

19 Burdett Avenue,
London SW20 0ST.
19 August 2006

Ms. Carmen Musonda, Secretary,
The Environment Committee,
The London Assembly,
City Hall,
The Queen's Walk,
More London,
London SE1 2AA.

Dear Ms. Musonda,

Helicopter Noise in London

I hope you will be able to take account of the following views of the residents of west Wimbledon, although the formal period for receiving submissions has passed.

Residents have become increasingly concerned in recent years at the issues raised in your first two terms of reference: namely the increase in helicopter traffic and noise, and the effect of routeing on the H7 flightpath across this residential area.

The volume of traffic and the noise it generates has increased greatly in recent years. It often involves frequent overflying from before 8.0am until after 8.0pm. It is particularly bad in the summer, on Saturdays and on days of special events such as Epsom races. The noise is louder and more prolonged than that of aircraft which overfly the area. The noise is particularly invasive with a high degree of vibration, so that it is loud even inside a house double-glazed and insulated to modern standards.

The anger and frustration of residents is increased by the lack of information on routes and the regulations they are meant to impose on pilots. There is little public information on the route of the H7 flightpath, but we believe it is intended to follow the A3 towards the Thames before turning towards Battersea, flying no lower than 1000 feet. In practice pilots depart from this line and cut off the corner of the route by flying across the well populated residential area of west Wimbledon.

It is difficult to gauge height from the ground, but it is clear that noise increases greatly as helicopters descend and is reduced by flying at a higher altitude. Height is therefore a critical factor for your committee in assessing noise pollution.

Routeing problems are fundamentally exacerbated by the increasingly inappropriate location of Battersea Heliport. This is an opportune time to consider the proper location for London's major heliport, in accord with the Mayor's policies 52 and 53 and Planning Policy Guidance Note 24. This should include consideration of locating it in the Thames Gateway to support economic regeneration, and more immediately to support the Olympic games.

In summary, the increase in helicopter traffic and noise is causing significant distress to local residents, and there appears thus far to be no effective action by any body to stem this erosion of our quality of life. For this reason we welcome the review by your committee and the London Assembly, and we hope that some of your recommendations will lead to local residents enjoying a greater level of peace and quiet.

Yours sincerely,

Derek Frampton
Chair, Residents' Association of West Wimbledon (RAWW)