

From: The Rt. Hon. Sir John Stanley, M.P.



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

4 September 2013

Rt Hon Patrick McLoughlin MP
Secretary of State for Transport
Department for Transport
Great Minster House
76 Marsham Street
London SW1P 4DR

I attach this letter of August 12 that I have received from the Chairman of Edenbridge Town Council, Councillor Robert Orridge, together with a copy of Councillor Orridge's letter to Sir Howard Davies setting out the Response of Edenbridge Town Council to the Airports Commission Paper Number 5 – Noise.

I strongly support all the points made by Edenbridge Town Council in its Response and all of the Town Council's Conclusions.

Without in any way detracting from my strong support for the totality of Edenbridge Town Council's response I wish to highlight the following points using the paragraph numbers and headings as in Edenbridge Town Council's Response.

2.1 Flight Concentration and Trade-Offs

I entirely agree that it is unreasonable for the Government and the Airports Commission to have removed flight concentration as an item for further deliberation. Flight concentration along a narrow flight path between

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Tonbridge and the Edenbridge area in my constituency for aircraft landing at Gatwick from the East is a key policy issue for my constituents living under the narrow designated flight path. There needs to be a full and wholly transparent discussion as to whether on grounds of fairness the present intolerable noise disturbance should continue to be concentrated relatively narrowly or spread more widely over a larger geographical area.

2.2.1 Airport Consultative Committees (ACC's)

Part of the Sevenoaks District Council's area falls within my Tonbridge & Malling constituency and I consider it to be wholly unacceptable therefore that the recent application by Sevenoaks District Council to become a member of GATCOM has been rejected. This rejection should be overturned and Sevenoaks District Council allowed to become a member of GATCOM.

2.2.2 Self Regulation: Airport Master Plans and Noise Action Plans (NAP's)

I entirely agree that the Master Plans and Noise Action Plans approved by the Department for Transport have negligible credibility with regard to noise because there is no regulatory mechanism, no enforcement and no penalties for non-compliance.

2.3 Independent Noise Regulator

Like Edenbridge Town Council, I consider it imperative that an Independent Noise Regulator is appointed, and at the earliest possible date.

Chapter 2 How does Noise Affect People

I entirely agree that much greater recognition needs to be given to the impact of incessant and high volume aircraft noise on the health of those who have to suffer from it including the impact of sleep deprivation on account of aircraft noise disturbance.

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Chapter 3 Measuring Aviation Noise

Like Edenbridge Town Council, I consider it imperative that the collection of aviation noise data needs to be made by an independent body and be made fully available to the public.

Chapter 4 Quantifying noise effects

There are indeed local environmental and heritage features along the eastern approach flight path into Gatwick in my constituency which should most certainly be taken into account in formulating aircraft noise reduction policy for Gatwick.

a) Night Noise

I take exactly the same position as Edenbridge Town Council and strongly urge the complete banning of flights at certain times of the night.

b) Monetisation

Edenbridge Town Council are entirely correct in stating that the current penalties for breach of noise regulations are derisory. I urge that penalties should be increased very substantially and I consider it would be entirely appropriate for the financial proceeds from such penalties to be received by the individuals/communities directly affected by the breaches concerned.

Chapter 5

iii) Mitigation through operational procedures

Edenbridge Town Council state "we witness major discrepancies in the heights with which individual aircraft approach Gatwick on a regular daily basis". This has been confirmed to me in any number of letters that I have received from individual constituents living under the eastern approach flight path into Gatwick. It is self-evident that a significant number of aircraft are landing into Gatwick from the east at lower altitudes than are required.

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I strongly support the introduction of steeper angles of descent which Edenbridge Town Council rightly point out are already being achieved voluntarily by some aircraft.

I also strongly support the adoption of noise restrictions from aircraft which are landing and are already applied to aircraft departing.

iv) Mitigation through operational restrictions

I consider it unacceptable that the mitigation of intolerable aircraft noise disturbance by means of operational restrictions should be being treated as the "option of last resort". I urge that it is treated as the option of first choice as it is the only certain way of reducing aircraft noise disturbance.

SECTION 4

Conclusions

I am entirely in agreement, and am strongly in support, of each and every one of the conclusions set out in Edenbridge Town Council's Response.

I should be grateful for your reply to the points I have made in this letter and in the Response by Edenbridge Town Council.

I am writing in similar terms to Sir Howard Davies.