

Title of Report:	NI International Airshow 2026
Committee Report Submitted To:	Leisure and Development Committee
Date of Meeting:	16 September 2025
For Decision or For Information	For Decision
To be discussed In Committee	NO

Linkage to Council Strategy (2021-25)	
Strategic Theme	Promote our tourist offering locally and internationally
Outcome	Improve prosperity. To provide a balanced portfolio for major events across the Borough and facilitate partnerships with other event promoters
Lead Officer	Head of Tourism and Recreation

Estimated Timescale for Completion	
Date to be Completed	September 2026

Budgetary Considerations	
Cost of Proposal	Approx £400k
Included in Current Year Estimates	NO
Capital/Revenue	Revenue
Code	
Staffing Costs	

Legal Considerations	
Input of Legal Services Required	NO
Legal Opinion Obtained	NO

Screening Requirements	Required for new or revised Policies, Plans, Strategies or Service Delivery Proposals.		
Section 75 Screening	Screening Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
	EQIA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
Rural Needs Assessment (RNA)	Screening Completed	Yes/No	Date:
	RNA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA)	Screening Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
	DPIA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	Date:

1.0 Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to ask if Elected Members wish to proceed with planning and delivery of the Northern Ireland International Airshow in 2026.

2.0 Background

In January 2021 Council approved a Notice of Motion to develop a new International Air Show for 2022 and explore holding the event every 2 years thereafter.

At the February 2023 Leisure and Development Committee meeting, Council provided approval for the NI Airshow which took place on 7 & 8 September 2024.

3.0 Planning requirements for the delivery of the NI International Air Show

Key planning considerations include:

- Income and expenditure.
- Air programme budget (air display assets, insurance, specialist air show coordinator etc).
- Ground infrastructure (marquees, comms, seating, Air Traffic Control, catering, amenities).
- STEM provision.
- Marketing and promotion.

4.0 Event Schedule 2026

Officers present annually at the December Leisure and Development Committee on the proposals for Tourism and Recreation led events (in the following years), and seek approval for the schedule and budgetary requirements.

Reoccurring Council events likely to be considered for 2026 include:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|-------------|
| • Ballymoney Spring Fair | April |
| • NW200 Race Week | May |
| • Rathlin Sound Festival | May |
| • Seasonal Programme | July/August |
| • Ould Lammas Fair | August |
| • Bushmills Salmon & Whiskey Festival | October |
| • Halloween x 4 | October |
| • Atlantic Sessions | November |
| • Christmas Festive Events x 4 | November |

Also, for 2026, Council will be the lead delivery body for the following events:

- Armed Forces Day (June 2026)
- 250 years USA Celebration

5.0 Planning Requirement for the delivery of the NI International Airshow

As the lead in period for the planning for an air show is normally in excess of 12 months, Officers require direction from Elected Members as to whether an air show is to be scheduled for 2026.

The budget estimated to deliver an event similar in scale to 2024 is approximately £400,000 (net). Previously the airshow was scheduled for the first weekend in September, with the rationale being:

- An extended Summer Season.
- To share assets with Ayr and have reduced costs for 2026.

6.0 Options for Consideration

It was initially hoped that it would be possible to combine Armed Forces Day with the International Airshow into one joint event, in order to combine resources, however it is now apparent that the Red Arrows will not be available in June 2026, therefore this is no longer a viable option. With the above information factored for, Elected Members are asked to give consideration to the following options:

- Option 1
Planning and resource allocation is assigned for the delivery of the Northern Ireland International Air Show – preferred dates 5 & 6 September 2026.
- Options 2
Planning and resource allocation for the Northern Ireland International Airshow is assigned for a future date, possibly in 2027 or beyond.

7.0 Recommendation

Elected Members are asked to consider the two options provided and make a recommendation with regard to the Northern Ireland International Air Show.