

Aerial displays could be banned over environmental and noise pollution concerns

Aerial displays over the capital could be banned over environmental and noise pollution concerns, according to plans put forward by an Edinburgh councillor.

Flypasts take place every year for the Edinburgh Military Tattoo every year in August, and sometimes happen as part of other events as well.

Now Green councillor Dan Heap has brought a motion to the city council to explore banning the displays.

And he said the noise disturbance it causes – and the potentially traumatic impact flypasts can have on people fleeing war – were grounds to try and get rid of them.

Cllr Heap told the Local Democracy Reporting Service: “We want to reduce these to, preferably, zero, but at least get fewer.

“The main user of these, the Edinburgh Tattoo, has already decreased them, there’s fewer than there used to be.

“But it has a number of flight paths of jet aircraft during the tattoo, which is in August – it’s purely for entertainment.”

He also said that the city’s Green group believes the negative environmental impacts of the displays are severe.

He continued: "I've been trying to get a hold of what the precise emissions are from these particular jets, and that's not public – but I found some other military jets.

"And they have significant carbon emissions. And yes, it's a relatively brief flyover, but they're flying from airbases that aren't near Edinburgh.

"Sometimes they come from Lossiemouth [in Moray], or from an airbase in England. So they're flying quite a long way.

"And yes, it might seem like the flight is relatively short over the castle, very short, but you've got to factor in the time they're flying to and from the air base."

Cllr Heap said that while passenger flying was currently essential, air displays are purely for entertainment.

The motion aims to use licensing to restrict the number of air displays in the city, given that the events that involve them require public entertainment licences.

Cllr Heap envisions a public safety element or some other reason being adhered to event licences that bans flypasts, but he says officers would be better equipped to explore what using licence conditions to ban flypasts would involve.

The motion, if passed by councillors, would call on officers to present a report on ways in which such a ban could be enacted by the August full Edinburgh council meeting.

It also says that displays involving drones or model aircraft would be allowed.

By Joseph Sullivan Local Democracy Reporter