth Town Centre Bid to work with communities and community event organisers to run a Community Fun Day on the Sunday encouraging visitors to stay the extra night, benefitting the Accommodation sector. This would also draw visitors away from the main Air Festival site (Seafront and Overcliff) on the Sunday into the wider Town centre, benefitting town centre businesses and hospitality.

3. Who is likely to be impacted?

Tourism industry and local businesses.

Residents and visitors who attend the Air Festival are from across a wide age and social spectrum. An economic assessment in 2021 showed that local residents of Bournemouth accounted for 32% of all festival attendees and day visitors accounted for 29%. Overnight stay visitors in Bournemouth accounted for 30% and staying visitors elsewhere for 10% of attendees. Adult only groups made up 69% of attendees with 11% attending alone. Adults visiting with children made up 31%. Age ranges were broken down into 7 groups from 0 – 15yrs up to 65+ yrs with a fairly even spread across all ages.

Total gross spend generated by attendees in 2021 was £49.7m including accommodation, food and drink, shopping, programmes, entertainment and travel.

4. How are they likely to be impacted?

No known equality impacts have been identified based on age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnerships, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, military veterans, children in care or care leavers.

However, as the Air Festival is a free event, were it to be stopped and not replaced with an alternative free event then this could impact on the health, wellbeing and enjoyment of those families on low incomes who would not be able to afford to pay to go to an alternative event elsewhere. According to the English Indices of Multiple Deprivation (2019) and matched to the 2021 Census population 45,200 people live in an area that is amongst the 20% most deprived in England, including 10,600 0-19 year olds and 6,000 over 65 year olds. BCP area has nine areas (2011 LSOAs) in the most deprived 10% in England where 15,900 residents live. (Source – State of BCP Report 2023)

The biggest sectors in employment terms in the BCP area are the 'Retail, Hospitality and Leisure' sectors and the 'Health' sector. (Source – State of BCP Report 2023). The loss of the Air Festival in economic terms would be felt most heavily by the Accommodation and Hospitality sectors which rely on it to extend the shoulder season in preparation for a long winter ahead. The decision to continue to run an Air Festival in 2024 and beyond will mitigate against the negative impacts that would be felt were it to cease.

5. BCP Council Staff

Depending on the decision taken a review of the events team structure may be required once the delivery mechanism for any future event is known. This is likely to require a review of functions and roles to ensure we can deliver on the income generating requirements.

6. Consultation and Results

In order to look at how the challenges facing delivery of the Air Festival could be addressed and consider what a future Air Festival or replacement event might look like, a Task & Finish (T&F) Group was set up including Members, Council Officers and representatives from local businesses and organisations.

This group has been meeting since July 2023 and has focused on understanding the options available and exploring interest from external businesses to deliver some form of Festival in 2024 and beyond.

The group is made up of a mix of Council Members, Council Officers (including Events, Communications, Finance, Economic Development and Resort Development) and representatives from the industry, including the Bournemouth BID companies and the Accommodation, Hospitality & Events sectors.

In addition to the main T&F group two smaller subgroups have been established with some additional external input;

- a. Finance & Commercial Income Sub Group
- b. Events & Festival Content Development Sub Group.

There has been no official consultation with the general public outside of the T&F group but their views and opinions have been openly encouraged.

An ePetition was lodged on the BCP Council website on 4 September 2023 asking for support to ensure that the Council 'keep the Bournemouth Air Festival for the foreseeable future' and 'pursue other avenues of funding'. This petition is due to close on 30 November 2023. The petition has currently received 90 signatures. (12/10/23). This level of response requires an acknowledgement from the relevant portfolio holder. For Council to debate an e-petition it would need to reach 2000 signatures. There is also a second online petition to *Save Bournemouth Air Festival*, supported by the Bournemouth Air Festival Patrons Club but this has not been registered with the Council.

Findings

7. Positive impacts of the Air Festival on protected groups in current format

The Air Festival is a free event so if the decision is taken to continue with it either as a 4, 3 or 2 day free event there would be a positive impact for families on low incomes as it is accessible and can be enjoyed by all. This contributes to the EHRC Equality Framework by encouraging participation in local and community events.

There would also be a positive impact for local businesses and the local tourism industry if the decision is taken to continue with the festival as either a 4,3 or 2 day event or replace it with something of similar value. This contributes to the work domain of the EHRC Framework.

8. Negative impacts of the Air Festival on protected groups in current format

Health domain of EHRC – emissions from increased parking in the area can impact on health and those with breathing issues. Mitigating actions are already in place to encourage sustainable travel, healthier travel options through the 1-in-3 campaign aimed at encouraging all Festival Goers to consider alternative more sustainable ways to travel to the event and through expansion of the Leave only Footprints campaign and the Refill Dorset Scheme, among others.

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These were developed alongside the Air Festival Environmental Action Plan and the BCP Sustainable Events Management Policy

9. Positive impacts of altering the current provision of the Air Festival

Reducing from a four-day to a three-day Air Festival allowing for the provision of a Community Fun Day on the Sunday would have a positive impact on Town Centre businesses and hospitality who do not derive any direct benefit from the four-day Air Festival as it draws visitors and residents to the Seafront, Lower Gardens and Overcliff areas, away from the Town Centre. Retaining an Air Festival will help to ensure that Bournemouth holds its position as one of the top coastal destinations in the UK and maintains its international reputation thus bringing economic benefit to the area making it a desirable place to 'live, work and play'.

10. Negative impacts of altering the current provision of the Air Festival

No negative impacts have been identified by reducing from a four-day to a three-day Air Festival

EHRC Equality Framework Impacts

As a free event the Air Festival is accessible to absolutely anyone offering **participation** (a key element of the EHRC Equality Framework) opportunities in a number of areas – military, STEM, entertainment. These opportunities would be lost were there to be no festival or similar free event. The benefits of being able to attend a free, outdoor event of this type extend beyond the simple enjoyment value, to a positive impact on health and well-being.

Loss of the Air Festival would also impact on pride of place and bringing specific groups together to foster good relationships between them.

The 2021 economic assessment identified the Air Festival as a high profile event which generated £14.1 total new spend to Bournemouth and the surrounding area. If it is stopped and no alternative event of a similar economic benefit to the area replaces it then there would be a negative impact on local businesses, especially hotels who benefit by higher room rates and occupancy over 4 days. This impacts on the work and living standards element of the EHRC Equality Framework.

There were no additional negative impacts identified for the following groups:

- **People's human rights**
- **Different Ages**
- **Current/Previous members of the Armed Forces**
- **Those with caring responsibilities**
- **Those with physical disabilities**
- **Those with mental disabilities**
- **Different ages (young and old)**
- **Different genders**
- **Those who identify as trans**
- **Those who are pregnant/on maternity**
- **Those who are married/in a civil partnership**
- **People from different ethnic groups**
- **People with different religions or beliefs**
- **People with different sexual orientations**

11. Mitigating Actions

A 2 or 3 day Air Festival or an alternative free attraction event would mitigate the negative impacts that would be felt were the festival to be cancelled completely, on both local business and those of low socio economic status who attend the festival. Work has already been undertaken to look at how a 2 or 3 day Air Festival could be delivered in 2024 with a substantially reduced budget or at no net cost to the Council.

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Conceptual work has also already begun to look at what a replacement event could look like with the Council acting as the key enabler.

Conclusion

12. Summary of Equality Implications

A decision to reduce the Air Festival from a four day down to a three day free event, provides a similar economic impact and profile for the area continuing to offer a free attraction for low income families and continuing to support local business and the tourism industry economically.

If the decision is taken to cancel the Air Festival completely then there will be an impact on local businesses, particularly the hospitality and hotel industries who rely on the Air Festival to extend the season into the shoulder period. The impact would also be felt by low socio economic groups who would no longer have a free event, open to all, to attend and participate in.

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[This action plan provides a summary of any negative impacts and relevant mitigating actions]

Equality Impact Assessment Action Plan

Please complete this Action Plan for any negative or unknown impacts identified above. Use the table from the Capturing Evidence form to assist.

Issue identified	Action required to reduce impact	Timescale	Responsible officer
Reducing from a four-day to a three-day Air Festival in 2024			
Seeking an external organisation or partner to deliver the Air Festival from 2025 onwards, with no net cost to the Council.			