

## **THE LONDON HELIPORT CONSULTATIVE GROUP**

Agenda for the meeting to be held on Thursday, 20th October 2016 at 7.00 p.m. at The Town Hall (Room 123), Wandsworth High Street, SW18 2PU

### **MEMBERS**

#### **Chairman**

Councillor Rosemary Torrington – London Borough of Wandsworth (Thamesfield Ward)

#### **Users' representatives**

Capt Ian Field  
Capt Michael Hampton  
Capt Robin Renton  
Capt Paul Watts

#### **Residents' representatives**

Wandsworth  
Mr David Brown

Hammersmith and Fulham  
Ms Christina Smyth

Kensington and Chelsea  
Ms Eryl Humphrey-Jones

#### **Local Authority Representatives**

Hammersmith and Fulham  
Councillor Larry Culhane (North End Ward)

Kensington and Chelsea  
Councillor Maighread Condon-Simmonds (Chelsea Riverside Ward)

Wandsworth  
Councillor Wendy Speck (Latchmere Ward)  
Councillor Rosemary Torrington (Thamesfield Ward)

#### **Refreshments**

**Sandwich refreshments will be available for members of the Consultative Group in the Committee Room (Room 123), prior to the meeting.**

#### **Contact:**

Martin Newton (Secretary to the Consultative Group),  
Administration Department, Wandsworth Borough Council, The Town Hall, London SW18  
2PU Tel: 020 8871 6488 Email: [mnewton@wandsworth.gov.uk](mailto:mnewton@wandsworth.gov.uk)

13th October 2016

## AGENDA

1. **Minutes - 16th May 2016** **(Pages 5 - 10)**

The Consultative Group are asked to confirm that they approve the draft minutes of the last meeting held on 16th May 2016 (Attached – Paper A).

The draft minutes were circulated to all members of the Consultative Group and to all on the circulation list for Consultative Group papers, and have been published on the Council's website.

Upon approval, the minutes will be signed by the Chairman as a correct record of the meeting.

The Chairman will then invite members to raise any matters arising from the minutes.
2. **Monitoring of Helicopter Noise Levels**

Colin Stanbury will update the Group on the latest position regarding monitoring of helicopter noise levels.
3. **Information on Helicopter Movements** **(Pages 11 - 14)**

Summary information on helicopter movements at the London Heliport in Quarters 2 and 3 of 2016, provided by the Heliport Manager, Simon Hutchins, is included herewith for information. (Attached - Paper B).
4. **Noise Complaints** **(Pages 15 - 18)**

Information on noise complaints received by the London Heliport in Quarters 2 and 3 of 2016 and on the action taken in response by the Heliport, provided by Simon Hutchins, is included herewith for information. (Attached – Paper C).
5. **LHCG Sub-Group** **(Pages 19 - 32)**

At the LHCG's meeting in November 2015 it was agreed to:-

  - establish a sub-group to institute work on a set of proposals to propose to policy makers at national level to bring the helicopter flight regime more into line with that governing aircraft to reflect their increasing use;
  - work with the Heliport to develop a more comprehensive set of reporting information to the Group, including helicopter

movements and noise contours; and

- develop ways of communicating this information to the public, including material which can be linked to the borough websites and an explanation of the procedure

At the last meeting of the LHCG in May 2016 it was agreed that the initial topics for consideration by the sub-group should include the factual and legal background, including noise, exemptions from environmental laws, policy issues including NATS and CAA considerations, flight paths, and information transparency including that of historical data from the heliport.

The first meeting of the Sub-Group was held on 13th July 2016 and a report will be made to the LHCG on that meeting.

Discussion and briefing papers for the LHCG's consideration are attached as actions arising from the Sub-Group meeting on the history of the heliport and the LHCG (Paper D), options identified and noise monitoring (Paper E), helicopters and health (Paper F) and on aviation noise and the law (Paper G).

**6. Use of Heli-Lanes by the USAF**

To consider the issue of the use of Heli-Lanes by the USAF.

**7. Any Other Business**

The Chairman will ask members of the Consultative Group whether there are any other matters they wish to raise.

**8. Date of Next Meeting**

The Consultative Group are asked to determine the date of their next meeting.

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**THE LONDON HELIPORT CONSULTATIVE GROUP**

Minutes of the meeting of the London Heliport Consultative Group held at the Town Hall, Wandsworth, SW18 2PU on Monday, 16th May 2016 at 7.00 pm

PRESENT

Chairman

Councillor Torrington (Wandsworth Borough Council)

Residents' representatives

Geoff Brindle  
David Brown  
Christina Smyth

Local Authority representatives

Councillor Culhane (Hammersmith and Fulham Borough Council)

Users' representatives

Capt Michael Hampton  
Capt Ian Field

Observers, advisers and officers

Simon Hutchins (The London Heliport)  
Colin Stanbury (Wandsworth Borough Council)  
Martin Newton (Wandsworth Borough Council)  
Guy Dennington (Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea)  
Jim Walker (CAA)  
Dr Stephen Dance (South Bank University)

Residents from Imperial Wharf and other nearby developments in LB Hammersmith and Fulham, along with residents from LB Wandsworth.

Apologies

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillor Condon-Simmonds (Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea), Councillor Speck (Wandsworth Borough Council), Capt. Watts and Ms Humphrey Jones.

Chairmanship of the Group's Meetings

On item 1, the details of the Chairmanship of the Group's meetings in the 2016/17 municipal year were noted.

## Minutes - 16th November 2015

On item 2, it was agreed that the minutes of the meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> November 2015 be confirmed and signed as correct.

The minutes were thereupon signed by the Chairman.

On item 1(b), and the question of flights over the Norland area of Kensington and Chelsea, Jim Walker confirmed that preliminary discussions had taken place with NATS and also Guy Denington. Any proposed changes requiring possible alternate routes required a 'sponsor' and this would probably need to be NATS. Further discussions would take place in the near future. Jim Walker undertook to produce a short note regarding NATS policy vis a vis the CAA.

## Order of Business

The Group agreed to consider items 3, 4 and 6 concurrently.

## Monitoring of Helicopter Noise Levels

On item 3, Dr Stephen Dance gave a presentation to the Group of the details of the limited monitoring that had taken place at an apartment at the Imperial Wharf development over the Easter weekend. He told members that the balcony of the property used was around 250 metres across the river from the heliport and that a noise measurement had been recorded at 5 minute intervals. It was noted that the Easter weekend had been very windy.

Dr Dance said that sound was measured in decibels and recorded those instances where 66 decibels (equivalent to a person addressing an audience) had been exceeded over that Easter weekend (100 decibels would be equivalent to a night club setting whereas 55 is normal at night). The analysis of the result showed 32 measurements over 66 dB LAeq, at the 5 minute intervals, from 637 datasets, which is considered to be 5% useful data. Heliport activity is easiest to identify at the 500 Hz octave band. Although the data gathered had been a useful first step it was acknowledged that the weekend was less busy for flights than would sometimes be the case.

The Group noted that the proposed next steps would be to set long term monitoring in place with event triggering, rather than 5 minute interval recording; to measure simultaneously at various multiple fixed Heliport base positions located over a wider area and use a roaming sound level meter; and to match the sound levels to heliport activity. Dr Dance said that the intention is to develop a noise contour map for the heliport similar to that which exists for all CAA airports to establish the areas affected by noise disturbance. He explained that, how this information might be used after the monitoring would be up to the Group, but that the results would show the extent of the noise issue.

Discussion commenced and Councillor Culhane asked that any resident volunteers for future monitoring or who would like to be involved in the LHCG sub-group give their names to the Secretary at the end of the meeting. In response to a question

from a resident about why there appears to be a decrease in noise near the park at Imperial Wharf, Dr Dance confirmed that this would be due to a 'canyoning effect' that amplifies sound. Christina Smyth said that the long-term aim is to establish the noise contours information for the heliport as this would then put the heliport on a similar 'footing' to airports where this information is known and greater regulation applies.

Discussion continued and the residential changes to the area since 1959 were noted and Simon Hutchins provided a brief history of the heliport's operation and ownership. In response to a comment from a resident about rotors remaining in operation whilst awaiting passengers and the resulting impact on noise and disturbance, Capt Field confirmed that if passengers were not ready to depart when a pilot arrived to collect them then the helicopter would shut down generally within 2 minutes of landing. If a pilot had kept rotors running for up to 5 minutes they would be instructed to shut down. Capt Field also made the point, however, that leaving the engine idling was sometimes less noisy than shutting down and restarting. Simon Hutchins told the Group that rotors continued to operate only if passengers are present and wanted to board. He confirmed that helicopters sometimes kept rotors operational whilst awaiting clearance to depart although this was usually expeditious.

The Chairman then raised the question of the controversial sightseeing trips from the heliport and asked why these had moved from Redhill. Simon Hutchins replied that this is in response to demand from the public for trips of this kind from a central London location. Capt Field said that the sightseeing trips are a business opportunity for the provider but are not operated by his employers, Starspeed. It was also noted that the flights continued to operate from Redhill. In response to a question from the Chairman about a statistical breakdown of sightseeing trips, Simon Hutchins said that the issue of additional statistics from the heliport had been raised at the last meeting and the heliport would respond to more detailed proposals on this when provided by the LHCG sub-group.

Discussion continued and Colin Stanbury said that the same issues were being raised on a regular basis and that the Group needed to look at and consider how these issues could be dealt with. A main issue was that no baseline data about the heliport previously existed but that the monitoring opportunity now presented would enable a better picture to be established. This monitoring, along with consideration of residents' concerns and in collaboration with the heliport, would enable work to be undertaken toward a far greater understanding of the noise impact.

Colin Stanbury informed the meeting that previous on-site noise monitoring had been carried out at the heliport but this ceased as results were constant over a long period of time. He said that the historic data from this monitoring could be reconsidered but some further monitoring by the heliport should now be carried out as an indication of support as part of the overall monitoring plan. Simon Hutchins confirmed that work had been undertaken to revalidate the earlier monitoring data and that the heliport had already indicated agreement for new monitoring subject to confirmation of the details. He undertook to discuss a financial contribution from the heliport toward the work with the heliport owners. Councillor Culhane indicated that a financial contribution could probably also be made by London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham toward the required work.

Discussion continued and Simon Hutchins confirmed the heliport's 0700 to 2300 operating hours and that sightseeing trips were daylight only but tended to be during the middle of the day. In response to a question from a resident about restriction on the sightseeing hours of operation, the Chairman said that this issue could be discussed by the LHCG sub-group.

In conclusion, Colin Stanbury stated that Dr Stephen Dance had so far made South Bank University resources available at no cost to the Group but that consideration needed to be given to funding of the monitoring going forward. It was noted that a possibility might exist to apply for EU funding for work of this nature and that other funding sources might exist. Simon Hutchins again re-affirmed that the heliport would give consideration to a funding contribution.

### Noise Complaints

Item 6 was received as information.

### Air Pollution Complaint

On item 7, the Chairman drew attention to the air pollution complaint and it was confirmed by a resident that the air ambulance appeared to cause the most complaints.

Capt Hampton said that helicopters had 2 kinds of engine – one a gas turbine (similar to a household gas boiler) - and that the emergency services use the same aircraft. He said that he was puzzled as to why the odour emission would be different to that of other helicopters using the same engine.

Geoff Brindle said that the problem could be that the air ambulance sat on the heliport apron for a longer period whilst refuelling and in a high state of readiness for take-off and asked whether this could be looked at by Environmental Health officers and by the sub-group. Simon Hutchins confirmed that a period of 7 to 10 minutes was taken to top up fuel and it was noted that the air ambulance probably carried fuel reserves that would last no longer than an hour.

### LHCG Sub-Group

On item 8, the Chairman suggested that it would be helpful to include Dr Dance and Colin Stanbury on the sub-group. Capt Hampton also offered his assistance. Christina Smyth put forward her name and also suggested that any residents that would like to be involved should pass their contact details to the secretary. Jim Walker said that he could provide help with aviation advice. Councillor Culhane undertook to convene an initial meeting.

The Chairman raised the question of initial topics for consideration by the sub-group and Christina Smyth suggested the factual and legal background, including noise, exemptions from environmental laws, policy issues including NATS and CAA considerations, along with flight paths be fully looked into to ensure the sub-group is well informed. She said that the sub-group should also fully look into the issue of information transparency including that of historical data from the heliport.



It was agreed that these issues and parameters be further considered as appropriate by the LHCG as discussions develop.

### Any Other Business

On item 9, and in response to a question asked by a resident on good neighbour policy, Capts Hampton and Field confirmed that arrangements for helicopter arrivals / departures from the heliport are strictly covered by safety and associated legal requirements. It was noted that the heliport and the British Helicopter Association both operate under such a fly neighbourly policy and that the policy and safety requirements go 'hand in hand'.

Discussion continued and Christina Smyth confirmed that contributions from as many residents as possible to the work of the sub-group would be welcome, in order to ensure all views were fully represented, and that representations about greater regulation could be made to the Government. The Chairman suggested that the sub-group's strategy be confirmed at the next meeting.

During further debate the Group also noted an update from David Brown on the use of drones at Battersea Reach.

### Date of Next Meeting

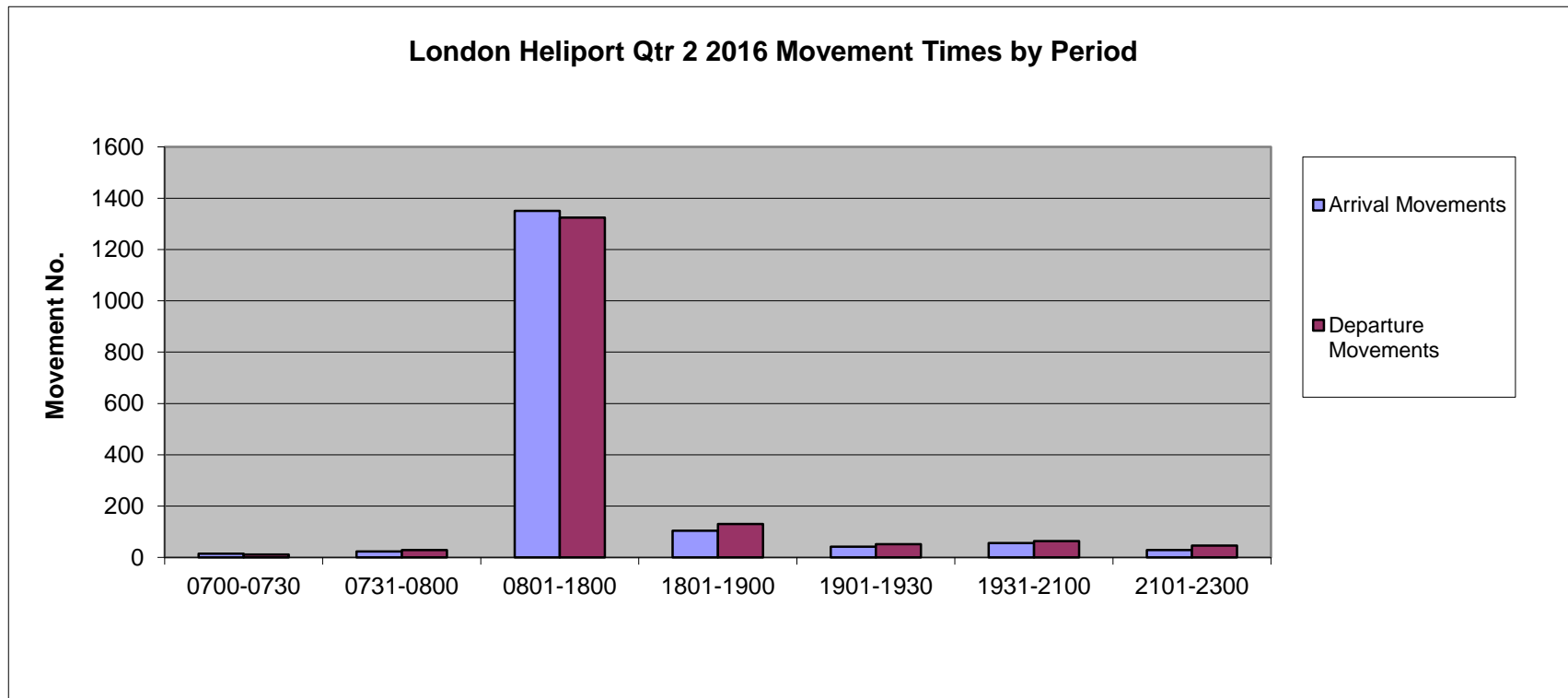
The Group agreed to meet again on Monday, 26<sup>th</sup> September 2016.

The meeting ended at 8.31 p.m.

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Qtr 2 2016 Movement Time Band Breakdown

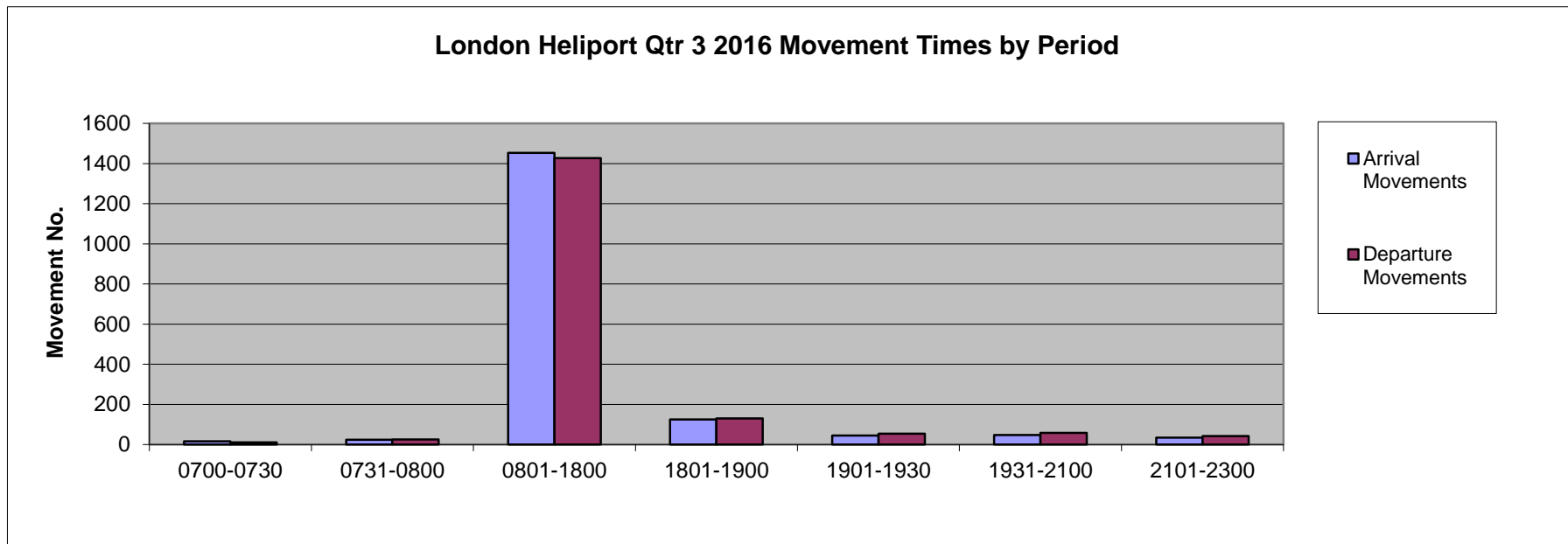
Time Band	Arrival Movements	Departure Movements	Total
0700-0730	15	11	26
0731-0800	23	29	52
0801-1800	1351	1324	2675
1801-1900	104	130	234
1901-1930	42	52	94
1931-2100	56	64	120
2101-2300	29	46	75
<b>Total</b>	<b>1620</b>	<b>1656</b>	<b>3276</b>



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**Qtr 3 2016 Movement Time Band Breakdown**

Time Band	Arrival Movements	Departure Movements	Total
0700-0730	16	11	27
0731-0800	24	25	49
0801-1800	1453	1427	2880
1801-1900	125	130	255
1901-1930	45	54	99
1931-2100	48	58	106
2101-2300	35	42	77
<b>Total</b>	<b>1746</b>	<b>1747</b>	<b>3493</b>



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NOISE COMPLAINTS SUMMARY

Apr– Jun 2016

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Complaint Reference	Date of Complaint	Time of Occurrence	Time of Complaint	Brief Details of Complaint	Brief Details of Investigation	Action Taken
02/16	5 <sup>th</sup> June 2016	1348-1407	1407	Complaint regarding the length of time there was an aircraft with rotors running on the apron.  (Imperial Wharf SW6 2JY)	Aircraft had developed an engine fault requiring engineer attendance at the heliport. An engine “ground-run” was required post-check to ensure aircraft could depart heliport safely.	Unusual set of circumstances explained to complainant. Post-check ground runs may be longer than normally required for engine checks prior to departures

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**NOISE COMPLAINTS SUMMARY      Jul– Sep 2016**

Complaint Reference	Date of Complaint	Time of Occurrence	Time of Complaint	Brief Details of Complaint	Brief Details of Investigation	Action Taken
03/16	2 <sup>nd</sup> July 2016	Past 12 months	1530	Repeated helicopters flying Northbound over last 12 months. (W11 3PJ)	As traffic levels have increased over past 12 months it is logical that there would be a related increase in the amount of Northbound traffic.	Complaint noted but little further action available to correct the situation other than rerouting aircraft on occasion.
04/16	12 <sup>th</sup> July 2016	0730-1800	1745	Constant noise every 6 mins resulting in having to close windows. (SM2 5EJ)	Due to Farnborough airshow there was increased traffic travelling via north-south route to and from Farnborough over complainant.	Complainant advised that the cause of the increased traffic was due to Farnborough Airshow and that traffic levels would abate after one more day.
05/16	12 <sup>th</sup> July 2016	General complaint	0930	Helicopters and generally not sticking to the river route and overflying her house with an increase in traffic. (SW11 3LG)	Due to Farnborough airshow there was increased traffic arriving at the heliport to travel to the show. Complainant lives very close to the river but no evidence of overflying off the river route.	Complainant advised of the cause of the increased traffic and that it was due to Farnborough Airshow.

**NOISE COMPLAINTS SUMMARY      Jul– Sep 2016**

06/16	12 <sup>th</sup> July 2016	1000	All the time and especially on Saturdays	General increase in traffic levels and noise disturbing complainant. (SW17 0AB)	Due to Farnborough airshow there was increased traffic travelling via north-south route to and from Farnborough over complainant.	Complainant only required the call to be logged and no response was necessary
07/16	28 <sup>th</sup> July 2016	1030	27 <sup>th</sup> July 2016	Complainant had helicopter circling repeatedly over house causing concern about their safety. No time specified or helicopter identified. (Prince of Wales Drive, south side of Battersea Park)	Arriving aircraft may have been delayed and asked to orbit in the area or Police helicopter.	Lack of detail from complainant meant cause uncertain and could not be specified.
08/16	3 <sup>rd</sup> August 216	1037	All the time	Increased traffic and noise levels over Bushy Park, Teddington causing concern in local community. (Teddington, TW12 2EJ)	Bushy Park lies underneath helicopter route H3. Increased traffic levels as expected for summer month.	Complainant was advised of general and season-specific increase in traffic and that traffic levels would reduce for remainder of the month due to holiday period.
09/16	10 <sup>th</sup> Sept 2016	1710	1705 approx	Helicopter flew over complainant home. Noise such that unable to hear TV, drowned out conversation and causing vibration. Did not see helicopter and therefore unable to identify. (W14 0HD)	Very large helicopter had departed heliport at this time.	Complainant advised of findings.

## Briefing Note for LHCG

### Scope of this paper

This paper sets out a brief history of Battersea Heliport within the context of helicopter provision for London. It also provides some background information leading up to the formation of the LHCG in 2006 and summarises the work that the group has done over the last 10 years since its inception.

### History of Battersea Heliport

Outline planning permission for a heliport on the current site was granted by the government in 1958 for a limited period of 7 years.

The heliport opened in 1959 and subsequent permissions to operate were granted by the Greater London Council (as planning authority for London) until GLC abolition in 1986 passed the planning responsibility to the London Borough of Wandsworth. It was originally promoted as an advertisement for Westland helicopters under the slogan “Westland gives London a heliport”. The heliport recently celebrated its 500,000th movement over the course of its history. It is also the only heliport in London able to provide refuelling for emergency services, such as the London Air Ambulance (HEMS).

Traffic in the early years of Battersea operations was limited to daylight hours, emergencies excepted, with 1,515 movements recorded in the first year. The numbers did not rise much until around the mid 1960s when turbojet helicopters started flying. After the number of flight movements climbed, an annual upper limit of 12,000 was fixed by the GLC in 1977. By then the seven-year option on the site had been extended; this was repeated recurrently until permanent planning permission was granted in 1995.

Westland / GKN decided to sell the heliport in November 2000 to the Harrods group of companies.

In December 2003 Battersea Heliport was acquired by Weston Homes who then sold the operation to the Von Essen hotel group in 2007 following redevelopment of the site (which included the construction of a new hotel and apartments).

The Von Essen hotel group went into liquidation in 2011, the heliport was subsequently acquired by the Reuben Brothers who also own London Oxford Airport (<http://www.oxfordairport.co.uk>).

In May 2016, Battersea Heliport was renamed the NetJets London Heliport, after private jet company [NetJets](#) signed a branding deal with the Reuben Brothers. Netjets specialise in fractional ownership of private (executive) jets.

Netjets say Battersea Heliport is a key piece of infrastructure for those flying privately in the UK. The number of interlining flights from the heliport with onward private jet flights increased up to 20% in 2015 with the biggest contributors being London Stansted, Biggin Hill, Farnborough, Luton and Oxford airports.

#### Development of Helicopter Operations in Greater London

Following the opening of Battersea Heliport additional helicopter landing and take off facilities were established from a barge moored at Trigg Lane in the City of London and from the rooftop of the former Daily Mirror building in High Holborn (although this was in practice used in the main by senior DM executives). The Trigg Lane facility closed in 1985 leaving Battersea Heliport as the only licensed heliport located within the Greater London area.

Vanguard Helipad A small heliport facility (<http://www.vanguardhelipad.co.uk>) located alongside the Thames within the Isle of Dogs that has been operational for a number of years. However this is an unlicensed facility and is therefore limited both in terms of the numbers and types of helicopters that may take off and land. It is considered unlikely that the CAA would consider licensing this location due to its restricted access. The Vanguard Helipad does not have any refuelling facilities.

N.B. There is no legal requirement to license a heliport unless it accepts helicopters on scheduled journeys for the purpose of the public transport of passengers or for certain pilot licence-related training activity.

Heathrow Airport is able to accept rotary aircraft, in practice, the airport does not cater for significant numbers of helicopters.

London City Airport is not permitted to accept rotary craft, permission for such operations has historically been ruled out on grounds of safety (the footprint of the airport being considered too small to safely accommodate both fixed wing and rotary craft).

Central London Heliport (CLH) A proposal to build a new Central London Heliport (CLH) adjacent to Cannon Street Station in the early 1990s was rejected by the government on environmental grounds following a lengthy public inquiry. The Thameside facility sought to provide an operating capacity of up to 25,000 movements per year by twin-engine helicopters.

#### Strategic Policy on Helicopters

The London Plan is not supportive regarding the provision of new or alternative heliport facilities within the Greater London area. For ease of reference the relevant section of the 2016 London Plan is copied below:

Section 6 Transport

6.30 *The noise impacts from helicopters can be considerable in an urban environment like London, where there are few locations where a heliport could be located without having major impacts on residents. Accordingly, proposals for new heliports should be resisted.*

Battersea Heliport - Hours of Operation & Movements

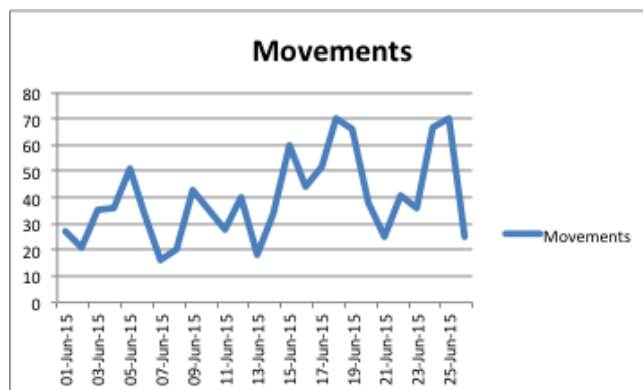
The current hours of operation (07:00 – 23:00 emergencies excepted) were fixed by the GLC in 1977. The 1977 planning permission introduced a complex arrangement of daily movement quotas and disregards within an overall cap of 12,000 “countable” annual movements. The current movement limits are still based upon the 1977 planning permission (with some modification introduced during negotiations of the 1995 planning agreement).

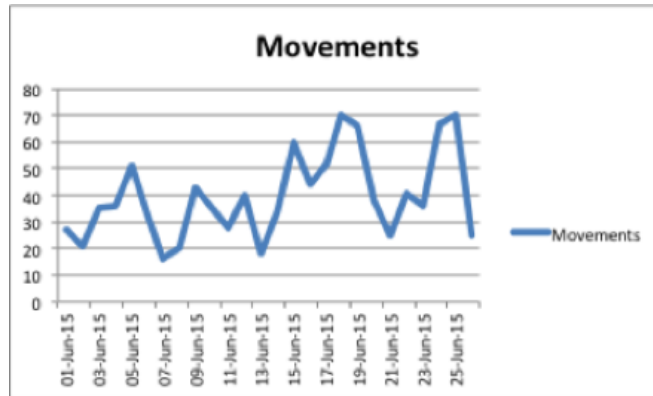
On any one day the maximum number of movements allowed is 80. In addition there are five days when the limit is raised to 160. The heliport can accept up to 130 movements on other days provided the total for all these 'busy days' does not exceed 1,000. Helicopter activity is at its most intense during major sporting events.

A number of exemptions to the above are however permitted. For example all emergency services flights and those undertaken by Government VIPs are allowed on top of the 12,000 annual movements.

In addition up to 1,000 armed forces flights may also take place outside the quota. A further exemption to the quota is given in respect of all flights made in connection with the Farnborough Air Show during the dates of the show (July 16<sup>th</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup> in 2016).

The movement total for 2015 was 10108 movements, well within the 12,000 annual movement cap. The following graphs constructed from the 2015 movement statistics show the variation in daily movements for June and July 2015 (the busiest months that year). These also show compliance with the daily movement cap.





Although the above movements are within the permitted town planning movement cap the statistical data provided by the heliport suggests that the introduction of London Helicopter Tours “on demand” has resulted in significant increases in the numbers of July movements.

For example the heliport claims that the new service when introduced in 2013 resulted in a 41% increase in flights in August and September alone compared with the same period in 2012. The heliport has also reported expanded activity by a wider variety of private helicopter owners and commercial operators.

The section 106 town planning agreement (the legal agreement) provides some theoretical limit on the numbers of the noisiest types of helicopters permitted to use Battersea.

Helicopters that are not able to meet a local noise standard of 81dB(A) at a distance of 150 metres from the take off position are restricted to a maximum of 1,500 movements within the annual 12,000 quota.

Most commercial helicopters using Battersea however fall within an automatic approved "A" list that was drawn up by the former Greater London Council. In practice this potential control now does little to encourage the introduction of newer and less noisy types of helicopter.

#### The London Heliport Consultative Group (LHCG)

The London Heliport Consultative Group comprises councillors and resident representatives from Wandsworth, Hammersmith and Fulham and Kensington and Chelsea as well as heliport users. It was established in 2006 following a surge in complaints. Wandsworth Council took the initiative in setting up the LHCG during summer 2006. The Group was set up having regard to CAA guidance on the formation and conduct of airport consultative committees as well as the model adopted by Shoreham Airport in West Sussex.

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/304735/guidelines-airport-consultative-committees.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/304735/guidelines-airport-consultative-committees.pdf)

<http://www.flybrighton.com/airport-consultative-committee>

Working with the then operators (Weston Homes and Premier Aviation) the Group moved quickly in 2006 to set up a formal complaints procedure and published guidance on helicopter activities including noise in a booklet for local residents (copies of this are still available).

During the set up phase for the Group the Department for Transport (DfT) announced that it was the government's intention to formalise the Group by way of statutory designation of the heliport under S35 of the Civil Aviation Act 1982.

A number of meetings were held between DfT officials and Wandsworth officers to progress the formal designation order but the order was never signed.

Concurrently with the Wandsworth initiative the Environment Committee of the Greater London Assembly (GLA) set up its own enquiry into helicopter use and noise impact over London. The LHCG gave evidence to the Committee and in October 2006 the Committee published a report entitled "London in a Spin". This report contained 14 recommendations designed to minimise the future impact of helicopter operations over the capital. <https://www.london.gov.uk/about-us/about-us/london-assembly/london-assembly-publications/london-spin-review-helicopter-noise>

Apart from the recommendation to endorse the setting up of the LHCG there has been no interest by the DfT to progress the other recommendations and the proposal to set up a DfT hosted stakeholder working group had only one initial meeting. The setting up of this working group is still considered to be potentially of value as Battersea is only responsible for about 30% of helicopter traffic around London.

On July 13<sup>th</sup> 2016 members of the LHCG sub group indicated that in their view there is a pressing need for another review of London-wide arrangements for helicopter provision. To date no support has been gained from the Mayor's office for a London wide search for an additional heliport location.

Over the last 10 years the LHCG has worked closely with the heliport operator to minimise the impact of helicopter operations on local residents. It has undertaken some original research as well as produced information for local residents. This has included:

- A CCTV based survey to monitor arriving and departing helicopters
- Production of an advice leaflet for residents

- Introduction of a “fly neighbourly” policy - all pilots using Battersea are required to co-operate with this policy and sanctions are applied to those commanders who do not conform.
- A National Study on Helicopter Noise -

The LHCG were a commissioning partner for an UK wide Defra funded study on helicopter noise in 2008 (NANR 235). <http://usir.salford.ac.uk/30805/1/nanr235-project-report.pdf>

One of the findings of this study was that more research is needed in the measurement and assessment of helicopter noise. However, the study also found that community response to helicopter operations might in part be determined by non-acoustical (virtual) factors. Effective local consultation involving all stakeholders was found to be of value in resolving potential disputes.

In this regard the LHCG has recently discussed asking for more detailed statistical information from the heliport operator (hourly breakdown of movements and helicopter types).

#### Recent Developments

Members of the LHCG will be aware that the decision by the heliport to run sight-seeing tours around London appears to have changed the landscape significantly since 2014. The LHCG has received specific representations from local residents about the impact of these new flights. At the request of the LHCG a planning officer from LB Wandsworth will attend the next LHCG meeting on September 26<sup>th</sup> 2016 to advise members of the planning position concerning heliport operations.

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Colin Stanbury  
9<sup>th</sup> September 2016



## **Summary of options arising from Sub Group meeting and requirements for Environmental Noise Monitoring**

Prepared by Dr Stephen Dance

Date: 29th July 2016

### **Background**

In May 2015, Dr Stephen Dance was invited by Colin Stanbury (Wandsworth Council) to investigate the environmental noise created by the operation of Battersea Heliport.

Over the Easter weekend in March 2016, measurements were undertaken at a domestic dwelling at Imperial Wharf, London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham. Measurements were taken on the balcony of the property, with a direct line of sight to the heliport, from the north side of the river at a distance of approximately 250m. The measurements demonstrated that monitoring was possible, the spectral content of helicopters were easily identified, and that noise levels event limits of helicopter traffic were also easily identified.

At the May 2016 London Heliport Consultative Group meeting Dr Stephen Dance presented the results of the measurements. It was decided that a Sub Group of the LHCG be set up to investigate residents' concerns and make recommendations in relation to the heliport. At this meeting, it was shown that 10,000 movements occurred in 2014/2015. The limit has long been set at 12,000 movements.

On 13th July 2016, the Sub Group held their first meeting. The meeting was well attended. Dr Stephen Dance offered his expert advice as to options. The actionable options identified at the meeting included practicalities relating to the scope for any possible alterations to the planning consent of the heliport site, collecting data and building an evidence base, and producing an on-line petition.

### **Options Identified at the Sub Group Meeting**

1. The heliport now operates under planning permission approved by Wandsworth in 1995, and an associated legal agreement, and is the last commercial heliport site in London. The planning position for heliport operations will be discussed on the 26th September 2016 at the next LHCG meeting when a Wandsworth Planning Officer will be in attendance.
2. Collecting data on the heliport is another / parallel option to investigate. The two issues raised by the residents were noise and air quality. The heliport used to be monitored for environmental noise. This system was removed in 2012. It is possible

to monitor either on a balcony or inside a room. It should be noted that no audio recordings are taken. For consistency it is better to locate the certified noise monitoring system at the same location as previously used at the heliport. This would require permission from the heliport. By using consistent data, assuming no new properties have been built adjacent to the heliport, a longitudinal study would be possible.

In addition to the fixed monitoring location, I would recommend as many distributed sites in the area as possible be used. These sites would be located on secure balconies and would involve 2 weeks of data collection using a small suitcase size equipment. Finally, in room measurements would be undertaken using lunchbox size equipment again for a 2 week period.

Air quality could be monitored, at least by spot measurements at the most sensitive locations to determine if air pollution is an issue. I have asked a colleague to help with this measurement.

3. The creation of a petition using social media is possible, but should be highly directed in terms of the wording. I expect 100,000 people would sign, there are approximately 900,000 people in the adjacent boroughs. This would then allow a question in the House of Commons to be asked by the local Member of Parliament. Alternatively, or as well, it might be possible for an MP to ask a question without a petition.

### **Requirements for Locations for Noise Monitoring**

At the Sub Group meeting the residents expressed willingness to cooperate with noise monitoring and it was agreed that a list of potential participants will be emailed. This list will be filtered by a set of requirements provided by Dr Stephen Dance.

1. Residents with a secure balcony are a priority in the following areas.

- i. Fulham and Hammersmith - Sands End and Chelsea Harbour
- ii. Kensington and Chelsea - Worlds End and Chelsea
- iii. Wandsworth - Area bounded by Wandsworth Bridge , A3220 and the River
- iv. Wandsworth- Directly overlooking the heliport

2. Residents with a room with a window in the following areas

- i. Fulham and Hammersmith - Sands End and Chelsea Harbour
- ii. Kensington and Chelsea - Worlds End and Chelsea
- iii. Wandsworth - Area bounded by Wandsworth Bridge , A3220 and the River

The measurements will take 2 weeks (limited by battery life). If mains power is available that would be helpful. The outdoor kit consists of a 1.5m tripod and a suitcase of equipment, the indoor kit consists of a tripod and a lunchbox of equipment.

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Dr Stephen Dance  
29<sup>th</sup> July 2016

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## HELICOPTER NOISE AND HEALTH

### Introduction

1. According to the New Zealand Planning Institute<sup>1</sup>:

“Noise is an unwanted sound. The effects of noise vary, starting at the lowest end with being an annoyance. The next level occurs when the noise is loud enough to make normal speech difficult to hear. Above that, even louder noise can make concentration difficult and interfere with important mental tasks such as learning, reviewing documents, doing math or where focus on the meaning of words is critical....Noise has even more serious effects when it leads to stress-related mental health decline and of course, if the noise occurs during sleep periods, then fatigue and disrupted sleep patterns can cause irritability, changes in behavior, and reduced ability to work or perform tasks.”

2. In recent decades the link between noise and health has been established in academic research and reflected in government policy. It is not always clear that policy has been turned into action.

### Government policy

3. The Government’s noise policy is to: “Promote good health and a good quality of life through the management of noise within the context of Government policy on sustainable development”. This long term vision is supported by the following aims: “Through the effective management of environmental, neighbour and neighbourhood noise within the context of Government policy on sustainable development:

- avoid significant adverse impacts on health and quality of life
- mitigate and minimise adverse impacts on health and quality
- where possible, contribute to the improvement of health and quality of life”<sup>2</sup>

### Air traffic noise and health

4. Because of its greater pervasiveness, most research has been undertaken on aircraft, rather than helicopter, noise. Substantial evidence about the adverse effects of aircraft noise on physical and mental health has accumulated over the last 20 years.

5. With regard to physical health for example, people exposed to high levels of aircraft noise around Heathrow have a 24% higher chance of stroke, 21% higher chance of heart disease, and 14% higher chance of cardiovascular diseases compared to people exposed to low levels of aircraft noise<sup>3</sup>

6. In connection with mental health, a large international study<sup>4</sup> undertaken between 2011 and 2015 showed a link between noise levels and mental health problems, including depression. Depression was most likely to occur in areas that had not previously experienced aircraft noise.

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1 *Noise Management in Mixed-Use Urban Environments* New Zealand Planning Institute

2 *Noise Policy Statement for England* DEFRA March 2010

3 <http://www.bmj.com/content/347/bmj.f5432>. See also a) study by Imperial College assessing the impact of night flights on the health of people living around a number of European airports, including Heathrow indicating excess risks of hypertension related to long term noise exposure b) *Aircraft Noise and Public Health The Evidence is Loud and Clear* Aviation Environment Federation

4 *NORAH study* A pan European study co-ordinated including Imperial College, London 2015

7. The pervasive impacts on public health from aircraft noise seem likely to apply to helicopters.
8. In fact, helicopter noise has specific features which exacerbate its impact:
  - Tail-rotor noise is annoying to humans because its higher frequency (as compared to that of the main rotor's noise) occurs directly in the hearing spectrum to which human ears are the most sensitive.
  - The loudness of a helicopter's noise signature is an obvious factor. The Effective Perceived Noise Level (EPNL) generated by helicopters is measured in units of EPNdBs (Effective Perceived Noise Decibels), a methodology that closely weights the frequencies that a normal human ear can hear, and tends to disregard the frequencies that the typical human cannot perceive. Using the test methods outlined in FAR Part 36 Appendix H, the EPNdB of the Bell 412HP at flyover, for example, is measured at 93.4, according to the manufacturer, which is equivalent to a [Boeing 777-200](#) at takeoff.
  - Noises with a beat or pulsating qualities tend to be more annoying. The main-rotor and anti-torque systems in turbine helicopters tend to dominate the acoustical signature.
  - The distinctive aerodynamic rotor blade slap noise generated by helicopter rotors is difficult to disguise. Blade slap (technically "Blade Vortex Interaction," or simply BVI) noise occurs during descent for landing and results from interaction of a main-rotor blade with previously shed tip vortices. These interactions generate a complex unsteady pressure field that propagates below the rotor as high impulsive noise. High-Speed Impulsive (HSI) noise is caused by transonic flow shock formation on the advancing main-rotor blade, primarily near the blade's tip. This noise tends to propagate forward of the helicopter.
  - Meanwhile, tail-rotor noise is annoying to humans because its higher frequency (as compared to that of the main rotor's noise) occurs directly in the hearing spectrum to which human ears are the most sensitive.

### **Recommendations**

10. The very useful briefing note for LHCG (Annex D) has a concluding paragraph titled "Recent Developments". This section of the paper should be amplified to include a number of developments which have occurred subsequent to the opening of Battersea Heliport in 1959. One such development is the body of research results on health effects of air traffic noise and the material in this paper should be included.

11. We should contact the Aviation Environment Federation. In the past they launched the Helicopter Noise Coalition, as a specialist body to bring together people affected by helicopter noise, whether in cities or open countryside. It is not clear how active this is at the moment but the AEF have a wealth of knowledge and experience in connection with the impact of air traffic and people's health. They have also formulated policy recommendations to government, so it would be worthwhile examining these to see what they are and how they have been promulgated to date. A couple of examples are:

- Government should update its overall aircraft noise policy to include specific long-term targets focussed on protecting the public from health impacts.
- The Government should review its policies to take account of the latest health based evidence and ensure that policy decision making takes health fully into account and is in line with a long-term goal to reduce the health burden from aircraft noise.

**HELICOPTER NOISE AND POLLUTION: THE LAW**

1. Virtually all the work on this has been done in relation to planes, and, as such, this papers relies on work by HACAN ClearSkies. However, the law refers to aviation, which is defined as including the operation and use of aircraft. Aircraft in turn is defined as including any vehicle, that can fly, such as a plane or helicopter (Cambridge English Dictionary). It therefore appears that the following applies equally to helicopters.
2. Aviation is virtually above the law as far as noise and pollution are concerned. In fact, laws which apply to other areas of noise specifically exclude aviation. The Environmental Protection Act, 1990, and the Noise Act, 1996 do not apply to aviation. There is therefore no legal redress for residents. The Air Navigation Act set in 1920, little changed since it was first enacted, prevents any litigation against the aviation industry for noise, pollution and damage. It effectively means there is no legal redress for the overflow.
3. Sections 76-82 of the The Civil Aviation Act 1982 are concerned with trespass by aircraft and aircraft noise and nuisance. Section 76 provides, inter alia, that the individual has no right of action in the courts against exposure to noise and vibration caused by aircraft in flight. Section 78 empowers the Secretary of State for Transport to take actions to limit or mitigate the effect of aircraft noise and vibration connected with the taking off or landing of aircraft from designated airports. Section 80 empowers the Secretary of State to designate the airports to which he may apply aircraft noise and vibration controls under section.
4. For example, the Secretary of State has designated Heathrow Airport for aircraft noise and vibration controls under section 78. In the exercise of his powers under section 78, the Secretary of State applies to Heathrow a number of controls to limit or mitigate the effect of aircraft noise and vibration: maximum permitted noise levels for aircraft taking off, restrictions on night flying, noise insulation for the areas worst affected, noise preferential routes for aircraft taking off, and noise restriction procedures for aircraft landing and taking off. It is not known whether the Secretary of State has designated Battersea Heliport and, if so, what controls have been specified. **Ascertaining whether the Secretary of State for Transport has designated Battersea Heliport, and, if so, with what controls; and, if not, developing a request for such designation is one avenue for exploration.**
5. The Human Rights Act 1998, which came into force fully in October 2000, incorporates the European Convention on Human Rights into UK law. The Act makes the rights that are guaranteed under the Convention enforceable in UK courts. The Act also recognises the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg as the final court of appeal from UK courts. The Convention rights include: respect for private and family life; prohibition of discrimination; prohibition of abuse of rights; protection of property; remedy where rights are violated. Section 3 of the Act provides that other legislation must be interpreted and given effect in a way that is compatible with the Convention rights. Section 6 makes it unlawful for public authorities to act in a way that is incompatible with a Convention right. Section 10 of the Act empowers the Government to amend provisions in other legislation that are incompatible with a Convention right. The Human Rights Act has yet to be tested in the courts in relation to aviation noise. But there is the potential for challenging the

Government on the basis of: concentrating flight paths or creating virtual flight paths through the interaction of different rules, rather than dispersing them, and so discriminating against particular communities; and creating virtual flight paths without warning or consultation, where people's private and family life, and their property rights, have been violated through no fault of their own. **Exploring the possibility of a legal challenge under the Human Rights Act, in advance of the potential repeal of this Act, or alternatively under any possible UK replacement, is another avenue for exploration.**

Christina Smyth  
Hammersmith & Fulham Representative to LHCG  
11<sup>th</sup> October 2016