

HIGH WEALD COUNCILS AVIATION ACTION GROUP (HWCAAG)

Aviation Policy

HWCAAG consists of the constitutionally elected representatives of resident and business communities within the defined area boundaries of Bidborough, Chiddingstone, Dormansland, Hever, Leigh, Penshurst, Sevenoaks Weald and Speldhurst Parish Councils¹. It has unanimously agreed the following policy and protocols with regard to aviation matters as they affect the lives of the members of our communities, in line with the Government's stated objective of "protecting the quality of life of local communities" (Philip Hammond, March 2011).

Purpose and Scope:

- To have an agreed aim and supporting principles.
- To suggest technical improvements to the aircraft flying in the defined area.
- To guide the member Councils' contribution to consultations and awareness campaigns on any aviation matters which will impact upon the residents of our communities.
- To articulate the immediate and long-term concerns, issues and aspirations of the resident and business communities (within the defined boundaries of the HWCAAG member Councils) with regard to the published expansion plans for London Gatwick's existing single runway and for the proposed second runway.

Aims:

- No increase in noise in the High Weald from aircraft arriving at or departing from Gatwick Airport.
- No night flights between midnight and 6.00 a.m.

Supporting principles:

1. **No Second Runway:** Rejecting the second runway application by Gatwick Airport Ltd. on the grounds that it will cause too great an increase in noise, and therefore be too damaging to our environment, tranquillity and quality of life.
2. **Maximum Respite:** Advocating the introduction of a policy that offers maximum respite for all communities and individuals affected, and is based upon geography rather than size of population. It should include:
 - a. The provision of a **programme of planned rolling respite** for all blighted communities
 - b. The abandonment of the current policy, which unfairly targets rural areas, areas of tranquillity and areas of low-density population by concentrating flight paths over them.
3. **Maximum Safe Height:** Advocating the introduction of a regulatory discipline to control noise and disturbance. This should include:
 - minimum height restrictions for aircraft preparing to land.
 - significant and effective financial penalties for noise-related incidents, so that unnecessary noise from low flying aircraft is reduced to a minimum.
4. **Noise Measuring:** Advocating the adoption of noise measurement standards to replace noise averaging (as represented by the current use of the 57dB LAeq yardstick), so as to reflect better the actual impact of individual noise events. The assessment of impact would be based upon the

¹ Councils to be added on receipt of minuted endorsement of this Policy by any Council who wish to support this Policy.

latest technical opinion on Noise Disturbance and its correlation with health issues. This, along with the use of more meters, would make noise reduction targets more realistic.

5. **No Night Flights:** The cessation of all night flights between the hours of midnight and 6.00 a.m., in order to eliminate the most disturbing aircraft noise for the benefit of our communities.
6. **Aircraft modification:** Advocate a national policy within the United Kingdom whereby all the Airbus 318, 319 and 320 aircraft, and those with a similar airframe, which call at UK airports, are to be retrospectively fitted with a modification to reduce FOPP cavities and similar aircraft noise.

Noise monitoring, enforcement and consultation:

We are **in favour** of the following technical improvements to the consultation, implementation, monitoring and enforcement regimes:

1. We support a **revision of the terms of reference and management** of Airport Consultative Committees to make them independent, representative, transparent and effective.
2. We support **the establishment of an Independent Authority** to oversee the management and delivery of Noise Action Plans and Airport Master Plans, with effective powers of enforcement.
3. We support **greater public involvement** in all stages of selection of inbound and outbound flight routes as part of the changes arising from the London Airspace Consultation.
4. We support **more research into health management issues** with regard to aviation noise.
5. We support **research into the likely environmental impact** of the increase in aircraft flying below 7000 feet on our communities.
6. HWCAAG will forward all concerns, issues and aspirations to the elected constituency, ward and division representatives – Members of Parliament, and County and District/Borough Councillors – so that they are made aware of the feelings of their local communities, and are thus in a position to influence Central and Local Government policy makers on aviation matters.
7. HWCAAG will link with other local Parish, Town, District and Borough Councils to achieve a common voice which is **reasonable, consistent, measurable, factual and objective**.

Membership

HWCAAG has **three tiers of membership**, namely:

1. Councils that have minuted Council decisions to be a member of the group, endorse the policy, share the burden of costs and vote on future policy amendments will be considered **Full Members**.
2. Councils that endorse the policy but do not contribute or vote will be considered **Associate Members** and will be named in the policy document.
3. Councils that wish to be informed of the group's activities and policies, responses and activities but do not wish to endorse the policy or contribute to costs will be considered '**CC**' **members**.

N.B.:

- Members of the public, businesses and other organisations can only be CC members.
- Membership at any level does not preclude a council having its own policy that reflects more closely the wishes of the individual community it represents. This policy is a statement of what is common to all councils in the group.