



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Mr Doug Patterson
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I continue to receive a large volume of correspondence from constituents, as, I am sure, you do too, who have a number of very legitimate concerns about the Council's approval to extend the operating hours of Biggin Hill Airport.

Since the launch of the consultation at the beginning of the year, I have made it clear that the terms of the lease with Biggin Hill Airport Limited (BHAL) are intentionally explicit to protect the interests of local residents and to ensure minimal overflight disturbance. Whilst I have personally seen no evidence to suggest that a change to the lease is needed, I appreciate that this is a decision the Council is responsible for and one that I am ultimately unable to influence. Nonetheless, I believe it is vital over the coming months that the views of local residents are put front and centre in the negotiation talks with BHAL, which I understand are still ongoing.

Despite the noise reduction measures included in BHAL's proposals, people are understandably concerned that aircraft noise, particularly at unsociable hours, could have a detrimental impact on their quality of life, something I am hoping to discuss with the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) when I meet with them shortly. This is, of course, in addition to fears over the increase in air pollution many local residents hold.

I would urge the Council to be as open and transparent as possible as its discussions with BHAL move forward, something which many residents unfortunately feel has been lacking throughout this process. Indeed, my office has received numerous phone calls and emails from constituents unsure of what the current situation is and when the relevant decision dates are. Although this may not be through any fault of the Council, and confusion may well have been compounded by hearsay and rumours, I believe the Council needs to show a heightened sense of clarity, and willingness to engage, on issues as sensitive and contentious as this one.

I am a firm supporter of BHAL as a local employer and business, and recognise that it is pragmatic to review the lease on a rolling basis. However, this must be done in a way that at all times acknowledges the concerns of residents and ensures sufficient safeguards are in place to protect the wellbeing of everyone in the Borough.

Bob Neill MP