

Biggin Hill Consultation  
By email only

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Date: 24 October 2014

Dear Sir / Madam,

**RE: BIGGIN HILL CONSULTATION**

Sevenoaks District Council welcomes the opportunity to respond to the consultation on the Biggin Hill proposals, regarding job creation and reducing the airport's noise footprint.

Job Creation

Sevenoaks District Council (SDC) is generally supportive of the proposals, including the expansion of the airport within the existing airport boundary. The aims of diversifying the airport (i.e. an Aviation College, the building of a hotel for workers and air staff) with the creation of an additional 2,300 jobs are supported. Biggin Hill is recognised as an important regional asset as an employment hub for outer London, as well as for the wider area. While the local needs for employment are immediately addressed in the consultation documents, SDC believes that there is also the possibility of greater economic advantages for the wider area.

The development has the potential to be complementary to the Council's own economic ambitions, in particular the aspirations for an employment-led redevelopment of Fort Halstead when DSTL vacate the site in 2018. Sevenoaks District Council is currently in the final processes of examination of its Allocations & Development Management Plan (ADMP). This document outlines the allocations that are required for housing as well as major employment sites within the District. Fort Halstead is a Major Employment Site allocation, whereby the policy for development is to be employment-led. The Council perceives that the expansion of Biggin Hill could boost economic activity within the District, with businesses seeking close proximity to such high quality infrastructure. There is potential scope for businesses to use Biggin Hill as part of a supply chain, for complementary businesses to be attracted to the area and for it to attract successful business people, both in the immediate and wider areas,.

Noise Reduction

The Council understands, and the alignment of Biggin Hill's runways indicate, that its residents are not currently overflowed by aircraft arriving or departing at Biggin Hill at heights that cause significant annoyance and there is no proposal for this situation to change. The Council notes that measures to reduce the area being regularly overflowed at lower altitudes, by making use of the point merge system, have been consulted on as

part of the recent London Airspace Consultation (2013). This seems to have been taken on board, as the Biggin Hill consultation states that aircraft will be flying at higher altitudes prior to descent. The Council suggests any further consultation should include the publication of a Noise Action Plan, for greater clarity on the preventative measures for noise reduction once further work has been undertaken following the London Airspace Consultation. Through this, the Council would welcome confirmation through the publication of flight path maps alongside future consultation documents that there are no plans to increase the number of flights over parts of its area at heights that are likely to cause annoyance. Where communities are affected by aircraft noise, the Council would suggest that all available safe options should be taken for minimising disturbance, such as optimising both landing and take off trajectories to reduce the noise impact.

#### Surface Transport

Further to this, the Council would welcome consideration of the surface transport impacts of any future development, as the proposals for expansion of the airport develop, in order that the benefits of the development can be fully realised. The A233 is the primary access road for the airport and it runs south through Biggin Hill to Westerham and north to Farnborough, where the A21 provides access to the M25 at junction 4. There could be increased pressure on Sevenoaks District's road network, in particular the A25 between Sevenoaks, Westerham and Oxted, A21/A25 junction near Riverhead, and the M25 Junction 4 near Knockholt/Polhill. The Council understands that the airport operator's opinion is that increases in flights and increases in the number of employees at the site, who generally work shifts, will not significantly increase peak time congestion but, as the proposal develops, this view should be tested in order to provide comfort to potentially affected communities.

#### Future Engagement

As noted, the Council is broadly supportive of the redevelopment of Biggin Hill Airport and the economic benefits that this could bring. The Council looks forward to continuing to work with the operator to help it bring forward high quality proposals and to maximise the opportunities for the airport and Fort Halstead to develop in complementary ways.

Yours sincerely,

Cllr. Robert Piper

Sevenoaks District Councillor  
Portfolio Holder for Local Planning & Environment