



Regarding Biggin Hill Airport

Did you know . . . ?

Over the past year, Flightpath Watch has been objecting to a 24% increase in operating hours at the airport, well into unsocial hours. We are still fighting the decision of 25 November to proceed, as it is based on misleading statements and ineffective mitigating conditions. Biggin Hill Airport Limited (BHAL) operates under Lease from The London Borough of Bromley (LBB). In the process of analysing information, we have come across a few important facts that we believe are in the interest of the public to know:

1. The increase in hours is NOT 'slight' or 'modest', as LBB would like us to believe. It is a 24% increase and brings the hours of operation at Biggin Hill to 110.5 per week, when City Airport operates within 93 hours per week. (*Source: calculated from new hours over existing hours, including bank holidays*)
2. The noise mitigating measures included in the Lease are better for residents than those included in the Noise Action Plan (NAP) (the NAP formed part of BHAL application to extend operating hours), so LBB has planned more hours and noise for residents. New noise measures are based on 'averages'. (*Source: The Lease signed on 6 May 1994 and BHAL application dated 5 November 2014*)
3. LBB stated that noise would be reduced by 50% but the opposite is true because of the expected 50% increase by 2020 in flights, with a 72% increase in noisy business jets. (*Source: LBB and BHAL used an old LBB's UDP (Unitary Development Plan) map which was never reached, and was therefore obsolete.*)
4. LBB has not kept its promise to cap the annual number of flights at 50,000. It has instead linked the number of flights to a 'revision of the NAP'. However, as an eminent noise expert (ST Acoustics) explained to Flightpath Watch: "If all aircraft using BHAL were 3 dB less noisy, the movements could be doubled and the same contour area achieved [...] It is highly likely that those living nearby would not perceive the noise reduction but would notice the doubling of movements and be adversely affected by it." This is what 'averages' do. (*Sources: ST Acoustics report of 13 November 2015, (3.16); LBB meeting on 25.11.15 when the 50000 cap became 'non-essential'.*)
5. LBB has refused to curb helicopters at unsocial hours and operators are already advertising heli-shuttle services to transport passengers to their final destinations on arrival of flights at unsocial hours. For example, a luxury flight from the USA arrives at 6.30 or 22.50 and passengers can be in London in less than half hour, with limousine service at the other end included in the price. What does this do for residents' right to sleep? (*Source: Statement made on helicopters at LBB meeting, June 2015; web search Battersea helicopter shuttle for service details*)
6. The £3 million that LBB would like us to believe is going to be spent by BHAL to improve noise conditions for residents is actually an investment by BHAL for its own benefit. The new GPS route* to the southern end of the runway (likely to affect Crockenhill, Badgers Mount, Downe, Coulsdon, Bletchingly, and Woldingham, among others) will attract more, larger aeroplanes, which pay 4 times more in landing fees (benefit for the BHAL) but cause more noise to residents. LBB is misinforming the residents. As above in point (3), the number of business jets will increase by 72% by 2020**. (*Sources: *<http://www.bigginhillairport.com/acp/>; BHAL published tariffs; ** in the NAP*)
7. The Noise Assessment conducted for Farnborough/Locksbottom was undertaken half a mile away from the flight path. That might also explain why an assessment conducted for the Princess Royal University Hospital was considered 'within guidelines'. This poses a question mark on where the proposed noise monitors will be located. (*Source: LBB's Environmental Health officer's report*)
8. LBB did not reveal during its public consultation that the increase in operating hours would be accompanied by an increase of 69,000 square metres in working space, 14% on green-belt land. (*p.24 of URS Biggin Hill Study, March 2015 – URS the company commissioned by LBB at a cost of £90K to report on development of Cray Valley+Biggin Hill*)
9. The owner of Biggin Hill Airport Ltd acquired Milking Lane Farm, Leaves Green, in September 2014, at the northern end of the runway, prompting concerns about the extension of the runway to encourage larger aircraft. (*Source: LBB's consultation for the Local Plan*)
10. Although LBB advertised that no scheduled airlines are allowed, and individual fare-paying passengers are prohibited by the Lease (charter for business purposes being the main activity at the airport) there is a submission* by BHAL to Parliament, dated March 2015, presenting a case for accepting fare-paying passengers. There are also advertisements by a French agent for scheduled services to and from Biggin Hill airport. (*Source: *Submission to Smaller Airport Commission; web source for French flights*)

We hope you agree that the London Borough of Bromley has been negligent in its duty of care towards residents. Please help us in our continuing effort to halt this unfair decision and instigate meaningful noise-reduction measures.

Contact us: info@flightpathwatch.co.uk and visit our website: www.flightpathwatch.co.uk