

Helicopter Noise in London – Written Evidence

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Written Evidence

HN/001

I refer to your letter of the 25th April sent to our Chief Executive regarding the effects of helicopter noise in Kingston. I have been asked to respond and would start by saying that complaints of noise from helicopters are rarely received by the Environmental Health Service. We very occasionally receive complaints of helicopter noise at night but these tend to be associated with Police activity or the air ambulance and are justified. Periodically, when the Farnborough Air Show or Ascot is on helicopters use the A3/ Main railway line in the borough as routes to these venues but again complaint is rare. There was some sensitivity in the south of the Borough when the Heathrow/Gatwick helicopter link was operational but this venture ceased several years ago. Not a lot of substance really but thought you would like this information any way!

Chris Newport
Assistant Borough Environmental Health Officer
Directorate of Community Services
Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames

HN/002

Tim Barnes, the chairman of The Greenwich Society has asked me to liaise with you about The Society's views on helicopter noise. I am the committee member who attempts to deal with such issues and can confirm that it has been an issue for us for quite a while. We receive many complaints from local people about the noise from an ever increasing number of helicopters which circle above Greenwich.

We have had meetings with the CAA at which it was established that over Greenwich Park was a designated point for joining helicopter route H4 which follows the river. This issue was taken up on our behalf by our MP, Nick Raynsford, some time ago and possibly as a result of that we have heard that there is a plan to move the joining point further down river to the region of London City airport.

At present Nick Raynsford is following up actions proposed in a document called the London CTR Review Group's report which has some implications for helicopter movements.

Some time ago it was our understanding that helicopters were limited to flying to route H4 and then up or down the river. This is not the practice and helicopters appear at present to fly over the whole of Greenwich with no limits on routing. They are an appalling nuisance and create very disturbing noise levels.

I hope the above is of use to you.

Regards

Derek Fordham
Greenwich Society

HN/003

I have lived on the Isle of Dogs for seven years.

I think that there has been a significant increase in helicopter traffic and its associated noise during this time.

The noise from these vehicles is very intrusive, much more so than noise from other aircraft.

It is particularly disturbing late at night and on Summer days when one is hoping to enjoy the quietness of one's garden.

The noise from the helicopters with two rotors can be deafening.

I wonder whether helicopter traffic could be confined to specific periods during the day and/or whether they could fly higher?

Possible the London Assembly Environment Committee would consider a pricing scheme for private helicopters which could be prohibitive and therefore encourage their users to take a "greener" form of transport?

Mrs Rosemary Houlston

Isle of Dogs Resident

HN/004

HACAN ClearSkies represents residents living under the Heathrow flight paths. The principal concern of our members is aircraft noise. We do not specifically deal with helicopters or helicopter noise, but we do get a sizeable number of people contacting us about the problem.

Our response focuses on the four main areas your investigation will be looking at.

To establish what impact any increase in helicopter traffic and noise has had on Londoners and how this is being addressed.

The number of complaints we receive about helicopter noise has increased noticeably over the last few years. We get the majority of complaints during the summer months. In part, this may be because people are outdoors more in summer or are more likely to have their windows open, but the main reason seems to be the greater use of helicopters at that time of year (there appears to be an increase in the use of helicopters to take people to private and corporate functions, particularly during the summer months).

The figures for helicopter use in London are not collated – but anecdotal evidence suggests use is increasing. The DfT's 1995 helicopter study did look at numbers, but the study was quite inadequate because it excluded charter flights which make up about half the market. The number of helicopters using Battersea Airport has not increased dramatically. The increase has come from the number of helicopters using the small airports and airfields around London and flying into or over the Capital. Many of these helicopters converge at the holding spot over Greenwich.

The other problem is the height at which the helicopters fly over London. This is in large part determined by the number of conventional aircraft using London's airports. This is huge and increasing. 472,000 flights used Heathrow last year. There has also been a big increase in flights using City Airport. The result is that helicopters are being pushed ever lower. Sometimes they are no higher than the statutory 500ft above the

nearest structure. By contrast, helicopters flying over national parks are required to be at 5,500 ft.

We suggest:

- It is important to know just how many helicopter flights are being made over London and for what purposes. These figures need to be recorded and collated.
- Any plans to expand Heathrow or City airports should be required to spell out the effects they would have on helicopters flying over London.
To determine helicopter routeing in London and to assess if improvements can be made to the way helicopter air traffic is managed.

At present single-engined helicopters flying over London are required to keep to prescribed routes (overflying the river, parks, lakes etc where possible). They are required to do this because, if they suffer an engine failure, they fall out of the sky (Twin-engined machines, which have a back up engine, have more freedom to take the most direct route, but, in practice, often keep to the helicopter routes). These routes, which in London also go over many residential areas, are not widely publicised to the general public. Most Londoners have no idea that they exist.

We suggest:

- There is a case for examining the case for getting rid of prescribed helicopter routes given that the noise impacts unreasonably on certain communities. That, though, for safety reasons, would require a ban on single-engine helicopters flying over London.
- There is a certainly a case for re-examining the practice of holding the helicopters over certain areas such as Greenwich.
- If prescribed routes do remain, they should be widely publicised and form part of local authority property searches. The maps indicating the routes should be widely available. Indeed, they should be published along with the wider noise maps, which member states are required to draw up under the terms of the EU Noise Directive, on the DFERA website.

To establish the noise performance of helicopters typically used and the different types of helicopter use in London.

The new helicopters are regarded as “quieter”, but there are a number of complicating factors which mean that the person on the ground may not be getting any benefit:

- many older helicopters are still in use – indeed, some helicopters are 40 years old because they are only used from time to time.
- The newer helicopters may be “quieter” than the old ones, but because they tend to be larger as well, the overall noise they cause may be just as loud;
- the overall number of helicopters has been increasing.

The pulsating noise – with a high low-frequency content – emitted by helicopters can be particularly troublesome to some people.

We would argue that it is sensible to differentiate between helicopters used by the essential services (police, ambulance) and those used for leisure or business travel. What becomes clear, when comparing the use of helicopters in the American cities with those in most European cities, is that there seems to be a direct link between the use of helicopters for business and leisure purposes and the congestion on the roads/the state of public transport. In cities where traffic is relatively free-flowing and the public transport infrastructure serving the city and its extended catchment area is good, businesses find it much harder to justify the use of helicopters for business and leisure purposes.

We suggest:

- That the possibility of progressively phasing out, or even banning, the noisiest helicopters is examined.
- There is a case for placing a cap on the number of non-essential flights that fly over London. Helicopters are still, after all a “rich man’s toy”. It is difficult to see how, as such, a restriction on their use in order to improve the quality of life of hundreds of thousands of Londoners cannot be justified.
- There is also a case for using the pricing mechanism to control the number of helicopters on the busiest routes. It is simple and inexpensive to install the technology which indicates where helicopters are, to require helicopter owners to buy licences to fly over London, with extra being charges to fly on the busiest routes – a sort of congestion charge of the sky.

To examine the effectiveness of the three policies on helicopter noise in the Mayor’s Noise Strategy.

The Mayor is restricted in that he does not have any powers to control helicopter movements or routes. Therefore, the fairly limited nature of the recommendations in the Mayor’s Noise Strategy is understandable.

We suggest:

- The Mayor’s office is given the power to control helicopters over London.

John Stewart
Chair
HACAN ClearSkies

HN/005

Response from the UK Noise Association

a. The UK Noise Association lobbies local and national government on the issue of noise. There is evidence to indicate that our cities have become significantly noisier over the past ten years. We, therefore, welcome any measures which cut unacceptable levels of noise and hope that your investigation will result in a reduction of helicopter noise over London.

b. We think it is important that a distinction is made between the use of helicopters by the essential services and their use for business and leisure trips. The former can save lives and help cut crime. The latter are difficult to justify – it is hard to make a case for permitting a small number of people who are using a helicopter as a business perk, a leisure toy or simply to get a better view of London to ruin the peace and quiet of the many.

We consider the four areas of your investigation.

1. To establish what impact any increase in helicopter traffic and noise has had on Londoners and how this is being addressed.

1a. The starting point has to be the odd fact that the figures for helicopter use in London are not recorded or collated. The helicopter study published by the Department for Transport in 1995 did look at numbers, but failed to give a comprehensive picture because it excluded charter flights (which make up about half the market). There are figures for the use of Battersea Heliport. They show no dramatic increase. But there would seem to have been a significant increase in the number of helicopters using the small airports and airfields around London and flying into or over the London. Many of these helicopters are held over Greenwich.

Recommendation

Mechanisms are put in place to record the number of helicopters flying over London.

1b. The other problem for residents on the ground is the height at which the helicopters fly over London. We understand that this is influenced by the number of aircraft using London's airports, particularly Heathrow and City Airport.

Recommendation

If the number of flights using Heathrow and City Airport cannot be reduced, there is strong case for restricting the number of helicopters over London to essential services only.

2. To determine helicopter routeing in London and to assess if improvements can be made to the way helicopter air traffic is managed.

2a. Most Londoners have no idea that helicopter routes exist. They must rank as one of London hidden secrets! This puts residents moving into a property below the helicopter routes in an untenable position.

Recommendation

Helicopter routes, if they remain, should show up on the house 'search' and clear maps showing the routes should be available in public.

2b. If only the helicopters used by the essential services were permitted to fly over London, there may be no need for helicopter routes. It is difficult to argue that leisure and business flights are essential to London's economy.

Recommendation

That only helicopters used by the essential services should be permitted over London – this might do away with the need for helicopter routes.

3. To establish the noise performance of helicopters typically used and the different types of helicopter use in London.

3a. All helicopters are noisy! The high low-frequency component in their noise can make them particularly disturbing. Although the newer helicopters use more advanced technology, because they are larger, they can be just as noisy as far as people on the ground are concerned.

Recommendation

Because of the noise they make and because they are forced to fly low by the other aircraft using London's airports, there is a strong noise case for banning all helicopters except those which can be justified by the essential services.

4. To examine the effectiveness of the three policies on helicopter noise in the Mayor's Noise Strategy.

4a. The Mayor, through his Ambient Noise Strategy, has set out a powerful case for reducing noise levels in London. His laudable aim is limited by the fact he has no control over aircraft, including helicopters.

Recommendation

The Major is given responsibility for issuing permits for helicopters flying over London.

HN/006

First of all can I express my support for this investigation.

I am not a Londoner by birth but chose to live here in the inner city some 26 years ago. I recognize the advantages and disadvantages that living in London brings and the impact that a growing population has on the quality of life of residents and visitors to this great capital city.

Since the creation of the new governance for London it is clear that a number of measures such as the congestion charge and improvements to public transport have already contributed to a better balance between individual 'wants' and the wider 'needs' of the community.

However in the case of helicopter noise and environmental pollution it is clear that individual 'wants' (the use of helicopters for both business and leisure) has increased significantly with a consequent impact on the quality of residents' (and visitors') lives.

Living in the same house in Greenwich since 1980 – under flight paths to Heathrow, close to London City Airport and close to major traffic routes to and from Central London, my neighbours and I have experienced an exponential increase in exposure the growth in environmental noise and pollution.

Greenwich has of course been a tourist destination for many years. It is a World Heritage site and has, for example, had a higher profile from such events as the very successful London Marathon and the less successful Millennium Dome. These events have had increased publicity via TV – showing what an attractive place south east London (Greenwich Park and environs) are and have, inter alia, inevitably encouraged an increase in the number of helicopters over – flying Greenwich, hovering, circling and disturbing what little peace there is. This is apparent throughout the week but excessively so during Saturdays and Sundays.

The growth in personal income has allowed more individuals to own their own helicopters and the sightseeing via commercial helicopters has clearly increased. Quick perusal of the Internet shows that there are numerous companies offering helicopter pleasure trips over London's historic sites including Greenwich and Docklands and, as a selling point, highlighting in their publicity that these flights are normally available at the weekends.

Whilst there are designated helicopter routes across London most of which require pilots from the East or West to follow the River Thames (in case of emergency landing) to a holding point at the Isle of Dogs, helicopters from the South (or North) are apparently allowed to get to the Isle of Dogs, crossing residential areas, sightseeing in the process Greenwich Park and surrounding area and disturbing large numbers of residents and visitors. Some of the traffic appears to be to and from West London London's only heliport in Battersea via that holding point at the Isle of Dogs.

Whilst only single-engine helicopters are required to keep to the designated routes; twin-engined ones would appear to have more freedom to take a direct or indeed any route. But where is the evidence that these requirements are being met?

There is already a recognition of the impact of the current noise regulations viz a vis helicopters and to quote from the Mayor's Ambient Noise Strategy

“the limited number of routes available to single-engine machines can become heavily used during busy periods. In certain areas, such as Greenwich, helicopters may be held for air traffic control reasons, which can create additional disturbance as machines circle.”

Britain has become a 7 day per week economy but for the majority the traditional weekend is still a time for relaxation and to unwind.

Many inner city residents who live in multi occupancy houses go to one of the many fine parks provided by the local authorities and the Royal Parks for peace and quietness away from the hustle/bustle. What do they experience?
Helicopters!

There is a substantial body of research from organisations such as the London Health Commission, Mental Health Trusts and Primary Care Trusts showing the high incidence of poor mental health in the South East London boroughs (Southwark, Lewisham and Greenwich). We know that as many as 1/3 to all visits to GP's are for reasons of 'stress, anxiety and depression'. I am sure that this experience is replicated in other inner city boroughs such as Lambeth, Tower Hamlet, Newham et al.

There is also significant research showing that one of the key contributory factors to poor mental health is noise pollution – excessive noise created over which the listener has no control.

Notwithstanding all this, the 'wants' of a small number individuals seem to have priority over the 'needs' of a population totalling many millions!

There appears to be no limit on those people who are able to buy or hire helicopters, who are then able to over fly residential areas and add to the distress many people experience from this source of pollution.

This problem continues to grow. Sadly I have not kept detailed records in terms of numbers of incidents but my experience has been of a significant increase over recent years. During Sunday 30th April, for example there were at least 8 occasions during the middle of the day when our peace and quietness was destroyed by helicopters. In terms of quantitative data presumably the relevant authorities are required to keep records. I assume therefore that the Committee undertaking the investigation will have the authority to seek that information in the course of its study.

In conclusion, given the impact of helicopter noise on the quality of life on London's residents :

How can use of helicopters over London be reduced ?

Can the current imbalance between individual 'wants' and society's 'needs' on be improved ?

Should the current freedoms to over fly London be reduced to lessen the impact of noise and pollution ?

What else can be done to reduce the risk to residents in the event of engine failure ?

How are the current arrangements monitored and transgressors dealt with and

Are the current arrangements rigorous enough.

Finally, thank you for the opportunity to contribute to this study. I hope that the study has a successful outcome.

Yours sincerely
Kenneth May
(Greenwich Resident)

HN/007

Dear Mr Davies


Re: Helicopter Noise in London Investigation.

I refer to your letter of 25 April 2006 regarding the above.

I am aware that there is a more detailed consultation by the City Hall Noise Team directly with officers in Enfield who have responsibility for such environmental noise issues. I have attached their response which I am sure will answer the questions you have raised on the four points set out in your letter.

As detailed in the officer response, Enfield does not have a history of noise complaints or problems associated with helicopter flights and, because of this, it does not have specific policies or other regulatory measures in place.

Yours sincerely



Rob Leak
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Enc

Rob Leak
Chief Executive
Enfield Council

HN/008

1. IWERA was pleased to receive notification of this investigation and to have the opportunity to express views.
2. Imperial Wharf is a new development on the north side of the Thames facing on to Battersea Reach and the London Heliport. The Heliport itself is 300 – 400 metres from the nearest residential block, which is next to the river. Two further blocks, still to be constructed, will be slightly closer. The river, at this point, is about 200m. wide and this is the flight path for helicopters landing and taking off from the heliport.
3. Our members acknowledge that when they purchased apartments in Imperial Wharf they were aware of the existence of the heliport and potential noise problems. However, there is a feeling that helicopter traffic is increasing and noise problems are becoming a cause for concern.
4. We have not had an opportunity to gather detailed information or data, but we list below some general observations which we hope will be of interest to the investigation.
5. Helicopter traffic volumes – the first families took up residence in 2002. They have the impression that traffic volumes are increasing and significantly so over the past 18 months. When looking at traffic volumes, we feel it is important to study the frequency of landings at various time intervals throughout the day. There is now a considerable concentration in early evening, which is particularly disturbing for residents in the area.
6. We are also observing more flights at 'quiet' times e.g. between 22.00 and 23.00 hours and on Sundays.
7. Helicopter noise – noise levels vary with the different types of helicopter and, seemingly, with the way in which they are piloted. Not surprisingly, the noisiest seem to be the larger and heavier models, although these do not appear to be dated in any way. These noisier models also seem to be the most regular visitors and we would guess that this is the most popular model for 'taxi' services in and out of London.
8. Both the arrival and departure of helicopters are noisy events, but take-off is by far the worst. Alongside this, however, ranks time on the ground, taxiing in a confined area, leaving rotors running if the stay is short or 'warming up' if rotors have been stopped. The noise of an individual helicopter can be doubled or tripled at peak times (see concentration comment in Para. 5.), when several helicopters can be preparing for take-off in quick succession.
9. While a helicopter can land and find its parking position fairly quickly and, comparatively, without too much noise, the take-off procedure can last for several minutes, with noise levels that are particularly disturbing.
10. The apartments in Imperial Wharf have windows that are double glazed and the sound proofing is of an acceptable standard. As a result, the helicopter noise, with windows closed, e.g. in the winter months, is tolerable. On the other hand, it is almost impossible to listen to radio or television or conduct a telephone conversation if the windows are open and a helicopter is taking off or landing.

- 11.** Exhaust fumes – the distinctive smell of aviation fuel is dispersed throughout the area. While we do not rate this as a great nuisance, the fumes can be detected and particularly at peak times. The strength depends upon the wind direction, but given that the heliport now sits in the middle of a residential area, some homes will always be affected.
- 12.** Passenger loads – it is difficult to tell by observation from 2 – 300m. distance, but we have the impression that the number of passengers per helicopter arrival/departure is very few – often just one’s or two’s. We imagine that most helicopters travel in one of the directions – either in or out – without passengers. The possible conclusion is that the disturbance caused/environmental damage is disproportionate to the number of passengers carried. This, however, is pure supposition, but it should be relatively easy to verify.
- 13.** Regulations and control – our preliminary research suggests that there is very little information in the public domain about helicopter movements, when and where they can fly, noise controls and who regulates.
- 14.** The London Heliport website carries basic rules for helicopters, such as landing and take-off procedures for pilots, how long helicopters can park with rotors running etc. These appear to be self-imposed rules by Weston Aviation and, on paper, quite reasonable. However, simple observation has indicated that these rules are frequently not adhered to. It is not clear what action, if any, can be taken to ensure that the rules are followed.
- 15.** Conclusions and recommendations
- a.** We feel that there are undoubtedly environmental issues that need to be addressed. These concern both noise and pollution.
- b.** We are not pressing for an immediate crack down. Our impression is that, at present, there is probably a lack of detailed information. Nevertheless, this should not be too difficult to collect. We would recommend closer examination of:
- Flight frequencies and concentrations at certain times/on certain days
 - Analysis of payloads and reasons for flights (essential, non-essential)
 - Measurement and analysis of noise and pollution levels for the various helicopter models using the heliport
 - Study of the routes of helicopters over London – not touched upon by our comments – in order to review safety and environmental issues
- c.** We would hope that investigation and analysis on the lines indicated could be conducted in a short timescale and at modest cost. The results of the investigation could then be made available to interested parties and their could be meaningful and balanced discussion regarding the way forward.

- d.** If new regulations should be deemed necessary, we would argue strongly in favour of transparency. All parties need to know what the rules are, how they are monitored and who is responsible for regulation. Relevant data should be collected and published on a regular basis.
- e.** While an obvious comment and probably not a very helpful one, we cannot avoid the observation that if London were today seeking a site for a new heliport, the current location would not be on the shortlist. It would be ruled out because a) it is in the middle of a residential area and b) the transportation links are extremely poor.

J. S. Hawken

IMPERIAL WHARF (EAST) RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

HN/009

As Team Manager of Hackney Council's Noise Service, I am responsible for policy, enforcement and management of noise pollution in the borough.

At present, we do not deal with noise from aircrafts (including helicopters). When complaints are received, we inform callers that it is a matter for CAA and also advise them to contact the Metropolitan Police.

As a matter of record, we receive very few complaints about the problem; less than 5 a year (including complaints about aeroplanes). The complaints are often about police helicopter flights which tend to circle a given area several times. Local residents have also reported 'low-flying' helicopters which are much noisier, even though the problem lasts for only a very short time.

In order to gather meaningful information on the problem, we will begin to monitor more closely complaints of helicopter noise.

However the conclusions we can draw from complaints are:

1. there should be fewer flights;
2. at higher altitudes, where practicable and
3. all aircrafts should be fitted with quieter engines.

The above points confirm the issues raised in the Mayor's Noise Strategy and support the three policies on helicopter noise, especially 51 and 53.

In addition, we believe that consideration should be given to the following:

- i. impose stricter limits (reduction of flights) on non-essential flights
- ii. ban or impose stricter controls on non-essential night flights – this is probably already the case, but on occasions we have received complaints about night flights (possibly medical emergencies).
- iii. raise the lower flying limit (say 200m, from it's current level of 150m)

The difficulty is in monitoring and controlling any conditions that are imposed. For a start, it is doubtful whether the public is aware that they can make complaints about helicopter noise and to whom.

To get an accurate picture of the problem, the issue of public awareness needs to be addressed. Moving on from that, a link should be in place (or strengthened) to ensure that local authorities can refer all complaints to the Met Police and CAA as soon as soon as they are received.

I hope you find this response helpful.

Yours sincerely
Joe Ben Davies
Principal Pollution Control Officer
Pollution Control Team
Neighbourhoods and Regeneration
London Borough of Hackney

HN/010

In Brent we do not record complaints about helicopter (or aircraft) noise and have no statistics.

From my local knowledge, complaints are few and far between and if any ever arise, we advise the caller to contact the CAA.

In Environmental Health in Brent, we deal with statutory noise nuisance as per the Environmental Protection Act 1990, Noise and Stat Nuisance Act 1993 and the Control of Pollution Act 1974.

Hope this helps. Please let me know if you require any further info

Clive Dinsey
Service Manager
London Borough of Brent

HN/011

Helicopter routes H2, H5, H9 and H10 pass over Hillingdon borough. Helicopters use Heathrow airport and RAF Northolt which are both situated in this borough. Also, helicopters use Denham Aerodrome which is situated only a few miles outside the borough. However, our records show that the number of helicopter noise complaints received in this borough is small. For example, in years 2002 to 2005, only between 2 and 5 helicopter noise complaints per year were received. These figures do not include helicopter noise complaints made direct to Heathrow Airport, RAF Northolt airport or Denham Aerodrome. One should be careful about judging noise impact solely on the basis of numbers of noise complaints. It is, nevertheless, our perception that helicopter noise is not a major problem for residents of this borough. In view of this, our reply to the issues raised in your letter is necessarily brief.

We support policies 51, 52 and 53 contained in the Mayor's Ambient Noise Strategy. Our own policies on helicopter noise would be mainly in the form of general planning policies contained in the Council's general development plan. For example, any proposal for a new heliport would be determined in accordance with our general planning policy advising against granting planning permission for uses which are likely to be detrimental to the amenity of properties because of noise. Similarly, we have a planning policy advising against the siting of noise sensitive development such as family housing and schools in areas which are exposed to unacceptable levels of noise, such as helicopter noise.

I regret that I do not have any relevant statistical information on helicopter movements or helicopter noise which would be of use to you.

This response need not be kept confidential.

If you have any queries on this matter, please contact the undersigned.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Mike Rickaby
Environmental Protection Officer
London Borough of Hillingdon

HN/012

The British Helicopter Advisory Board (BHAB) is the Trade Association that represents the British civil helicopter industry. Our membership is comprised of some 250 organisations and individuals that are directly involved in the industry and includes the major UK helicopter manufacturer, numerous commercial operators, Police Authorities, Emergency Services operators, heliport operators, pilots and private individuals. When applicants are accepted as members of the BHAB, they subscribe to the ideals and principles promoted by the organisation. Our mandate is to promote the safe and responsible use of helicopters with due regard for environmental considerations.

I have studied the three principles in the Mayor's Noise Strategy and confirm that the BHAB can in principle support them all. We strive for public acceptance of the helicopter and recognise that noise is a major factor in this. The manufacturers are making good progress in this area and new aircraft entering service today are significantly quieter than their predecessors. In the medium term however, the current generation of helicopters must continue to support business, local authorities and the general public in the many roles for which the helicopter so adept to the greater benefit of the City of London.

Our website at www.bhab.org contains a very comprehensive set of guidelines and advice on a variety of related issues and I have included some extracts below.

SECTION 5 - ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

5.1 Noise Made By Helicopters In Flight - Civil Aviation Act 1982

It is well known, but worth repeating, that under Section 76 of the Civil Aviation Act 1982, no action lies in respect of trespass or nuisance by reason of the flight of an aircraft over any property where the aircraft is flown reasonably in accordance with the standards of good airmanship having regard to the circumstances.

5.2 Noise At The Heliport/Helipad

Section 77 of the Civil Aviation Act 1982 precludes persons from claiming damages under common law for nuisance in respect of noise and vibration at a CAA licensed heliport provided the relevant requirements and conditions laid down in the ANO are met. Furthermore, the combined effect of Section 78 of the Act and Regulation 13 of the Air Navigation (General Regulations) 1993 is to extend the immunity in respect of noise and vibration caused by:-

- helicopters landing and taking off;
- helicopters moving on the ground or water;
- engines in the aircraft being operated for the purpose of ensuring their satisfactory performance, bringing them to a proper temperature in preparation for, or at the end of, a flight, or ensuring that the instruments, accessories or other components of the aircraft are in a satisfactory condition.

In the case of unlicensed heliports and landing sites, individuals are able to pursue a claim for noise nuisance under common law but, as already stated in Section 5.1 above, this does not extend to helicopters in flight.

5.3 Helicopter Noise Certification

It is a mandatory requirement that, prior to the issue of a Certificate of Airworthiness of a new type of helicopter, it meets certain internationally agreed noise standards. The standards are laid down by the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO), to which the UK is a signatory, and involve noise measurements whilst the helicopter is landing, taking off and overflying at its maximum permitted all-up weight. Larger types of helicopter are permitted to make more noise in the same way that large fixed wing aeroplanes are permitted to make more noise than smaller ones. A copy of Schedule I Part IX of the Air Navigation (Noise Certification) Order 1990 - Noise Standards Required for Issue of a Noise Certificate to Helicopters Specified in Article 6(10) - is shown at Appendix A. All current light types of helicopter meet these standards. For the future the European Joint Aviation Authorities will set the standards through the medium of Joint Aviation Requirement (JAR) 36.

5.4 Methods of Measuring Helicopter Noise

In the past, the use of contours based on the Noise and Number Index (NNI) was the recognised method of measuring the degree of disturbance caused by helicopters. However this method has been superseded in favour of Leq contours on grounds that they are more appropriate to modern conditions than the NNI. Following a Public Inquiry in 1991 into a proposal to develop a heliport near Cannon Street station in London, the Secretary of State for the Environment asked the Secretary of State for Transport to develop a more robust means of assessing urban helicopter noise impact. This work, carried out between 1992 and 1995, included development of a helicopter noise contour model (HCON) by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) which calculates the Leq (dBA) noise contours taking account of various features that distinguish helicopter noise from the noise of fixed wing aircraft. Important among these are different directional characteristics from helicopter movements within the heliport boundary (ie: hover, ground-taxi and idle).

Helicopter noise characteristics not only differ markedly from type to type; they are also extremely sensitive to flight configuration, particularly during manoeuvres involving accelerations and turns. Because of these effects, helicopter noise contours are much more difficult to model accurately than those around conventional airports. Although HCON is very flexible with regard to the amount of detail it can accommodate, its output is only as good as the input data upon which it relies, and this is rather limited. For example, in its current form HCON would be of limited use for evaluating a specific heliport proposal (ie: at a specific location involving specific helicopter types and operating procedures in the presence of particular buildings and other features that affect sound propagation). If required for such applications, it would, as a minimum,

have to be 'calibrated' by flight tests (ie: at the actual site or at other suitable representative locations) and supplemented by helicopter specific data (eg: from the manufacturers).

5.5 Control of Aircraft Noise

The Department of the Environment Transport and the Regions (DETR) issued an updated consultation document "Control of Aircraft Noise" in July 2000. A relevant extract reads:

"9. The 1991 consultation also asked for views about the possibility of extending the Environmental Protection Act 1990 so that it applied to temporary sites used by helicopters. The responses to this consultation showed no evidence of persistent or widespread problems at temporary and private helicopter sites and it was decided that an amendment to the Act would not be justified. Also, given the limited extent of the problem, it was felt that regulating the use of helicopter sites through a local authority licensing system would be too bureaucratic and expensive and would remove helicopters' flexibility of operation. Since 1991, there has been no obvious increase in problems at temporary and private sites, so we are not considering any new provisions to restrict or regulate the use of these sites used for helicopters or other aircraft.

"10. The essence of our proposals is that matters should be resolved locally (and where possible amicably) between the parties. We therefore propose that noise amelioration schemes should have the status of agreements between aerodromes and their users, subject to civil rather than criminal sanctions in the event of dispute."

The BHAB supports the proposals contained in this document.

5.6 Some Comments on Helicopter Noise

The subject of helicopter noise is complex. Evidence shows that there are a number of factors which have given the helicopter a poor public perception. A survey in the USA conducted by the Helicopter Society of America which asked residents adjacent to heliports what they disliked most about helicopters showed that 'noise' as such came about half way down the list. Surprisingly, safety came bottom but intrusiveness or the invasion of privacy came top.

A study of Community Disturbance Caused by General and Business Aviation Operations (published by the Department of Transport, 1988, £8.95) indicated that noise disturbance was particularly strongly influenced by public perceptions of the nature and conduct of flying activities.

Thus to some extent the type of mission upon which a helicopter is engaged has a direct bearing on public reaction. Those engaged on police or ambulance work appear to be more acceptable in the eyes of the public than those carrying key staff of large commercial companies. Filming and survey work can also cause problems, especially if the helicopter is either hovering over the same spot for long periods, or is operating in a confined area. The BHAB has prepared three Codes of Conduct for Helicopter Pilots; one covering general operations; a second specifically for aerial work and photography over urban congested areas; and a third for helicopter operations in National Parks. These are shown at Appendices B, C and D respectively.

PILOT'S CODE OF CONDUCT

1. ALWAYS FLY AS HIGH AS POSSIBLE consistent with the weather and other factors. This will reduce your projected noise at ground level, and also give you more scope to find a suitable landing site in the event of an emergency.
2. ALWAYS AVOID POPULATED AREAS if possible. You owe it to the public to help to preserve the environment. You will also find more landing sites out in the open in the event of an emergency.
3. NEVER BANK SHARPLY if you can avoid it. The sharp deflection from level flight will cause a rise in your aircraft's noise signature.
4. ALWAYS GET AIRBORNE TO HEIGHT AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE consistent with a safe climb speed. This will reduce your noise footprint and increase your safety.
5. ALWAYS LAND AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE once you know your landing area is clear. Again this will limit your noise footprint and please both your passengers and air traffic control.
6. NEVER STRAY FROM ACKNOWLEDGED ROUTES or you are sure to be spotted and risk complaint. Short cuts could prove to be an aggravation to you as well as those on the ground.
7. ALWAYS WARN PEOPLE OF YOUR ARRIVAL IF POSSIBLE if you want to be welcomed.
8. ALWAYS TAKE TIME TO TALK TO INTERESTED PARTIES ABOUT HELICOPTERS
The Public's interest in all forms of aviation, especially helicopters, provides a great opportunity to extol the virtues of rotorcraft.

In order to contain this letter to reasonable proportions, I have not included the text from Annexes B, C and D that provide codes of conduct for specific types of flight but they are easily available on our website. I hope that you have found this information to be helpful.

It is my intention to attend the public meeting on 13 July as an observer.

Yours sincerely,

Peter Norton

Peter Norton
Chief Executive
British Helicopter Advisory Board

HN/013

I am writing in response to a letter from Mr Johnson dated 25th April and provide the following information which I hope will assist. I am responsible for the day to day tasking of the Metropolitan Police Service aircraft.

Type of aircraft used; Three AS355N 'Twin Squirrels'. These are due to be replaced towards the end of 2006 for three EC 145's. Although the 145 is a larger machine it is indeed the quietest in its class. It is in fact 6.7dBA below ICAO limits.

Role; The aircraft are deployed for Police air support and are a major risk management tool for the organisation. They are based at Lippitts Hill in Epping Forest.

Policy; The provision of aerial support provided by helicopters is a tactical policing option that is primarily aimed at managing risk.

The Helicopters operated by the Metropolitan Police Service are deployed throughout 24hrs according to strict tasking criteria and for four particular strategic purposes. To counter terrorist activity in London, to enhance the safety of both public and police officers, to gather intelligence and to tactically support officers at ground level with an airborne perspective of activity that cannot be seen at ground level.

Different tasking criteria are applied dependant on the particular role at the time. For example, will the use of the aircraft at a particular incident provide safety cover unachievable by other means, such as at a spontaneous firearms incident? Is there a risk to life (a vulnerable missing person or child)? Are there risks to police officers (suspects on roofs, scaffolding, railway tracks, near water, etc)? These are all things that are considered every time before the aircraft is launched. Best value to the organisation and the taxpayer is considered. Environmental impact, particularly at night, is also a major consideration. Only 15% of the Units flying time is between 1am and 9am and all those launches fall into the Public/Police safety category. Indeed over 50% of all flying time is for that category. In excess of 80% of all of the Air Support Unit's deployments are in direct response to requests from officers on the ground.

The unit operates a 'Fly Friendly' Policy. This means the aircraft go as high as permitted at the time by Air Traffic Control (this height changes dependant on several variables). We descend to whatever height is required to complete the task and remain on task for only as long is operationally necessary. We have the advantage of not being restricted to heliroutes and therefore our routes are varied whenever possible spreading the noise footprint so that it is not concentrated over one area unnecessarily. Recent investment in new camera systems mean that we can operate higher than before and remain operationally effective, reducing noise footprint on the ground.

Movement Stats ; Currently the unit averages about 8300 movements per annum.

Sgt John Gleeson
DUEO/Operations Manager
Metropolitan Police Service Air Support Unit

HN/014

1. Preamble

1.1. The Advertising Association (AA) is a federation of 31 trade bodies and organisations representing the advertising and promotional marketing industries, including advertisers, agencies, the media and support services in the UK. It is the only body that speaks for all sides of an industry that was worth over £18.3 billion in 2004. Further information about the AA, its membership and remit, can be found at the following location:

<http://www.adassoc.org.uk/>

2. Introduction & Summary

2.1. Having been identified by the Environment Committee of the London Assembly as a party likely to have an interest in the freedom of helicopter operators to carry advertising flags or banners, the AA welcomes the opportunity to participate in this investigation into the noise generated by such aircraft here. The AA notes that the parameters of the Committee's investigation is intended to exclude incidental 'livery' advertising, for example, on the airframe identifying the carrier and other such information.

2.2. In this submission the AA:

- provides an overview of the legislative and regulatory framework as it relates to heliborne advertising;
- sets out its support for the freedom of helicopter operators to engage in such activity, assuming it is conducted in a responsible manner;
- comments on the parameters of this response; and
- responds to the three specific questions put by the Environment Committee of the London Assembly to the Association in the letter of the former to it dated 25 April 2006.

2.3. Where helpful the AA has cross-referenced material within this submission. The AA is not seeking of any part of this submission to be treated as confidential.

3. Legislative and regulatory overview

3.1. The statutory basis for allowing helicopters to carry advertising material is The Civil Aviation (Aerial Advertising) Regulations 1995 (SI 1995/2943). This Statutory Instrument repealed and replaced The Civil Aviation (Aerial Advertising) Regulations 1983 (SI 1983/1885), which had not permitted heliborne advertising. SI 1995/2943 also repealed and replaced coterminously the provisions contained within The Civil Aviation (Aerial Advertising) (Captive Balloons) Regulations 1984 (SI 1984/474).

3.2. Within Government, responsibility for aerial advertising resides within the Civil Aviation Policy Division of the Department of Transport rather than with the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA). Helicopter operators are, however, only allowed to carry advertising with the permission of the CAA. Such permission documents, which set out very strict operational limitations, must be sought by all those helicopter operators wanting to engage in this particular area of commercial activity; and, renewed on an annual basis by those wanting to continue such operations.

4. Support for the freedom of helicopter operators to conduct heliborne advertising

4.1. The AA was supportive of the proposals made by the Department of Transport to allow any aerial advertising to take place in the first place via SI 1983/1885 and the more liberal regime, inherent in SI 1995/2943, that replaced it. In respect of the present investigation, the AA would add that it continues to be supportive of the freedom of helicopters and other platforms, to carry non-livery advertising over London, if such advertising is conducted in a responsible manner.

5. Questions of the Environment Committee of the London Assembly

5.a. Parameters of the AA's response to the Environment Committee's questions

5.a.1. In the AA's response to the questions set out below, the Association has taken account of the fact that the Committee's overall investigation relates to concerns around noise, rather than any other issues, such as the content of the advertising carried by helicopters.

5.b. AA's response to the specific questions posed by the Environment Committee

5.b.1: Do you consider that the environmental impacts of the means of carrying the advertising in this case reflect adversely on the social image of the advertising industry?

5.b.1.1. No. The AA does not consider that the environmental impacts of the means of carrying the advertising, in terms of the noise created, reflect adversely on the social image of the advertising industry - the caveat being that such activity is conducted in a responsible manner.

5.b.1.2. The AA notes that the trade body responsible for helicopter operators – the British Helicopter Advisory Board (BHAB) – always advises its members, whether private or commercial, to fly as high and as expeditiously as possible at all times and with due consideration for environmental issues. Indeed the mandate of the BHAB is to promote the safe and responsible use of helicopters with due regard for environmental considerations and all members of the Board subscribe to this central ethic.

5.b.1.3. It is noteworthy that unlike some other comparable platforms for aerial advertising, helicopters are incapable of varying their engine noise in flight, since this is constant.

5.b.2. Do you have, or would you consider producing, any codes on use of aerial advertising?

5.b.2.1. The AA does not have, and has no plans to produce, any codes on the use of heliborne advertising.

5.b.2.2. A decision on whether to produce such a code always rests with the media carrying the advertising, in this case the helicopter operators themselves.

5.b.2.3. The BHAB's Code *Helicopters in the Local Community* contains no explicit reference to aerial advertising. The AA does, however, consider the BHAB's Code to be an extremely useful document. Section 5 of the Code relates to a number of

environmental issues, including how helicopter operators should behave to reduce their impact in terms of noise on local communities.

5.b.2.4. In light of the Environment Committee of the London Assembly's investigation (as well as the concerns that must have elicited it) and having consulted with key constituents within the AA's membership, the Association has agreed to take the following action in mid-June 2006:

- To publicise the existence of the BHAB Code across the whole AA membership.
- To recommend that any advertisers entering into contracts with helicopter operators, irrespective of whether they are BHAB members or not, to carry aerial advertising on their behalf make it a condition of contract that the operator abide by Section 5 of the Board's *Helicopters in the Local Community Code*.

5.b.2.5. The AA considers that adoption of this second policy by the advertising industry might obviate the need for the helicopter operators to produce a separate code on heliborne advertising themselves. This is because the AA considers that the general principles of the BHAB Code have applicability to the specific activity of heliborne advertising as well.

5.b.2.6. A copy of the BHAB's Code *Helicopters in the Local Community* can be downloaded from the following location: <http://www.bhab.org/>

5.b.3. Could you provide any information on the extent of the use of helicopters or other aerial platforms for advertising and if you consider that demand is likely to grow in the future?

5.b.3.1. The AA understands that there are presently only two companies operating in the UK with permission from the CAA to carry advertising banners or flags slung from the cargo hooks of their helicopters. (The AA understands that helicopters are not capable of towing banners as, if towed, they would risk becoming entangled in the blades of their tail rotors – something with the clear potential for serious consequences.)

5.b.3.2. Of these two companies, one is a member of the BHAB. The other operator is, however, not permitted by the CAA to fly banners over built-up areas due to design and system limitations. Thus only one company presently conducts such activity over London and is in BHAB membership. The company in question operates under the strict controls issued by the CAA, as referred to above in Section 3.2 of this submission.

5.b.3.3. The AA would anticipate that the amount of expenditure on aerial advertising (including heliborne) is very small in comparison with those more common media that are measured by the Association, such as print, broadcast and internet advertising. Consequently, the AA does not have any historic data that might give some idea as to future trends or the factors that might stimulate advertiser demand for aerial advertising media platforms in the future.

5.b.3.4. The AA does not have any statistical information on the extent or use of those other aerial platforms for advertising permitted by SI 1995/2943. The 1995 Regulations cover fixed-wing aircraft, airships, kites and balloons (either captive or in free controlled flight). There was clearly demand a decade ago amongst operators of such platforms for them to be able to sell them as advertising media – hence their specific inclusion in SI 1995/2943. Should the Environment Committee of the London Assembly require further information on these sectors the AA would recommend it

contact the relevant representative trade bodies for commercial fixed-wing aircraft, airships, balloons and kites direct.

Jim Rothwell
The Advertising Agency

HN/015

Dear sir,

I refer to your letter sent to Croydon's Chief Executive regarding your investigation into helicopter noise.

In Croydon we do not have any real problems with helicopter noise either from heliports, of which as far as I am aware we don't have any, or helicopter's themselves.

We don't appear to be on any flight path that causes any problems.
Based on this I do not see how I can assist in your investigation.

Clive Barwis
Pollution Enforcement Manager.
Pollution Enforcement Team,
London Borough of Croydon

HN/016

Dear Richard,
I am responding to Darren Johnson's letter of 25 April about helicopter noise.

I am responsible for policy on environmental noise in England and my specific role covers:

- the transposition and implementation in the UK of the Environmental Noise Directive (END);
- noise mapping and action planning;
- noise and planning policy;
- research into the effects of noise and how it can be managed;
- strategy for noise.

For the purposes of noise mapping under END, we have concluded that heliports would not reach the qualifying threshold for preparing noise maps.

I'm not sure I can give a very helpful reply at this stage. We haven't yet scoped out what the noise strategy will cover although helicopter noise could well feature. As we are not mapping helicopter noise specifically they are unlikely to feature in action plans for agglomerations (which will be an even greater reason to pick it up under the strategy).

I'm sorry I can't be more helpful but we're still at a very early stage.

Wendy Hartnell
Head of Environmental Noise Branch
DEFRA

HN/017

Dear Mr Davies,

Further to your letter regarding the above, please note that we have very few complaints or enquiries relating to helicopter noise in our borough. The most recent complaint was as far back as 2001 from a resident complaining about helicopters cutting the corner around Hanger Lane gyratory onto the A40. I am aware that there is a route over our borough, mainly above the A40, and from our offices you can clearly see them, and they do appear to cut the corner occasionally.

I deal with aircraft noise complaints so it is very likely that I would have to deal with any helicopter noise complaints. Nothing in our service plan specifies this but this is because it isn't regarded as an issue. We have no specific policies in place in the same way we have in terms of aircraft noise.

I'm afraid I have little else to add - I hope this is of use to you.

regards
Liza Ctori
team leader, environmental quality
Housing and Environmental Health
London Borough of Ealing

HN/018

I write in response to your email regarding helicopter noise.

Although we are not in a position where we can submit formal evidence I would make the following observations.

1. Residents in the borough do suffer from helicopter noise. When this is investigated it is usually found to be as a result of activity by the police or ambulance service.
2. To effectively investigate helicopter noise we are advised the registration number is needed. This is impossible to obtain at night.
3. Investigation of complaints is not easy and we are having discussions on this matter with DfT see 4 below.
4. We do not get many complaints about this matter as there is little positive action we can take however we had a number of complaints on 18th May regarding the TV helicopters used to film the A380, hence the discussion with the DfT. I will also be raising this matter tomorrow at HACC.
5. We have a policy within our development plan re helicopters see extract below.

POLICY T.6.8 HELICOPTER LANDING AND TAKE-OFF FACILITIES AND HELICOPTER FLIGHTS

The Council will oppose the development of helicopter landing and take-off facilities in the Borough which lead to an unacceptable level of noise pollution and other adverse environmental impacts. The Council will make representations against development of

similar helicopter facilities elsewhere which would lead to an unacceptable level of noise disturbance in the Borough.

Reasons (Applicable to Policy T.6.8)

11.38 Helicopters produce considerable noise nuisance and the development of landing or take off facilities for helicopters in the Borough would increase the nuisance to residents arising from helicopters. The development of helicopter facilities elsewhere, particularly in London, could also have an impact on Hounslow as a number of preferred routes pass over or pass very close to the Borough. The Council will also press for greater planning controls over the permitted temporary use of sites for helicopter landings and take-offs for a maximum of 28 days per annum.

6. We would resist any move to reintroduce the Heathrow - Gatwick (or any other airport) helicopter link for environmental reasons, not least noise.

Rob Gibson
LB Hounslow

HN/019

It is very hard for us to monitor if a helicopter strays from the flightpaths. For us problems arise when they come too low and disturb the wildlife on the reserve. However in the last six years since we have been open there has only been 3-4 occasions when this has happened. For us the helicopters aren't much of a problem.

Kristenne Pickles
Acting Centre Manager
WWT London Wetland Centre
Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust

HN/020

On behalf of Mr Keith Reid, Chairman of the Royal Aeronautical Society Rotorcraft Group, thank you for the opportunity to contribute to your investigation into helicopter noise. The Royal Aeronautical Society is the learned society for the aerospace and aviation community. It has some 20,000 members in the UK and over 5000 members abroad. Most have some active or past connection with industry or academia.

The Society is a source of objective information and analysis of aerospace and aviation issues - technological, environmental, economic and policy related. Its main resource is the various specialist committees comprised of individual members, many of whom are subject matter experts in their fields of technical expertise. The Society publishes the world's leading peer reviewed journals on aeronautics and sponsors numerous academic and general conferences on specialist topics. Although it does have corporate members, the Society does not represent the interests of any individual company or group.

This note is based on a paper presented at a Royal Aeronautical Society Rotorcraft Group Conference in October 1999. Although the authors were then employees of GKN-Westland, their work should not be interpreted as reflecting the views of that company. The paper has been reviewed by appropriately experienced members of the Rotorcraft Group. While its contents are slightly outdated, particularly in understating

recent progress made in the introduction of new helicopters with reduced noise signatures, it remains a relevant analysis of the complex interaction of individual issues which influence the subject. A hard copy of this paper is enclosed.

Their main findings were:

- Despite many helicopters meeting or bettering civil certification noise standards, substantial local opposition to helicopter operations over London continues to exist.
- While the acoustic (direct) noise of helicopters does vary according to their age and size (older or larger types tend to be objectively noisier), non-acoustic (virtual noise) characteristics tend to be more important in determining the public's acceptance of helicopter operations.
- Virtual noise is the result largely of subjective factors including:
 - Perceptions of usage – helicopters used by the emergency services are regarded more benignly than “site-seeing” flights, or operations believed to be for the wealthy. Operations clearly linked to the local economy attract few complaints.
 - There is a link between perceptions about helicopter safety which are not consistent with the statistical record and are likely to be linked to lack of knowledge on the part of the public.
 - The irregularity of helicopter flights tends to make them appear more intrusive than even large commercial aircraft operations which, although having a higher objective noise foot print, generate a stream of continuous background noise.
 - Prevailing ambient noise levels affect perceptions, and a quieter setting will accentuate airborne noise, especially if radiated from above. This is particularly important when locating heliports and defining the flight paths for arriving and departing helicopters.
 - It may also be the case that helicopter noise is reflected off high buildings and people may be unable to identify the source of the noise. This may also amplify the noise.

All of these factors lead observers to feel that helicopters are noisier than conventional light aircraft which tend to fly at the same altitudes. However, it is evident that existing regulatory regimes covering helicopter noise do not take sufficient note of virtual noise in setting standards.

- The distinctive aerodynamic rotor blade slap noise generated by helicopter rotors – colloquially described as the “thumpa-thumpa” sound is difficult to disguise. Contemporary design is aimed at lessening these effects, as is the restriction of abrupt manoeuvring and/or rapid initiation of descent which can create this noise. However, this sound serves to act as a trigger for virtual noise responses.
- There are potential mitigation strategies:
 - Encourage the design of yet quieter helicopters by more accurately defining the levels of acceptable acoustic noise. There is much design work under way to reduce the acoustic noise of helicopters.
 - Enforce specific mandatory operational requirements for the noisiest (predominantly older and ex-military) helicopters such as in place at Issy-les-Moulineau airport in Paris.

- Require helicopters to over-fly at higher altitudes – there is a direct and dramatic correlation between virtual noise effects and height.
- Require approach-to-landing over water or over high ambient noise areas.
- Require pilots to tailor the manoeuvres that they undertake, particularly around high usage areas such as heliports, to reduce the amplitude of rotor blade slap noise that is generated.
- Publicise objective data about helicopter safety and ensure that this information forms part of the public debate on helicopter noise issues.
- Apply regulations to all classes of helicopters, as individual bad cases will trigger negative responses for all flights.

The Society will be willing (subject to availability) to provide a witness with expertise in helicopter noise studies at your formal Hearing on July 13th. Any questions regarding this note should be directed to me on 0207 670 4361 or keith.hayward@raes.org.uk.

Yours truly,
 Professor Keith Hayward
 Head of Research, Royal Aeronautical Society

HN/021

Dear Richard Davies,

In response to Darren Johnson's letter of 25 April concerning the London Assembly Environment Committee's investigation into helicopter noise in London, I am responding in the role of principal policy officer responsible for preparing advice to the Mayor on London Ambient Noise Strategy.

As you will be aware, the Mayor does not have any powers to control the numbers or types of helicopters flying over London, the heights they fly, or the routes they use. The use of helicopters may be influenced where planning permission for additional helicopter take-off and landing facilities is required. The Mayor has indicated that he will look very carefully into the noise impacts of any helicopter facilities in planning applications referred to him, in terms of impacts on residents, workers and others.

It is noted that the Committee proposes to 'examine the effectiveness of the three policies on helicopter noise in the Mayor's Noise Strategy.' It is worth recalling that the Greater London Authority Act 1999 required the Mayor to produce a London Ambient Noise Strategy, although the Government had not produced a National Noise Strategy, or mapping of noise from road, rail, aircraft and other sources, and action planning under the European Environmental Noise Directive 2002/49/EC, which it has indicated it is to commission. To avoid duplication and potentially abortive spending, the Mayor's Noise Strategy was thus obliged in many areas to identify issues which Government and others need to consider in London's interests; it was to that extent a 'bidding' document. The effectiveness of many of the policies in the Mayor's Noise Strategy will thus be best assessed when a National Noise Strategy and a London agglomeration noise action plan are produced. The former is expected during 2007, and the latter is required by the Directive by mid 2008.

The Committee's investigation is timely in relation to influencing how National Noise Strategy addresses helicopter noise. It is also timely in the context of the publication of the Report of the London CTR Review Group of September 2005¹. The document identifies a number of areas where there is potential for change in helicopter movements in London airspace. Attachment 5 provides some broad outline statistics, and the further work indicated should provide an opportunity for more helicopter data to be produced cost effectively by organisations involved in air traffic control. As the Committee will be aware, there is no regularly published source of data on numbers of helicopters using particular routes or flying over particular areas. Changes from year to year in the use of the heliport at Battersea, for which the Civil Aviation Authority does publish statistics, are not necessarily a guide to changes in overall movements over London since, of course, helicopters operate from many locations around the region, such as the airfields at Biggin Hill, Denham and Fairoaks.

I would, of course, very much welcome the opportunity of assisting Secretariat officers in assessing incoming evidence from a technical noise management viewpoint and providing relevant advice in support of the investigation.

Yours sincerely,
Max Dixon
Principal Policy Officer, Noise
Greater London Authority

HN/022

Dear Mr Davies

Your letter addressed to Mr Myers, inviting comments on the Council's experience of helicopter noise, has been forwarded to me. I am pleased that the London Assembly's Environment Committee has taken an interest in this matter, as we are aware that several residents, particularly those living near to the Metro Business Aviation Heliport in Battersea, do experience disturbance from this form of noise.

Unfortunately, the Council is not able to provide you with much information specifically on the four areas that you requested, however, as the Royal Borough is situated close to the heliport, we felt it was important to respond and pass on what we can.

In 2000, I based my noise and acoustics diploma project around the subject of helicopter noise - *'Is helicopter noise a significant source of noise annoyance to surveyed residents in the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea?'*. It examined the effects that flying activities (take-off, landing and flyover) associated with the heliport had on certain residents living near by, in terms of noise and annoyance. Noise measurements were taken at three sites situated at different distances from the heliport. In addition, questionnaires were delivered to 120 residents that lived near to two of the sites. Although the number of returned questionnaires was low, the subjective responses indicated that, when compared with the objective noise measurements for helicopter flyover, the level of background noise relative to helicopter noise was significant in determining annoyance. Whilst the study is six years old, if you would like a copy, I would be willing to post one to you.

The number of complaints relating to helicopter noise, that the Council has received from residents in recent years, has dropped. This is likely to be because residents are

¹ See http://www.caa.co.uk/docs/7/London_CTR_Review_Group_Report.pdf

now aware that we are not able to exercise direct control over this problem, as the noise created is specifically excluded from the scope of the Environmental Protection Act. Therefore they know there is little point in contacting us. This suspicion was confirmed when I contacted the Chair of a local environmental group known as the 'Environment Round Table', regarding your investigation.

We are aware that many residents within this group are disturbed by helicopter noise. Several years ago, the Council did try to set up a helicopter noise reporting scheme with the heliport. We produced reporting cards for residents to complete with information that would enable the heliport to identify whether it was a helicopter which had business with the heliport, and then whether the pilot had complied with all relevant policies. A copy of the card is enclosed. Initially, the heliport was very supportive of this scheme, but unfortunately, the manager then changed several times, and after considerable efforts to finalise the scheme, the Council felt it was no longer worthwhile to allocate further time to pursue it.

As you aware, the heliport is located directly under the flight paths of aircraft approaching Heathrow's Westerly runways, so helicopter routes were established in the 1960's to ensure there is adequate separation between aircraft. These cover the whole of the London Control Zone. Route H4 seems to be the route which causes our residents most disturbance. Anecdotal information from the Chair of the Environment Round Table says that pilots often appear to fly over residential areas to reach the heliport rather than following the river. Those that do are presumably pilots of twin engined helicopters, because although obliged to approach and climb out over the river, they are generally allowed to route direct rather than follow the lanes specified for single engined types.

Hovering rather than flyover is also more irritating, and residents are also concerned whether there are sufficient controls over these actions. When events are held in Hyde Park, helicopters often hover for prolonged periods which are a particular nuisance. Other incidents have been reported with regards to the use of Chelsea Barracks. Whilst movements from the Police and Air Ambulance Service are known to have caused disturbance, residents have more sympathy with these.

You have asked for comments on the effectiveness of the three policies on helicopter noise in the Mayor's Noise Strategy. Overall, we are not aware that residents have noticed a difference in noise and disturbance since the introduction of these policies. We would be very keen to hear from you what work has been done to implement them and what improvements you think have resulted, as I know our residents would be interested.

I look forward to seeing the results of the investigation and learning what you propose to do with the outcome.

Yours sincerely
Rebecca Brown
Pollution Strategy Officer, Environmental Quality Unit.
Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea

HN/023

Dear Mr Davies,

Thank you for your letter of 25 April concerning the London Assembly's investigation of helicopter noise in London.

The London Heliport, operated by Weston (Aviation) Ltd is located to the west of the city and is approaching fifty years of safe operations since its inception. Although we are the only CAA licensed heliport in London, we cannot comment on the wider impact of any changes in the level of helicopter traffic and noise may have had London-wide.

The heliport has a circular air traffic zone (ATZ), controlled by our own air traffic staff, which two miles in diameter. Helicopter traffic in the zone is controlled and co-ordinated locally only during periods when the heliport is operationally active. Outside of these periods of activity, which may be during our permitted opening hours, the airspace is controlled by National Air Traffic Services (NATS) radar controllers based at West Drayton.

When the heliport is open and active our air traffic controllers deal with civil and military helicopter traffic in and out of the heliport as well as traffic transiting along the designated heli-route (the course of the River Thames) which bisects our ATZ. In addition our controllers deal with other flights which affect our ATZ including those in and out of the Royal Palaces, military barracks, Battersea Power Station, and also any other helicopter traffic which may be operating in the Battersea ATZ such as the Metropolitan Police Air Support Unit, the London Air Ambulance (HEMS) and news-gathering helicopters. Recently we helped co-ordinate helicopter traffic flying entertainers in and out of the "Live 8" concert in Hyde Park.

We work very hard with NATS and our customer operators to smooth the flow of helicopter traffic into and out of the heliport by carefully managing our landing slot system in order to reduce the impact of our operation both locally and beyond our ATZ.

We are aware however that it is not only changes in overall helicopter traffic levels which may affect the impact of helicopter noise on Londoners, but also short-term changes in the circulation of all air traffic in the wider London ATZ. For example changes to the level of traffic in and out of City Airport or runway direction at Heathrow may in turn affect the routing of helicopters. Changes in the weather such as cloud-base height may also close some available routings to helicopters. In this way helicopter traffic which might normally follow one route is re-directed so affecting Londoners in another part of the city.

Weston (Aviation) Ltd are members of the British Helicopter Advisory Board (BHAB), and as such advise all users of the heliport to operate under "Fly Neighbourly" principles which follow the BHAB "Pilot's Code of Conduct" available on their website. At the heliport itself we strive to minimise the overall impact of noise on the ground from start-ups and shut-downs by not permitting ground running of helicopter engines for any longer than is necessary to perform the task in hand.

We take very seriously our environmental responsibilities toward our neighbours, taking time to investigate and explain any occurrences which give rise to complaints which we receive about noise or apparently non-standard helicopter operations within our ATZ. Complaints about occurrences outside of our ATZ, whilst out of our control, are also taken seriously and we try to help or offer an explanation where we can. Where we are

unable to help or offer explanation we normally refer complainants to the Civil Aviation Authority.

The usage of helicopters is clearly on the increase as high-ranking government officials, businessmen, emergency services, military and high-profile individuals appreciate the speed and flexibility of this mode of transport.

Offsetting this increase in traffic is the contribution of constantly improving technical efficiency of helicopters toward the reduction in noise pollution. We believe that one cancels the other as time progresses.

We have seen a copy of the BHAB response and fully support their comments.

Regrettably due to annual leave I shall be unable to attend the public meeting on July 13 at City Hall.

Yours sincerely,
Simon Hutchins
Heliport Manager
Weston Aviation Limited

HN/024

Over the last nine years, where we have had computer recorded information on complaints received, Lewisham have recorded just 7 complaints in connection with helicopter noise. The complaints on the whole also appear to be isolated occurrences. One of the complaints in 2004 did however indicate regular disturbances from flight movements. These were reportedly taking place in the area around Lewisham Hill, Blackheath Hill and Princes Rise, SE13. The other complaints related to emergency helicopters that were low flying and were allegedly causing a lot of noise disturbance. A complaint was received about helicopter movements from the Tower Hamlet's side of the Thames in 1999, which their Planning Department were investigating and as no further complaints were received in connection with this it was assumed that the take offs and landings at Tower Hamlets had stopped soon after the initial complaint. With the exception of the emergency flights, the complainants were advised to contact the Civil Aviation Authority for more information.

As Lewisham has received so few complaints, it has not adopted any specific policy, management and/or operational procedure.

I hope the above information is of use in your collation of data and study on the effects caused by helicopter noise.

Chris Howard
Pollution Control Officer
London Borough of Lewisham

HN/025

Dear Mr Davies

I refer to a letter addressed to the NATS Company Secretary from Mr D Johnson, Chair of the London Assembly Environment Committee, dated 25 April. The letter sought information on NATS' role in the handling of helicopter traffic over London. I hope the following comments address your request.

NATS is responsible for the provision of the air traffic control service for helicopter traffic over London, a function discharged through dedicated control positions at the London Terminal Control Centre at West Drayton. Responsibility for the ATC task in the immediate vicinity of Battersea Heliport is delegated to Battersea ATC.

NATS provides air traffic control in accordance with the Air Navigation Order which contains the Regulations for all aircraft operations in the UK and is based on the requirement to ensure the safety of such operations. Those Regulations are the responsibility of the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) who will be able to provide you with detailed information on the applicable rules. NATS manages the control of helicopter traffic in accordance with those defined rules to ensure safe separation with all air traffic and to comply with restrictions on the operation of single-engine aircraft over built-up areas.

Designated helicopter routes have been established within the London Control Zone (CTR) for many years. The height for each section of helicopter route is the maximum height permissible whilst maintaining safe vertical separation from Heathrow, Northolt and London City fixed-wing traffic operating above. Although the London CTR Review Group report identified some options for consideration of changes to routes and/or procedures for the handling of helicopter traffic, there is little scope to allow helicopters to operate at higher altitudes because of these essential separation requirements.

Notwithstanding the existence of fixed helicopter routes, twin engine helicopters, including helicopters operated by the Emergency Services, can operate with greater route freedom, although are still subject to maximum height restrictions, for the same separation reasons.

The operational handling of helicopter traffic within the London CTR, including holding if required, is dictated by the need to ensure safety of operations. There is no specific requirement to minimise noise or environmental impacts, other than on agreed special occasions (e.g Remembrance Sunday), when some timing/route restrictions may be applied.

You asked if it was possible to cite statistics in relation to helicopter traffic over London. NATS' data on the subject is based on all low level traffic, both helicopter and fixed wing operating within the London CTR. This covers traffic both to the west as well as the east of Heathrow and does not easily provide meaningful data to inform the Committee's particular areas of interest. For example, NATS does not record the number of occasions when helicopters may be asked to hold temporarily because of traffic separation reasons. One statistic which may be informative is that on days sampled in December 2004 and January 2005, 60% of low level flights in the London CTR were carried out by Helimed and Police flights. Such flights of course may operate over any area of London, may hold in one area for some time and may fly at low altitudes if landing or departing. They may therefore be more conspicuous than other flights on some occasions.

The London CTR Review did identify some potential opportunities for changes driven by environmental considerations (e.g. the desirability of minimising helicopter holding in some sensitive locations). NATS will continue to work with the CAA in considering areas where operational improvements or opportunities for mitigation of environmental impacts may be possible. However the progression of any changes in this complex region is subject to the availability of resources and other operational priorities. As the Air Navigation Service Provider handling this area of operation, NATS would be the sponsor of any changes to airspace or routes in the London CTR that it considers operationally necessary or advantageous, although the CAA would be responsible for approving the changes, taking account of the views of all affected parties. In bringing forward any change proposals, NATS would of course be required to consult widely on the proposals and their effects, including environmental impacts.

You asked about any opportunities for emerging technologies to address environmental impacts. NATS is not aware of any Air Traffic Management developments which are likely to offer any significant change to the handling of helicopter traffic in the London CTR, given the very restricted nature of the airspace and the need to provide vertical separation from the commercial air transport traffic into the airfields serving London. In respect of the development of helicopter technology itself, we suggest you address your query to the aircraft manufacturers, or the British Helicopter Advisory Board (BHAB).

Yours sincerely
A W Jack
General Manager
Operations Standards & Development
National Air Traffic Services

HN/026

Officer response to the London Assembly Environment Committee's Investigation:

- 1: Introduction
- 1.1 Westminster City Council welcomes the opportunity of contributing to the London Assembly Environment Committee's investigation into helicopter noise.
- 1.2 This officer response includes information from a range of officers responsible for the following City Council services: 24-hour noise team; environmental health; transport policy; planning policy and development control; and environment policy.
- 1.3 We understand that the investigation will focus primarily on the following:
 - 1) Impacts on Londoners of any increase in helicopter traffic and noise, and how this is being addressed.
 - 2) Helicopter routing in London and whether improvements can be made to the way helicopter traffic is managed.
 - 3) The different types of helicopter used in London and their noise performance.

4) The effectiveness of the three policies on helicopter noise in the Mayor of London's Noise Strategy:

- a) Pressure to tighten helicopter noise emission standards internationally.
- b) Pressure on Government and air traffic services to keep noise implications of helicopter use under review.
- c) Impacts of developments, routings and usage levels in relation to helicopters to be assessed in the light of Government planning guidance on noise. Identification of helicopter sites in East London. Otherwise, boroughs to resist proposals for private heliport facilities other than predominantly for emergency service use.

2. Regulation of helicopter use

2.1 Local Authorities do not have powers to enable them to control either helicopter movements or noise from helicopters. The Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) regulates helicopter movements in London by defining helicopter routes and what helicopter flights can be made outside these routes. In relation to Westminster, the relevant defined route is along the River Thames.

2.2 The CAA defines the London Control Zone (CTR) as a portion of controlled airspace. Within this, all aircraft movements are subject to Air Traffic Control (ATC) clearance. The CTR extends vertically from the surface to an altitude of 2,500 feet.

2.3 Under the Rules of the Air Regulations (RoA) helicopters (and other aircraft) are not generally permitted to fly over any congested area below a height of 1,000 feet above the highest fixed object within a horizontal radius of 600 metres of the aircraft. Aviation activities that can be exempted from RoA include: Police operations; flying displays; and aerial surveys.

2.4 We note that the CAA's guidance from their Directorate of Airspace Policy ('Helicopter Activities in the London Control Zone and over Central London' – Environmental Information Sheet Number 7) is that:

"On all routes, in order to minimise noise nuisance, pilots should maintain the maximum altitude compatible with their ATC clearance and with the prevailing cloud conditions."

But we also note that this says:

"There are no constraints on the hours of operation of helicopter routes."

2.5 The same CAA guidance note explains that multi-engine helicopters can be provided with ATC (Air Traffic Control) clearance to transit elsewhere than specified helicopter routes, through the London CTR (Control Zone).

2.6 We are also aware of a report of the CAA Directorate of Airspace Policy, dated 7 September 2005 ('Report of the London CTR Review Group') which includes the following statements:

"A wide variety of issues associated with the operation and use of the London and London/City Control Zone have highlighted a significant number of anomalies that exist in the current arrangements. Furthermore, many of these anomalies have an environmental or efficiency disbenefit"

"There would appear to be some scope for amendment to some existing helicopter routes and the creation of a limited number of new routes that will provide efficiency and environmental benefits."

2.7 We suggest that the above provides a line of useful line of enquiry for the London Assembly Environment Committee, in discussions with the CAA.

2.8 Local Authorities are able to apply their planning powers in relation to any application for development of a heliport. The City Council's replacement Unitary Development Plan (pending adoption) indicates that we:

" ... will oppose any changes to or deviation from the approved airway along the River Thames likely to cause disturbance to residents, visitors or workers. It will also oppose the development of helicopter landing facilities, including any proposals to site such facilities in the River Thames."

2.9 The Westminster replacement Unitary Development Plan (pending adoption) also indicates that the City Council's reasons for the above are:

"Helicopters can create a noise nuisance and their use within Westminster should be tightly controlled. The powers available to the City Council to control helicopter movements are currently restricted to those sites that would normally require planning permission. The City Council is opposed to any increase in the number of helicopter flights over the City, and believes that there is a need for additional local authority powers to control the temporary use of sites for helicopter take-off and landing."

3. Helicopter routes, usage and trends

3.1 A main London helicopter route runs along the southern boundary of Westminster – a band 400 metres either side of the central line of The Thames. This route is used for civilian and military helicopters and is part of the London CTR (Control Zone) subject to CAA regulations and guidance.

3.2 Over-flying of Westminster, other than on the Thames route, is primarily by police and ambulance helicopters. Other uses include flights for Royal use, with helicopters landing in the grounds of Buckingham Palace, and by Kensington Palace (at the western edge of Westminster). Further uses are for purposes such as TV news cameras, and transport of celebrities to special events (such as performers at concerts in Hyde Park).

3.3 Westminster City Council does not have any objective means of monitoring levels of helicopter usage, nor access to readily available sources of such information. However, a subjective assessment from our noise officers is that the proportions of helicopters over-flying Westminster or its boundaries are: Police – 45%; military – 35%; air ambulance – 10%; other – 10%.

- 3.4 We expect there to be some reduction in numbers of military helicopters using the Thames route after the closure of Chelsea Barracks, which is on the Westminster side of Chelsea Bridge Road.
4. Helicopter noise levels and complaints
- 4.1 Residents and others concerned about helicopter noise do not necessarily report their concerns to the City Council. Some may contact other bodies such as the CAA, which has authority over air traffic movements.
- 4.2 Westminster City Council does receive a modest number of service requests ('complaints') to our 24-hour noise team about helicopter noise, each year. However, these are at a level that has not merited figures for them being recorded separately from other types of service request. A subjective assessment of numbers suggests that they have been relatively similar from year to year until the last two years (2004/5 & 2005/6) over which there has been a slight increase.
- 4.3 The southern area of Westminster is more generally affected by aircraft noise than other areas of the City, as it is the closest part of the City to the 57dB Leq noise contour for Heathrow Airport and is adjacent to the Thames helicopter route.
- 4.4 In recent years, use of helicopters to transport celebrity performers to concerts in Hyde Park has generated additional noise service requests ('complaints') from the Bayswater area.
- 4.5 The view of officers in our 24-hour noise team is that any significant increase in helicopter traffic would generate additional noise service requests.
5. Planning issues related to helicopters
- 5.1 The City Council has not received any recent applications for development of heliport facilities in Westminster. However, in the 1990s there was a commercial proposal for use of a barge on the River Thames as a heliport. The barge was to be moved up and down a ten-mile stretch of the river between Chelsea Harbour and Greenwich, mooring in the centre of the river at one of 22 different sites to allow helicopters to land or take off. The City Council, along with other boroughs, made representations in this case, arguing that a material change of use of land was involved. The matter was resolved through the Courts (Thames Heliport Ltd. v. Tower Hamlets London Borough Council (1996) – referred to in notes at P55.13 of 'The Encyclopaedia of Planning Law and Practice'). The Courts agreed with the argument that planning permission would be required. Therefore the floating Heliport could not be proceeded with.
- 5.2 Some years ago, helicopter landing facilities were proposed for the roof of Harrods (a few metres outside Westminster), to allow the owner to arrive and depart by helicopter. The owner argued that this would not require planning permission, as the use was said to be ancillary to the main use of the building. The City Council supported the view taken by the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea that planning permission was required. The Secretary of State at a planning appeal, and subsequently the Courts, backed the Councils' arguments, and a Certificate of Lawfulness of Proposed Development was refused.

5.3 The Westminster replacement Unitary Development Plan (pending adoption) contains a policy on helicopters, TRANS 13: Helicopters which says:

“(A) The development of new or enlarged facilities for helicopter movements (including applications for the enlargement of existing ones and the variation of their operational restrictions or limitations) will only be allowed where they are essential for public or other emergency services and have regard to the following considerations:

- 1 the likely impact on noise-sensitive property in the vicinity (including the vicinity of likely approach flight paths)*
- 2 the economic, environmental and employment advantages of their development*
- 3 the possibility of rationalising existing helicopter operations at existing sites with a view to an overall reduction in noise and disturbance.*

(B) The development of helicopter landing facilities may be subject to conditions in order to ensure that the relevant criteria (1-3) are met and may also be subject to planning agreements or obligations in order to ensure an overall reduction in noise nuisance and disturbance caused by existing operations under applicants’ control.”

6. How helicopter noise impacts might be reduced

6.1 The level of reports to the Westminster City Council noise team of annoyance from helicopter noise is relatively low. Where there are reports, these tend to relate either to exceptional uses of helicopters – such as in relation to events in Hyde Park – or to use of the Thames helicopter route at the southern edge of Westminster.

6.2 The main ways of preventing and reducing disturbance caused by helicopters, in relation to Westminster, include:

- 1) Ensuring no further heliport capacity in central London
- 2) Avoiding increased helicopter movements in the area
- 3) The CAA to monitor existing use of helicopters to ensure that they are operated in accordance with CAA requirements to minimise noise
- 4) Improvements to helicopter specifications.

6.3 We understand that noise standards for helicopters are set by the International Civil Aviation Authority (ICAA) and that these standards are known by ‘Chapter’ number. Apparently, the newer noise standard, Chapter 4 will apply to new aircraft types from 2006, and this is broadly 10dB more stringent than the Chapter 3 standard for aircraft in general. It is not clear the extent to which this will reduce noise from helicopters traversing Westminster.

6.4 The noise ‘signature’ of helicopters is different from noise from fixed wing aircraft. Helicopter noise comes largely from rotor blades – particularly from

their tips – and proportionately less from the engines. Rotor noise can be exacerbated by sharp aircraft movements.

- 6.5 We suggest that the main scope for controlling and reducing noise from helicopters – over and above the limited types of intervention that the City Council and other London boroughs are able to employ – would be for the Mayor and the Greater London Authority to investigate the potential for improvements in dialogue with the Civil Aviation Authority and the main helicopter operators.
- 6.6 For those Westminster residents and others who report annoyance at helicopter noise, each instance is unwanted noise. However, at present, the number of reports to the City Council is relatively small.

Mike LeRoy
Environment Policy Manager
Westminster City Council

Dear Mr Davies,

Helicopter Noise in London Investigation

I am writing in response to Darren Johnson's letter of 25th April. As I explained in my letter of 6th May to Mr Johnson, I deal with issues of Aircraft Noise on behalf of the Blackheath Society. The Blackheath Society was founded on 1937, and it's aims are to preserve and enhance the environment and amenities of Blackheath.

Helicopter traffic and noise has had a detrimental effect on Blackheath and it's residents. We believe most people would not seriously complain about helicopters being operated by the Police, Hospital or Security Services or the Military, even though the noise impact can be considerable. The same applies to helicopter noise associated with international events such as the London Marathon. All this goes with living in a big city.

However helicopters taking people for sightseeing joy-rides over London, or helicopters being used for private purposes, seem to us to be an entirely different matter. These uses of helicopters seem to us to be highly objectionable when conducted over a large city. Helicopters fly low, and are very noisy, far noisier than most fixed wing aircraft. They can cause disturbance over a large area and to a very large number of local residents. It is very difficult to see how, in view of the amount of disturbance and the environmental impact, these flights can be justified on any ground.

Joy-riding helicopters are a particular menace. They appear on fine sunny days when people are out of doors or are using their gardens or open spaces such as the Heath or Greenwich Park. They tend to prefer to fly at week-ends, although this is not invariable. There are clearly some who use the same regular route, possibly flying to and from Biggin Hill where we understand a number of organisations are promoting and operating helicopter flights over London. I have looked again at a letter I wrote to the Blackheath Society in June 2004 (before I was asked to deal with aircraft noise on their behalf) and in this letter I complain about one particular helicopter which regularly passed overhead every 20 minutes going North -West or South- East and these return trips could continue for 20 or more times during the day. It took about 2 minutes for the noise to appear and then disappear on each overhead flight. As soon as the noise had died away, it seemed as if it started again with the helicopter appearing once more. This level of disturbance is, we believe, insupportable. This kind of

activity has continued since 2004. There must, incidentally, be security implications as well, but in this letter we are addressing the noise issue.

Although we believe that an environmental assessment is supposed to be made by the Department of Transport before a helicopter is given a licence to fly, it does not look as though a meaningful one is done.

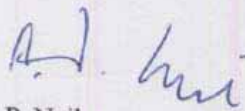
The regulation of helicopters appears to be divided between the Dept: of Transport, the CAA and NATS. In our view this does not lead to good governance, and tends to encourage buck-passing and very slow consideration of problems.

A Report of the London CTR Review Group was published at the end of last year by the CAA Directorate of Airspace Policy. This dealt with the over-flying of Blackheath and Greenwich by helicopters and suggested there might be a change to the normal routings to minimise disturbance. We have heard nothing since then.

We believe that the over-flying of London by helicopters should be forbidden, except for those who can establish a requirement to do so for reasons of security or health.

I hope the above is helpful.

Yours sincerely


A.P. Neil

A. P. Neil
Blackheath Society

HN/028

Helicopter Noise

I am a council tenant living close to the Elephant & Castle junction. I have lived in this flat for 22 years. There has been a vast increase in helicopter noise pollution in recent years. Without exaggeration, nearly every day one or more helicopters will circle round and round above my flat (top floor) causing intrusive noise pollution. I have periodically tape-recorded helicopter noise as part of my records of the intolerably high level of all types of noise pollution I have to endure in this location. Daytime, night-time, helicopters circling and hovering. I appreciate they must be police or security helicopters, but this does not alleviate the intrusive stress they cause.

Herewith an incomplete diary illustrating frequency of helicopters over Elephant & Castle:

Sun 28 May 10.15-10.20 pm Helicopter circling over E&C - 5 mins.
Mon 29 May 1.15 pm Helicopter droning noisily across E&C
Mon 29 May 10.44 pm White (police?) helicopter flying noisily across E&C
Wed 31 May 7.49 pm-7.55 pm White (police?) helicopter circling noisily overhead
Thur 1 June 8.15 pm Helicopter noisily crossing overhead (didn't take note Fri 2 June to Sun 4 Jun)
Mon 5 June 8.45 pm Dual rotor helicopter droning across river near Westminster, audible in my flat at E&Castle
Tue 6 June 1 pm Helicopter somewhere overhead (No notes kept 7 - 11 June, ill)
Mon 12 June 1.15 pm - 3 pm Helicopter circling round Westminster, audible in my flat at E&Castle
Mon 12 June 3 pm Helicopter overhead @ E&Castle
Mon 12 June 3.35 pm Helicopter along river, audible in my flat @E&Castle
Tue 13 June 11 am to 12.30 pm helicopter hovering/circling around Westminster, audible in my flat @E&Castle

Pauline Bennington
Southwark Resident

HN/029

1. Have complaints about helicopter noise to your authority increased, decreased or stayed the same over the last 10 years? Do you feel that any changes in complaints are due to changes in numbers of flights, noisiness of machines, or routes taken?

Answer – Helicopter Noise complaint data are not routinely kept by this authority, it is therefore difficult to respond objectively. The Battersea Heliport is located in the borough and continues to operate without significant complaint from Wandsworth residents. A search on the Wandsworth website aviation pages will reveal that nearly all of the comments are in fact complaints about fixed wing over flights en route to Heathrow, early morning/night flights being the most common issue mentioned. Over the last 10 years it is believed that complaints from helicopters have remained about the same. A small number (2 or 3) residents near to the heliport routinely report being disturbed on days such as the Derby and Silverstone Grand Prix when extra hospitality flights take place.

The following analysis of Battersea Heliport flight data shows how there can be significant day to day variation in movements

Date	Type A movements	Type B Movements	Civil Exempt	Military	Total
1/11 /05	32	6	2	2	42
8/11/05	50	4	2	8	64
20/11/05	2	2	0	0	4
21/11/05	29	0	0	2	31
24/11/05	34	2	2	4	42

For the month of November a total of 1074 movements were reported. By contrast In August 2005 only 778 movements were reported.

The following table shows air traffic movements subject to quota + those exempt (military and civil) reported from Battersea Heliport in the years 2001 – 2005

Year	Movements to count against quota	Movements exempt from quota	Totals
2001	9602	1810	11412
2002	9789	1878	11667
2003	9470	1512	10982
2004	9524	1640	11164
2005	10370	1652	14186

It can be seen that 2005 was somewhat busier than for the previous 4 years.

The following table shows totals for January – March 2001 to 2006

Year	January	February	March
2001	621	641	772
2002	648	735	875
2003	686	576	830
2004	612	676	920
2005	618	593	845
2006	752	774	1108

The two tables above appear to provide some evidence to suggest that general helicopter activity in to and out of Battersea has increased in the past year.

2. Are there any particular local areas where change is apparent, e.g. changes in use of helicopter routes, either designated or 'de facto', or any changes in incidence of circling or hovering? Do you have any views on likely reasons for any such changes?

Answer: An elected member reported in 2003 that residents of Tooting (which lies due south of the Heliport) were expressing concern about increased numbers of helicopters flying over their community en-route from Battersea. It would appear that there is in fact some substance in this allegation from the recent report of the London CTR Review group (September 2005). This report identified the possibility of formalising new arrival and departure routes to the north and south of Battersea on the basis that they these are already custom and practice to some extent. (Page 18- Report of the London CTR Review Group)

3. Existing designated helicopter routes are effectively a swathe about half a mile (800 metres) wide, i.e. 400 metres either side of the notional line. Have you or local residents perceived any increase in numbers of helicopters on the edges of the swathe, e.g. where people do not think they should be overflown? Have you or residents perceived any change in the number of instances where helicopters leave designated routes, or any change in the proportion of helicopters not using the routes?

Answer: No changes as such but a number of comments have been received to the effect that the heliport seems to have got busier in the last 12 months. Departure and

approach routes to the heliport are strictly controlled by Battersea Air Traffic Control, as are all helicopter movements below the 1500ft ceiling within 2 nautical miles of the heliport.

4. Do you feel able to estimate, however approximately, proportions of different types of helicopter use?

Answer: the following data have been extracted from a sample of the Battersea Heliport runway logs.

- a) Air ambulance – 2% (*Exempt from quota*)
- b) Police – 2% (*exempt from quota*)
- c) Military, special security, search and rescue – 10% (*exempt from quota*)
- d) Royal/VIP – 1% (*exempt from quota*)
- d) TV/film/other media – 5%
- e) Business – 70%
- f) Leisure/recreational – 9%
- g) Air survey (including infrastructure inspections) 1%
- h) Other, please specify – 0%

It is appreciated that it is often not possible to identify flight purpose from livery or popularly identifiable markings.

5. In relation to Policy 53² of the Mayor's Ambient Noise Strategy, has your borough received any heliport proposals over the last 3 years, or are you aware of any potential heliport proposals in the offing?

Answer Yes – The Council approved proposals for redevelopment of the Bridges Wharf, the neighbouring area, which included improved facilities for the heliport control room, business centre, passenger centre but it did not include the redevelopment of the heliport itself. This was in February 2006. The proposals envisage retention of the remodelled and updated heliport facility together with hotel and residential use subject to noise conditions

6. Can you outline any problems your authority has had with the planning provision allowing helicopter landings and take-offs for up to 28 days without specific local consideration?

Answer – None

7. What is your borough's current policy on helicopters/heliports/helipads and are you considering any change? Is the policy formally expressed in the development plan, or elsewhere?

Answer – *The Council's policy in relation to Heliports is contained in its current UDP adopted August 2003 (Paragraph 391). No changes to this policy are envisaged at the present time.*

8. Do you have any views how helicopter noise impacts might be reduced, or any other comments?

² ".....Working with boroughs in east London, the Mayor will consider the need for and practicality of identifying sites in east London for an additional heliport to support London's economy....."

Answer – The Council does not believe that Battersea is a suitable location for London's only heliport in the long term and that alternative location(s) should identified to contribute towards meeting future growth in demand. There should therefore be a London wide strategy for future heliport provision in the London area.

HN/030

I would like to add my voice regarding the increasing noise from helicopters.

I live in Holborn, Central London and the frequency of helicopters up above has increased a lot these past few years. From ones passing over, to ones following "events": the noise is often so bad that I am unable to even hear my television.

I appreciate that the police ones are necessary **sometimes** but even they tend to "hang around" for ages, which is especially annoying late at night when one is trying to sleep.

The stress and tension that the noise from all these helicopters causes is quite worrying.

Yours sincerely
Mr Michael Southwell
Holborn Resident

HN/031

Dear Richard

As explained on the telephone I have been asked to reply to Mr Johnson's letter of 15 April 2006, to Mick Temple about the above.

The Department for Transport (DfT) is responsible for policy on the control of helicopter noise and for their routes.

DfT is also responsible for dealing with complaints about noise from helicopters unless they are taking-off or landing at Heathrow. The number of helicopter flights using Heathrow Airport is very small compared with the number of other flights. We do not produce statistics on helicopter flights separately but it is possible that National Air Traffic Services or the Civil Aviation Authority may do so and I understand that you have approached them separately.

In my experience, the majority of complaints Heathrow receives do not relate to Heathrow helicopter traffic. In those cases therefore we refer those making complaints to the DfT.

We do not separately identify helicopter complaints, but it may be helpful if I mention that, in my experience, the majority relate not to overflight but to instances where the helicopter is circling for a period of time, for example police helicopters.

I am sorry that this reply is brief but you will appreciate from the above that our experience of this subject is small.

I would prefer that this response be kept confidential as it contains my personal views which I have included in order to be as helpful as possible but which I cannot confirm by the production of statistical data.

Please come back to me if you think I may be able to help further.

Yours sincerely
Nita Easey
Airside Sustainability Manager
BAA

HN/032

I saw your letter to the West End Extra this week and am writing in response.

My husband and I moved to Soho in 1997. At that time it was – and still is – a very noisy place to live, at times unbearably so. Quiet times come only at the weekend, specifically Saturday mornings and, if we are lucky, all day on Sunday. We have a tiny garden, smaller than most people's bedrooms, and we like to enjoy it in peace at the weekend if we can.

In 1997 helicopter noise was restricted to one overhead flight on a Sunday afternoon (someone once told us it was the Prime Minister returning from Chequers, I suspect apocryphal, but it is certainly a regular flight), TV helicopters for the London Marathon, police helicopters for New Year's Eve and that was about it.

Now it seems that on every fine afternoon we must endure helicopter noise for hours on end. Since the Mayor decided Trafalgar Square should be an entertainment venue as well as the place most marches end, we have helicopters circling right over our house throughout the day, sometimes on several weekends in a row in summer, and most often on Sundays which is awful. There is very often more than one circling at a time, presumably the police and TV together. This is no less intrusive in bad weather either, when it is difficult to hold a conversation inside the house.

The Olympic Games will be a one off. I refuse to complain about them. The helicopter noise we are suffering from right now has been brought on by the increased use of Trafalgar Square, part of a deliberate policy instigated by the Mayor and the London Assembly.

Noise is a dreadful blight. The Mayor and other authorities, including Westminster City Council and particularly the Police, behave as though no one lives in Soho, when in fact there are 5000 of us. I am sure residents in St James's, Covent Garden and Westminster itself – unless fortunate enough to have country homes, like Chequers, to escape to at the weekend – suffer equally. It is ironic that the authority that has done most to bring the helicopters here, is now investigating the impact. It brings to mind carts and horses, in that order.

Kind regards
Phillipa Suarez
Soho Resident

HN/033

Dear Richard:

I sell "The Big Issue" very near to Bow Street Magistrates Court and the problem of the Metropolitan Police helicopters hovering over the court is disconcerting to say the least. The helicopter's grating drone almost drives some folks mad, including me! The noise is nerve-wreaking, tormenting and unmitigating. Such is totally uncalled for it seems to me. I invariably get a quick headache or a dizzy feeling within minutes of those mechanical contraptions killing the air ... They're also a grating menace as the noise curtails my ability to converse with my customers or they with me.

Those helicopters sometimes hover overhead for 10 to 15 minutes a time. Or they scream by as they circle around and around in the London sky. The biggest danger and threat to public safety is the helicopter that one day may just malfunction and come crashing down on the urban street and killing all in its wake. Including the helicopter police themselves, too. Such could be worse than 7/7 death toll should the flying contraption hit crowds at Covent Garden, Trafalgar Square, or anywhere in the densely populated area of London's West End or Soho.

If there are special court appearances (ie, terror suspects, celebs) at Bow Street Magistrates Court or some kind of public demo or celebration going on, then those hideous police helicopters appear from out of the blue and create havoc and headaches with the intense drone and unyielding noise as they scan the crowded scene below of folks milling about. Such is done in the name of security, but there seems to be no one to abate their violation of our peace and quiet as they rudely invade our personal space with those noisy flying machines of theirs!

Also my concern is seeing such helicopters sharing air space with private, commercial and military aircraft passing over central London. During last Saturday's flyover to mark the Queen's 80th Birthday, I was stunned to see a police helicopter up so high up in the sky as the Royal Air Force formation came by under the helicopter. In fact, the helicopter was at the highest altitude I have ever seen. It seemed to sit like a tiny toy in the open sky. And, yet the noise was again unbearable for me and I suspect for many that viewed the flyover as the red, white and blue smoke streams gave great colour to the military aircrafts as they went swiftly by.

It is my hope that legal restrictions will be placed on the plague of helicopters that destroy our life's day by its very unwelcome presence and its violence to our ears and our sound minds.

Faithfully Alex Albion,
Big Issue Seller – Bow Street

HN/034

In brief our response is:

- 1 We fly to the Air Navigation Order 2005 and associated Rules of the Air and comply to all CAA requirements.
- 2 We follow, as far as the above rules permit, a “Good Neighbour” policy and stay as high as possible to avoid causing excess noise.
- 3 Our type of filming helicopter has a certified noise level of just 81 decibels – this is about the same as a passing motorbike. We use one piston engine. There are noisier twin turbine (jet) engines used by civilian and military flights – the rules of Public Transport flying require 2 engines for journeys over the middle of London away from the river.
- 4 We are active members of the British Helicopter Advisory Board whose own guidelines encourage members to follow “good neighbour” flying.
- 5 The fact that London City Airport does not permit ANY helicopter movements (due to the initial planning for the site in the 1980s) means that there is a concentration of helicopter flights into and out of London’s only heliport at Battersea. Battersea is inconvenient for passengers bound for the financial districts of London.
- 6 If London is to maintain its global destination status, it is vital to serve the needs of those who wish to visit. London City Airport should be opened to helicopter movements immediately. There are far noisier aircraft than helicopters using LCA. It should not be forgotten that LCA was designated for propeller aircraft only in its original planning – but within a few years the airlines had forced jets into the mix.
- 7 A heliport at LCA would remove a lot of helicopter activity from central London and would serve as an excellent hub for business users connecting to and from scheduled fixed wing flights at LCA – further reducing pressure on other London airport sites.
- 8 Every leading city worldwide accommodates helicopters with easy-access heliports. The easier the access, the less noise landing and taking off. Airspace restrictions around Battersea force helicopters to use more power and therefore create more noise during movements.
- 9 Our main activity – aerial filming – produces output that goes worldwide. Aerial shots of London convey the beauty of the city in movies and tv shows around the globe. This in turn assists in building the profile of London. From *Mission Impossible* through *James Bond* and even our live coverage of the attempted whale rescue in the Thames (January) : all of these publicise our city through aerial shots.

Best,
Mike Smith
Managing Director
Flying TV Ltd

HN/035

Well, I saw this link and i can't resist adding a general remark to what i would guess will be a quite a chorus.

I see a deadline of June 16th, and yet i can't give you any specific dates about this nuisance of helicopter noise. If it wakes us or keeps us up or just haunts us again before then then i will be more specific. However, there is a ridiculous amount of chronic copter hovering in the night and in the area i live in, just off the New Kent Road and what sounds like northwards, i.e. the South Bank/Borough. It goes on for such sustained periods of time, swooping, hovering round and round goes away and comes back and back and back that it is clearly not related to transport or emergency services.

There are those too and they are q. identifiable. They are more purposive. I usually ascribe the ominous and unsettling racket to police searches but if you listen to it it doesn't make sense, the area covered being too wide, etc. Terrorists? Everything is the fault of, excused by that. I don't think so. But i am curious -not least having given up on all these explanations with my wife, because they ring very hollow under the drone.

As soon as you doubt the need for the noise then it becomes a very severe nuisance. If the chronic noise pollution is anything but NECESSARY then it is a disgrace [and necessary would have to include rampant incompetence which leaves cops-ters going round and round and round and round failing to find what they're looking for, but only reluctantly.

Also I can't help pointing to the grotesque discrepancy between the resort to toys in place of feet on the ground even now when I am seeing police on my street for the first time in fifteen years. Yes! Walworth police actually standing up! Leaving the coffee machine! Deploying their limbs!].

It's not something that can be fine tuned it must be outlawed. I don't like living in Apocalypse Now, which is how it can feel. Perhaps the answer is more thrusting towers on the South Bank, then they won't be able to cruise so low at least, so long, that is, as copter pads on their roofs are outlawed too.

I'd be grateful for a response, or for an answer to the thrust of my remark.
Best

Guy Mannes Abbott
Southwark Resident

HN/036

I read with interest that the London Assembly is looking into the issue of Helicopter noise pollution in London.

As a resident of Prices Court, a new development 300 yards from the London Heliport, I am becoming very unhappy at the increase in noise pollution and air pollution from the aircraft's engines (a strong smell of exhaust fumes is often present downwind from the heliport).

Weston Aviation's annual report (Weston Homes 2005 Annual Report) describes "key" usage as "events such as the Cheltenham Festival, the General Election, the Grand Prix and Ascot Week".

It beggars belief that a "key" part of the Heliport's business is transporting customers to and from events such as Ascot and the Grand Prix. These flights are far from essential and no doubt comprise large companies taking their customers on 'jollies'. Whilst others are enjoying Champagne, canapés and other corporate hospitality Battersea locals suffering the consequences ... the noise and air pollution.

I have also recently read that a shuttle service between the Heliport and Heathrow is being set up. As a result thousands of local residents will suffer extra noise and air pollution to save a wealthy commuter the 40 minute road trip to Heathrow!

This situation is totally unacceptable. I have no objection to the Heliport being used for important flights such as by the police, air ambulance ... even the general election! However, I do object when a few wealthy individuals are permitted to charter flights to transport themselves to corporate events or save a few minutes travelling to Heathrow.

The use of the Heliport as a rich man's 'play thing' cannot possibly be justified when taking into account the inconvenience suffered by many in Battersea and Fulham as a result.

Regards,

Jonathan Harris.
Battersea Resident

HN/037

Dear Mr Johnson

HELICOPTER NOISE IN LONDON INVESTIGATION

I am sorry that I am so late in our response to your letter of 25TH April 2006 but our Executive Committee only managed to discuss it at its meeting last Wednesday. I will fax this letter to ensure it arrives in time.

We, in the two villages, are in a somewhat different position than most others as we border Heathrow Airport and are situated in the helicopter holding area for aircraft wishing to continue to the south. The approved route crosses Heathrow and helicopters have to hover over us until given permission to cross the runways to reach the south side and pick up their route from there.

The comments from our committee members are as follows.

- The "waiting zone" ensures that we have more than our fair share of low-flying machines;
- We also get the large military machines going to and from the airport;
- They all create noise directly overhead, hovering and moving up and down the length of the villages while waiting for ATC instructions;
- To the north, the M4 seems to be used as a simple guide for private helicopters especially those going to and coming from race meetings;
- They all fly very low (we would think that they may be below the 800 feet permitted near an airport);
- They clearly add to the pollution in the area;
- There is considerable police helicopter activity in relation to security and crime prevention.

The traffic varies tremendously; some days, such as today, are quiet, some very busy when we have helicopters to the south, over head and to the north of the villages. We have not tried to identify the types of aircraft.

I do not know if this is helpful as any improvement would need the routes to be changed completely.

Thank you for consulting us.

Yours sincerely

B A B Sobey
Hon Secretary

Mrs B. A. B. Sobey
Hon. Secretary Harmondsworth and Sipson Residents Association

HN/038

I was interested to see that the GLA is launching an inquiry into helicopter noise in London.

On 13 June 2005 I was woken up in my flat by a helicopter at about 5am which continued buzzing for about an hour. I have no idea what it was doing but the people who are most likely to be responsible must be the police. (I can't imagine any medical emergency which would require the noise to go on for a whole hour.) I put the issue to my local residents' association who advised me to consult the Camden Police & Community Group. I did this a few days before the events of 7 July. I got an acknowledgment but no subsequent response.

I suppose that there may be life threatening emergencies which would justify such intrusion into the lives of hundreds of thousands of local residents, but I believe that the public should be told what's going on. I can understand that there may be operational reasons for not doing so immediately, but surely it would be possible to tell us in due course, without an undue wait ? Then we could have a serious public debate about whether the police aren't taking enough account of the disturbance they are causing. Someone suggested that the police might be monitoring premises in preparation for a dawn raid, but I remain to be convinced that such an arrest couldn't be made at another time when the noise nuisance would be less.

I suspect that there may be many people whose health may be threatened by sleep deprivation. Also people who drive vehicles may cause accidents the next day if they nod off at the wheel, as happened to the van driver responsible for the Great Heck rail crash.

I may add that a couple of months later (25 Aug 2005 to be exact) the Camden New Journal carried a letter by a Paul Braithwaite, now a Camden councillor, making exactly the same complaint.

And remember that I don't have any definite knowledge that the police were the cause of this particular disturbance. I therefore make the following suggestions:

1. A log should be compiled of all authorised helicopter use, at least during the small hours.
2. If anyone complained about an incident, then they should be told immediately whether the use of a helicopter was authorised; and, in due course, what the helicopter was being used for.
3. There should be a public debate about when the night-time use of helicopters was justified, for which the above information would be indispensable.
4. If the use of a helicopter was unauthorised, then the people responsible should be brought to justice.

Simon Norton
Hampstead Resident

HN/039

Dear Mr Johnson,

RE: HELICOPTER NOISE IN LONDON – INVESTIGATION

Thank you for your letter dated 25 April inviting us to respond in relation to the above named subject. The letter has been forwarded to myself to respond.

In my role as Environment & Planning Manager for London City Airport (LCY), I am directly responsible for collating all complaints received, which enables good access to the perception from the local community regarding noise complaints.

At LCY we have no helicopter operations. The airport operates one of the most comprehensive and restrictive noise regimes in the country, and noise from the take off and landing of helicopter operations would not be considered appropriate under this regime.

The airspace surrounding LCY is controlled by our own Air Traffic Control (ATC) service, which is provided by National Air Traffic Services Ltd (NATS). In order for helicopters to transit this airspace helicopter pilots need to seek the permission from LCY air traffic controllers, who need to prioritise between our own scheduled services and other air traffic waiting to transit the airspace. Therefore our primary concerns related to the growth of helicopter movements in London relates to the implications for increased workloads for air traffic controllers, and the subsequent potential implications for disruption to our own operations.

Whilst it is the growth of commercial helicopter movements that may be our primary concern with regards the potential implications for our own aircraft operations, our view is that the real noise problems attributed to helicopter noise in London is not primarily that from commercial helicopter operations, but from noise associated with emergency helicopter services such as medical and police services, in particular the police helicopters from operations at night. We also believe the use of the high intensity spotlight on the police helicopter gives rise to complaints. We do acknowledge that the HEMS air ambulance service is now operated using the latest Eurocopter version which incorporates the shrouded tail rotor, and meets the highest ICAO noise standards. This is therefore much less of a noise problem than the police helicopters which do not currently utilise this version. We would therefore encourage the Metropolitan Police to procure similar vehicles as soon as possible in the future.

We do have a concern that with the anticipated demand for helicopter movements in the future, and in particular with the forthcoming Olympics, that unless a more holistic approach is asserted on the regulation of temporary helicopter sites in London as a whole, then there is a potential for inadequately regulated growth in helicopter movements to result in air traffic controller workloads reaching levels where they may have to consider measures to control the flow of air traffic over London. We believe that the limited controls available to the planning authorities are not sufficient, and do not take into account the potential implications on either air traffic or the subsequent noise generated as a consequence of that traffic.

Helicopter pilots and operators are conscious of the fact that the use of the helicopter routes is a singular privilege that depends entirely upon the ability of Heathrow, London City and Thames Radar air traffic controllers to fit them into a virtually unbroken stream of commercial air traffic coming in and out of London, yet there is no overall control of

how many commercial helicopters there are, and there is no system of charging helicopter operators for the services they require to fly over London.

In conclusion, we believe that whilst efforts to procure more environmentally efficient and effective helicopters should continue, the Policies 51 and 52 of the Mayor's 'Ambient Noise Strategy' should be focused on lobbying Government to introduce more effective regulatory controls, particularly with regards the use of temporary helicopter sites, and perhaps a more co-ordinated and authoritative role from the Civil Aviation Authority, and airports in general when considering new helicopter sites.

In the interest of continued public safety we strongly urge, particularly in the lead up to the Olympics, that any proposals for new helicopter sites or applications for new helicopter routes, should be referred for consultation with London City Airport, and that the Mayor should reflect this as part of this consultation response.

Yours sincerely,
Rob Grafton
Environment & Planning Manager
LONDON CITY AIRPORT

HN/040

I am a resident of the Piper Building (Corner of Carnwarth and Peterborough road in SW6) and the current President (for my sins!) of the residents association. We are subject to increasing levels of helicopter noise along with aeroplane noise as the activity for the first increases at the Westland heliport across the river in Battersea.

It is clear that the helicopters are cutting across residential areas to shorten their journeys where there are riverways which are clearly unpopulated which would be more suitable. The traffic is hugely increased when there is a Chelsea game on - obviously Roman Abramovich's (Russian owner of Chelsea) friends can't travel in by any other route so during these days the traffic is almost non-stop before the beginning of the game and at the end.

I am sure that I can canvass others views for your scrutineering from the building and will endeavour to do so.

Kind regards

Richard Hale
Fulham Resident

Dear Richard Davies,

I am writing in response to your letter in the West End Estate. We have lived in Covent Garden for 13 years. The use of helicopters has increased steadily. They are extremely stressful - often our flat vibrates, hovering far too long - flying at unsocial hours. We have tried to complain several times especially if it is too long a flight, or on some occasions far too fast. We have come to dread large events, it is impossible to make a complaint.

Yours

Margaret & David Chandler

MARGARET & DAVID CHANDLER

Margaret & David Chandler
WC2 Residents

HN/042

I am writing in response to Darren Johnson's letter in the Mercury newspaper regarding noise pollution by helicopters. I am copying this letter to my local councillor on Lewisham Council.

Helicopter traffic around the area where I live (Hither Green, Lewisham) has become far worse and intrusive in recent years. Since the completion of the Lewisham Police Station, there has been constant noise from police helicopters, usually at night or in the early morning. I am often kept awake by helicopters circling overhead at low level between 12 midnight and 01:00 usually on Sunday nights and last weekend was awoken at 06:30 on Sunday by a helicopter circling overhead for half an hour. I have no idea whether these are training exercises or in response to incidents. Either way, it is intolerable that we are subjected to this constant noise at unsocial hours. Sleep deprivation has both short and long term effects on health in addition to making it impossible for me to perform well at my job the next day. I live on the flightpath for London City Airport but these planes do not create much noise and do not tend to fly at night.

Police helicopters often circle overhead with their searchlights on at night which again has the effect of keeping me awake, or in one instance interrupting my friends and family who were sitting outside at about 10 pm on a summer evening last year by directing the searchlight directly at us.

Whereas I accept that the police have to do their job, I fail to comprehend that whereas other people are expected to respect other's rights not to have to endure noise pollution, the police would appear to have no regard to the noise they are making. I would urge the London Assembly to look into ways of ensuring that the police helicopters are subject to the same rules as other air traffic as regards the times they can fly low overhead unless, of course there is a real emergency.

Yours sincerely
P. Halsall
Hither Green Resident

HN/043

I noticed your invitation for comments on the above subject on your website and am delighted this is now being given serious consideration.

In February 2000, my wife and I moved from Highgate in north London to Fulham, into the development known as Regent on the River, William Morris Way on the north side of the Thames. Needless to say, this faces the London Heliport and bears much of the appalling noise created by helicopters taking off, landing and revving up on the tarmac, even though we fall within the borough of Hammersmith and Fulham.

Whilst the presence of the Heliport didn't put us off moving to the area, I was advised by London Borough of Wandsworth that the owners were governed by the same restrictions laid down in the 1950's when a licence was first granted for a heliport there. These restrictions included size and engine type, operating hours (7am to 9pm) and frequency of use (12,000 take off and landings per year). I assumed, wrongly, that

perhaps these limitations would, one day, make the operation unviable and an alternative, more suitable place found for it. Alas this has not happened.

I am convinced that the restrictions are being flouted. Certainly helicopters take off and land well into the night, sometimes up to midnight, the sizes of helicopters and their engines are increasing, and some days there is a relentless stream of helicopters taking off and landing—for Chelsea football matches, Flower show etc. pushing the usage up to well over the agreed limit.

Richard, I don't know where you stand on this matter, but if you would like to come to my apartment to experience the noise first hand you are welcome. You would find that it is literally impossible to listen to a TV, even at full volume, whilst a helicopter is passing by (which they do at ear and eye level outside our flat), and impossible to have a telephone conversation unless all doors and windows are closed which, in Summer time, is unbearable.

Quite simply, when the heliport was first built, there were literally no apartment blocks anywhere around the area. Now every possible plot of land right along both sides of the river has been developed into apartments, including Imperial Wharf, Battersea Reach, Candle Factory, Oyster Wharf, Regent on the River and Riverside West to name just 6 of about 12 developments, all obviously with the full support of the respective local authorities. This is naturally good from a Council Tax revenue-raising point of view, but nothing seems to have been done regarding the heliport noise to protect the quality and standard of living these owners and occupiers have.

I understand one argument would be "the heliport was there when you bought your flat so if you don't like the noise, you shouldn't have bought there". However, it is only when you live here day in, day out that you realise how damaging the heliport noise is to one's enjoyment of living here. I truly don't believe that, if challenged professionally, the noise and nuisance created by the heliport would fall within guidelines and regulations for one's right to enjoy a reasonable quality and standard of living. I have not taken measurements of aircraft noise or aircraft fumes but common sense would suggest neither of these would be considered reasonable within such a highly and densely populated area.

The last area of concern, and most important one, is the safety aspect. Helicopters do go wrong, without notice and often with little scope for corrective action. We very often see newspaper articles covering helicopter crashes and, by the nature of the machines, when something goes wrong the pilot needs a lot of room to attempt to land. At Battersea Heliport, there is no such room, just a corridor of apartment blocks waiting to be hit!

As a solution, I am sure the area occupied by the Heliport could be sold for further residential development, and the revenue from this would be self-justifying. Even an additional levy onto each home-owner's Council Tax bill could be made if required, to cover any loss of revenue experienced by the local authority. I really don't think any home owner would argue with this given the massive improvement to their quality of life from not having relentless helicopter noise!

As for the heliport, it could be moved either to a floating island in the Thames in a much less residential area, or moved to a Greenfield site, or as part of the Heathrow extension.

I trust some of this is useful. I would be happy to be contacted, on 07970 625450 or at 67, Sailmaker's Court, Regent on the River, William Morris Way, London SW6 2UX.

Yours sincerely,
Nick Bishop
Fulham Resident

HN/044

A friend passed on your email address to me. I understand you are interested in reports about helicopter noise and will be more than happy to tell you about mine.

I live in Islington (London N19) and I can confirm that since around the second half of 2003, the activities of police helicopters have gone from an occasional nuisance to something that is having a significant effect on my quality of life. Prior to then one might be disturbed by circling helicopters about once every few weeks, and even then, never much later than 11:30 at night. Now, barely a fortnight goes by without my being awoken between the hours of 02:00 and 04:00 by the sound of a helicopter swooping in *Apocalypse Now*-style at zero feet over my flat, followed by anything up to half an hour of it droning round and round in circles that seem to be centred on the estate where I live (which is a small private development of 16 houses and 32 flats). Even if it departs within ten minutes, I am generally so wide-awake that it will take me anything up to two hours to get back to sleep, with obvious effects on me the following day.

My estate is located between a park, an industrial estate and a railway line. No doubt all these places attract criminals, and the patrols are a significant deterrent, but I feel that insufficient consideration is being given to hundreds of people who are having their sleep ruined on a regular basis by them, and that on-the-ground policing is a better option.

Christopher Seddon
Islington Resident

HN/045

AEF Response to the London Assembly's Environment Committee Investigation into Helicopter Noise in London

Introductory Remarks

The Aviation Environment Federation (AEF) is the UK's principal non-governmental organisation concerned specifically with addressing aviation's environmental effects. Established in 1975, we have over 100 member organisations comprising local resident and amenity groups around the UK's airports, airfields and helipads, as well as parish councils, local authorities and consultants. As well as having seats on many Department for Transport and European Commission working groups, the AEF coordinates and represents the NGO community as an official observer to the International Civil Aviation Organisation's Committee on Aviation Environmental Protection (CAEP).

In the context of this investigation, the AEF's role is to highlight environmental problems and concerns, as reported and experienced by our members, and to suggest appropriate policy measures to address any adverse impacts.

The AEF welcomes the Committee's investigation into helicopter noise in London. We believe this is a timely opportunity to examine what many communities perceive to be an increasing noise problem. Helicopter noise is regarded as particularly intrusive and, as noted in the Government's planning policy guidance, "Helicopter noise has different characteristics from that from fixed wing aircraft, and is often regarded as more intrusive or more annoying by the general public" (PPG 24, Planning and Noise).

What impact has any increase in helicopter traffic and noise had on Londoners and how is this being addressed?

Available statistics for London (Battersea) Heliport³ do not suggest a significant increase in helicopter numbers using the facility over the past 10 years. In 1995, approximately 10,000 movements were recorded, compared to 12,000 in 2005. In the intervening years, annual numbers have fluctuated between 11,000 and 13,000. Of the 12,018 movements in 2005, the CAA's data shows that approximately 6,600 were for commercial purposes (public transport operations), with 4,118 private movements, 838 movements performed by the military and 603 for business aviation purposes.

However, this pattern is not reflected in the number of helicopter-related concerns reported to the AEF. In 2005, we received 95 enquiries relating to helicopter flights in and around the London area. This compares with 68 in 2000, and 59 in 1995. Of these, 97% related to helicopter noise from overflights. Common factors mentioned include:

- Position of helicopter;
- Altitude of helicopter;
- Activity (e.g. hovering);
- Noise level and/or vibration.

Providing evidence for an increase in helicopter movements is difficult as, to our knowledge, the only publicly available information is that published by the CAA based on data supplied by reporting aerodromes. This data will not include information on the number of overflights. Where flights take place in controlled airspace, some information may be held for helicopter movements in the London Control Zone. We would encourage the Assembly to request a formal mechanism for the monitoring, collation and publishing of this data.

While the Secretary of State for Transport has powers to limit the noise and vibration from aerodromes, these have only been used at the three major London airports. Elsewhere, the Department for Transport encourages local solutions through the establishment of consultative committees and the preparation of local noise amelioration schemes. Such controls are usually of a voluntary nature and are not legally enforceable. Other than through the imposition of planning conditions or agreements, it is not possible to address noise from aerodromes (including heliports) as aircraft noise generally is exempted from the Environmental Protection Act and protected from legal redress in respect of nuisance. Providing a helicopter is flying according to the Rules of the Air, and is following any advice from air traffic service providers, no action or measures can be taken against a helicopter operator. This approach puts additional emphasis on the need for quieter helicopters and better noise management policies.

Helicopter routing in London: can improvements be made to the way helicopter air traffic is managed?

³ Civil Aviation Authority, Airport Statistics 2005

<http://www.caa.co.uk/default.aspx?categoryid=80&pagetype=88&sglid=3&fld=2005Annual>

As acknowledged in the Ambient Noise Strategy, existing helicopter routes in the London Control Zone have been designed taking account of flight safety, following open spaces where available. This minimises the residential population overflown, and the third party risk in the event of an accident. However, it also concentrates the noise for those that are overflown and reduces the tranquillity that many people associate with open spaces. This is particularly true for single-engined helicopters that are required to follow the prescribed helicopter routes across the London CTR. It also creates the need for entry points to the CTR and junctions which can introduce an element of congestion and holding at busy times. Twin-engined helicopters do not have to follow the prescribed routes, dispersing noise over a wider area. While direct-routing by twin-engined helicopters could be encouraged, it is difficult to see how noise from single-engined helicopters could be dispersed without compromising third party safety. The only way of reducing noise from such helicopters would be to restrict or prohibit their entry to the London CTR.

In areas of uncontrolled airspace, helicopters must comply with the low flying regulations of the Rules of the Air. These state that an aircraft (including a helicopter) may not fly closer than 500 feet to any person, vessel, vehicle or structure, except when taking off or landing. However, over “congested areas” (defined by the CAA as being anything larger than a settlement or village with a visible centre) aircraft (including helicopters) were historically required to remain at a minimum altitude of 1500 feet. However, last year the CAA consulted on reducing this minimum altitude to 1,000 feet in order to bring the UK into line with ICAO recommendations. Although the AEF argued that lowering the height would increase noise levels for those overflown, the Secretary of State for Transport passed the amendment last year.

We believe this change can only compound existing problems at a time when we should be considering increasing the altitude at which helicopters to fly to minimise disturbance. A paper by the Rotorcraft Group of the Royal Aeronautical Society⁴ noted a report by Leverton⁵ which recommended *“that the only sure way to increase public acceptance to a level which will allow industry to expand operations is to operate helicopters whenever possible in a manner which either reduces noise to the point at which it is inaudible or minimises the annoyance factors. This can be achieved en route by flying (subject to air traffic or other limitations) at heights much greater than those employed currently. Typical route heights in the region of 2,000 ft to 3,000 ft above city centres and up to 5,500 ft over rural areas, where ambient noise levels are much lower, are desirable”*.

Unfortunately, the busy controlled airspace over much of London prevents this from being considered as an option. Nevertheless, the AEF would welcome initiatives to maintain helicopters at the maximum permissible height consistent with safety.

Noise Performance of helicopters typically used and the different types of helicopter use in London

The AEF has no data of helicopter types currently using London airspace. However, we wish to point out that any assessment of helicopter noise needs to include the impact of low vibration noise and the tonal characteristics of helicopter noise.

⁴ “Expanding the role of the helicopter and related vertical flight aircraft” Rotorcraft Group, RAeS, May 2002

⁵ “Understanding helicopter noise – implications on design and operation” A.C. Pike and J.W. Leverton, Proceedings 24th European Rotorcraft Forum, Marseilles 1998

Effectiveness of the three policies on helicopter noise in the Mayor's noise strategy

policy 51 The Mayor will urge the Government, European Union, and the helicopter industry to progressively tighten noise emission standards, support the development of quieter helicopters, and ensure that noise impacts of related emerging aviation technologies are minimised.

Helicopters entering into service after the mid-1980s are required to have a noise certificate that complies with the ICAO recommended standards and practices in force (setting maximum noise levels for take-off, approach and flyover). The UK and the EY have progressed the tightening of these standards working through ICAO. However, in our experience, these standards follow technology rather than leading it: one of the criteria applied by ICAO to the assessment of new standards is "technological feasibility" which in practice means that standards follow current production capabilities. At present we are not aware of any plans to discuss further stringency for rotorcraft.

While standards can force the introduction of quieter helicopters, effective policies can also create an environment to encourage the uptake of new technology. European legislation on producing noise maps and action plans (Environmental Noise Directive EC/49/2002) and applying the balanced approach to aircraft noise management (Directive EC/30/2002) are having some impact on civil airport operations. The application of these Directives' to airports with more than 50,000 annual commercial movements limits their relevance to heliports such as the London Heliport at Battersea.

In conclusion, we feel that there are few "drivers" to encourage quieter helicopters, and would urge the Mayor to step up the pressure on Government to find appropriate solutions.

policy 52 The Mayor will urge the Government and air traffic services to keep the noise implications of changing helicopter use under review, together with emerging opportunities for cost-effective monitoring and control, and to examine, in consultation with the Mayor, London boroughs and others, how relevant technologies could provide new ways of minimising noise impacts.

We believe this remains a valid policy but one that, in respect of finding cost-effective monitoring and control, has yet to deliver anything of significance.

policy 53 The Mayor will expect any proposed heliport or similar facilities to be assessed in accordance with Planning Policy Guidance Note 24 or its replacement, and noise impacts minimised, including in terms of projected changes in intensity of use of helicopter routes across London. Working with boroughs in east London, the Mayor will consider the need for and practicality of identifying sites in east London for an additional heliport to support London's economy. Boroughs should, in general, resist proposals for private heliport facilities, with the exception of predominantly emergency use facilities.

We support this policy in terms of providing an assessment framework, but would resist any proposal to increase the number of helicopter flights over London.

HN/046

I live in north west London and work in SE1. I have noticed a considerable increase in helicopter noise over recent years, especially in Willesden where overflights are now a common occurrence. Whilst use by the emergency services of helicopters is essential it is difficult to see why Londoners should be subjected to this noise pollution for any other reason.

Dave Statham
Willesden Resident

HN/047

I have grave concerns over the noise of helicopters in Edmonton, N9. I fully understand that the police have a job to do but to be perfectly frank it sounds like 'South Central, Los Angeles', constant drone is driving me crazy, particular in the evening. I have a meeting with the Borough Commander of Enfield Police next month where I shall be bring this to her attention. I don't know if you can help but I thought I would make me comments heard.

Kind regards
Vivienne Aiyela
Edmonton Resident

HN/048

I am a resident of North Islington (Archway) who frequently experiences helicopter noise.

There are many occasions, often late at night, when helicopters fly over my area for a considerable period of time. Recently, I was kept awake from around 11.30 pm to after midnight. I believe these are police helicopters as they circle around and around for long periods of time. Another cause is the policing of Arsenal matches. The helicopters fly over for the duration of the match and afterwards. It is unrelenting, frequently occurring in the day when residents want to be outside. This affects me less directly when I am at home but, as I have many friends all over Islington, I hear frequently.

I find the noise often excessive, disruptive, disturbing and irritating. I find it particularly difficult when they circle over head for a period of time. When there is a flight overhead you cannot use your garden, converse, hear the television or radio or sleep. There is so much noise in London these days that it is extremely stressful to live here sometimes.

Yours,

Piercy Hamilton
Archway Resident

HN/049

I am not sure if you want to hear from ordinary residents about helicopter noise, but as an Islington resident, helicopters do wake me up in the middle of the night occasionally, they tend to circle for a long time around the area I live in (Canonbury), this can go on for more than an hour sometimes and this can be very disruptive.

I would be interested to read about any developments in this area.

Wendy Baverstock
Cannonbury Resident

HN/050

I live in Harefield, which appears to be under some flight paths for helicopters. I have noted the bright Virgin helicopter. We have many helicopters flying over our home. The occasional helicopter is of interest to my baby daughter, but too many do cause noise problem. We also have a local aerodrome in Denham which produces noise from pleasure flyers. I have also notices that some planes, presumably from Heathrow, fly over our area in South Harefield. This is worrying.

Regards

Nandish Patel
Harefield Resident

HN/051

Dear Mr Davies,

Helicopter Noise in London Investigation

I refer to a letter addressed to me from Mr D Johnson, Chair of the London Assembly Environment Committee, dated 25 April, requesting a response from the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) to the Committee's investigation into helicopter noise in London.

The rules and procedures for helicopter flights in the London and London/City Control Zones (CTR) are summarised and combined with comment on other aspects of their operation, as follows:

- a. Specific helicopter routes over the London area have been designed to provide maximum safety in respect of single-engine helicopter traffic by avoiding built-up areas as much as possible.
- b. All flights in the London CTRs, regardless of aircraft type, are subject to air traffic control (ATC) clearance and instructions. (NB: The CAA, as the independent regulator of the civil aviation industry, does not provide ATC services; in the London CTRs and elsewhere in UK en route controlled airspace, and at most major airports, ATC services are provided by NATS, formerly known as National Air Traffic Services Ltd.)
- c. The height for each section of helicopter route is the **maximum** height permissible and which is designed to ensure safe vertical separation between helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft, mainly Heathrow traffic.
- d. On all routes, in order to minimise noise nuisance, pilots should maintain the maximum altitude compatible with their ATC clearance and the prevailing cloud conditions. This, together with other procedures for helicopter operations in the London CTR, is specified in the Integrated Aeronautical Information Package, a flight planning publication, in the section dealing with London Heathrow Airport.
- e. Notwithstanding these height parameters, helicopters must at all times comply with Rule 5 of the UK Rules of the Air Regulations. This Rule contains a number of prohibitions on low flying. These include:

The 500 Feet Rule:

This prohibits any aircraft from flying closer than 500 feet to any person, vessel, vehicle or structure other than with the permission in writing of the CAA. The 500 feet rule applies to helicopters operating in the London CTRs with Special Visual Flight Rules (Special VFR) clearance from ATC, which enables the flights to be made in this category of airspace instead of under Instrument Flight Rules as would

over-flight of Greenwich and Blackheath. Consequently, the CAA has arranged that, as an interim measure, NATS will ensure that all holding is performed over the River Thames. This will not adversely affect flight safety but may provide some relief from over-flight of Greenwich Park and the northern part of Blackheath. Discussions are now ongoing between NATS and CAA with the aim of extending the limit of the route to the east. (The designated helicopter routes are shown at Attachment 1 of the Report and the Restricted Area is shown at Attachment 3.)

As regards the 3 specific questions in Mr Johnson's letter, the following is the CAA response and in the same order:

1. Section 70 of the Transport Act 2000 provides that the CAA must exercise its air navigation functions so as to maintain a high standard of safety in the provision of air traffic services. Subject to that overriding safety duty, it must also exercise its air navigation functions in the manner it thinks best calculated to, amongst other things, take account of any guidance on environmental objectives given to the CAA by the Secretary of State.

The Secretary of State has given Directions to the CAA under section 66(1) of the Transport Act 2000 in respect of all UK airspace. Those Directions are concerned with, amongst other things, the environmental impact of air operations. However, other than when considering the environmental impact of proposals to establish new, or amend existing controlled airspace, the CAA is unable to restrict aerial activity over any particular place or at any particular time solely for environmental reasons.

Meanwhile, there are no plans to change any regulations in relation to helicopters, including those used for advertising, but the Committee might consider it worthwhile contacting the British Helicopter Advisory Board (BHAB). The BHAB has issued guidelines to helicopter pilots to fly in such a way as to minimise disturbance over residential areas and they can also sometimes assist with problems arising from the improper or inconsiderate use of helicopters. They can be contacted at the following address: Building C2, West Entrance, Fairoaks Airport, Chobham, Woking, Surrey, GU24 8HX. Tel: 01276 856100. The BHAB's website address is: <http://www.bhab.org>

The CAA's air navigation functions are shown in the first part of the 'Guidance to the CAA on environmental objectives relating to the exercise of its air navigation functions', which is also available on the CAA website via Airspace Policy, Documents, and then Policy/Guidance; also available on this part of the website are the Directions given to the CAA by the Secretary of State, dated January 2001. Overall, other than in respect of the issue of noise certificates (see h. above) and the consideration that it must give to environmental factors in relation to airspace change proposals, the CAA is not empowered within the framework of current legislation to regulate aircraft solely with regard to environmental impact.

2. At the request of the Government, the CAA undertook research into helicopter noise and its environmental impact in 1982/83. This was reported in the following publications, which represent the most recent such research on the subject:

DR Communication 8302, 1982 Helicopter Disturbance Study; Tabulations of the Responses to the Social Surveys, Clair Atkins, Civil Aviation Authority (Chief Scientist's Division).

DR Communication 8303, 1982 Helicopter Disturbance Study: Tabulations of Noise Measurement Results, B J Atkinson, Civil Aviation Authority (Chief Scientist's Division).

DR Report 8304, 1982 Helicopter Disturbance Study: Main Report, C L R Atkins, P Brooker and J B Critchley, Civil Aviation Authority (Chief Scientist's Division).

DR Report 8305, An Assessment of the noise Impact of an Exemplary Helicopter Operation Post 1990, L I C Davies and P J Mahoney, Civil Aviation Authority (Chief Scientist's Division).

The Department for Transport commissions the CAA and other organisations to conduct research on the environmental impact of aviation. Accordingly, proposals for research topics should be addressed to the Department.

3. Arrangements for helicopters to hold, flying heights and routeing were considered in the Report of the London CTR Review Group. However, in exercising its air navigation functions, the CAA must give priority to maintaining a high standard of safety in the provision of air traffic services in accordance with section 70(1) of the Transport Act 2000. Any general increase in helicopter weights would not have implications for flying heights; the latter are determined independently of aircraft weights in accordance with safety requirements, e.g. the Rules of the Air Regulations and the need to apply vertical separation between aircraft through the application of maximum heights on the helicopter routes in the London CTRs.

The Recommendations in the Report are in the process of being implemented but there is no particular timeframe envisaged for this; much will depend on the resources available to the organisations concerned, mainly NATS. However, the CAA is continuing to work with NATS to revise the airspace arrangements in the London CTRs as visualised in the Report and as circumstances and operational priorities allow.

In addition, where an environmental assessment would be required in order to implement a particular operational Recommendation such as would require consultation, the CAA will in future ensure that the London Assembly Environmental Committee is included as an environmental consultee.

Yours sincerely,

David Butcher
Consultation Secretary

David Butcher
Consultation Secretary
Civil Aviation Authority

HN/052

I am writing to ask you to investigate increased noise from police helicopters. I live in Fulham under the flight path to Heathrow so I am used to aircraft noise in general, but the noise from police helicopters is quite different.

They fly very low and often stooge about in the same area, either criss-crossing or hovering for prolonged periods. This is extremely disturbing and of a different order to general aircraft noise and transiting helicopter traffic.

I have noticed a big increase in this recently, with police helicopters overhead several times a day, often in the evening and sometime during the night. For example, aside from day time flights, evening flights

over the last few days have been:

Saturday: Hovering for an hour overhead in mid evening and then again between 12 and 1 am.

Sunday: Sunday 1/2 hour late evening

Monday: 15 minutes mid evening

Tuesday: 15 mins mid evening

Wednesday: 15 mins late evening

It looks as though patrolling by helicopter has become routine and I don't remember any consultation about this. It must be very expensive and I am concerned that it diverts funds from police on the ground.

Discussions with neighbours suggest that many people in the area are as disturbed by this increased helicopter noise as I am.

--

Simon Pugh
Fulham Resident

HN/053

Good to meet you at the Brockley Health event last Sunday. As discussed I live in Buckthorne Road and am often disturbed by helicopter noise. Often (at least twice a week) they fly over the house late at night and I either cannot get to sleep or I am woken up by the noise. They often hover over head for several minutes. Sometimes helicopters fly overhead during the day as well.

This has been an irritation to me for at least 2 years now and I would appreciate you taking up this issue for me.

Suzanne Easton
Brockley Resident

HN/054

Dear Richard,

Helicopter Noise in London Investigation

Thank you for your invitation to send in a written submission to the London Assembly's Environmental Committee regarding the above investigation.

As the Mayor's agency responsible for driving London's sustainable economic growth, we are responsible for ensuring that London remains a global success story. The London Development Agency work to deliver the Mayor's vision for London to be a sustainable world city with strong, long-term economic growth, social inclusion and active environmental improvement. To enable this, we produce the Mayor's Economic Development Strategy for London, which sets out the Mayor's vision in detail and also sets the context for our work.

It is recognised by the Mayor's Ambient Noise Strategy that the Mayor does not have any powers to control helicopter numbers, movements or routes. This equally applies to the LDA and as such we have not felt it necessary to acquire specific technical knowledge on the subject.

However, through our remit of delivering sustainable economic growth we would like to raise some issues in support of our environmental and economic interests. The following points summarise our perspective on helicopter use in London and the associated noise impacts:

- The LDA supports the Mayor's existing policy on helicopter noise and believes that this policy highlights the concerns of the LDA regarding helicopter noise.
- The LDA recognises the very important role that helicopters play in modern day security and supports the Mayor's policy that helicopter operations at night should be limited to emergency services. The LDA recognises that the best way to minimise the disturbance from emergency services' use of helicopters is to further engagement with the Metropolitan Police Service on the options for minimising the disruptions to residents of helicopter use without compromising security.

- The LDA considers the negative environmental impacts of helicopter use in combination with the comparative positive benefits of other transport options as rational not to support the further expansion of helicopter use in London for business purposes.
- While the LDA is supportive of initiatives that improve the tourism offer of London, in general the LDA would not be supportive of the use of helicopters for sightseeing trips across London.
- The LDA would like to bring to the attention of the committee that there is likely to be a need for some temporary use of helicopters in association with the Olympics, but details are not yet decided. This is a matter that the Olympic Delivery Authority will be considering as part of the Olympics transport policy.

Once again I would like to thank you for the invitation to submit to this committee's investigation. However the LDA does not wish to take up the option of attending as a witness on the 13 July. If you do however wish to further discuss our submission please contact our Transport Policy Manager, Neil Hutchinson on 020 7954 0075 or at neil.hutchinson@lad.gov.uk.

Yours sincerely,



Manny Lewis
Chief Executive

Manny Lewis
Chief Executive
London Development Agency

HN/055

I am interested in the meeting at City Hall on July 13th regarding the noise nuisance created by helicopter traffic, as advertised in my local paper in Enfield. Please could I have more details?

I live just south of the North Circular and A10 junction, with the M25 only 6 miles north. So there is the nuisance created by traffic helicopters, as well as the police pursuit helicopters, which are sometimes hovering overhead for long periods into the small hours of the morning. This can sometimes happen several times a week. I contacted the police station to ask them what sort of risk assessment they do to consider the impact of the noise on residents. The desk officer said she lived near where they take off and agreed the noise was terrible!

In addition, the North Middlesex hospital is nearby.

Quite often the helicopter is accompanied by sirens of either police cars or ambulances, even in the middle of the night.

Jeanette Redding
Enfield Resident

HN/056

I would like to register my objection to the increases in helicopter flights over London.

The noise is intrusive and creates a sense of intrusion and fear. The noise can be very disturbing and seriously damage residential amenity.

I believe this type of transport over London is detrimental to the policy of reducing carbon emissions and adds to the burden of poor air quality. Every effort should be made by the Mayor and the GLA to restrict and limit further helicopter flights over London.

Yours sincerely

Guy Tolmarsh
Newham Resident

HN/057

The noise from police helicopters is the main problem. I seriously suggest they use an airship instead.
These act as a suitable platform for surveillance, are much quieter, and use far less fuel.

Yours sincerely,
Richard Scrase
Editor:
Green World

HN/058

My name is Jeff Daley I live at 21 Manchester Road , Isle of Dogs opposite Greenwich, being on the bend of the river Thames.

I seem to be on the flight path of all helicopter traffic in summer when sitting in the garden it becomes unbearable, what used to be a nice day sitting reading and chatting to friends it now gone thanks to the constant drone of the helicopters all day.

Jeff Daley
Isle of Dogs Resident

HN/059

Dear Sir, I have always been annoyed by the noise of low flying helicopters. I live in Covent Garden and its not the commercial flights that go up and down the Thames that are a problem. They fly A-B. It's the Police and news helicopters I hate. They hover endlessly in one place at very low altitude. They drone on and on. I now they have a job to do, but they have no regard for people living underneath. The Police go round and round or hover for up to 20 minutes. The news people will just hover for 1/2 an hour if something like a march is in Trafalgar Sq.

I hope your investigation can bring this to the attention of those in charge. Thank-you for the opportunity to get this off my chest!

Yours etc. Paul Stannering.
Covent Garden Resident

HN/060

Dear Mr Davies

Helicopter Noise in London

Many thanks for giving us the opportunity to provide our comments on helicopter noise in London. This is an important issue to the Borough, hosting as it does the Royal London Hospital's Helicopter Emergency Medical Service (HEMS) in Whitechapel, and the private Vanguard Wharf helipad on the Isle of Dogs, as well as being located close to London City Airport.

To address the points posed in Max Dixon's email of 5 May 2006:

1. 38 complaints regarding aircraft noise have been received by this Department since 2000, being a small fraction of the total number of noise complaints received each year. Of these, 29 specifically related to helicopters.
 - a. A steady number of complaints were received each year, 12 in total since 2000, pertaining to general helicopter noise. This encompasses complaints regarding changes to flight path and flight times, and noise from HEMS and hovering media, traffic-watch and police helicopters.
 - b. There has been a sharp rise in complaints about the Vanguard Wharf helipad – from 2 in 2001 and 2002 to 10 in 2005 – due to an increase in helicopter movements. It has not been possible for the Local Authority to address this problem due to lack of statutory powers, and following investigation complainants were advised that they should form an action group and approach Vanguard Holdings direct to try and negotiate an acceptable arrangement for flight times and frequency. Due to Environmental Health's lack of powers in respect of noise from airborne aircraft, historically complaints of this nature have been referred to DEFRA. However, the above investigation having determined that DEFRA do not have any powers in this respect (neither do the Department for Transport or the Civil Aviation Authority), this Department is now unsure as to how to advise complainants in the future.

2. One complaint has been received since 2000 relating to helicopter routeing – specifically asking whether the HEMS flightpath had changed. From this it can be concluded that this is not considered a significant issue by Tower Hamlets residents.
3. Records from this Department do not refer to the noise performance of helicopters, and no record is kept of the types of helicopter using the borough's airspace.
4. This Department is supportive of the policies on helicopter noise within the Mayor's Noise Strategy, but considers that they do not go far enough in protecting residents:
 - a. It is felt that the '28 day rule' gives too much scope for operators to run helipads without due concern for those living and working around them. The level of workload being experienced by Planning Officers dictates that there can realistically be no check carried out on whether the 28 days are exceeded. The introduction of legally binding Guidance or a Code of Conduct for operators – detailing acceptable flight times, flight numbers, and proximity of helipads to residential properties – would provide some mitigation of this bypassing and overloading of the Planning system. This Department would welcome the Mayor's support in lobbying for such a document to be produced, and would be glad to act as consultee should the GLA wish to produce such a document.
 - b. This Department considers it vitally important that Local Authorities, or one of the other statutory agencies involved with aircraft, are devolved powers to enable nuisance action to be taken in relation to aircraft in flight. The noise levels associated with aircraft movements are such at even the smallest helipad (e.g. Vanguard Wharf) that serious noise problems are currently being endured without recourse to legal action, and residents are entirely reliant on the goodwill of operators, who cannot be guaranteed to respond favourably to their requests for fewer flights and restricted flight times. This Department would welcome the Mayor's support in lobbying for such powers to be made statutory.

If you require any further information regarding the above, please do not hesitate to contact Jen Hicks on 020 7364 5008.

Yours sincerely

Mr David Farrell

Head of Environmental Health, Environmental Protection
London Borough of Tower Hamlets

HN/061

I read in my local paper that you would like to hear from people who find helicopter's traffic and noise annoying. Our dog finds the noise frightening and will bark continuously until pacified this is very annoying for us and our neighbours, especially as the helicopter often flies over at night. In fact over the last few years we have found that Tuesday nights

around 11.30pm the helicopter circulate over Walthamstow-actually it is a joke between myself and my husband : we hear the helicopter and we say to each other it must be Tuesday, which it usually is. We also find the noise annoying as it disturbs the peace when we are enjoying time in our garden and our allotment.

Hoping this is of some help and I am pleased to find out that there is an investigation into this problem.

Liz Simpson
Walthamstow Resident

HN/062

We are getting a lot of helicopter hovering over Sands End/Parsons Green at the moment. It has been particularly intense over the last couple of months. They can hover for up to an hour and it is very disturbing. We are possibly also affected by the helicopter landing pad in Battersea.

Best regards,
Alison Trauttmansdorff
Fulham Resident

HN/063

I saw Darren's article in Mercury 31/5

I am a recently elected Councillor and do not appreciate of late night sorties by noisy (police presumably) helicopters keeping my neighbours and me up/waking us up late at night.

I live on the top of a hill/valley overlooking Lewisham Town Centre.

About twice weekly (weekends) there is excessive noise of helicopters over Lewisham Town Centre at night.

Recent extending of licensing hours has also resulted in later helicopter flights. Yates Bar in Lewisham Hi St (by the Police Station) is a popular flash point on Friday and Saturday nights.

Sometimes it seems that the helicopters were practicing night flying over Lewisham as they circled more times than necessary (maybe the suspects were themselves driving or running!)

Helicopter use is the most environmentally unfriendly form of transport and expensive for police to maintain and operate, it has its uses (medical), but in an urban environment at night it is a problem.

Can the Police develop, pilot and use alternative quieter and less gas guzzling methods to track people on the ground. 'Model' aeroplanes with cameras (OK strong lighting is a problem but camera sensitivity is increasing and are used commercially by ariel photographers) or balloons/airship type. Maybe a light plane/airship hybrid (I have designs of my own as an amateur at night after being woken up!!)

This is copied to others who may be concerned.

Cllr Michael Keogh
London Borough of Lewisham

HN/064

I understand you are looking for views on helicopter noise.

London is a busy place; so some noise is unavoidable, but I think that unless there is an important reason (such as tracking a dangerous criminal) helicopter flights over London should be restricted.

There are many events in (and pass through) Greenwich and most are accompanied by a host of helicopters, which I see must belong to the media. This is the sort of thing that I have issue with; I understand the need for coverage, but there should be one official helicopter (which only flies when the event is taking place) – the official helicopter then could sell the footage to the media channels.

An example of this is the London Marathon. There were numerous helicopters overhead from about 8am !!

Police helicopters; I sometimes wonder what's a worse crime waking up an entire neighbourhood, or the crime that the person has committed who the helicopter is chasing. Police helicopters should only be dispatched for a certain seriousness of crime; Also it costs a lot to keep a helicopter in the air – maybe that cost could be spent on more police on the ground.

I have a stressful job and need rest and sleep. If there is a good reason for a helicopter to be overhead (air ambulance / police), then I don't mind. Otherwise I would be very happy to see non-essential flights stopped.

Finally, why don't helicopters have the same noise restrictions as cars? And I bet they don't have catalytic converters!!

Niall Bell
Greenwich Resident

HN/065

I saw your letter in the Hackney Gazette. I live near Newington Green N16 and yes the helicopter noise does sometimes drive me mad! The police helicopters are frequently over this area and often without any apparent problems on the ground that they would be supporting. They frequently circle for up to half an hour. What really annoyed me recently was the helicopter turnout for the final Arsenal match. There were two helicopters that day and they hovered/circled from approx. 1.30pm until 7.45 pm. I assume that they were police helicopters.

A football match only lasts less than 2 hours with a bit extra for the crowds arriving and departing = so why did we have to put up with this din for over 6 hours? I don't think that Arsenal fans are notorious for bad behavior, and I don't think that the Wigan fans have a bad reputation either I assume that they were police helicopters and if so I think that this was definite police "overkill".

Although I live a fair distance from the Arsenal ground the helicopters actually patrolled a fairly wide area. The noise also appears to deflect off neighbouring buildings. In my case the noise was much worse at the back of the house than at the front, although the helicopters were some distance away at the front. At the back of my house there are some tall buildings which leads me to think that the noise possibly bounces back.

I am not concerned when the police use their helicopters to fight genuine crime but they often appear to be used for what appear to be frivolous reasons. I wonder if they list anywhere the time place and reasons why they are used?

Best regards

John Adams
Newington Green Resident

HN/066

We have lived in Barnfield Road, opposite Pitshanger Park for 40 odd years and have seen and heard a considerable increase in the noise from helicopters.

Partly this is due to the use of police helicopters hovering over and around the Park trying to locate people they wish to question with regard to a crime. This is extremely noisy, but forgivable.

What is less easy to accept, however, is the route currently taken by the helicopters from Northolt Aerodrome into central London. We believe they are supposed to follow a route along the A40 and then veer away south, but instead they 'cut the corner' and fly too near this densely populated area. The noise is such as to stop off normal speech. This traffic has increased gradually over the years and presumably will not become less so.

It would be appreciated if the pilots were asked to revert to their previous route, thus relieving a great many people of the extra burden they have placed upon us.

Veronica Heley (Mrs)
Ealing Resident

HN/067

You have asked for submissions re helicopter noise and so I am writing to let you know that we find this a major nuisance.

We live near Arsenal football stadium and frequently have to put up with a helicopter overhead for over 3 hours. Our property is a one story mews property in between two rows of 4 story Victorian houses. The helicopter noise seems to ricochet off the walls and be amplified. When this happens for 15 mins it is irritating but after hours of it you become quite stressed and agitated. You feel like you are living in Vietnam during the war. Frequently I have had to give up gardening or sunbathing or reading a book

outdoors and retreat into the house shutting all the windows. I have lived here for 26 years and Arsenal have always been here but we never used to experience this nuisance. I appreciate the need for traffic control but feel that the use of the helicopter is excessive and in , for the majority of matches, unnecessary.

Similarly our sleep is broken by police helicopters overhead. I know that crime has become a lot worse in the past 26 years and that Upper Street and Holloway Road are particularly bad, but again this appreciation isn't much comfort when you have to go to work after a broken nights sleep.

Yours
Ms K Rooney
Islington Resident

HN/068

Our local paper, the Walthamstow Guardian, published a letter from Darren Johnson seeking views on helicopter noise, so:

- In my area of Walthamstow (E17), near Whipps Cross, this is a growing issue
- I assume the helicopters are in police operation
- The noise is enough to be heard clearly, for example, above the TV at moderate volume
- The frequency is about 2-3 times per week, sometimes more
- The most frequent time for the noise is c 11.15pm to midnight (i.e., when many workers are trying to sleep)
- It also occurs sometimes during daylight hours
- It also occurs in the middle of the night (e.g., in w/o 29 May, at least once at 3.30am, loud enough to wake me up)
- The "tactic" appears to be to circle in the same area, constantly, for periods up to 45 minutes
- The helicopter noise is currently the worse noise pollution in the area
- I have never yet seen a cost-benefit analysis by Waltham Forest police of these operations, but I presume they are expensive, and contrast with a minimal to non-existent police presence on the street in my area
- I have also heard helicopter noise is an issue in Hackney; and also experienced similar problems in Tufnell Park (N19), when I lived there 6 years ago
- Judging from passing discussions with neighbours, I'd say (a) there is huge scepticism that this form of policing contributes more to community safety and security than extra resources at street level, and (b) it loses the police good favour with the community

Graham Bennett
Walthamstow Resident

HN/069

I have lived in Prices Court (about 200 yards away from the heliport) for nearly 5 years and there is no doubt that there are many more movements and the helicopters are much bigger. Also the heliport does not turn off their search lights which shine directly into our bedrooms. Furthermore sometimes they fly as close as 50 yards from our balcony so that I can easily see the inside cabin details. In the summer there is no question of having the balcony doors open and recently we have noticed vibration when some of the bigger ones fly by, which is not something we have experienced in the past.

Since the Heliport was first built the following residential buildings have been erected: Prices Court, Battersea Reach, Oyster Wharf, Falcon Wharf, Montevetro, Imperial Wharf. I would estimate that this means at least another 1500 flats, yes, 1500. ie thousands and thousands of people are affected. It is time it was moved and only used for medical and police ie civil emergencies. Not as a social facility. Please let me know the outcome of your report.

Geraldine Higson
Battersea Resident

HN/070

Following up the letter from Darren published in the Islington Gazette. A very welcome and timely initiative. I do not have specific examples, e.g. over a flight path, but I have noticed more heli noise recently and I am sure it is going up. We do get it in this part of Islington when Arsenal are playing at home which is fine. However there are increasing examples of helicopter hover the reasons for which are by no means obvious. Yesterday, Sunday 4 June for example. We went through a period of excessive hover which was rumoured to be with the fact that the head of MI5 lived nearby! It also occurred to me whether any of the noise was to do with "training".

What would be very useful would be very clear guidelines/instructions especially for the public services and those organising events.

Would be helpful to be put on a general mailing list of progress so that I can publicise locally.

Chris Bulford
Islington Resident

HN/071

I write further to you letter dated 25 April and apologise for the delay in replying.

I would be willing to help with any project relating to helicopter noise, we do have a particular interest as London city airport is within the boroughs boundary.

With regard to complaints and statistics we have very little. Certainly we have very few complaints, none within the last calendar year and possibly none the year before that. This is not the whole story however as residents are concerned regarding helicopter noise, and residents around London city airport are opposed to the airport being able to operate helicopters. The borough is also opposed to such operation and a planning restriction prohibits the use of helicopters at the airport.

In considering helicopter routing the impact on the London airports will also need to be considered.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you require further information.

Regards
Robin Whitehouse
Lead Environmental Health Officer
London Borough of Newham

HN/072

I read your article with interest about helicopter flight noise in this weeks edition of the Wandsworth & Putney Guardian.

I would suggest one of the reasons Mr Davies doesnt get any complaints is the fact that the ordinary public find it difficult to find anyone to complain to. Its not that a Government website exists specifically to complain about helicopter noise!!!!!!

It is only because of your article that I am penning this email and copying Mr Davies.

I have lived in a residential block of apartments called Fairacres, in Roehampton Lane SW15, for 5 years.

I had no idea planes and helicopters would plague the life out of my Wife and I when we moved here, but we seem to live directly under one of the flightpaths to Heathrow, but in direct relation to this email, right under the flightpath of the helicopter route into Battersea.

I can assure Mr Davies that 63 families would love to see a review of the route the copters currently use they fly directly over our building very low, and make a extremely high level of noise.

Why they cant fly down the Thames beats me, especially as Battersea heliport sits by the side of the Thames anyway.

The military Chinook's (with double rotor blades) are the worst, fortunately for us they dont fly over every day.

During events such as Wimbledon & Queens Club, it very bad, but I would suggest over the past 3 years helicopter use has doubled to what was annoying, its now a major noise problem.

There are late night flights now, which definitely didn't occur 5 years ago, quite often upto 11pm/midnight we will get a copter fly over. Late evening is a favourite, I recently counted 6 flights in half an hour. All in all its getting slowly worse, the review is long overdue.

Before Mr Davies says why buy a property under a flight path, how would you know? When we bought our apartment there was no reason to suspect overflight by planes or helicopters, it was only after moving in that these issues became obvious.

I and my fellow Residents would be more than happy to meet Mr Davies and his colleagues should he wish to do so.

Regards,

Malcolm Cotton
Roehampton Resident

HN/073

Complaints about helicopter noise to Ealing's Environmental Health Department seemed to be particularly common about 10 years ago when one of the main problems was "corner-cutting" of route H10. Westwards, the route follows the North Circular Road to the Hanger Lane Gyratory System and then heads west over the A40. Pilots very frequently cut the corner (in both directions) and this results in flights over Pitshanger Park and/or North Ealing Primary School and large areas of housing. I notice this myself since I happen to live under this very section of the route. The problem persists, and, in fact, over the last few days I have noticed several helicopters cutting the corner and a complaint about helicopter noise was received by this Department about a month ago.

Andrew Lyon
Environmental Health Officer
London Borough of Ealing

HN/074

I write to you as an individual and also as the Chairman of Valiant House (Management)

This Company is responsible for the upkeep and maintenance of Valiant House which is a block of one hundred and five (105) flats on Vicarage Crescent London SW11 3LX and which is only a few hundred yards from the heliport.

The noise from the helicopters has increased drastically over the last two years and this is due not only to the greatly increased frequency of flights but also to the fact that the helicopters are flying much lower.

If we open our windows, which we are likely to do in the summer months, the at times it is impossible to hold a conversation with the person next to you and the continual and excessive noise lessens the quality of life.

Yours sincerely
Jeffrey Aubrey
Battersea Resident

HN/075

I have tried to answer the questions in the doc from the GLA as follows:-

1.We used to get about 6 per year but have had none in the last year.

2.Complaints tend to be from residents of Greenwich Town centre i.e. SE10

*Please see comment in 8 below.

3.No info available

4.Predominantly c) we have Woolwich Barracks not far from Woolwich Town Centre and on occasions will have Chinooks flying in the area, then b) as the Police use their helicopter to overfly incidents and on occasions police convoys taking prisoners to and from Belmarsh prison in Plumstead SE18, and less frequently d) I recall one occasion, filming of TV programmes have involved the use of helicopters

5. No

6 None

7. General Noise conditions and under Condition M12 of the UDP "Generally, heliports and like facilities will not be permitted in the Borough, unless material considerations arise which would justify or enable development in exceptional circumstances. The whole Borough is considered sensitive to over flying by all types of aircraft due to its predominantly residential nature, existing or planned. As such reductions in existing levels of overflying will be sought and proposals generating an increase in noise and/or frequency will normally be opposed. Any Planning applications for such a proposal would be required to address and make clear environmental impacts when submitted".

8.No

*However, I have subsequently had a discussion with another experienced EHO here at Greenwich who advised me that we did have complaints from people living in the Greenwich Town centre area about what seemed to be "Tourist" helicopter flights over central Greenwich/Greenwich Park in 2005. It should also be remembered that our advice to residents complaining about aircraft and helicopter noise is to contact the Civil Aviation Authority and this approach may have reduced the number of complaints we receive about helicopter/aircraft noise. I hope this helps.

Eric Broom
Environmental Health Manager - Pollution Control
London Borough of Greenwich

HN/076

From the SE1 website I noticed your request for feedback on helicopter noise.

I am resident in Waterloo, close to the Thames and of course, because of the location, we suffer from helicopter noise more than most. I appreciate the need for much of the purposeful use of helicopters having witnessed the air ambulance come to the aid of a car crash in Brixton some years ago.

I would however like to mention a particular personal experience. About 6 weeks ago I was woken at 8am by the sound of what seemed like a heli landing on my roof! On looking out the window it was just beyond Stamford street but was hovering VERY low down. This continued for approx an hour, in the same place. I work at home and spent the hour completely deafened and unable to think, let alone make phone calls as the noise was so loud.

I guessed it was a police heli and phoned Charing X police station who told me that Waterloo was indeed on their list of 'routine practice manoeuvres' for that day but could tell me nothing more. They promised to call back with more information, but needless to say, did not.

I think many Londoners like myself would appreciate more visibility of the policies and regulations on the use of helis simply to understand why so much noise pollution of this sort is necessary. If it is justified, so be it, but a little more explanation would be useful.

Best regards,
Emma Gilman
Waterloo Resident

HN/077

1). My family and I lived in London (near the Oval and not far from the river) until 1991 when we moved to Hampshire. After a fifteen year absence from London, we returned to live in Fulham (near Wandsworth Bridge) just two months ago. This has enabled to have a somewhat unique viewpoint as to changes that have occurred in London after 15 years, a bit like seeing a 20 year old you last saw when he or she was aged five.

2). As native Londoners during the 1970's and '80's, we were certainly aware of increasing aeroplane noise. Indeed we often seemed to be directly under the flightpath into Heathrow. However (with exception of Concorde) the noise was tolerable. The planes were relatively high and the pitch of their engines relatively low.

3). Fifteen years later and the frequency and pitch of aeroplane noise seems fairly similar today as it was then, i.e. still reasonably tolerable. But the big change is the helicopters, of which we had never been previously aware. Their noise around Fulham is almost continuous and a much harsher, more intrusive pitch than any plane. The combination of the closer-sounding helicopter noise with the background sound of aeroplanes is verging on the intolerable, and thus making London a less pleasant place to live than it otherwise could be. All too regularly it sounds like we are living through the Vietnam War here !

4). Just before we returned to live in London, resident friends here warned us of the new and increasingly intrusive sound of helicopters. They were not wrong. Emergency services apart, any reduction in helicopter traffic would be a very welcome relief to Londoners in general.

5). It would seem that much of the helicopter traffic from Battersea Heliport is non-essential, e.g. sight-seeing trips, business people who can afford the convenience etc. It would seem unreasonable, therefore, that others (the vast majority) should have to suffer the whims of the few. There are many examples of noise restriction and/or abatement in our society and made for a variety of good reasons. High power speedboats, for example, are not allowed up the Thames, though some might find such a mode of transport both useful and fun. Similarly, in some parts of the U.K., motorised leaf-blowing machines may now be banned on account of their noise and pollution, or simply because they are an extremely lazy way to gather up leaves. They have similarities with non-essential helicopters on all three counts !

6). Before helicopter flights over London get even more out of control, there should be tighter restrictions imposed on their purpose, their routes, their frequency and on the times at which they are allowed fly.

Yours sincerely,
JOHN WOLSTENHOLME
Fulham Resident

HN/078

I am writing to you about helicopter noise as suggested by Darren Johnson in his letter to my local newspaper, the *Islington Gazette* last week.

I live in Canonbury Square and am regularly awakened in the middle of the night by a helicopter, which I assume to be the Metropolitan Police helicopter, hovering and circling low over the Canonbury/Highbury area for considerable periods of time.

The helicopter is also usually out and about when Arsenal are playing at home but at least that is usually during the day or early evening. Even so I believe that the use of a helicopter to police football matches is completely disproportionate and excessive and I would be surprised if in terms of the cost and noise (and other) pollution involved there was any valuable increase in crimes detected or prevented.

In addition to the Canonbury/Highbury helicopters I am also affected by helicopter noise at work. My office is in Finsbury Square and is frequently subjected to low flying helicopters which seem to be involved in landing and taking off at the HAC ground in City Road. Yesterday (4 June) while I was at work an extremely noisy helicopter spent most of the late morning and early afternoon hovering around City Road.

It seems to me that none of the users of these helicopters pay any real attention to the effect they have on the inhabitants of the areas they afflict. None of these uses seem to justify the resulting reduction in quality. It is not as if the helicopters are rescuing people from burning buildings or anything as worthwhile. More like boys with toys, I think.

Regards,

Michael Barron
Canonbury Resident

HN/079

I understand you are undertaking a study of helicopter noise in London.

I currently reside in one of the riverside developments adjacent to the Battersea helipad and have done so for four years. I took account of the fact my flat was so near the helipad when I bought it and mostly the noise does not bother me. The irritant is during the early and late hours in the summer when the doors and windows are open.

I do have a concern however if the number of trips/helicopters is to increase which I have been told Weston Homes is proposing for their new development. In conjunction with this is the traffic which would accumulate on the already busy Wandsworth Roads - try driving from the helipad to the A3 on a weekend - it will take you an hour.

Regards,
Katrina Macfarlane
Battersea Resident

HN/080

Being relatively new to Battersea, I always try to pick up the local paper to find out what is going on in the area. I noticed the article about helicopter noise and here are my views.

I have been living in Plantation Wharf for a few months now and am slowly getting used to the fact that, every so often, I will not be able to hear what is being said on the phone or on the radio or television - even with the double-glazed windows closed. The television flickers and switches from digital to mono (not quite sure what that means) when a helicopter goes by. In an area which is otherwise very quiet, this noise does stand out. Occasionally, flights seem to have been going on until quite late in the evening. When I was looking for a flat, I chose not to go ahead with one in Oyster Wharf because that was far too close to the heliport and the noise from helicopters taking off was deafening.

I do not know anything about helicopters or how they work, but assume that, like other modes of transport, some are more powerful (and hence noisier) than others. However, I have noticed that some fly considerably closer to my flat than others as they come in to land or take off. Would it not be possible for them to fly down the middle of the river instead? With more and more developments being built along this part of the river and the area becomes more residential than industrial, I wonder if it is time to limit flights or power, or move the heliport to a less residential area. However, I also understand that Wandsworth has approved plans for a hotel by the heliport, with guests being able to fly in by helicopter. Clearly, this would increase noise.

Previously, I lived on a very busy main road in West London and although the traffic noise there was constant, it soon became a background 'hum', and was a problem only in the summer months with open windows. Helicopters are much more disruptive.

Yours sincerely
Anne King
Battersea Resident

HN/081

I live in Prices Court,
The noise pollution from the nearby Heliport is becoming intolerable
The flights are increasing in frequency and pass ever closer to the heavily populated apartments
A safer site must be found where lives would not be disturbed or put at risk

Keith Holmes
Battersea Resident

HN/082

I live at 114 Addison Gardens, London W14. Prior to the summer of 2005 I don't recall any helicopter noise here. Now helicopters seem to fly by several times a day and quite late at night also. The noise can be deafening especially if I am in the garden. I would be most grateful if the helicopters could be re-routed.

Thank you
Norrie Buxton
W4 Resident

HN/083

We live at Plumstead above Woolich and find noisy helicopters very irritating. I get migraines that get triggered by low frequency sounds, which they make.

The Police use helicopters round here at night to try to locate cannabis factories in cheap rented buildings. They hover low, often stationary, looking for the heat given off by the lighting used to grow it, coming through the buildings roof. They also use them in crime fighting and seem to fly around Bellmarsh maximum security prison.

I doubt if they would get away with using them so much if the area was more privileged. Police sirens are also used excessively. They may think this will cow the criminal fraternity, I think it just adds to a sense of tension.

Please add us to your list of people finding the frequent use of helicopters, close to built up areas, a thing to be avoided where possible.

Sincerely
Charles & Sarah Vernon-Hunt
Plumstead Residents

HN/084

The heliport is now situated in the middle of residential development some of which is high rise and there are constant planning applications to Wandsworth council for further high rise development next door to the heliport so it must be decided which takes priority. The noise is especially bad on Friday evenings and Sunday evenings. The properties in this area are not cheap but the heliport was there first so the noise should be a factor in the granting of the planning consent

Pauline Sennett
Battersea Resident

HN/085

Thank you for your initiative. I am the Music Producer at the Globe Theatre and would like to speak for about 150 musicians who perform regularly in our shows, and also for the Globe audiences. The noise of helicopters circling above the Globe Theatre and SE1 has always interfered with the performances on this open air stage, persistently drowning out the sound of acoustic music and speech and distracting the audiences. In the last 2 years however things have worsened and we have been affected by an increasing number of helicopter appearances in the sky. Also, they seem to stay or 'hover' for longer in the same area. Of all the sounds of the modern Bankside environment, this is the loudest one, and it always goes on for too long, and it is hard to see why they need to stay in the same place for minutes.

If the amount of helicopter traffic over central London could be reduced, this would be received with great thanks by our audiences (up to 3,000 people per day), performers and artists, who are all coming here to experience the works of Shakespeare in its original form - performed under the open sky, with acoustic music and speech only.

With best wishes for your initiative,
Eva Koch-Schulte
Music Producer
Shakespeare's Globe Theatre

HN/086

For the last few years I have become increasingly concerned about helicopter noise. I live in Chislehurst in south east London. We are on a direct route for helicopter flights. My enquiries lead to the conclusion that these were sightseeing trips over London run by a company from Biggin Hill airport. The flights would fly to Greenwich and then up the Thames. I am convinced that they fly below the legal limit of 1500 feet over built up areas. I believe they do this to give a better view to the sightseeing passengers and also to save fuel. The authorities will only act on this if you provide the number of the helicopter, which is difficult to read from a fast flying object, looking up into the sun. On summer weekends they can pass over every half hour, making a terrible noise and disturbing the peace of the weekend.

I think there needs to be better enforcement of the height limit over housing and strict control of routing.

Douglas Clegg
Chislehurst Resident

HN/087

I note from the Islington Gazette that you are collecting information from London residents about their experience of the nuisance caused by helicopter flights.

I live with my family in the St Mary's ward of Islington. We are seriously bothered by frequent night time helicopter flights, with helicopters flying low and hovering, often using searchlights, over the Upper Street (N1) and Liverpool Road areas. I assume that these flights are made by the police. If so, I suggest you establish whether the use of helicopters is a cost beneficial way of reducing crime when the environmental costs of the noise nuisance at night is factored in to the assessment. The helicopter seems to operate at all night time hours, and often wakes me at around 02.00am. Although I have kept no records, it is my view that the frequency of flights has increased over the past ten years, while most other sources of noise have remained unchanged.

I hope your investigations lead to a reduction in this source of noise and to London residents getting a better understanding of the reasons for these flights and of what level of nuisance it is appropriate for them to tolerate.

Yours

Tom Worsley

Islington Resident

HN/088

Helicopters ruin our shows - hanging overhead and looking down they pose a threat to our very likelihood. The Globe's structure is such that it holds their noise and amplifies it. Can't we ban helicopters from overflying our theatre?

David Marshall

Director of Exhibitions

Shakespeare's Globe

HN/089

I am prompted to register our concern with the increased traffic and noise, as it has a severe impact on our matinee performances during the summer. I have to say it seems to increase every summer and difficult to know how many are police/emergency and therefore necessary and how many are tourist/media i.e. filming related. We can only really judge if we see that they are black in colour and seem to have a concentrated route or patrol around the Globe.

For obvious reasons, with no roof and therefore open to the elements, this has always been a problem but anything that you can do to scrutinize or request certain times be avoided, the more grateful we would be!

With best wishes

Celia Gilbert

Front of House Manager

Shakespeare's Globe Theatre

HN/090

I have worked at Stage Door at The Shakespeare Globe Theatre for a number of years, I am also a local resident.

It has become an increasing nuisance especially in the summer months when the Theatre is in full production around 14 00 hrs we hear the helicopters circling overhead. It starts again around 19 00 hrs when our evening performances commence. The actors and audience find it difficult to hear and also are distracted from the flow of the play.

It is very disturbing in this present climate as of late it has become excessive. surely they cannot be all police or military?

Brenda Vel (local Resident) and

Regards
Brenda Vel
Facilities Assistant
Shakespeare's Globe Theatre

HN/091

I am responding as requested to the London Assembly's [Environment Committee](#) request for views on the captioned matter.

I live at Prices Court which is adjacent to the Weston aviation heliport in Battersea off Lombard Road. The noise from take-offs and landings at this heliport is certainly a disturbance to me and my neighbours. Some additional observations:

- Since the heliport was built, Prices Court, Oyster Wharf, Falcon Wharf, Battersea Reach, Montevetro and Imperial Wharf and a proposed new development at Bridges Wharf have been built thus the noise and environment pollution from this heliport affects over a 1000 households - thousands and thousands of individuals. This inconvenience is suffered by many to benefit a few - and it is not as if London is otherwise poorly served by other transport links thus these few would not be severely disadvantaged if this heliport were to be closed down or be used only for emergency services. This observation is reinforced by a reading of Weston Aviation's Annual Report which stated a "key" usage was for "events such as the Cheltenham Festival, the Grand Prix and Ascot Week". In other words whilst others are enjoying speedy transport to and from their corporate hospitality tents we (persons living in the vicinity) are all suffering the noise/air pollution!
- I have noticed that helicopter movements have got more frequent and happen later in the day and into the night. The noise from the helicopters is certainly intrusive and seems to have got more pronounced as other developments have been built in the area as the glass facades provide a reflection surface for the noise - my neighbours and I have repeatedly made this point when planning application consultations for new developments have gone out but our objections have been ignored by the Wandsworth council . I have no way of determining what other pollution is released into the atmosphere but do not underestimate its effect.
- One of my neighbours mentioned this consultation to me otherwise I would have had no way of finding out about it - suggest if you wish to obtain more views on this from affected parties that you should do a mail shot to people living at postcodes in the vicinity of the heliport.

I hope the points I have made will be taken into consideration by the Environment Committee.

Yours sincerely

Lester Pereira
Battersea Resident

HN/092

My name is Jo Matthews

I am the Manager of the Friends of Shakespeare's Globe

I work in the West Wing of the admin block attached to Shakespeare's Globe I represent 7,500 Friends and 80 volunteers

Helicopter noise is very loud in my office (we sometimes wonder if one is about to crash on us). It is worse when they 'hover' as opposed to just flying over.

But more importantly I get continuous comments from members seeing our shows about the noise from helicopters and aircraft. They find that it spoils their enjoyment and understanding of the play because it drowns out the voices of the actors.

I know this to be true as I experience it myself.

Some days it is very bad indeed in that there seems to be very many flights over us, other days only a few. On the bad days some people will say that it completely ruined the play for them.

Also our hearing loops are affected by the noise - we have constant complaints from the hard-of-hearing because of it. (although the hard-of-hearing are not very many in number)

May I say that if a solution can be found, it could work to limit the numbers of flights per day, and tell us how many that will be. We can then at least know that after number three (or whatever), we can have peace.

I do realise that control over the MOD is not possible. However with decent PR, and with email, they should be able to give immediate warning of activity, which again would help us. We have blackboards for last-minute notices to our audience, we could tell them and they would be (a little bit) happier.

Also to ban hovering would be very good news.

Jo Matthews
Manager,
Friends of Shakespeare's Globe

HN/093

We are fed up with the noise from helicopters, especially all day Saturdays and Sundays flying over exactly the same route (across Upwood Road SE12) every 20 minutes or less, when will it stop, where are they going, where are they from, can't they vary the routes, it is so annoying, bring back Concorde, at least that was only once a day and carried 99 people.

Please do something to stop the peace and quiet of our lovely green residential areas being destroyed especially at weekends at all times of the year. This has been going on for years, we thought nobody cared, I can moan some more if you wish.

Best of luck for action.
Cheers
Nalletamby
SE12 Resident

HN/094

I am aware of an increase in helicopter noise in recent years but have no idea what this relates to – is it 'necessary' e.g. ambulances and police? Or not?

I do not think the public are aware of who is allowed to fly helicopters over London or when – or how go about complaining about helicopter noise. Surely this is an issue for wide public debate?

I have personal experience of sustained, loud helicopter noise over my house (E4) at times – including at night when it has woken me up or kept me from sleeping.

Is there to be information on this distributed to Londoners? Is there to be wide public debate?

Sheena Dunbar
Director
Age Concern Waltham Forest

HN/095

I attach a copy of a message sent to my local MP and councillors complaining about helicopter noise in order that you can consider this as part of the London Assembly's Environment Committee investigation into Helicopter Noise in London (http://www.london.gov.uk/assembly/scrutiny/env_helicopters.jsp)

Dear Greg Hands MP; Councillors Bristow, Donovan, Johnson,

This evening, not for the first time, my evening was disturbed by the intrusive noise of helicopters flying over my back garden. I was trying to make the most of the sunshine by relaxing over a meal with my family on one of the rare occasions that the weather allows this. The craft flew repeated circuits around the area for about 40 minutes.

Given the density of housing in this area thousands of residents would have been affected by this anti-social behaviour.

The noise of aircraft flying into Heathrow is bad enough but the additional intrusion of this helicopter flights is really unacceptable.

I understand the necessity for the emergency services to fly in the area. I do not think that these flights fall into this category, indeed a quick search on the internet reveals a company offering sight seeing flights over London
(http://www.adventure001.com/a1_aviation_helicopters_sightseeing.htm)

According to Hansard
(<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200506/cmhansrd/cm050704/text/50704w07.htm>) :

All civil aircraft fly subject to the legislation of the Air Navigation Order (ANO) and the Rules of the Air Regulations (RoA). These require that helicopters should not fly within 500 feet of any person, vessel, vehicle or structure (except when landing or taking off) nor below 1,000 feet over a congested area. Although these regulations are concerned primarily with safety, the height restrictions do give an incidental noise benefit.

I have no way of knowing if these flights comply with this legislation or not. If they do not then I would like your advise about how to enforce the legislation, if they do not then clearly the legislation is inadequate.

I hope that I can count on your support in this matter.

I have also recorded a complaint on the Hammersmith and Fulham web page (reference 38210).

Rick Burne
W6 Resident

HN/096

I live off Stamford street in Waterloo and I am very much against the continuation of the current practises that see helicopters parked over our area whenever there is something happening up or down the river.

WE had one instance that so enraged me that I phoned every authority that I could think of that may have any control of these noise polluting louts that have no regard for that fact that this area of south London is in fact quite heavily populated.

I see no reason why these nuisances can not park themselves in a very noisy hover over the city when the city effectively empties in the evenings.

The daily flow of helicopters up and down the Thames is also becoming a very serious nuisance, and to add to the already high noise level we now have increased traffic over our homes of flights to city airport and we are told that the plan is to increase this usage markedly.

When will you be enforcing restrictions on the noise levels that assail Londoners daily. I would point out that this is also an element of pollution that is always left to the end of the list that has even more of an impact on a daily basis, than that of the particulates and gaseous pollution that we cannot usually see but that damages our lungs daily.

Noise damages peoples hearing and can effect ones mental stability very seriously. Please control these pollutants and restrict the number of aircraft and helicopters that assail us.

Thank you
Peter Fey
Waterloo Resident

HN/097

The Kensington and Chelsea Environment Round Table (of which I am Secretary) is a voluntary body of residents, which provides a forum for discussion on environmental issues, supported by, but independent of, the Council.

We have drawn attention in recent years to the problem of noise from helicopters overflying Kensington and Chelsea, but have found it difficult to understand whether environmental factors are taken into account in the control arrangements. We should be glad to hear more about the present examination of the matter, which was front page news

in the local press on 1 June. I should be grateful for any information you can give me: for example, is the meeting planned for 13 July open to the public or to a group such as ours? Should we write about our experiences? It would be helpful to have at least a short reply from you by Monday 12 June, when the Round Table is meeting in the evening.

Tim Nodder
hon Sec
K&C Environment Round Table.

HN/098

I can certainly tell you that there is often a helicopter circling overhead where I live. It just goes round and round and round in a large circuit taking a minute or so. And it does it for hours at a time. It is most annoying and it even circles after midnight. It is a bloody nuisance, but I don't know who it belongs to.

Yours,
Robert Pearlman
NW4 Resident

HN/099

After yet another sleepless night I wrote to my Jeremy Corbyn MP on 9 July to complain about the problems we have with helicopter noise around here.

He wrote back with information re the London Assembly's investigation and so I am copying in what I originally sent to my MP. See below:

Once again I had an almost sleepless night due to the droning of police helicopters. I am sure you are aware this is not an unusual occurrence around here.

Last night I was woken at about 2 am and the noise continued till about 4.30, directly overhead it seemed, and then moved off but was still going on until after 6am. My bedroom is in the roof of our house and the roof and windows literally vibrate with the noise. Earplugs do no work, as it is the deep throbbing vibration that is as bad as the noise itself.

Last summer it seemed particularly bad and last night just makes me dread the summer ahead. Why does this happen? I note the London Ambulance helicopter service is dependent on public donations etc and yet my already extortionate council tax seems to fund the police to be in the air all the time.

Last Sunday there were 3 helicopters at one point; one was clearly carrying banner advertising the new Arsenal stadium which incidentally I do not support being there, and two others were police helicopters droning on all afternoon; do I pay for those too?

I look forward to hearing your comments on this.

I hope our problems are seriously considered within your investigation.

Silba Knight
N19 Resident

HN/100

I lived in Chigwell Road, Woodford Green from 1977 until last year. Throughout that time traffic noise of all types just got worse, but over the last decade the noise from helicopters became a real problem for me, especially during the night and early hours of the morning. The choppers frequently circled above our houses, sometimes for nearly an hour at a time. It was not just the noise it was also the frequent use of 'search lights' which I'm sure you know are extremely bright and penetrating. I had a sleep disorder which certainly was not helped by the use of choppers in the night. Obviously, if there were really good reasons for police to be searching, I cannot argue with that, but I'm not convinced by the regularity that this was always the case. Fortunately, I have now moved to Norfolk where the noise disappears completely for several hours in the night and my sleep disorder has improved somewhat, and I will never go back to Woodford Green to live again.

SUE HAMMANS
Ex-Woodford Green Resident

HN/101

In response to your request for information on personal experiences of helicopter noise I can say that this has increased noticeably over the past 7 years or so. There has been a marked increase in the frequency of flights over my area, most of which appear to follow a flight corridor in a South East direction over West Greenwich. Other helicopters sometimes hover around at a lower level and this is an increasing nuisance.

I find the noise intrusive and irritating, and unlike traffic noise there's no getting away from it. Back streets, private gardens and public parks are equally affected. Sometimes helicopters pass over every 5 or 10 minutes and as the noise persists each time for a minute or two it can be a considerable interruption.

Surprisingly there seem to be more helicopters at weekends, especially on Sundays from about 11 am to late afternoon. It would be useful to know what purpose the flights served. Essential flights for security or emergencies would be more acceptable than those taken for pleasure or convenience, but currently we don't know who to blame. Without this information public debate on the acceptability of the noise is not possible.

Whatever the economic benefits of using helicopters they have for me increased the stress of living in London and made difficult the use of my garden for relaxation. I would like to see a ban on helicopter trips for tourists and discouragement of the use of helicopters as a convenient method of travel for those individuals and companies who can afford it. The convenience of the minority with access to a helicopter should not be at the expense of the many on the ground.

Yours sincerely,
Chris Dance
SE10 Resident

HN/102

Following your letter in the East London Advertiser. I am sending this on behalf of my 78 year old father who lives on the Isle of Dogs. He complains that helicopters are hovering over the Isle of Dogs every day of the week and more so of a weeked. he says it constantly affects his use of his garden during the summer monthers. He welcomes any campaign to reduce this nuisance.

Sent on behalf of
Mr R Richardson
Isle of Dogs Resident

HN/103

I have just seen an article in the paper about 'helicopter noise' and would like to add my opinion.

I have lived in Fulham near Putney Bridge all my life and have always been aware of helicopters but in the main have managed to ignore the noise. However over the last couple of months there seems to have been a big increase in the number of flights and a lot of noise from helicopters circling around late at night. I am starting to find this very irritating and would like to know why there has been such an increase. I appreciate that some of them may be emergency services but even taking that into account I would say that at the moment the helicopters cause more noise than the planes - and that really is saying something!

I have also noticed that a lot of flights seem to deviate from the river - such as 'cutting the corner' at Hammersmith Bridge, and wonder if this is allowed.

I have been sitting in the garden this afternoon and the noise from the helicopters has been almost constant - and unlike the planes it has drowned out my walkman on occasions so I reckon it is louder. And it is not being caused by military or police helicopters as far as I can tell.

Sorry to go on but it really is a problem!

Regards,
Digby Jones
Fulham Resident

HN/104

I am responding to news of an investigation into helicopter noise by the London Assembly. I live at 31 Sunbury Lane, very near the River Thames in Battersea and just down the road from the heliport.

My household has been troubled by helicopter noise for some time. The problem takes two forms. Firstly, we have helicopters flying overhead during the day and early evening, making it impossible to hear the radio, television, or telephone conversations and difficult even to talk to other people in the flat. It is particularly disruptive for me as I work at home for part of the time, and I can only imagine that it is worse for people with small children.

Secondly, we have had helicopters hovering overhead for hours on end during the night, as well as flying over. This is not as frequent, but happens perhaps every couple of weeks. The helicopters appear to stay in the same area of sky, circling for ages. Presumably this is for security reasons, but it is extremely noisy and for me personally, I find it impossible to sleep when this happens. On the most recent occasion it started sometime around 3 am and did not stop until after 6am.

I very much hope that you will receive further evidence of the problem from other residents of Battersea and perhaps some action will be taken. If you need any more information, please do get in touch.

Thank you for your attention,

Yours sincerely,
Rachel Hadwen
Battersea Resident

HN/105

The noise from the police helicopter operating from Loughton is acceptable during the day and the evening, even later on, what is not acceptable is low level flights early in the morning. This week I was awoken at 6.30am by the helicopter passing over Chingford. The pilots seem to make it normal practice to pass over the centre of Chingford where the maximum number of people can hear them. Why can't they be routed over the Reservoirs, this would add seconds to their journey times.

Yours sincerely

Mike Rowland
Chingford Resident

HN/106

The Authorities Health and Environmental Services section, have at this time no recorded information that helicopter noise has had an impact on the LFB operationally or environmentally. We will however investigate and record all reports of this issue that affect the Authority. If any subsequent matters arise we will of course let you know.

Regards,
Roy Bishop,
Deputy Commissioner and Director of Fire and Community Safety,
London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority (LFEPA)

HN/107

I understand you will be having a conference on this matter later this year. One extremely vulnerable place in this area on bankside is the open air theatre-Shakespeare's Globe theatre. There have been many occasions when performances have been spoiled in particular by the very large twin engined chinooks and police helicopters circling around. Both of these cause a big distraction to us -the audience and to the actors who cannot be heard. The performances from April/May through to Sept./October are 3 hours in the afternoons -2.00-5.00 and 3 hours in the evenings - 7.30-10.30.

Can they be diverted to fly over North London instead -away from the Thames or further to the East before going in to City airport? I would be interested to know the outcome of your discussions and if any changes are possible.

Thank you,
Sally Winter

HN/108

Dear Mr Davies

In response to your request for information about helicopter noise in London, I would like to make the following comments.

- * Helicopter noise in London is intrusive, it breaks into the quietude of the day and suspends activities of individuals, disrupting telephone calls, music listening, television watching, conversation, school lessons etc.

- * The frequency with which it disrupts these activities (for me) is roughly three to four times a week. (example: Saturday 10 June 9.03am disturbed music listening)

- * Helicopter noise is a blight on noise pollution in the city, and adversely affects stress levels in inner city living

- * There seems to be no indicator as to what this traffic actually is, whether it is private individuals, politicians, joyflights, surveillance, police etc.

- * I can understand that police and anti terrorist activities may require the use of helicopter services from time to time, but this needs to be weighed up against the disruption caused to tens of thousands of people every time a helicopter flies through the inner city.

* Are there advertised helicopter flight paths and usage guidelines and could these be put onto a website, with maps.

* There seems to be little available on the website to find out about proposed changes to helicopter usage rates within London.

I do hope that you find this information useful in your petitions against helicopter noise, and may also be able to address my questions in due course.

Kind regards
BY EMAIL
Dr Andrew Lee
Head of Geography
Westminster Under School

HN/109

I saw an article in a newspaper written by Darren Johnson suggesting that anyone wishing to contribute to your investigation on helicopter should write to you.

We have noticed a great increase in helicopters flying over our house since we moved here over ten years ago.

They fly at all times of day or night and sometimes even hover nearby for minutes on end.

I trust your investigation will conclude with recommendations on reducing this.

May I suggest that they have to fly over and along A roads only to leave every where else quiet and they have to have noise reduction systems fitted?

Yours sincerely

David Snook
Highgate Resident

HN/110

I am replying to the article in the May 31 Mercury Newspaper entitled 'Are helicopters a noise issues'.

My family and I live in Plumstead, Greenwich Borough and we have Police helicopters, private helicopters and Army helicopters fly over, they fly so low we can tell the difference with the naked eye.

I understand the police helicopters have to fly low because of crime and police pursuits but we have private helicopters fly low and hover over the area, some I assume are traffic helicopters watching congestion at the Woolwich ferry and Blackwall tunnel. Also as I mentioned we have army helicopters; Chinooks pass overhead, these are loud, they

seem to have a weekly / bi-weekly route over plumstead towards the London area. The helicopters are large and sound like a heavy truck passing outside our house. The thumping from the powerful blades can be heard and felt in the house which is quite disturbing.

Regards,
Mr. D'Silva.
Plumstead Resident

HN/111

I am responding to an article in the Islington Gazette which invites personal responses to helicopter noise.

As I type at my work place on the Strand there is a helicopter hovering; no doubt this is for some approved security/news or other purpose.

At my home in Finsbury Park, N4, many summer days are ruined by helicopters hovering for several hours at a time - this seems like 'security' overkill for the events taking place, often held in Finsbury Park itself. There does not seem to be any consistency, some events getting the all-day helicopter treatment and other apparently similar ones not. The noise means not being able to hear the radio or television and simply not having the possibility to enjoy the day, there is no peace on these days.

There are also helicopter flights over N4 at various times. I would definitely not want these to increase as there is already a great deal of urban noise for residents to cope with and helicopter noise is one of the most intrusive, far reaching and long lasting compared with other kinds of transport, especially considering the small size craft and small number of passengers.

I am sorry not to be able to give any technical information, but I wish to re-emphasise that the high level of noise helicopters make, in my opinion, can only be justified for genuine security or life-saving situations - the 'gain' for certain individuals travelling quickly across London is at a disproportionately high cost in loss of quality of life for the rest of us.

Many thanks
Robert Hills
Islington Resident

HN/112

I have noticed some coverage in the press recently of the nuisance caused to local residents by more frequent usage of helicopters in this part of London. I want to add my voice to the debate.

I have recently moved from Wroughton Road (south Battersea) to Orbel Street (north Battersea). Helicopter noise is a real problem here and it frequently destroys what would otherwise be a fairly peaceful environment. Even last Sunday morning at about 07.30, I took my 2.5 year old daughter to the local playground and there was a huge amount of activity close to Battersea heliport - not exactly kind to local residents, most of whom were still in bed trying to sleep. It is very difficult to have a conversation in our garden with the helicopters flying near so frequently, as we are constantly drowned out by the noise.

I appreciate that the emergency services need to use helicopters occasionally but we all feel here that the frequency is at such a level as to be detrimental to our quality of life. Even in South Battersea, much further away from the heliport, we were often dogged by helicopters flying overhead, quite often late at night when we were trying to get to sleep in the middle of a busy working week.

What with the (to my mind) unacceptable noise and frequency of aircraft flying towards Heathrow which seem to be equally prevalent in both North and South Battersea and Clapham, we feel we are plagued by excessive noise in this otherwise lovely part of London.

I hope you will take these comments on board and that the weight of local opinion against excessive aircraft noise pollution will result in direct, effective and sustainable action.

Yours sincerely,

Julian Wannell
(London SW11)

HN/113

I live in Valiant House, Battersea.

It was coincidental that the Guardian had the article concerning the noise as I was just about to write to the Heliport to ask that they route the choppers down the centre of the River, as the noise is far less if they take that route. This was very obvious during the recent bad weather, when perhaps visibility was not so good, or the winds too strong to come close by all the blocks of flats along the riverside. The helicopters were going up or downstream of the river, pretty much in the middle and consequently the noise was greatly reduced from the ear splitting din that we put up with incessantly. Obviously it is possible to be a good neighbour by adopting this simple re-routing - I live on the third floor of my block and normally can clearly see people onboard the choppers - they are coming in too close. This is not an optical illusion because the difference between visibility/noise between those choppers too close, and those maintaining a healthy respect for our homes, is very big.

Even with the windows shut, I frequently have to shriek down my phone to tell people to wait until the chopper has gone. This doesn't help much if another comes in close behind and another is taking off. In the newspaper article, Tony Tuck says that the noise isn't intrusive and it's only on cup final days. This just isn't true. There are days when it is incessant. His comments comparing the noise to traffic going over speed bumps is utterly fatuous. Further, those people who are now buying flats next to the heliport are likely unaware of the frequency and severity of the noise. At any rate it is true that whatever they do or don't know they have decided to buy there. But the new flats are not the only neighbours - my block is about 30 years old and there are all the other ex-local authority blocks not to mention the blocks still within the Council's ownership. Battersea is quite dense on the Blocks front. Visually, I rather like the choppers and being a bit of an aviation fan am certainly not anti the use of choppers, but they really do come too close by housing and this could be simply remedied merely by having the manners to realise that they can fly in up the centre of the river and then turn left to land. Problem much alleviated.

I find Mr Tuck's tone obnoxious - there isn't any argument that traffic has increased over the years presumably because more people can afford to rent or hire them for their

personal use. Nothing wrong with that but were I to buy a large motorcycle, remove the exhausts and sit outside Mr Tuck's house revving the engine hour in and hour out, he would experience a similar level of ear splitting discomfort. I don't think he'd like it much.

Please would you take up our case and find a good solution.

Many thanks
Noelle Greenaway

HN/114

I understand that you are collecting anecdotal evidence about helicopter noise.

We suffer a lot from this in Kennington. In many ways it is worse than the noise from fixed-wing planes because:

- i) It's much louder
- ii) The helicopters sometimes hover for hours at a time.
- iii) They fly at night.

The night flying is rather disturbing, making the place feel like a war zone.

Your sincerely,
Simon McKeown
Kennington Resident

HN/115

Dear Richard,

Thanks for the follow-through. Yes, I am happy for you to base the submission on my email--maybe *this* one is better since it contains all threads. Indeed, I did receive a reply from the CAA. I have appended it at the very end of this thread. I found it *slightly* patronising/dismissive/inaccurate: I **can** tell the emergency aircraft from the other larger craft. There are two different sizes and once can often see the livery.

The larger size are the ones that have a *consistent* route to and fro. They tend to be white. It's difficult to judge distance, but based on the proximity of them and the noise, I'd say they fly roughly N/S or SE/NW (I haven't got a compass) within a 1/4 mile corridor between Great Western Road and Ladbroke Grove (so west of Kilburn, Edgware Road). One last week (not the one originally quoted) seemed so close that I'm sure it was below 500 feet.

Then there are smaller ones. It's relatively rare to see them emanating from Hammersmith hospital (west of me). Again they seem more commuter craft and fly as above. The red one(s) and the occasional police one(s) are, I think, quite distinctive. I could be wrong, not being privy to "commuter" routes or all liveries, but I think I'm a shrewd observer. (Note, I am NOT a helicopter spotter, and I'm not keeping a log right now ;-).

The volume on any day is unpredictable. The increase in volume is not in doubt. Sometimes, like last weekend, there seem to be well over a dozen, sometimes concentrated within a particular hour: every few minutes. Even Sunday, and as early as c. 8am, is not without instances. Last Sunday (11- June) is a case in hand. Whereas today (13-June) is rather quiet, perhaps because of the low cloud and thunder? I'm

hoping that the Assembly have access to full flight records so that your deliberations can be based on fact set against *observations* from residents like me.

If I had suggestions in particular:

1. have varied routes in a similar way to the LHR corridor usage (spread the risk and the nuisance).
2. avoid inundating affected residents on corridors that today have BOTH jets AND helicopters (same days *or* alternate days--it's like a double whammy! Give us some peace please).
3. residents like me also have concerns about (a) added air pollution and (b) safety: the odds of an accident are stacking up. Helicopters don't glide well I gather.
4. The noise and vibration "pollution" must not be underestimated. Also, the cumulative annoyance effect of multiple aircraft through the day.
5. After all the above are considered, any COMMUTER aircraft that are permitted to fly should see some **huge** extra environmental tax (hey, these are 4x4s of the sky) paid in a way that somehow feeds back to making life for impacted residents better. AND They should be regulated in number, hours of operation, altitude, regularity, route variance and all other variables.

I will do my best to attend if you could send details, and assuming business doesn't take me away (rather more likely I'm afraid). Might I also add how impressed I am at the responsiveness of the Assembly to my emails? It makes one feel well-served.

Kind regards,
Spencer Carter
W10 Resident

HN/116

Dear Mr. Davies,

I gather that you are gathering information from residents in north Battersea regarding helicopter noise as part of the investigation by the London Assembly.

I live at 105 Valiant House (I have lived in Valiant House for 30 years) overlooking the river on the flight path into the Heliport and have to say that the amount of noise pollution from these machines has become a real nuisance, having increased insidiously over the past years.

Flights arrive as frequently as one each minute - and not just on days when there are special events in and around the capital. Thirty helicopters arriving in swift succession (ie one a minute) is irritating in the extreme.

The noise, albeit intermittent noise, renders conversation impossible and destroys any enjoyment from the radio or television. It is quite simply not possible to hear.

Concomitant vibrations caused, it seems to me, by the aircraft for example circling overhead, are also a considerable nuisance. I am aware that the flight path is meant to be solely over the river, but this is not always adhered to.

Flights to and from the Heliport are now increasingly often at unsocial hours - something I of course notice but which is nowadays also reported to me by overnight guests whose sleep is disturbed by the machines.

I do naturally appreciate that we in London need adequate transport facilities and that, in the 21st century, this must include helicopters. I have flown from the Battersea Heliport myself in years past. But surely an upper limit has to be imposed on flights - if there is one already it is clearly being stretched. Similarly if there is a ban on very early or very late flights, it too is being abused.

I was prompted to make this representation by the article by Sarah Halls in our local Guardian which pointed me in your direction. Often these days, it is only ignorance of

the person who is responsible or interested in certain matters that prevents representations being made. In the context of helicopters, I have to say that the Battersea Society does not come to mind, and I am delighted to know that you and Darren Johnson are taking a personal interest on behalf of the London Assembly and therefore the residents of London. Thank you for doing so.

Yours sincerely,

The Reverend Alan Boddy

HN/117

Dear Sirs,

I would like to express my concerns in the large amount of low-flying and noisy helicopter flights that have been taking place over the past 6 months - criss crossing the skies over our house and making enjoyment of what was a quiet and peaceful area and garden an impossibility.

The helicopters fly in a SE - NW direction and vice versa - making a huge amount of noise and seem to come in batches every few minutes apart - then there is a lull until the next batch take to the skies that may be some hours later.

Yours,

Ronald Monjack

HN/118

Dear Mr Davies;

I am writing to concur that helicopters landing in Battersea is an unmitigated noise disaster. We moved into our flat at Valiant House about 2 years ago. In choosing this flat, we looked at others closer to the heliport (particularly the new builds with double glazing) but always ruled them out as being too noisy. The flat we chose seemed well insulated from noise and as there was not much helicopter traffic at that time, we felt we had done very well given the compromises one must make in living in a large city like London. Our previous flat was also near a helicopter landing pad on the top of a building a street away. We lived on the 31st floor at the Barbican and at no time were we bothered by noise from helicopters approaching the landing pad or taking off.

The absolute reverse is true of where we live now and we feel it is inexcusable. It is one thing to be having the odd small corporate helicopter approaching too low, circling over our heads often two or three times but huge helicopters are also making the same manoeuvres trebling the noise. If we are in our apartment with the windows closed, having a conversation, we are literally drowned out by the noise. In the summer, we keep our windows closed at peak times of day.

The heliport was allowed to operate when the riverfront in Battersea was undeveloped, but it is now almost exclusively domestic dwellings. It is now totally inappropriate that the site be allowed to continue as a heliport and an alternative site should be found. The helicopter traffic has doubled in the last 2 years and will get worse when the Olympics are taking place.

I have tried to find out what rules helicopters have to follow in taking off and landing, from the Wandsworth Council who referred me to the Civil Aviation Department. They referred me elsewhere and I gave up. But I did lodge a complaint with the noise pollution dept at the Wandsworth Council. I received in return a form to fill out on whether my questions were answered politely.

The whole point of helicopters is that they can take off and land vertically, so cruising along the river at 150 ft on approach must be unnecessary as is a scenic two or three circles on takeoff. And we were always under the impression that there were restricted hours in which they could operate, which are obviously not followed.

We do hope you will register this anecdotal comment as a serious complaint. We are delighted to see that there are others who feel as we do and are willing to start an investigation into the problem. Please do not hesitate to get in touch if we can help in any way. Thank you for your consideration of this matter

Yours very truly
Jean Hodgins(Mrs)
Battersea Resident

HN/119

I live in New Cross, Telegraph Hill area and almost every night and early hours of the morning there is one or more or the same one hovering around, maybe searching for criminals, but when they are out and circling the noise level is very high and it has woken me up or I cannot hear the TV above the noise. I hope this helps. distressed of New Cross.

New Cross Resident

HN/120

Dear Richard:

I am pleased to see that the assembly's environment committee is looking at the impact of helicopter noise. As a resident of Greenwich whose enjoyment of the local environment, including my own garden, is currently under threat through increasing helicopter noise, I would like to contribute from my own experience.

Helicopter flights have certainly increased in recent years. I am unable to provide the figures, although just a few years ago helicopter overflights were rare. Nowadays at weekends when I am in my garden, one after the other passes over. Many of the helicopters circle around and around, and it is not at all uncommon to see three or four in the air at once. The noise is both loud and penetrating: for example, my husband and I are frequently forced to suspend conversations as we are unable to hear each other's speech. I do not consider this acceptable: it is a great intrusion into people's lives.

I urge the enquiry to investigate how many of these flights are essential. I have on occasions seen through binoculars that the helicopters appear to be private and are therefore not essential.

I will be very interested to learn of the outcome of this investigation, and I would be grateful if you could please forward any reports which are produced.

Many thanks
Yours sincerely
Caroline Welch
Greenwich Resident

HN/121

Richard,

I have been making a variety of enquiries on how we may assist with your investigation and can now give you more information on what is available from MOD.

The Greater London area falls into a specified military area known as the Thames Valley Avoidance Area (TVAA) that encompasses not only Greater London, but the major airports at Heathrow, Gatwick, Stanstead and Luton, and extends from Reading in the west to Southend in the east. Low flying by military aircraft within the TVAA is very tightly controlled, and we hold records of all military helicopter and fixed wing

movements that enter this area. In general terms, our helicopter traffic will normally follow published CAA helicopter routes and comply with the procedures for these routes. Military helicopter operations can be divided into three main categories: routine transport that will use Battersea Heliport, Chelsea Barracks or other published helicopter landing sites; training sorties to ensure that crews are fully trained and experienced in operations over London for United Kingdom National Standby tasks, and operational missions where tasked under UK National Standby arrangements (for example 7/7). There may be other requirements from time-to-time (for example, flypasts for State Occasions) but these are relatively few and far between.

In terms of noise performance, I understand that noise data on military helicopters may be held by the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (DSTL) at Farnborough. I am waiting for confirmation of who specifically within DSTL may have access to this data. We are interested in military helicopter noise primarily from a defensive perspective to protect the helicopter, and therefore I do not yet know if this data is releasable into the public domain. I will be able to advise you accordingly in due course.

If you want hard statistics on helicopter movements within the TVAA, could you please let me know what period you are interested in, and how you want this information – i.e. monthly, annually, by helicopter type etc., and we will be pleased to assist.

I look forward to hearing from you in due course.

Regards,

J TAYLOR

Wing Commander

Directorate of Air Staff - Lower Airspace

HN/122

We live just west of Battersea Bridge- Morgans Walk SW11 3TS. There is an increase in the amount of traffic to the heliport close by.

If the helicopters stuck to flying along the River it would reduce the noise. They often fly over the houses in Morgans Walk when they could easily fly over the river which would be safer anyway.

Susan Merrells

Battersea Resident

HN/123

Dear Mr Davies,

I am sending this in response to a letter in the local newspaper "The Mercury" from Mr Darren Johnson, Chairman of the London Assembly Environment Committee.

There is no doubt about it, Helicopter Noise is the most disturbing and irritating noise that we have to suffer, especially as so much of it is completely unnecessary. I live in Greenwich, which is probably a popular area to view from above, and we are plagued with helicopters, not just over flying, but flying round and round and hovering in one spot. At least with fixed wing aircraft, they approach, past over and are gone and the noise can be little more than a deep rumble. Helicopter noise is a combination of clattering engine and thudding rotor blades which quite often occurs above you as much as ten times on a Saturday or Sunday afternoon and seems to be on the increase.

The fact that there seems to be little or no restriction on when and where they fly seems incredible.

I look forward to attending the meeting at City Hall on July 13th.

Kind regards

John Miles

HN/124



Simon Cooper – Director
Cabair Helicopters

HN/125

Dear Mr.Johnson,

As a 22 year resident of the Morgans Walk estate (222 flats and houses) located west of Battersea Bridge between the Thames and Battersea Church road, I would like to add my voice to those of the many residents whose lives are blighted by continuous helicopter noise. We have the choice of closing all windows in our homes or curtailing conversation including telephone calls until the helicopters pass. Although we complained in the past, nothing positive was ever achieved. Over the years the disturbance has increased each year, in particular, since the Battersea heliport received permanent planning permission.

The disturbance is greatest for those of us who live in the houses behind the flats which directly front the river - the noise bounces off the brick walls in all directions. When the helicopters turn directly over head they create an even more disturbing juddering noise which we consider to be safety hazard as well.

Due to the curves of the river, many of the helicopters take a shortcut across our homes, over Battersea Park, and commercial land to rejoin the river at Vauxall Cross. It should be noted that the observation tower at the heliport can only monitor the movements of the helicopters until they reach St.Marys church or the Montevetro building which may be the reason why they divert from the river at Morgans Walk. The pilots appear to make little effort to reach their cruising altitude as quickly as possible to minimise the noise disturbance - or to maintain their altitude until landing at the heliport.

The commercial manager of PremiAir asserts that the noise disturbance is mainly caused by military Chinooks or the police which clearly not true. In fact, the helicopters that regularly use the Battersea Heliport appear to deviate from the designated commercial helicopter flight path or are the ones who turn over Morgans Walk.

It is unfortunate that so few people in my area are aware of of your investigation as I am sure that we are one of the worst affected areas. My information came from the Battersea & Clapham Guardian which is not delivered to us and the Wandsworth Borough News which few residents are aware exists. Would it be possible for you to leaflet the area?

As I sit here, there has been non stop helicopter traffic which is many times worse than the aircraft disturbance when their flight path is directly over my house. The government has recognised the disturbance aircraft cause so perhaps your investigation will recommend that the heliport be relocated to a less populated area. Helicopters are a mode of transport which rather selfishly accommodate one or two persons at the expense and well being of so many.

Yours sincerely,
Jean Willett

HN/126

My wife and I are Stewards at Shakespeare's Globe Theatre. Every performance is plagued by helicopter noise. I understand pilots are required to follow the river which is right next to us.

Don & Shiela MacLean

HN/127

Dear Richard

I live and work in Fulham SW6 and particularly in the last 3 months I have noticed Helicopter noise on a more persistent basis rather than the occasional nuisance that existed before. I am sure it was the case that they used to follow the river for the Wandsworth Heliport but now are constantly flying over my house as well as hovering for prolonged periods in the general area of the Eel Brook Common. This morning I was woken at first light by the noise of a Helicopter when I usually have no trouble sleeping through the early aeroplane noise and it persisted for at least 15 minutes and is probably twice as loud as the aeroplanes. I am very interested to know why this has suddenly become an issue, are there more millionaires with these machines now?

The safety record of helicopters in comparison to commercial aviation is not sufficient to permit this sort of traffic over one of the most populous cities in Europe and apart from their noise nuisance an accident is bound to occur in due course.

By the way I was in a friends garden in Lewisham on Tuesday and they appear to be dogged by the same nuisance.

Regards

Michael Bagg

Fulham Resident

HN/128

Dear Mr. Davies

I came upon the investigation being undertaken by The London Assembly by chance whilst searching for information regarding the rules and regulations and number of permitted helicopter flights in London. This search was prompted by my own and other members of my families awareness of the noise nuisance in the increasing number of helicopters flying directly above our home. We have lived here for 30 years and are quite aware of the changes that have taken place in this time. In response to your request for comments:

- Number of flights have increased dramatically, especially over the last year
- There would appear to be rush-hour traffic in both am and pm with helicopters landing every five to ten minutes at Battersea Heliport
- At times the number of flights require the helicopters to circle whilst waiting to land
- Increased number of weekend flights and on some weekends more flights than Monday to Friday
- **Innumerable flights do not follow the route of the Thames but fly directly NNW to NNE from the Battersea Heliport and vice versa (SSE to SSW) to the Heliport**
- Majority of these helicopters are private or business Charter Flights - large black helicopters

- If the flight path to Heathrow for aeroplanes is in operation due West over London we have aeroplanes above us every minute with helicopters buzzing about like flies all around us
- Some helicopters very much noiser than others (I am unable to quote what type of helicopter any helicopter is other than military, police and ambulance)

In the past the sound of a helicopter was quite rare, the majority of traffic about us was either the emergency London Hospital helicopter, Royal helicopters and the police with a few private crafts and occasional military flights. The private and military crafts would always follow the line of the Thames and what is increasingly worrying is the huge increase in the number of flights directly overhead, a good half a mile north of the river flying directly towards Chelsea and the vast majority of these are not security helicopters but private or charter helicopters. Before the situation becomes intolerable something should be done to curtail their movements and the disturbance they cause on what should be peaceful mornings, evenings and weekends for many Londoners.

Yours sincerely
Sue Clay, SW6 Resident

HN/129

Dear Richard Davies

In my area helicopter traffic has increased in recent years.

I attach a file of times & dates of helicopter movements over the last 2 weeks

Mike Tyzack

Helicopter flights

time	date	
2.25pm	2.6.06	circling round
3.59pm	2.6.06	flying northbound
8.10pm	3.6.06	flying southbound
10.20am	7.6.06	circling round
6.15pm	7.6.06	flying southbound
2.50pm	8.6.06	flying southbound
3.00pm	11.6.06	flying Southeast
4.00pm	11.6.06	flying northwest
4.30pm	11.6.06	flying past
5.20pm	11.6.06	flying past
6.00pm	11.6.06	flying past
11.38pm	11.6.06	flying past
11.40pm	11.6.06	circling round
11.50pm	11.6.06	flying past
10.12am	12.6.06	4 of them flying southbound
6pm	12.6.06	circling round
11.50pm	12.6.06	flying past
2.40pm	13.6.06	flying past
3.55pm	13.6.06	flying past
4.30pm	13.6.06	flying past
6.15pm	13.6.06	flying past
11.45pm	13.6.06	flying southbound
8.38pm	14.6.06	flying past

HN/130

Traffic and circulation

Air circulation and particularly the helicopters one respond strictly to international standards and procedures in what security is concerned. In the Parisian region, helicopter traffic is rigorously framed and even limited by lawful texts.

Helicopter circulation can be divided in two categories : commercial traffic and non commercial traffic.

In the Parisian region, the activity is mostly non commercial : 50% of the traffic is done by the State (defense, customs, police, or for general interest such as emergency transports to hospitals, evacuations, monitoring road traffic...).

Commercial traffic represents just 50% due to the cost of the hours of flights, and also because of the obligation to use twin-turbine engines helicopters for this special activity.

By the way, a 1994 limited the activity of the Issy-les-Moulineaux' heliport : in 1994 the traffic decreased to 18 200 movements, and to 11 000 movements in 2002. It is now not possible to give piloting lessons and also traffic quotas had been introduced during the week end (less than 70 movements/day). These measures made that the whole traffic get reduced in the Parisians area. Due mostly to economic matters, the helicopter traffic won't extend in the next years.

Routes and movements controls

Routes are clearly defined and published by means of maps. Security is the first motivation and routes follows the Parisian ringroad, highways, railways, waterways... but there are never flights on the very city of Paris, except if the "Préfecture de Police de Paris" gives a special authorization.

Controls are very strict : helicopters are always in touched with the air circulation organism. The territory is sectorized in function of the helicopter route, and linked to a special control tower (Issy-les-Moulineaux, Orly, Villacoublay, Brétigny, Le Bourget, Roissy CDG).

Soon helicopters' altitude will be watched by the "gendarmerie des transports aériens", that is to say the police air transport, it should get *telemetric binoculars* equipped with sensors (capteurs) with which it will be possible to measure the machines' height above the ground.

There is of course restriction for helicopter routes since 9/11 above the district of la Défense (there are many towers), and flights are forbidden there. Very few flights are authorized and request a special authorization, and are controlled by the air defense department.

An example that permitted to reduce the number of flights

In 1999, a west-east route had been opened in the south Parisian region with through military zones of Brétigny, in order to discharge the traffic of the west-east route between Rocquencourt and Mont d'Est (Marne la Vallée) through le pont de Sèvres and the "boulevard périphérique". This measure allowed to reduce by half the helicopter traffic between le pont de Sèvres and la porte de Bercy.

Instructions and conditions of flights

Except for take off and landing, helicopters can't flight beneath 200 metres high regarding to the floor. This minimal height was of 150 metres in 1998. This change

reduced of 3 decibels the noise felt in the ground. Helicopters always stands beneath planes traffic for security reasons.

Generally (Defense flights are not concerned) flights are made in visual flight conditions (VFR : visual flight rules), that is to say between the sunrise minus 30 minutes and the sunset plus 30 minutes. Nevertheless it is possible to fly in the night time for civil helicopters (In west-east routes to Rocquencourt's points (junction of A12 and A13 highways) and Mont d'Est (Marne la Vallée) until 9 pm. It is also possible to fly during the night on several routes close of the Bourget and Roissy CDG airports, but just for the use of these airports.

During the day, the pilot visibility must be at least of 1500 metres. Helicopter pilot have to fly away from clouds and that they can be seen from the people on the ground.

During the night, the visibility must be at least of 4000 metres and the "ceiling" at least of 450 metres.

In this context, the helicopter traffic volume changes in function of the weather conditions and its daily amplitude depends on the duration of the day, so that of the season.

The different heliports in the Parisian region

The Ile-de-France region counts around 40 helistations.

Department	Name	Towns concerned	Altitude Metres	Nb de pistes	Remarks
77	Aéroport de Meaux - Esbly	Meaux	67	4	
77	Aéroport de Coulommiers Voisins	Coulommiers	143	3	
77	Aéroport de Chelles - Le Pin	Chelles	63	2	
77	Aéroport de Fontenay-Trésigny	Fontenay-Trésigny	113	2	
77	Aéroport de Lognes - Émerainville	Lognes	108	2	
77	Base aérienne de Melun Villaroche	Melun	92	2	military
77	Aéroport de Nangis Les Loges	Nangis	130	2	
77	Aérodrome de La Ferté-Gaucher	La Ferté-Gaucher	163	1	Restricted use
77	Aérodrome de Moret-Épisy	Moret-sur-Loing	77	1	
78	Aéroport de Chavenay - Villepreux	Chavenay	129	2	
78	Aéroport de Saint-Cyr-l'École	Saint-Cyr-l'École	113	2	
78	Aéroport de Toussus-le-Noble	Toussus-le-Noble	163	2	
78	Aérodrome de Beynes - Thiverval	Beynes	113	1	Restricted use
78	Aéroport des Mureaux	Les Mureaux	27	1	
78	Base aérienne de Villacoublay Vélizy	Vélizy-Villacoublay	178	1	Military

91	Aérodrome de Buno-Bonnevaux	Buno-Bonnevaux	127	2	Restricted use
91	Aéroport d'Étampes Mondésir	Étampes	150	2	
91	Base aérienne de Brétigny-sur-Orge	Brétigny-sur-Orge	82	1	Military
91	Aérodrome de La Ferté-Alais	La Ferté-Alais	138	1	Restricted use
91	Héliport d'Évry	Évry			héliport
92	Héliport de Paris - Issy-les-Moulineaux	Paris			héliport
92	Héliport de Paris - La Défense	Paris			héliport
93	Aéroport Roissy-Charles-de-Gaulle	Paris	119	4	
93	Aéroport du Bourget	Paris	66	3	
94	Aéroport d'Orly	Paris	88	3	
95	Aéroport de Persan - Beaumont	Persan	45	3	
95	Aérodrome d'Enghien - Moisselles	Enghien-les-Bains	102	2	Restricted use
95	Aérodrome de Mantes - Chérence	Mantes-la-Jolie	156	2	Restricted use
95	Aéroport de Pontoise - Corneilles-en-Vexin	Pontoise	99	2	

Reglementation

The helicopter traffic organization in the Parisian region stands on the 8th February 1984 decree, which had been modified par the decree of the 6th July 1992. Helicopter routes in the control field of aerodrome (zone de controle d'aérodrome) of Paris are defined on a purely derogatory basis in the one hand, and in relation with "les règles de la classe d'espace A" from which the visual flight rules are excluded.

The helicopters traffic organization in the Parisian region

HN/131

Having read an article in the Wandsworth Guardian dealing with the disruption caused by helicopter noise, and being a regular sufferer of this particular nuisance, I made a note of your email address (quoted in the article).

I reside at Sunbury Lane, near the river, in Battersea. The heliport is perhaps a mile away from me; the noise from the traffic to and from it is a regular annoyance, interfering with - or, to be more accurate, preventing me from - listening to the radio or television, holding a telephone conversation in which I have any chance of hearing my interlocutor (or indeed, they me), or even speaking to somebody on the opposite side of the room from me.

I understand that people who use helicopters have rights and entitlements...but it seems not unreasonable to ask that they may pursue their entertainments at higher altitudes, or better still, have fewer flights (particularly during the evening or night time - as I have had my sleep disturbed by helicopters hovering endlessly in the early hours). After all, the residents of Battersea far outnumber the helicopter enthusiasts, however influential the latter group may be.

Michael Shine
Battersea Resident

HN/132

Dear Richard

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to the debate by the Environment Committee on the issue of helicopter noise in London.

Since the last planning application for a heliport in London, in 1988 I believe, the economic importance of time to businesses and the considerable improvement in helicopter design and environmental impacts, make this review particularly important and timely.

Our proposals are that the benefits of improved helicopter access to central London be examined, and that the noise be considered in the context of international standards of helicopter noise and operations set down by the Civil Aviation Authority.

Further, we would recommend that the following points should be considered as well -

- 1 An economic appraisal should be carried out to identify the importance of improved helicopter access to London as a World City.
- 2 The need for improved helicopter access for the 2012 Olympics should be considered and the concerns of the Civil Aviation Authority about London City Airport be noted (see attached)
- 3 To discuss with the Ministry of Defence whether the number of military helicopter movements can be reduced, since military helicopters are not designed as to be so environmentally friendly .
- 4 The safety and environmental impact of further development of residential properties around the one heliport in London, at Battersea, be considered.
- 5 That improved access by helicopter to the City of London and Docklands be provided as a matter of priority.
6. That the committee should experience at first hand some of the modern helicopters in action. For example, the new McDonnell Douglas helicopters are particularly impressive in their quietness, although I would not recommend that the facility is too specific about aircraft types, but instead focuses upon internationally accepted noise levels.

Turning towards what could be done, our proposal is that close to Docklands there needs to be either a platform or barge on the river, or a pier, a rooftop site, or a small open area on land with safe approach and departure access.

In order to minimise both the size and the environmental impact of such a new facility, it would not need to be as large as the heliport at Battersea, but rather in the form of a “drop off/ pick up rotors turning” facility where only one, or at the most two helicopters could be in operation at any one moment, without the need for aircraft parking areas, start up and wind down periods of time, hover taxiing and associated activity and noise.

Our airport at Biggin Hill could then operate a “cab rank” slot management process since it is only five minutes flying time from the City and has no limitation on helicopter movements. We would be pleased to invest in and manage the London facility, which would need to be no bigger than the emergency helicopter facility on the roof of the hospital in Whitechapel, and would not require, if based on/beside the river, any diversion of flights from the existing river route.

Quite recently we discussed this proposal with the appropriate authority for the Thames, and together we identified a location suitable and close to Docklands.

We would be pleased to provide further evidence and assistance to the Environment Committee.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Walters

Chief Executive
Regional Airports Limited

HN/133

Dear Mr Davies

IMPACT OF HELICOPTER NOISE ON OUR LIVES

We live by the river between Wandsworth Railway and Battersea bridges and are directly under the flight path of helicopters landing and taking off from the Heliport.

When Westland operated the Heliport they used to send us regular warnings of days of heavy usage with estimated hours and apologies. Once they sold it on, all this communication ceased and the severe impact of helicopter noise on our lives is no longer mitigated by courtesy from the operators.

Oviously the impact is far greater in summer when:

1. Our windows are open
2. More events involve the use of helicopters.

WAYS IN WHICH HELICOPTER TRAFFIC IMPACTS ON OUR LIVES

1. The noise interferes with many of our basic amenities..This includes listening to the radio, watching television, telephone calls etc. Sometimes important calls have to be suspended due to the noise.

2. Enjoyment of outdoor life is marred. For example, it is impossible to use our balcony on days of heavy usage because of the noise and the vortices sometimes created.

3. Normal conversation at times becomes impossible.

4. There are certain times when many of us feel compelled to leave home for the day because the noise is constant and overwhelming. Such times include Ascot Week (next week will be misery), Silverstone, major sporting events etc.

HOW WE FEEL THE RULES ARE NOT BEING FOLLOWED

We understand that the helicopters' flight paths are subject to strict controls and they are meant to fly over the centre of the river. In practice, they are tending more and more to fly directly overhead which is proven by our not seeing them but the building vibrates and the noise is intense. On complaint to the Heliport management I was told that it is military helicopters which fly overhead and there is no jurisdiction over them. Frankly I think this is a load of cobblers and the Heliport staff and the pilots simply discount our rights.

The number of flights and flight times are supposed to be controlled and limited. Increasingly they start earlier and finish later. The number of flights per diem is certainly on the increase.

We are delighted that this matter is being investigated and hope that the problems can be alleviated. We do understand that living near the Heliport must involve a certain amount of inconvenience and noise disturbance but feel that it is now getting out of control and affecting our lives.

Yours sincerely

Rebecca and Selwyn Goldsmith
Battersea Resident

HN/134

Dear Sirs,

We are the Helicopter Club of Great Britain have considerable experience in noise assessment and helicopter operations, and would be please to assist your investigation.

We also endorse the BBGA response and in addition would urge increased provision for helicopter landing places in London, which is inadequately served by Battersea.

Modern helicopter types such as the Eurocopter EC120, EC130 and EC135, and the MD Notar series produce vastly less noise than older helicopters, indeed less than many fixed wing aircraft, and these types should, in our view, be allowed to use London City Airport.

London needs sufficient helicopter landing places to assist business in a modern capital city, and we suggest your investigation should include the remarkably low noise levels on these modern helicopters, so as to encourage their use over noisier types. Not only would this reduce noise for Londoners, but provide additional much needed helicopter landing capacity.

Yours sincerely,

Jeremy James
Secretary
Helicopter Club of Great Britain

HN/135

Dear Sir,

In response to the letter in the Islington Gazette (1st June) from Damien Johnson, Chairman, London Assembly Environment Committee, requesting the public's experiences of helicopter noise, we are very grateful to take advantage of this opportunity.

We live on a triangle of land bordered by Holloway Road (the A1) Camden Road & Parkhurst Road. Nearby are Seven Sisters Road and Caledonian Rd. All main roads with heavy traffic, major shops and leisure facilities. The area is known as The Nags Head. Not far away is the (now former) Arsenal stadium. Now their Emirates Stadium is about to open, just up the road from us.

From this picture you may guess that helicopter noise is intolerable: Police activity day & night ie crime and accidents, plus not infrequent need of Air Ambulance; police observation ie football matches, hours of noise even when games were at Highbury - so we are dreading the new venue's opening. Coupled with police we have the TV sports helicopters. (And formerly the airship). Midweek evenings, Saturdays & Sundays, our nerves are shredded, even in winter with windows closed the drone makes listening to TV/radio etc difficult, reading not enjoyable, and the sound waves/air pressure(?) beats on the (Flat) roof and walls of our maisonette. We can't go somewhere else on match days (why should we?) as we have a 92 yr old mother with dementia to care for.

In recent months a new insult has been added - commercial advertising.

A helicopter, higher than most but more noisy as its engine strains, towing a massive 'flag' advertising WHAT? The rippling flag can't be read! The only one identified was QANTAS because of the logo. The flag being tugged by strong winds often pulls against the way the copter is trying to go. The progress of the 'copter is slow - and so the noise has to be endured for ages. Supposing the 'flag' gets caught in an updraft & snags the 'copter, or breaks away & causes danger? A call to Islington Council to see if there was a way of banning this activity (they can't) brought forth the telephone number for the Civil Aviation Authority. A very helpful official sympathised but said the mode of advertising was legal and so no action could be taken. A number of complaints had already been received. He provided the helicopter company's name, CASAR, but it doesn't appear in our 'phone books (we don't 'do' computer).

We accept the need for police helicopters (often directly over our estate), but the rest, no. Add to all these the incessant police, fire & ambulance sirens, aircraft traffic and vehicle hubbub, not to mention dogs, children & music; life isn't quiet!

Yours faithfully, Hazel Barrett (Miss) and Arthur

Hazel Barrett - Islington Resident

HN/136

Dear Richard,

I, along with hundreds of my neighbours, live close to the Weston Heliport in Battersea.

Frequently the helicopters pass in front of my windows, which is excessively noisy.

I understand that we need to find a balance between supporting the local economy, and respecting the lives of local residents. However, the busiest day of the year is Grand Prix Day, when helicopters start before 8AM in the morning and continue all day. It seems, this supports Corporate Entertainment, which would occur with or without the heliport.

I believe we should close down the heliport, and instead develop the area for river transport.

Yours faithfully

Chrl (CHRIS BOWLES me)

Chris Bowles
Battersea Resident

Dear Sir

I live in a Block of Flats that over looks on to St Mildreds Rd South Circular Near St Mildreds Church.

When we moved here over 30 years ago we had special windows in and we didn't hear much noise. We still have the windows. But the noise is now terrible it's not so much of the flow of cars. it's the noise of Police cars, Hone Vans, Ambulances and Fire engines. also Motor Bikes who Roar past to over take Traffic. The Traffic lights are on stop a long time and when they go to green it only lets about 4 to 6 cars through. The sirens on Police cars and Hone Vans and Ambulances, Fire engines. have deafeningly made them very much louder.

I myself am a bit Deaf in both ears and when we are watching Television or watching a CD Film at night when the flow of Traffic isn't much we can hear Ambulances, Police cars all the time Day or Night. We do get helicopters over but they are not so bad as they have mostly at Night time you can see them plainly.

Hope this information has been of some help to you. I Read your article in the Mercury.

Yours sincerely

Mr. Richard Lock

Richard Lock
SE12 Resident

HN/138

Dear Mr Davies

Re : Helicopter noise

I am very pleased to hear that this issue will be discussed by the Environment Committee.

Walthamstow has long been plagued by noisy choppers circling for hours at a time over residential areas, including the Walthamstow Marshes nature reserve which is often blighted at weekends by police and other helicopters.

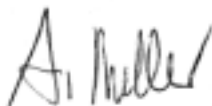
As well as the noise, this is a most unnerving experience and feels like living under occupation.

On Saturday 20th May, I was driven to distraction by a police helicopter circling low over our back gardens and phoned the local police station. They told me helicopters are only called out in emergencies as it 'costs so much to put them in the air'. I am very skeptical about this and wonder whether the area is being used for training purposes by the Police Training Centre at Lippitts Hill in Loughton. I would be grateful if you could make enquiries into the regulations governing these flights.

In general, our quality of life in London is badly affected by aircraft noise. This includes commercial aircraft, private helicopters, police and broadcasting helicopters, and model aircraft flying on what should be valued as peaceful open space. We badly need restrictions on this noise pollution - or we will all be driven mad!

It is time this issue was taken seriously, and I hope your investigation leads to some progressive initiatives.

Yours sincerely



Anita Miller

Anita Miller
Walthamstow Resident

HN/139

Dear Mr. Davies,

RE: HELICOPTER NOISE.

I am writing concerning helicopter noise
which once again today spoilt for me
entirely my enjoyment of a performance
at The Globe Theatre in BANHIDE.

Every year I have felt that for
helicopters to fly over the theatre was
inappropriate but today during a performance
of "TITUS ANTONIUS" one seemed to
hear directly overhead mainly pointing out the
uniqueness of the theatre and as a
consequence I missed a whole scene of
dialogue. This was not helped when other
helicopters were using the airspace above the
theatre as part of their flight plan.

I do hope you can do something
to prevent this happening in the future.

RECEIVED

Yours sincerely,

SECRETARIAT

Terry Edwards
Mr. Terry Edwards.

Terry Edwards
SE7 Resident

HN/140

Dear Mr Davies

I am writing to you with regards to the article in The Stratford and Newham Express about helicopter noise.

We noticed a great increase in noise around the beginning of April. Helicopters were hovering very close by at 2 or 3 in the morning as well as throughout the day. The noise during the night disturbed my 2½ year old who has always been a fantastic sleeper. The noise terrified him. He was convinced something was in his room at night and started refusing to go to bed

without us sitting with him. He woke up constantly during the night resulting in him being exhausted in the day. Roaring crying at playgroup where he had been perfectly happy before. The noise turned our lives around with the whole family worn out from trying to soothe our my son.

The noise seems to have ~~been~~ eased off a little now. We do not see so many helicopters around but I am worried ~~why~~ that they will return and would be very grateful if somebody could respond to this letter and let me know why such helicopter surveillance was deemed necessary. Is it due to a security risk? At times we looked out at night to see two or three helicopters circling the area.

Yours Sincerely

Katie Munro.

Katie Munro
Eastham Resident

HN/141

Dear Mr Davies

I write further to your recent article in the East London Advertiser regarding helicopter noise.

I live close to Canary Wharf (near Chrisp Street market) and we continually experience extreme disturbance from helicopters flying over the area. Just this week, we were woken at 5 am by a helicopter flying over Canary Wharf. It also hovered there for a long time, making it impossible to actually get back to sleep. This is unacceptable.

Also, we have previously, on many occasions, had to suffer helicopters flying over where we live at all hours of the night and early morning, with seemingly no regard for the fact that we are actually trying to sleep. Again this is utterly unacceptable and we are basically left helpless against this immense noise pollution.

Kindly advise as to what can happen with this. I appreciate that since the events of September 11th 2001 we now live in a state of high security but surely this early morning and late night flying can be avoided or at least kept to an absolute minimum for the sake of local residents' peace.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely



Ms Leigh Tiff

Ms Leigh Tiff
E14 Resident

Dear Mr. Johnson,

I saw your letter in W.E. Extra about helicopter noise and I think that it is about time that somebody took up this issue. Whether I am at home or walking in London or in somewhere like Richmond Park I experience this noise. I imagine that much of the problem is caused by Battersea Heliport. Nowadays it is hard to find anywhere in the countryside that is not affected by the noise from helicopters or light aircraft. Good luck with your campaign.

May I draw your attention to one aspect of litter that local councils ignore. Such a lot of litter gets dumped on commons and in woods and heathlands and nobody

takes responsibility for removing it. The solution is for the GLA to invite members of the public to join teams that would go out and clear it. Some people would take a pride in volunteering to clean green areas.

Sincerely
Paul Philips
1.6.06

Mr Paul Philips
SW15 Resident

HN/143

Dear Mr Johnson

HELICOPTERS

I very much hope that your Committee will consider the plight of those of us who live under the Heathrow flightpath.

Helicopters are additional to the 70 plus planes overflying us each hour. I wonder if you can imagine the shattering noise and smell of aviation fuel as a low flying helicopter crosses the flightpath immediately under an approaching 747 ?

Surely the wit of man and the versatility of the helicopter can be brought together to eliminate helicopters crossing the flightpath into the busiest airport in the world, so that the present noise and pollution caused by ever increasing flights is not added to, and thousands of your citizens get a little less distressed ?

Yours sincerely



A, Fairfax

SW15 Resident

HN/144

DEAR SIR,

I AM REPLYING TO A LETTER IN THE CHINGFORD GUARDIAN BY DARREN JOHNSON AM, ON 1-6-06, ABOUT THE NOISE OF HELICOPTERS. I AM DISTURBED SEVERAL TIMES DAY AND NIGHT MAINLY BY THE POLICE HELICOPTER BASED AT LIPPITS HILL, IT COMES ACROSS MY GARDEN LOW AND NOISY, I HAVE TWO DOGS WHICH IT DISTURBS PLUS I DO SHIFT WORKS AND IT WAKES ME FREQUENTLY. I AM SURE IT COULD FLY ACROSS FIELDS BETWEEN WALTHAM ABBS AND CHINGFORD AND THEN ALONG THE RESERVOIRS ON ITS WAY TO LONDON INSTEAD OF STRAIT ACROSS MY HOUSE?

Yours



JP Claxton
Chingford Resident

HN/145

I have noticed an enormous increase in the noise from helicopters during the past few weeks – I live in SW6, near Eel Brook Common

One specific incident:

I was woken up at 5.30 am on Tuesday morning by excessive and unacceptable noise from helicopters

Why has this noise increased so much?

Sophie Foll

HN/146

Referring to Darren Johnson's recent letter in our local paper about helicopter noise I would like to make the following points:

1. We are close to Whipps Cross hospital so occasionally a helicopter lands in the grounds and this is acceptable. Partly because it is presumably essential from a medical point of view but it is also very occasional.
2. Police Helicopters seem to be wasted as they get called up for any incident and night or day. It is made worse by the fact they fly low and constantly over the same area. Is it really necessary for them to be so frightenly low when there are such good lenses used by spy aircraft etc.? The vibration is tremendous and it does beg the question what damage they do to property such as loosening tiles etc. There should be some rule that they can not continue over the same area for more than a minute or two. There have been instances where they circle for up to 15 minutes over the same properties.
- Night time flying should be banned as it is very frightening to be woken at 2am by the huge clatter of sound with the search light scanning every property around. There is far less traffic on the roads at night so why can't the police use their vehicles to search an area? There is too much of "we have it so we are going to use it" mentality by the police with no thought of the disturbance they are causing.
3. Both with the police and air ambulance, figures need to be compiled as to how often the helicopters are sent up and the time of day. This needs to be compared to how successful they have been i.e. was a criminal caught that wouldn't have been or did a patient survive that would have died without the use of a helicopter. A serious cost/benefit analysis is needed to identify how much money is wasted.
4. The very small helicopters which fly fairly high seem very much noisier than the larger types. Many helicopters fly straight over this area and are not a major problem, but some of the smaller ones can be heard from miles away and therefore create a serious noise nuisance for a significant period of time.
6. Every day in the Lea Valley two huge double rotor machines fly down the valley and a few hours later come back. I assume they are military helicopters but is it necessary for them to make this journey every day? Where do they come from and go to and for what purpose?

I have another point that I believe the Committee should consider. Yesterday flying over Walthamstow was a helicopter with a huge Quantos advertising banner trailing behind

it. This is not the first time I have seen these banners in the sky but they are usually pulled by small aircraft.

I believe this type of advertising should be banned for the following reasons:

1. Safety - helicopters and aircraft are built to a certain specification which does not include pulling huge banners behind them. How safe is this procedure especially yesterday when it was very windy and the helicopter seemed to be struggling to make headway?
2. Noise - over a city it makes no sense to encourage noise which is what is happening when these flights are made.
3. Crash - if the helicopter gets into trouble presumably these huge banners can be easily released. They would then drop to earth and a huge banner falling on a road junction could cause a major accident. At best the banner would end up being draped over various houses causing structural damage.
4. Ineffective - because they are so high up it is hard to read the words so as an advert they are ineffective. This form of advertising cannot justify the waste of precious resources like fuel.

Adrian Stannard
Walthamstow Resident

HN/147

Dear Mr Davies,

First of all, I must apologise for missing the 16 June deadline for comment on helicopter noise in London. I hope, however, my observations can be considered.

I write in a private capacity as a resident of Clapham Park in the borough of Lambeth. Our experience of helicopter noise is not routine in its timing, but is rather a short, extremely intrusive burst of noise that occurs from time to time. Our house is not far from Brixton prison. Every so often, helicopters, which we assume to be police helicopters, circle fairly low over the prison and sometimes train spotlights down over the building. This is generally around midnight or even later, at 1am. We suppose that the helicopters are in place to provide extra surveillance for the transfer of prisoners. The effect, however, in the dark, is disruptive and even intimidatory in the immediate neighbourhood. We question if the attendance of helicopters is really necessary at that hour.

Other helicopter noise comes during the day, when traffic surveillance is carried out over the Clapham Common area. The noise is tiresome, but the helicopters are higher and do not spend too long over the place.

Yours sincerely

Susan Pares (Ms)
Clapham Park Resident

HN/148

Dear Mr Davies,

I am writing in response to the invitation on the London Assembly website.

I live in Wandsworth Common. I am chiefly concerned about helicopter noise at night. This involves helicopters hovering or circling in the sky for extended periods. This morning (Sunday 18th June 2006) for example I was woken several times by helicopter sound over a period of several hours. As usual, in order to get any sleep I had to keep my fingers in my ears.

I have had the same experience countless times over the past year, and the frequency seems to be increasing.

My assumption is that these are police helicopters combating crime. This is very laudable in theory. However, the practical question I want to raise is whether the benefit of the flights in terms of catching criminals is worth not only the financial cost of running the service, but more importantly the cost of repeatedly waking hundreds or even thousands of people from their sleep.

I also wonder whether there might be a temptation to fly when not absolutely necessary, in order to justify the service's existence.

If the benefit of the service is indeed worth the cost, then I think it would be useful to publish the evidence widely, if only to calm the frayed tempers of those disturbed from their sleep.

I hope these comments are helpful, and look forward to hearing the outcome in the report.

Thank you for consulting Londoners about this issue.

Yours sincerely,

Dennis Hooker

Wandsworth Common Resident

HN/149

Dear sir,

I see I am too late for a formal reaction, however still I'd like to give my reaction on helicopter noise in London.

Although there are more planes than helicopters in the London sky, helicopters are much noisier than planes. And also the efficiency of planes is higher, since they have much more people on board. Therefore I hope the use of heli's will be restricted, for emergency services only.

I live in Greenwich, not too far from City Airport and I suppose this airport attracts several heli's a day.

Also, I work in Shakespeare's Globe Theatre as a voluntary steward and almost every performance is disturbed by noise of helicopters (and planes) flying over the (open air) theatre or near it. I know it's impossible in the 21st century to make the sky clear

just for the sake of an open air theatre, but a growth in the number of helicopters would be a disaster for this theatre.

Yours sincerely, Harrie Brom
Greenwich Resident

HN/150

Dear Mr. Johnson,

We read with interest the article in the Wandsworth Guardian regarding helicopter noise, and your interest in this.

For years now we have been suffering excruciating noise from the (too) many helicopters which fly too low and too near to Valiant House. We have complained to the heliport on frequent occasions to no avail, and we are delighted that at long last, someone is interested enough to look into this matter.

Tony Tuck, the Battersea Society chairman must be living in Neverland if he thinks that the noise on certain days is not intrusive, and that there are louder and worse noises in Battersea. What does he mean he has never had any complaints? Is it because his profile is too low?

The noise from the helicopters is so bad that our living-room windows which face the river, actually shake and rattle. It is impossible to sit on our balconies in Valiant House, or indeed sit peacefully indoors and read or listen to music or watch television.

Thank you so much for taking up, what until now, has been a lost cause.

We have circulated your name and address to various neighbours who feel the same as we do, and trust they will contact you, too.

If there is anything we can do, please let us know.

Yours sincerely,

L. Kash & Cass Allen

(Mrs) L. Kash and (Ms) C. Allen

Battersea Residents

Dear Sir

re: Helicopter Noise

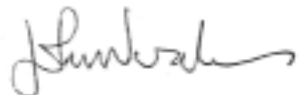
I am responding to your recent letter in
the Ealing Gazette

Certainly I have become aware of an increase
in noise from helicopters over my house here
in Ealing. We already suffer a great deal
of noise from aircraft in and out of
Heath Row and any addition to that is
most unwelcome.

I can't quote chapter and verse on this,
but the offending craft fly very much on
a North South line over Ealing Common,
in both directions and though there is
more than one type of helicopter, I get
the impression that they are part of a "Service".

I think that this activity should be
watched for it could become a much greater
nuisance than it already is.

Yours faithfully

 (JOHN NOAKES)

John Noakes
W5 Resident

HN/152

Dear Mr. Johnson,

Helicopter Noise in London Investigation

Thank you for your letter dated 25 April and for the invitation to submit our comments to your Committee's investigation.

There is a planning policy in the City's UDP which states: *To permit the provision of take-off and landing places for helicopters only where their operation would not adversely affect the environment of the surrounding area or exceed the appropriate noise and number index.* Whilst the policy appears permissive, I understand it is very unlikely that a facility could be provided and meet the criteria. More fundamentally, however, there seems to have been no recent demand for helipad facilities.

I am advised by our Environmental Services department that complaints about helicopter noise in the City are rare and they do not perceive there to have been an increase in helicopters in the City or along the river in recent years.

I hope this information is of some assistance.

Yours sincerely

Chris Duffield

Chris Duffield
Town Clerk and Chief Executive
City of London

HN/153

Dear Mr Johnson,
reference Battersea Heliport:-

- ① Although on a small scale, the Heliport is an avoidable environmental disaster.
 - ② If flights were restricted to Ambulance and essential Police use residents might be willing to put up with the appalling noise. However its continuing use for business and pleasure is simply an invasion of our lives that is really unacceptable.
 - ③ The number of people presently affected may be small but the recent addition of residential blocks near the heliport means that in the near future more and more people will be affected
- yours sincerely K S Lucas

Mr K Lucas
Battersea Resident

HN/154

Please see the thread below - I assume my original email has also been forwarded to you.

General points I am interested in are:

- 1) Which organisations are allowed to use helicopters at night (say from 23:00 - 7:00) - I assume the ones we get at night in Hammersmith are from the police, but I don't know. What approval process do they have to go through (if any) before making flights at night ?
- 2) Helicopter flights at night seem much more regular than during the day - for example some weeks ago for several days one came at 2:00am and stayed for 10-15 minutes. It seems they are carrying out regular "patrols" rather than responding to any specific situation ?
- 3) What exactly are they doing ? It does not seem a very effective way to police an area other than for very specific circumstances and incidents - especially at night.

4) No-one would complain if it was clear that the flights were necessary and in response to very specific circumstances - more information on why recent flights have been carried out, and the guidelines for their being approved, would be helpful. As a start, related to my specific complaint, why was there a helicopter flying low over Hammersmith from 4:00am-4:30am on 20 June ?

Regards,
Clive Beautyman
W6 Resident

HN/155

Dear Richard Davies,
Yes, no (we don't have any dogs around here) and Yes to your opening questions in the message at the end.
I know I've missed your deadline date, but I've only just discovered your posting. I've just had my Sunday morning peace destroyed by helicopters going back and forward over my flat. I've lived near Tower Bridge for 8 years, and today the endless shuttle of 2 helicopters flying overhead between 1000 and 1200 is just unacceptable. It's been getting worse each year, as far as I can tell.
The noise is extremely intrusive, and every now and then one helicopter flies a bit lower and it's really noisy. And the worst bit is not knowing who is responsible, how often they are scheduled, what control or regulations exist (if any) and who controls and who can take any action to rid us of this noise pollution.
I hope to attend the meeting.

Regards
Nick Napier

HN/156

Hi,
I just found your London Assembly article on helicopter noise in London :
http://www.london.gov.uk/assembly/scrutiny/env_helicopters.jsp.

I notice the deadline for comments is 16th June but hope you will be able to include mine.

We live in Kingston upon Thames. In theory, my neighbours & I are not on a helicopter flight path. According to both the DOT and CAA, there is a flight path coming in over SW London to Battersea Heliport but this should go further north over Ham Common and Richmond Park.

In reality, my neighbours and I are regularly disturbed by helicopter noise and it is getting worse. Not only do the helicopters fly directly overhead, they are also extremely frequent (sometimes every 10-15 minutes) and they regularly go on late into the night (even past midnight).

I am so pleased that the London Assembly is looking into this matter, since the response I get from both DOT and CAA is that the flight paths are fairly vague, there are no rules about residential disturbance and basically its tough luck.

I do hope you can get some controls in place to limit this disturbance and ideally move the heliport to an area that causes fewer issues for residents.

Please keep me posted on any developments on this matter.

Many thanks,
Tim Kimber

HN/157

Dear Mr Davies

I refer to your recent email to David Bartlett, Chief Executive with this Authority, and to Darren Johnson's previous letter. I have been asked to respond to you on this matter.

Helicopters have used Biggin Hill Airport for a number of years with the majority of movements relating to the Air Ambulance and the Police. The numbers of complaints relating to these have been very small with the most common problem being that helicopters have not always approached the airport on the established paths used by fixed wing aircraft. The Airport management follow up all complaints and where appropriate will take immediate steps to prevent a recurrence where there is a justifiable complaint. On these occasions they have spoken directly to the pilots concerned.

I am not aware of any helicopter routes passing over our borough and the occasional movement does not give rise to complaints. Similarly, I am not aware of any recent increase in helicopter traffic over our borough.

I hope this assists in your investigation.

Yours sincerely
Steven Glass
Environmental Health Officer (Scientific Services)
London Borough of Bromley

HN/158

Dear Mr Davies

I obtained your name as a result of a web search having been woken and kept awake in the middle of the night on numerous occasions by low flying helicopters in East London (South Woodford). Is there a body to whom I can direct and air my complaint? Last night we had 2 machines at the same time making an absolutely deafening roar for 30 mins, circling around. I suspect they were Police helicopters.

One and a half hours later another machine returned!

Result = little sleep for literally hundreds of thousands of residents in the immediate and surrounding area who, because of the heat have to sleep with windows open.

This noise pollution is unacceptable and has increased substantially in recent years - it cannot be in the public interest to create such disruption in the name of 'fighting crime'.

I look forward to hearing from you,
Kind Regards
Greg Eaborn

HN/159

Dear Mr Davies

I came across your letter in our local paper and hope that my comments can be included.

I do not have any bother with civil, commercial or military helicopters as they always fly over without hovering and at height. I do have an issue with the Police 'copters which seem to regularly hover over our area, especially at night (I live in Leyton, E10). It becomes an infernal nuisance when one is trying to get to sleep. I understand that the 'copter service is very expensive so perhaps if they used that money to provide more Officers on the beat then we wouldn't have the need for the things to fly.

Yours sincerely

Adrian J Liddle
Leyton Resident

HN/160

Dear Richard Davies

I have only just come across a letter copied to the forum on the www.london-se1.co.uk website, and fear that this e-mail response maybe too late for the Assembly's Environment Committee meeting on the 16 July. However, as anecdotal evidence is being sought, I may as well send this if it might be of some use.

As you will see from the address below, I live just south of St George's Circus and just north of the Elephant just west of the London Road. I have lived for about five years, and in that time have noticed a steady increase in low-flying/hovering (single engined) helicopters -- they seem to prefer the area just south of this street, directly over this street and the area just north, which is directly over the Bakerloo Line sidings on

Lambeth Road. When I have seen them (as opposed to just hearing them), I have noticed that some are police helicopters, but most seem to be either unidentifiable (to me) or, quite commonly, helicopters belonging to the media such as Sky News. Of course, their purposes on these occasions may be necessary/essential, but what makes me suspicious is that the air space I have just identified is in such regular use (at least once per day, sometimes at night, but not so regularly in recent weeks) that I wonder if the helicopters are simply in some kind of holding pattern while hovering here. Sometimes they are so low that I can see the pilot's face (just) with the naked eye.

I offer this is purely anecdotal but with the purpose of complaining about what I suspect is unnecessary and antisocial use of the air space above our houses and streets.

Thank you.

--

Andrew Lindesay
Elephant and Castle Resident

HN/161

Richard

Thanks very much for this. I am now attaching a letter dated 21st June which I sent to the police officer in charge of helicopters in London and which I also copied to my MP Greg Hands and to the Mayor. Greg has responded to me as has the police officer for the Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham. I will try to keep this brief!

I live in W6, on the border of Hammersmith and Fulham, two roads away from the river. We have noticed a steady increase in helicopter noise in the last 6 months, and it is now more or less constant, with a helicopter visible or clearly audible from our house approximately every 20 - 30 minutes. This noise is present 7 days per week, starting at 7 or 8 am and continuing up until midnight. Due to the flight path which is directly above us, the helicopters fly very low and the noise is intolerable - we have to stop talking to let them pass before continuing conversations.

The police claim the noise is due to aircraft following assaults carried out by mopeds. However, they were able to list only 5 such incidents since April this year and we experience this noise on a daily basis.

Greg Hands believes many of these aircraft are not police helicopters, and as many of them are not marked "POLICE" I suspect he may be right. If so, why are they not following the river as they are supposed to, and what if anything is being done to curb the number of flights across residential areas?

I look forward to hearing about the meeting

yours sincerely
Madeleine Bailey
W6 Resident

HN/162

Dear Mr Davies,

I know we are to late to make a submission on helicopter noise but nevetheless it is important for you to know that the noise and disturbance has reached such a level that all of the apartment blocks on the river from albert bridge towards putney are about to organise themselves into a protest group to complain about the effect on the environment and also the awful noise from seven in the morning onwards when battersea heliport was built that stretch of the river had very few apartment buildings but that is not the case today we feel it is incredible that a heliport is allowed to operate in such a densely built up area. I would be obliged if the committee was made aware of our plans especially mr darren johnson representations from ineffective organisations such as the batterseas society do not represent the true feelings of residents most do not know of its existance and it does not even have a web site or easily identified telephone numbers which is why its chairman has commented he has not received many complaints.

We would appreciate it if you could at least help us by forwarding this email to mr johnson even if it is outside of the consultation period.

kind regards
dennis rooke
director of albert bridge house
SW11

HN/163

Dear Mr Johnson

I have just written to Councilor Lister the Chairman of Wandsworth council but have learned that you are the person to whom our protests should be addressed.
As residents of Worth Battersea we are extremely concerned at the danger from helicopters whose pilots are no longer following the designated path along the river but flying over the densely populated area of North Battersea which has recently seen an increase in the number of high rise flats. Many of them fly well below their permitted height adding to the danger of a crash; must we wait for an accident to happen before a stop is put to such irresponsible behaviour?

Yours Truly
Yvonne Axford (Mrs)

HN/164

Angie Bray, AM

As one of your constituents, I am writing to you about 3 issues.

1. Was appalled to read the Times yesterday
http://driving.timesonline.co.uk/article/0,,22749-2244427_1,00.html

that TFL are planning an advanced Kengestion charge system from 2009, with
"the possibility of moving to a satellite-based charging system covering the whole of Greater London"

Apparently, Ken Livingstone has said that he favours a top rate of at least £20. He said: "I think we have reached a tipping point with public reaction to climate change. I think we have to make significant changes in the way we live our lives. We're already working on whether we can bring in a more sophisticated congestion charge.

I personally am not convinced by the 'climate change' excuse - key Conservative Party donor Stuart Wheeler rightly drew attention to the fact that a large and respectable body of scientists doubt the computer models used. Participating scientists have later disowned one UN model and an IPCC report, the latter because the findings were selectively edited to remove inconvenient evidence! (As the pendulum is now swinging firmly against 'consensus' - look at today's reports on Germany - David Cameron would be well advised to stick to issues that will not blow up in his face!).

As for 'public reactions', Ken will probably ignore the RAC and government opinion polls that put support for congestion charging at around 25% as much as he will the views of your Kensington constituents.

There is also talk of penalising 4 x 4 owners, which I suspect is more down to the class prejudices of Ken's politically neanderthal friends. One such pressure group tried to use non-representative American data to justify their 'arguments' and got pulled to pieces (www.abd.org.uk).

2. Was also appalled to read on the Mayor's website that Ken has been a 'Gold Sponsor' of the Europride festival. Such sponsors have to contribute a minimum of £25,000 and I bet Ken didn't do so out of his own pocket.

There's no more justification for subsidising this any more than the annual (heterosexual) Erotica Festival at Olympia. I have no objection to the gay community organising festivals out of their own pocket, but do object to my ever-rising council tax being used - not just for Ken's grant, but also the Met Police's.

3. Perhaps my main reason for writing to you was re: the Helicopter Noise investigation. I initially corresponded with my local councillors and MP; the latter has advised me to complain to the GLA and copy in both yourself and himself.

I will check the GLA website on how best to submit complaints, but your advice might be welcomed, please, on what the GLA can actually do to halt helicopter noise nuisance in the small hours of the morning?

With best wishes,
Brian Mooney
SW6 Resident

HN/165

Dear Mr Davies

I recognise I am past your deadline but can I put in a plea for those of us who live near the Thames. I think the helicopter industry thinks that flying helicopters down the Thames is fine - but I and thousands of others live along it. 20 years ago they might have been right but the Thames has changed - it is now in effect a residential area. As I email a helicopter has been hovering overhead. Last week one flew so low very early in the morning I leapt out of bed thinking it was going to land on the house. They should be made not to fly so low over houses and flats, and they should not be allowed to circle around - I do not believe they are all police helicopters - and even these need to be aware of just how many people they are disturbing and only fly when it is likely to be genuinely useful.

Yours sincerely
Catherine Hand
SE10 Resident

HN/166

Dear Sir

I understand you are dealing with the horrific increase in noise from helicopters at Battersea landing site.

We are resident at Albion Riverside and have been since the building was first occupied.

Initially, in 2004, the helicopter noise seemed infrequent but now into our third year it has become overbearing. In the summer months particularly, when our windows are open more, we are bombarded throughout the day with the noise.

Any further increase would make it impossible for us to remain here as our hearing is deteriorating and when helicopters are flying we are unable to communicate with each other.

On behalf of Albion Residents Association.
Ramon Benardout

HN/167

This note represents the Department for Transport response to the request to provide information for this investigation. Five particular issues were raised in the request to the Department:

1. What are the relevant current and prospective roles and responsibilities of the Department in relation to those of the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) and National Air Traffic Services (NATS)?
2. How does the Department ensure that environmental issues are properly taken into account in regulating use of helicopters, including those used for advertising? Please include comment on the extent of CAA's and NAT's legal duties to take account of environmental issues in discharging their functions,

and the scope for such duties to be extended having regard to practice in other industries.

3. How would the Department consider that helicopters could best pay for the environmental costs of their operations, e.g. through fuel duty, supplementary landing/take off charges related to local noise sensitivity, or route-based charging using GPS or similar technologies?

4. Has the DfT commissioned, or could it cite, relevant research or studies on the environmental impact of helicopters, including modelling of noise in relation to human response? Please indicate the main policy-relevant gaps in understanding, and whether the DfT would be willing to commission further research on any of these matters, including, for example, a census of typical and peak days of helicopter usage.

5. What improvements could be made to arrangements for holding helicopters, flying heights, routing and other requirements to minimise noise exposure and other environmental impacts?

Department's Role

1. The Department for Transport (DfT) is responsible for overall policy on the control of aircraft noise, and its approach is outlined in the White Paper, "The Future of Air Transport". The DfT only has direct involvement in measures to control aircraft noise at Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted Airports which are designated under section 80 for the purposes of the Civil Aviation Act 1982. Elsewhere, because of the wide variation in circumstances, the Department believes that aircraft/helicopter noise problems should be dealt with locally between the operators, the airfield site management and people living around the aerodrome. However, operators are expected to achieve a reasonable balance between their legitimate operations and the interests of those affected by them.

Regulations Governing Helicopter Operations

2. Under Civil Aviation legislation, the Rules of the Air Regulations and the Air Navigation (Restriction of Flying) (Specified Area) Regulations govern flight by helicopters over London.
3. For **single engine helicopters** this includes the use of specified routes because of the requirement to be able to alight safely in the event of power unit failure. The helicopter routes have been designed to maximise safety by avoiding built up areas as much as possible and to minimise environmental impact.
4. As **twin-engine helicopters** have the potential to maintain height and continue flight in the event of one engine failing, they can be authorised to fly other than on the designated routes, provided this is in accordance with the Rules of the Air.
5. Rules of the Air stipulate that, excepting CAA permission in writing, no craft shall fly below a height of 1,000 feet over congested areas. The Specified Area Regulations require that helicopters do not fly over Central London below such a height that might present a potential safety risk in the event of a power unit failure. This essentially means prohibition from the central area of London for single engined craft.

CAA and NATS

6. The CAA have been issued Directions by the Department under the Transport Act 2000 and have been given Guidance on Environmental Objectives Relating to the Exercise of their Air Navigation Functions. Essentially this requires that the environmental impact of proposals for new, or amendment of existing controlled airspace, have to be considered. There are no similar directions in relation to NATS. I understand that the CAA and NATS have both been asked to provide information for this investigation and I trust that they will fully explain their roles and legal duties.

Compliance with the Regulations

7. All helicopter flights in the controlled airspace over London are subject to an air traffic control clearance and, in the case of single-engine helicopters flying routes, particular visibility minima. Air traffic controllers monitor compliance with air traffic control clearances and instructions while the CAA, who are responsible for the enforcement of aviation legislation in the UK, will investigate any reported breaches and take enforcement action as necessary.
8. It is for the CAA to consider granting permission for an operator to carry out an advertising flight. The CAA will only grant permission to operators with an adequate safety record. As the permission is granted on the grounds of safety, as opposed to noise disturbance, there is no requirement for consultation.
9. Police helicopter activity is governed by the provisions of the Police Operators Certificate which exempts them from certain parts of the Rules of the Air Regulations. Overall responsibility for policy on police helicopter operations lies with the Home Office.

Planning Controls

10. While the provisions of the Civil Aviation Act 1982 apply to helicopters, their ability to land almost anywhere can be a particular source of noise nuisance in residential areas. However, there is very little that can be done to alleviate the problem, except by use of planning controls. The use of temporary sites is permitted up to a limit of 28 days a year, under the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995, without the need to make a specific planning application. Under the Temporary Use provision, a local planning authority would not be required to assess an application for planning permission. More frequent use of sites may not need planning permission if helicopter operations are incidental to the main use of the land.
11. Generally, whether a planning application is needed in a particular case will depend on whether there has been any material change of land use. Helicopter take-offs and landings in gardens of private houses and at commercial premises may often be ancillary or incidental to the primary use of the land and, as such, may not be seen as developments requiring a separate planning permission. However, the construction of a hardstanding helipad or any incidental development facilitating helicopter movements, such as the installation of landing lights, may be regarded as development requiring planning consent. It is ultimately for the local planning authority to consider if a change of use has occurred and if an application for planning permission is consequently required.

12. It is open to local authorities to require any use of land, including helicopter flying, to be discontinued by making a "discontinuance order" under Section 102 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. Such an order, which would have to be confirmed by the Secretary of State for the Environment, could involve the local planning authority paying compensation for the loss of existing use rights. Similarly, permission to operate helicopters for up to 28 days a year can be removed by issuing a Direction under Article 4 of the General Development Order. The effect of such an Order is that Planning Permission must then be sought. If it is refused or granted with conditions, the local authority may have to pay compensation.

Complaints from the Public

13. The Department receives a number of complaints about the noise arising from helicopter operations, especially in the summer months. In responding, we are able to comment on the Government's overall policy on these matters. The Department does not operate a 'complaints database' and so cannot provide detailed statistics in relation to this. The most common helicopter complaints are about low flying or noise at night. Helicopter noise at night is mostly due to police helicopters which normally work to 2am. No legal action can be taken against pilots for noise disturbance, provided they observe the Rules of the Air and fly in accordance with normal aviation practice.
14. If appropriate, complainants may be referred to the British Helicopter Advisory Board (BHAB) but this is usually when the owner/operator is known and the problem is long term. The BHAB also produce various guidelines such as 'The Civil Helicopter in the Community', 'Pilots' Code of Conduct' and 'Guidelines for Aerial Photography and Flights Over Congested Areas'. Complaints thought to be due to police helicopters are referred to the relevant police air support or helicopter unit.
15. In the last 12 months, the Department has received three letters from MPs about helicopters in London and three Parliamentary Questions have been asked relating to helicopter movements in London. Further action in this area would only be considered if there was sound evidence of increased environmental problems outweighing the economic benefits that helicopter operations bring.

Technology Improvements

16. Improved technology means that helicopters are less noisy than they were and we seek reductions in noise at source by encouraging industry developments in aircraft and engine technology. The noise signature of helicopters differs from fixed-wing aircraft in that noise derives not only from the engines but also from the main and tail rotors - particularly from their tips. Thus, silencing the engine alone would do little to improve the level of disturbance. Since 1 August 1986, all new and modified versions of existing designs of helicopters to be flown in this country have been required to meet noise certification standards. The current requirements for helicopters are laid out in the Air Navigation (Noise Certification) Order 1990 and are based on the International Civil Aviation Organisation's (ICAO) Annex 16. We helped to establish and have adopted this international standard. However, where standards are concerned, further progress is dependent upon international negotiation and agreement, which can then be implemented by EU and in national regulation. Although no significant technology advances are in prospect, the Government will continue to press for action to reduce helicopter source noise.

Research

17. The Department has not commissioned any substantial new work on helicopter noise since that carried out for the London Heliport Study in 1992-4 and published in 1995. For that study, the Noise Sub Group carried out a considerable amount of work to develop a helicopter noise model to indicate the likely helicopter noise exposure at a new heliport, when fully operational. The Group also commissioned a state of the art review of recent helicopter noise research and likely future trends in helicopter noise performance. The report of a social survey of reactions to helicopter noise was also included as an appendix in the LHS Noise Sub Group Report, published in 1994.
18. There are no plans for further research at present but the Department would be interested in the outcome of any such research related to the environmental impact of helicopters.
19. Helicopter noise, even by comparison with the noise of fixed-wing aircraft, is an extremely complex subject. This applies equally to the tasks of estimating noise exposures around heliports and of predicting likely levels of public reaction to the noise.

External Costs

20. The Future of Air Transport White Paper stated that we would work to ensure that aviation meets its external costs, including its environmental and health costs. The aviation industry has a responsibility to reduce its impact under the 'polluter pays' principle. There is, however, no viable alternative currently visible to kerosene as an aviation fuel. We have long recognised that the global exemption of aviation kerosene from fuel tax is anomalous, but a unilateral approach to aviation fuel tax would not be effective in the light of international legal constraints. Any decisions on tax would, of course, be a matter for the Treasury. Landing/take-off charges where relevant would be an important factor in the external costs argument. We understand that Battersea Heliport has a schedule of landing and parking charges based on helicopter types. Route-based charging would not be a very straightforward charge to impose and could give rise to significant difficulties.

Report of the London CTR (Control Zones) Review Group

21. The Report of the London CTR Review Group which considered safety, security and environmental impacts was welcomed by the Department. The recommendations of the Review Group are for NATS and CAA to take forward, with the approval of the Secretary of State where required under the terms of the Government Directions to the CAA. I understand NATS and CAA are taking this forward and trust that they will provide an update in their response to you.

HN/168

Dear Mr Davies

I understand that you have asked for comments on Helicopter noise in Havering.

Whilst I cannot give specific information, I am concerned about the increasing number of helicopters flying over Upminster, and the noise which they make.

I understand that some of these flights are for police training and would suggest that these could be done in a less built up area.

I believe that the number of helicopter and light aircraft flights should be reduced on both noise and environmental (pollution, global warming) grounds.

Thank you.

Peter Caton
Upminster Resident

HN/169

How can I make my views known on helicopter noise? The London Assembly's investigation seems to concentrate on Battersea Heliport and the surrounding area but where I live in LB Camden there seems to have been an appreciable increase recently in helicopter traffic (particularly in the evening) over the house. The noise is so loud that phone conversations are difficult and tv and radio are drowned out. Perhaps you would pass my views on to the relevant people.

Many thanks
Susan West

Dear Susan

Thanks for your email. The investigation is looking at the issue of helicopter noise across London. Please send me your views and experiences of helicopter noise so that I can take them into account. I will begin drafting the Committee's scrutiny report shortly. The aim is to publish in early October so if you include your address on your submission, I will arrange to send you a copy of the report in due course.

You should also note that the GLA does not have any formal powers to deal with aviation noise issues. The DfT have devolved environmental complaints to the Civil Aviation Authority. Therefore, individuals should in the first instance write to:

Consultation Secretary
DAP K6
CAA House
45-59 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6TE
Telephone 0207 453 6524 or 0207 453 6525

Regards
Richard Davies

Thanks for your response.

I don't really have anything more substantial to say than I have said already except there does appear to have been a significant increase recently in helicopter flights. I, and my neighbours, have noticed this increase particularly because the flight path seems to be directly over the house. Also, the peace and quiet of Hampstead Heath is often disturbed by the roar of helicopters. Last week for example I was picnicking with friends on the Heath at about 8.30pm and our conversation was drowned out by a low-flying helicopter

I believe that the commercial use of helicopters over London should be curbed (with Police and HEMS flights exempt) – perhaps they should be banned from flying below a certain height or banned from flying across central London. There is also the safety issue. If a helicopter crashed onto a heavily-populated area the consequences could be serious.

Regards
Susan West
NW3 Resident

HN/170

Dear Richard,

I hope it is not too late to make some comments regarding helicopter noise in Battersea.

I have lived within sight of the heliport for the last 4 years. In the last 4 or 5 months the frequency of flights has increased noticeably, particularly on weekday evenings and on Sundays (there used to be very few flights on a Sunday).

If the increase in traffic is the result of an increase in the number of private charter flights I think you should consider whether the convenience for those taking these flights outweighs the noise pollution experienced by those living in the area.

Until recently the noise from the heliport was a minor inconvenience but at the present level it is becoming a nuisance.

Regards,
Emma Slaymaker
Battersea Resident

HN/171

Dear Carmen Musonder,

I have already made enquiries about official complaint procedures regarding low flying helicopters along and over the Thames west of the Canary Wharf complex.

Many helicopters that use the route, and there seem to be more of the horrors every day, fly lower than the 500 feet permitted and many stray off their proscribed route over the water.

We also have the police and the air ambulance to contend with flying into and over the East End and particularly into the Royal London Hospital. I have no objection to the emergency services use of Helicopters in any general sense.

You can already see the reason for this email. I understand that the LAEC are conducting an investigation into helicopter noise in London and I wish to add my observations to the debate.

1. There is already an unacceptable level of ambient noise in Central and East London

2. Helicopters are poorly policed by the Air Traffic Authorities
3. Pollution of the air will increase to even higher levels than those at which we are already suffering with increased asthma in children and the elderly
4. We are already under the flightpath of the City Airport and turbo prop aircraft are much noisier than the new jets
5. Police Fire and Ambulance sirens are a constant addition to ambient noise
6. The railway and DLR are also a full and constant addition to ambient noise.
7. Helicopters both civil, and military use the river as a flight path to Westminster, the Royal palaces and between airports including Northolt.
8. It would seem that there are more leisure aircraft (helicopter) services operating though I have no direct evidence of this at this time.
9. General road noise is a constant background factor affecting all ambient sound in a city. I would suggest that all traffic inclusive of low flying air traffic is banned from Central London on Sundays (an arbitrary day, not for any religious reasons) to allow pedestrians, cyclists and others to enjoy the great city in comfort and safety.

I would therefore like to add my voice to others who will be objecting to the siting of an East London Helipad close to Docklands (i.e closer than London City Airport).

I do not want to see a helipad situated in any place where the level of noise in the area will, as a direct consequence, increase in any way to the detriment of residents and citizens, who already pay grossly excessive taxes to keep the wealthy few in the lifestyle which they enjoy by any local and national government policy.

Please send me any official format on which to outline my case, the level and nature of evidence required and the details of method and media for submission.

With many thanks
Ralph W. Withers BA MA Chartered MCIPD
Director
Azure Associates Ltd.

HN/172

Dear Val,

I have just seen an item on the lunchtime news concerning the London Assembly looking at helicopter flights. How can I have an input. This has been an item on our Forum agenda for the past year. We suffer from helicopters over the Oval during cricket matches constantly circling. There are also balloons and during the world cup had a helicopter all day trailing an advertising flag whenever England was playing. We believe Lambeth should get some sort of payment for the use of airspace above us and it is probably true for any other borough that has this problem. These flights are of course in addition to the police flights that happen whenever there is a demonstration which happen as we are so close to Parliament.

Many thanks
Maureen Johnston,
Chair
Kennington Oval and Vauxhall Forum.

HN/173

Dear Richard,

I got your email address from the London Assembly web-site. I am contacting you as I believe you are involved in the current investigation into helicopter noise in the London. I am writing to you as this has become a big issue for me in recent years.

I live in New Malden, in south-west London, and my house is on a flight path used by helicopters going in and out of the capital. On occasions I have counted more than 50 flights per day over my house, and at peak times have counted about one every 5 minutes for periods of over an hour. Each flight is very loud, and as every helicopter is normally in earshot for at least a minute, that makes a significant amount of disturbance. I live in what is otherwise a very pleasant and peaceful area, and this is one of the few factors that makes me consider moving house.

It is not just householders that suffer - the flight path in my area goes near parks, schools and even a cemetery. The peace and quiet of one of London's best new attractions, the London Wetland Centre (at Barnes), also suffers from similar disturbance.

Helicopters cannot provide a solution to London's transport problems. They will only ever be used to carry a tiny number of wealthy individuals from A to B a bit quicker than they could travel on the ground. To me it seems completely unacceptable that so many people should have to put up with this noise just for the benefit of a few inconsiderate individuals.

I understand that there is currently a proposal to build a new heliport in east London. I hope that this plan will be rejected. In addition, I hope that the LAEC will do all in its powers to at least prevent any increase in the use of helicopters. Ideally, it should be looking at reducing their use in and around the capital. If the Mayor and the LA want to show its commitment to the environment then addressing this problem would be a good way.

Please contact me if you require any further information on this.

Regards
Andrew Barrett
Surrey Resident

HN/174

Hello Richard,

I am glad this issue of helicopter noise has finally surfaced. I have complained many times to no avail. I live in Worcester Park which appears to be underneath a Helicopter flight path, these go back and forth nearly every 30 minutes throughout the day. I am also certain that they fly too low. it is a very annoying disturbance which residents anywhere should not have to put up with. We are affected by aircraft noise and I think Worcester Park suffers greatly here too I think we are also underneath an aircraft hold before decent into Heathrow There has recently been many letters in the local paper about this. And we are hoping Paul Burstow will be adding his voice to the problem I would appreciate if you could if you could keep me informed of any progress regarding the issue.

Regards
Evan Jones
Worcester Park Resident

HN/175

Thanks Richard, I am the owner of the property at Plantation Wharf, but am non-resident. I do, however, stay there for a day or two every now and again. I was there for two nights in July and flights were landing and taking off 'nose to tail'. Since I am not there very often, I notice the difference, rather than getting used to a gradual build-up, and this traffic is way in excess of anything previously experienced.

I consider myself to be reasonably 'tolerant' of the surrounding environment as, after all, we do elect to live in a major city, but this is now 'over the top' ! When the flights are well spaced the nuisance is not so bad, but this non-stop flight pattern is not tolerable. Those in the blocks even closer to the Heliport must be driven mad by the noise, and if I was in their position I would be taking legal and other intervention action by now.

As I also mentioned in my first note, it appears that the pilots are contributing to the problem by coming in, and taking off, low along the river, and then also turning over land within a short distance before they have gained reasonable height. In the past most of them followed the river, and descended or ascended rapidly over the heliport. My understanding is that this recent practice is in contravention of the existing

regulations, and I am guessing that they do it to increase the slot frequency, in which case the Heliport Owner is possibly complicit in the breach.

I appreciate the activities of your Committee in addressing this issue, and the wider issues concerning reasonable helicopter access to London. My hope is that it will not take long to resolve the Battersea situation, or that at least you will be able to put some enforcement and restraints in place ahead of a more holistic solution ! Please share my comments with your Committee.

Thanks and best regards,
Peter Hickman

HN/176

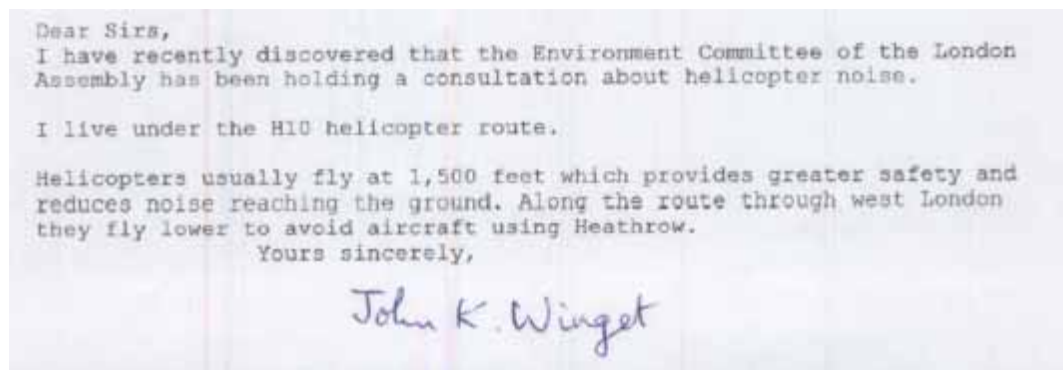
I would like to ask that while considering this issue, the use of Police Helicopters at night is considered.

They may be necessary in some circumstances, but they do cause considerable nuisance to those citizens who are trying to sleep. I have known them to be hovering overhead just after midnight, but with no visible police presence on the ground, and no means of complaining about the nuisance.

I would hope that the conditions relating to their deployment at night can be reviewed, and that a system for us to report the nuisance is put in place, so that some independent person can check that the conditions are being observed.

Charlie Orton

HN/177



Dear Sirs,
I have recently discovered that the Environment Committee of the London Assembly has been holding a consultation about helicopter noise.

I live under the H10 helicopter route.

Helicopters usually fly at 1,500 feet which provides greater safety and reduces noise reaching the ground. Along the route through west London they fly lower to avoid aircraft using Heathrow.

Yours sincerely,
John K. Winget

John Winget
Greenford Resident

22/Jul/06

Darren Johnson
London Assembly.

Dear Mr Johnson,

I see from a freebie publication 'London Magazine' that the Assembly is looking into helicopter noise, something we here are increasingly plagued by.

So I am sending you some additional evidence:

This house, a short distance north of Westbourne grove, appears to be on a flight path for regular helicopter use, particularly in the early evening when up to four or five helicopters pass overhead making a noise that prevents ordinary conversation out-of-doors and even interferes with conversation indoors.

It would be good to know the Assembly has found a way of mitigating this. Is it impossible to fit a helicopter with car-type mufflers?

Yours,
H.R.F. Keeling

H.R.F Keeling
W2 Resident

HN/179

Dear Mr. Johnson,

HELICOPTER NOISE

May we add information and support to your enquiry into the above topic. It appears that we live directly under helicopter route H7. This was once not a great problem but the marked increase in traffic in recent months is making our lives a misery.

1. The frequency of flights has increased dramatically e.g. 20 in one half hour, intervals of less than one minute and on 18/7 3 in 1 minute.
2. Although there is alleged to be a minimum height of 500' this seems to be flouted regularly and is, I suggest, unenforceable. Military machines seem to ignore this at all times - a low flying twin engine machine might cow the Viet Cong; it has no relevance to suburbia.
3. In other areas there are laws to protect privacy and noise pollution; helicopters seem to ignore these - why?
4. Reference to our M.P. has brought nothing more than a copy of a tract from the Department of Transport which tells us that pilots should maintain maximum altitude - would that they did and who enforces this?
5. The same tract claims that helicopters are less noisy than they were - apart from the patent untruth of this, if there were higher common standards then we would notice a diminution of noise. The very wide discrepancies in noise hints at disturbingly uneven levels of maintenance.
6. The closeness of the machines in any conditions gives rise to concern for safety.
7. One particularly irresponsible part of the D. of T. reply suggests that we record the registration letters of offending machines - I wonder whether anyone on the ground has taken those details from a fast-moving aircraft.
8. Although the D. of T. assert that the machines must use a closely prescribed route it is obvious to even a casual observer that they do not.

The intrusion into our lives by helicopters is causing us a great deal of stress and unhappiness. It appears that neither the relevant authorities nor those who use the flights have any concern for the effect on residents. The D. of T. refer to 'the needs of an efficient aviation industry, providing jobs and serving the local, regional and national economy and the need to minimise the impact on the environment'. You may find their order of priorities of interest.

Yours Sincerely,



DG Sullivan
Worcester Park Resident

I understand that the Assembly is to meet in public to discuss helicopter noise on July 13th and the Society's Executive Committee thought that it might be helpful if we were to set out the comments we have previously made on this subject over recent years. As you can well imagine, noise from helicopters registers fairly well up the scale of noise disturbance issues for residents of Westminster in particular but also for people to work and visit the area.

The Society first raised its concerns about helicopter noise in the Autumn of 2001 in response to the DETR Consultation Paper "Control of noise from civil aircraft" (question 5) since helicopter movements are by far the greatest source of disturbance in this area by air forms of aircraft. In its response "Summary of Responses" (March 2002), the Government noted the concerns of local authorities and environmental and residential associations (paragraphs 17+) that heliports should be treated equally with other aerodromes. There was little that was positive in this regard however from elsewhere in the summary of responses.

The Society raised the question of specific question of noise from non-fixed wing aircraft in a letter to David Jamieson MP, then Civil Aviation Minister in October 2002, about aircraft noise generally and Police and Air Ambulance operations in particular. The Society also raised the issue with the Mayor of London in the context of the London Ambient Noise Strategy Consultation (letter May 30th, 2003) which highlighted the problems created by Police helicopter operations;

the issue was only marginally addressed in the adopted Strategy document published in March 2004 (Box 48, page 142)

The next stage in the central Government process was the publication of the post-Gatwick "Second Edition" of the "Future Development of Air Transport" consultation document in February 2003. It was something of a disappointment to the Society that the document did not address the issue of non-fixed wing aircraft movements (ie helicopters) and in its response to the Department in June 2003, the Society said:

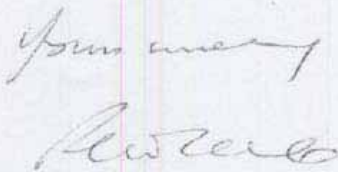
"... but from the noise perspective, I must add that the Society deeply regrets that the consultation document does not address the question of where any additional helicopter landing facilities should be provided in the south east of England and London in particular, since these operations generate more disturbance to the people of Westminster than practically anything else."

In July 2004, the Department published its Stage 1 consultation document on night flying restrictions at major London airports – the Society's concern was only with Heathrow, for obvious reasons – and again the Society tried to raise the helicopter noise problem (letter September 2nd, 2004). The Government then published (June 2005) Stage 2 of the consultation exercise, which did not address the helicopter issue at all.

The bottom line is that helicopter operations fall into three categories: civilian, emergency and military. Most of the first are restricted to specific routes and, whilst they cause disturbance to people immediately adjacent to their flightpaths, they are an annoyance rather than a misery. Military flights tend to follow similar routes and again merely constitute an annoyance (I would add that as a fairly regular spectator at The Oval in Kennington, commercial/civilian/military helicopter movements are clearly an irritant but then so are fixed-wing aircraft movements towards Heathrow and London City Airport).

The real problem concerns the operations of the emergency services. The Air Ambulance clearly can cause immense disturbance during its landings and take-offs but it is at least fulfilling (normally) a service of great urgency and not at particularly frequent instances. When it comes to the operations – and attitudes – of the Police service, the Society and its members find the tendency to hover at especially low levels over residential areas sometimes for prolonged periods particularly disturbing and especially at night; it is the seeming disregard of the interests of residents and their enjoyment of their homes and gardens that appears notably cavalier and unwelcome.

If you would like copies of any of the documents I have mentioned, or would like me to be at City Hall on July 13th, please let me know. At the request of the Society's Chairman, I am sending a copy of this letter to Tony Arbour.



PETER R HANDLEY
SECRETARY

Peter Handley
Secretary, The Westminster Society

HN/181

Dear Mr Davies,

I would like to add my voice to that of many concerned citizens in Fulham about the amount of helicopter noise.

While some helicopter noise is expected for policing around large football events and the like, it seems that the occurrence of this type of activity has increased in the recent past, without a clear explanation for why it is needed.

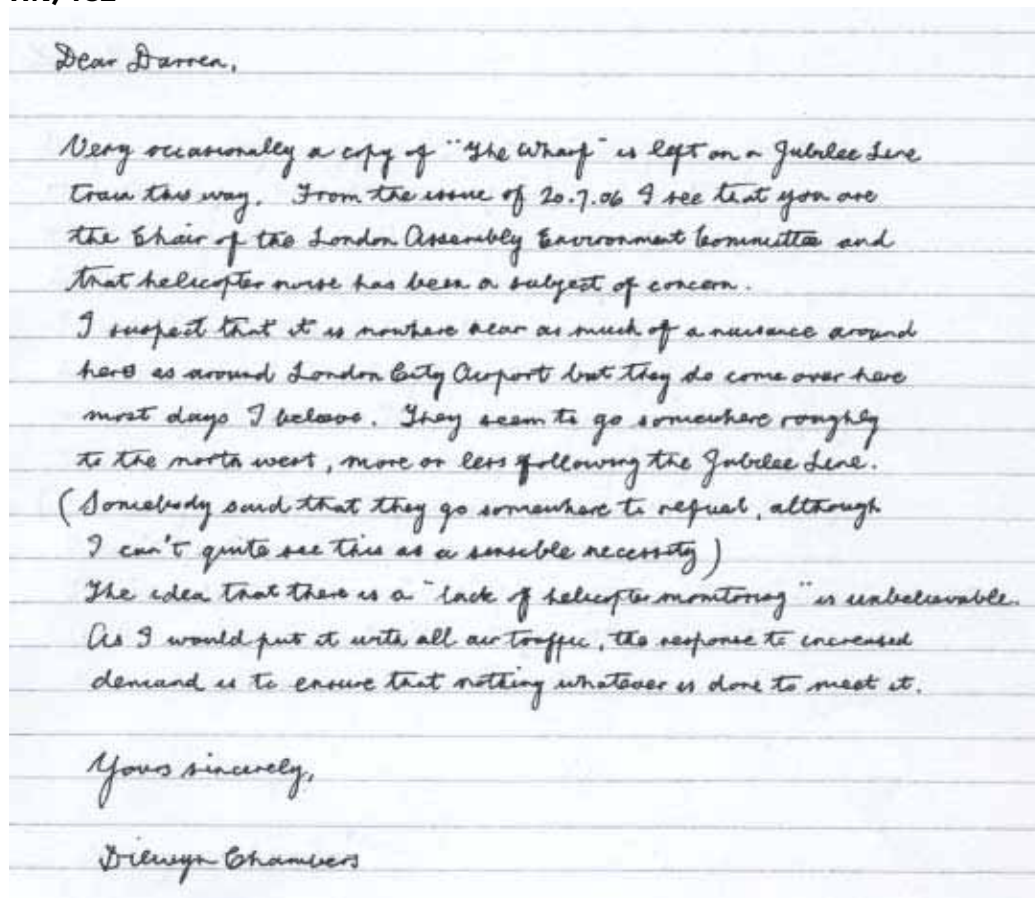
We are already in a part of town terrorised by airplane noise, and this is adding to this problem.

I am looking to the London Assembly to decrease the amount of helicopter activity if within its power, and at the very least to help increase transparency around why individual helicopter activities are necessary.

Many thanks for your activity on our behalf.

Yvonne Deng
Fulham Resident

HN/182



Dear Darren,

Very occasionally a copy of "The Wharf" is left on a Jubilee Line train this way. From the issue of 20.7.06 I see that you are the Chair of the London Assembly Environment Committee and that helicopter noise has been a subject of concern.

I suspect that it is nowhere near as much of a nuisance around here as around London City Airport but they do come over here most days I believe. They seem to go somewhere roughly to the north west, more or less following the Jubilee Line. (Somebody said that they go somewhere to refuel, although I can't quite see this as a sensible necessity)

The idea that there is a "lack of helicopter monitoring" is unbelievable. As I would put it with all air traffic, the response to increased demand is to ensure that nothing whatever is done to meet it.

Yours sincerely,

Dilwyn Chambers

D Chambers
Edgware Resident

HN/183

Helicopter noise

As mentioned on the telephone I have been requested to contact you on behalf of the above Residents Association concerning the investigations which your Authority is carrying out. The area covered by our Association is just outside the London Borough of Sutton in the Borough of Epsom and Ewell and many of our residents live directly beneath helicopter corridor route H7 - one of the busiest. With increasing traffic Helicopter noise has become a major issue here and we would like to support any campaign to lessen the impact. I enclose copies of some of our correspondence for illustration.

Referring to your Report Number 09 dated 7 June 2006 it is noted that the Mayor's Noise Strategy is to urge the Government and industry to: tighten noise emissions and lessen impacts by improving technology; and reviewing helicopter use and routes. We would be interested in any progress updates issued regarding these policies. It is also noted that Government has undertaken to produce a national strategy by 2007 and that consultations are to be held later this year.

We would be very interested in the content of your scrutiny report to be published by October. If we can be of any assistance to you please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned.

Yours sincerely,



R E S Farrar

on behalf of Howell Hill Residents Association

R Farrar
Epsom Resident

HN/184

I AM WRITING TO
COMPLAIN ABOUT THE
CONSTANT STREAM OF HELICOPTERS
FLYING LOW OVERHEAD WHERE I LIVE
ARE THERE NO REGULATIONS
ON THEM? - AROUND HERE IT IS
DAY & NIGHT THEY ARE ALL GOING.
Yours Sincerely C Watts

RECEIVED
SECRETARIAT

Carol Watts
Sutton Resident

HN/185

Dear Sir,

Helicopter noise has become very unpleasant in recent months. 2 or 3 fly over morning + late afternoon every day. They resemble military machines. Are these private?

Yours truly,

Ann Gordon

Mrs Ann Gordon
Worcester Park

HN/186

Dear Sir,

Can you please explain why, all these helicopters flying low over our houses? This has only been happening for the last year or so and is very annoying for residents.

Yours faithfully
P.A. Poullier (Mrs)

Mrs P. A. Poullier
Worcester Park

Dear Sir,

I live in the flight path of helicopters and during July these aircraft were flying particularly low. They started to come overhead as early as 8 o'clock in the morning and continued at 10 minute intervals for some considerable time. In the late afternoon the same thing occurred when the helicopters were ferrying their clients back.

In the past years helicopters, although numerous, have taken a higher flight path and have not been as intrusive, nor have they caused our house to shudder.

I am writing to add my voice to the many who have suffered this intrusion for the enjoyment of a few.

Yours faithfully,
S. Brady (Mrs.)

Mrs S Brady
Worcester Park

Dear Chairman,

Unacceptable noise from helicopters

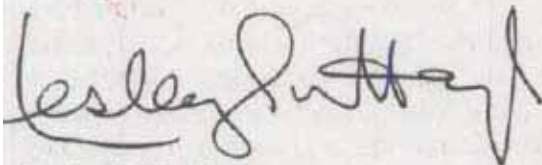
We are suffering from the appalling noise made as helicopters over fly our area. The frequency has increased to unacceptable levels over the last couple of years rendering our environment unpleasant. Whilst fully realising that Epsom is not in London, we do not know where to turn to get this problem reviewed since the local council appear to be powerless.

Our local MP, Mr Chris Greyling, who contacted the CAA on our behalf about 18 months ago was told that Epsom is on flight path H7, and that helicopters are not breaking the rules if they fly no lower than 2000 feet. A fait accompli, the CAA were not even prepared to discuss it further.

Who made this ridiculous height limit? The noise these machines make is disproportionate to their size or height. Perhaps an odd one throughout the day although an irritant would be acceptable, unfortunately they go over every few minutes at certain times of day rendering phones conversations or radio programmes inaudible.

Is there anything that can be done to reduce the nuisance and noise pollution from these craft?

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lesley L.M. Hays', written in a cursive style.

Lesley L.M. Hays

Lesley L. M Hays
Epsom Resident

HN/189

Dear Sir or Madam,

I got this address from my local guardian newspaper, it said "is anyone else fed up with the constant stream of helicopters flying overhead", Well yes I am, I would say in the last three years they have got more & more. This year has been the worst EVER. I started to see one day how far apart they were from each other & they were coming over in less than 2 mins apart & the noise was unbearable. I did find a phone number I could ring & complain to, but all they could say was could you bare with it for a couple more days because of the air show that was on at the time, But that was not the answer I wanted to hear.

The volume of helicopters I get over my house is ridiculous, they also fly so low that I can't hear anyone on the phone (if I'm on it) or put my television volume up because I can't hear it for the noise. I just wish they would fly in a different direction from time to time so that I & my neighbors would get a break from them EVERY DAY. I don't understand why there is such a constant flow of them now & I don't see why we have to put up with the noise of them.

I also want to complain about the helicopters that fly round & round in circles in the early morning, that also is getting more frequent. I keep getting woken up about 2 or 3 o'clock in the early hours of the morning with a helicopter going round & around & again flying very low, it's disturbing my sleep all the time, especially when I have to get up for work at 5.30 am. So yes I would like something done about this increase & noise of these helicopters please.

I understand you are doing some investigating into these complaints, so I hope you will take this complaint seriously, thank for your time in reading this, I'm glad someone is taking notice of this issue.

Sincerely,

Mrs M Phillips.

Mrs M Phillips
Worcester Park Resident

Dear Sir,

Regarding recent correspondence concerning helicopter noise. In 2003, with help from Mr. Grayling, I wrote to the CAA to complain about growing numbers of disturbing helicopter flights over Epsom and I agree with your recent correspondents that they are intrusive and a nuisance which is getting worse. I received a reply from a Mark Smailes (Consultant Co-ordinator) which at the time I considered a bust off. One suggestion I made was to vary flying routes, say separate incoming/outgoing flight paths, but apparently the CAA does not have the powers or resources to do this. It was suggested to me that if registrations were obtained the CAA would provide details of the registered owners, I could then liaise direct with the operators.

If, as the CAA has implied, it has no powers to control helicopter flights perhaps it is time the regulations were changed. The recent Farnborough air show was a typical example of increased traffic during mornings and late afternoons, also Derby day is another example.

Yours faithfully
P.S. Dicker (P.S. DICKER)

P. S. Dicker
Epsom Downs Resident

Dear Sir/Madam

I am writing this letter complaining of the helicopter noise over this area, when they first built Battersea Heli-Port they were instructed that the helicopters must follow the river Thames for fear of engine failure over residential areas. And when there is a low cloud base they fly under this making twice as much noise. Hoping you can do something to stop these flights before a nasty accident occurs.

Yours Sincerely A.R. Mays

A. R. Mays
Worcester Park Resident

HN/192

Dear sirs

I understand that you are debating the level of helicopter noise in London and I would very much like to advise you that it is not just in central London that the number of helicopter flights and levels of noise have risen dramatically.

There has been a steady increase in low flying commercial helicopters and an unacceptable level of noise that these flights make.

These helicopters generate much more noise than the commercial airliners that regularly fly above our area. In fact even the large aircraft are only really heard when they are directly overhead. Not so with the helicopters, whose noise is heard well before they approach and doesn't disappear until they are some considerable distance away. In fact on some weekends there is constant noise from helicopters as the noise from one helicopter going into the distance only just fades before another approaching helicopter is heard. The flights start early in the morning and go on until dusk.

I understand that the Civil Aviation Authority are only concerned with safety and not noise issues regarding helicopters. It really is about time that helicopters and their flightpaths were subject to noise regulation and stricter controls as indeed commercial airliners are. I hope that my experience of helicopter noise can be of some use in your debate and that some kind of regulation can be applied to the operators of helicopters regarding the noise, frequency and flightpath heights not only in central London but on the approaches to London over the surrounding boroughs and districts such as Banstead.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Larner

Andrew Larner
Banstead Resident

HN/193

Dear Sirs,

Re: Excessive Helicopter Flights/Noise.

With reference to the above I would advise that over the past year I have noticed a substantial increase in the number of helicopters flying over my house/area. They appear to fly a lot lower than I would have expected as well as the fact that the engine noise (especially the very small ones) is extremely loud and consequently quite disturbing. I understand that police helicopters need to be low when they are operating to catch criminals but they only appear infrequently over my area, so I do not have a problem with them.

I should be most grateful if you would be good enough to look into this for me as these flight are becoming a real nuisance.

Yours Faithfully,



D. T. Leeves (Mr.)

D. T. Leeves, Carshalton Resident

HN/194

Dear Sir,

We understand that you are currently investigating the problem of helicopter noise in Greater London.

While we appreciate that the greatest nuisance posed by such noise is in the vicinity of the Heliport, we would like to point out that helicopter traffic over the London Borough of Sutton in general and over the Cheam area in particular has increased markedly over the last few years.

Obviously, there will always be a certain requirement for military helicopter traffic, but these aircraft, by and large, although relatively slow, produce relatively low noise levels, and tend to make single one-way flights. We are also familiar with the G-MET police helicopter on occasion.

Historically, there has always been a certain level of traffic relating to particular days and/or events such as Derby Day on Epsom Downs.

However, we are now experiencing helicopter noise on a daily basis which does not relate to any particular special event, and many of these flights are extremely noisy because the helicopters are flying at low altitude.

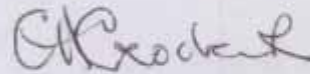
In addition, this year the disturbance caused by helicopters to and from the Farnborough Air Show was particularly bothersome, since these journeys are in both directions throughout the day and are by small helicopters producing high noise levels.

We would like you to give consideration to our concerns when gathering evidence, and trust that we can receive a copy/summary of your report when it is complete.

Yours faithfully,



Bernard Crocker



Mrs Christine Crocker

Bernard and Christine Crocker
Cheam Resident

HN/195

Dear Ms. Musonda,

Helicopter Noise in London

I hope you will be able to take account of the following views of the residents of west Wimbledon, although the formal period for receiving submissions has passed.

Residents have become increasingly concerned in recent years at the issues raised in your first two terms of reference: namely the increase in helicopter traffic and noise, and the effect of routeing on the H7 flightpath across this residential area.

The volume of traffic and the noise it generates has increased greatly in recent years. It often involves frequent overflying from before 8.0am until after 8.0pm. It is particularly bad in the summer, on Saturdays and on days of special events such as Epsom races. The noise is louder and more prolonged than that of aircraft which overfly the area. The noise is particularly invasive with a high degree of vibration, so that it is loud even inside a house double-glazed and insulated to modern standards.

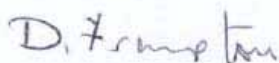
The anger and frustration of residents is increased by the lack of information on routes and the regulations they are meant to impose on pilots. There is little public information on the route of the H7 flightpath, but we believe it is intended to follow the A3 towards the Thames before turning towards Battersea, flying no lower than 1000 feet. In practice pilots depart from this line and cut off the corner of the route by flying across the well populated residential area of west Wimbledon.

It is difficult to gauge height from the ground, but it is clear that noise increases greatly as helicopters descend and is reduced by flying at a higher altitude. Height is therefore a critical factor for your committee in assessing noise pollution.

Routeing problems are fundamentally exacerbated by the increasingly inappropriate location of Battersea Heliport. This is an opportune time to consider the proper location for London's major heliport, in accord with the Mayor's policies 52 and 53 and Planning Policy Guidance Note 24. This should include consideration of locating it in the Thames Gateway to support economic regeneration, and more immediately to support the Olympic games.

In summary, the increase in helicopter traffic and noise is causing significant distress to local residents, and there appears thus far to be no effective action by any body to stem this erosion of our quality of life. For this reason we welcome the review by your committee and the London Assembly, and we hope that some of your recommendations will lead to local residents enjoying a greater level of peace and quiet.

Yours sincerely,



Derek Frampton, Chair, Residents Association of West Wimbledon

HN/196


TO THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

We object to the many helicopters flying low over South Sutton, most days. Who is flying them? Is it the police looking for escapees from Highdown and Downview prisons? Is it wealthy entrepreneurs or jockeys? We do know that the loud noise is a major contribution to the already heavy noise pollution we have to bear.

We would appreciate a reply, thank you.

Kathleen & John Guthrie

Kathleen & John Guthrie
Sutton Residents



ENFIELD
Council

Environment, Street Scene & Parks

Mr Max Dixon/Alan Bloomfield
Noise Team
City Hall
The Queens Walk
London SE1 2AA

Please reply to: T Williams
: Environmental Health & Regulation
: PO Box 57, Civic Centre
: Silver Street, Enfield, Middx. EN1 3XH
Tel: 0208 379 3687
Fax: 020 8379 5120
Minicom: 020 8379 4419
Email:
My ref:
Your ref:
Date: 10 May 2006

Dear Max

Re: Helicopter Noise in London Investigation

I refer to your recent e-mail regarding the above.

As requested please find attached the officer response to the 8 specific questions. In preparing this response the views of officers in the Councils Development Control and Environmental Health Services have been incorporated. As you will note from our responses, helicopter noise is not a problem for the borough. As such we are unable to make any significant or useful comment.

Our response is set out in bold type under each question.

1. *Have complaints about helicopter noise to your authority increased, decreased or stayed the same over the last 10 years? Do you feel that any changes in complaints are due to changes in numbers of flights, noisiness of machines, or routes taken?*


Response
The Council does not have any recorded complaints about helicopter noise in Enfield other than during a single past specific recreational event, at a location in Enfield, which promoted short helicopter flights.


2. *Are there any particular local areas where change is apparent, e.g. changes in use of helicopter routes, either designated or 'de facto', or any changes in incidence of circling or hovering? Do you have any views on likely reasons for any such changes?*

John Pryor
Director of Environment,
Street Scene & Parks
London Borough of Enfield
www.enfield.gov.uk

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DX: 90615 ENFIELD

Community
Legal Services


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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Response

We are unable to comment - See response to question 1

3. Existing designated helicopter routes are effectively a swathe about half a mile (800 metres) wide, i.e. 400 metres either side of the notional line. Have you or local residents perceived any increase in numbers of helicopters on the edges of the swathe, e.g. where people do not think they should be overflown? Have you or residents perceived any change in the number of instances where helicopters leave designated routes, or any change in the proportion of helicopters not using the routes?

Response

We are unable to comment - See question 1

4. Do you feel able to estimate, however approximately, proportions of different types of helicopter use?

- a) Air ambulance
- b) Police
- c) Military, special security, search and rescue
- d) Royal/VIP
- d) TV/film/other media
- e) Business
- f) Leisure/recreational
- g) Air survey (including infrastructure inspections)
- h) Other, please specify.....

It is appreciated that it is often not possible to identify flight purpose from livery or popularly identifiable markings.

Response

No

5. In relation to Policy 53¹ of the Mayor's Ambient Noise Strategy, has your borough received any heliport proposals over the last 3 years, or are you aware of any potential heliport proposals in the offing?

Response

None received and no proposals

6. Can you outline any problems your authority has had with the planning provision allowing helicopter landings and take-offs for up to 28 days without specific local consideration?

Response

As question 1. Short-term complaints related to a single recreational event in Enfield which included the use short helicopter flights. Following discussions with the event organisers the helicopter attraction has not been used since.

7. What is your borough's current policy on helicopters/heliports/helipads and are you considering any change? Is the policy formally expressed in the development plan, or elsewhere?

Response

Any development proposals are judged on their own merit. The Council does not have a specific policy on helicopter/heliports/helipads and is not considering any change. As helicopters and associated developments are not an issue in Enfield there is no formal expression of Council position in development plan or other documents.

8. Do you have any views how helicopter noise impacts might be reduced, or any other comments?

Response

None. Enfield has no issues in respect of this consultation.

I trust the information is of some assistance. Please contact me direct on the above number if I can assist further./

Yours sincerely,



Trevor Williams

Head of Environmental Health
London Borough of Enfield

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