

## 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.

#### 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.