

London City Airport Inquiry - Interested Party Statement

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Home Address: [REDACTED]

Introduction

- Firstly, I would like to say thank you for allowing me to make my statement to this inquiry.
- My name is Anne Sharp, and I have lived in Forest Hill, in the London Borough of Lewisham for the last 34 years.
- During that period, I have lived in two properties in Forest Hill. One near to Horniman Gardens for the first 20 years, and at my current address for the last 14.
- I took early retirement from my employment as a Project / Contract Manager for a major Highways Contractor in March 2022.

Noise Pollution Impact

When we first moved to [REDACTED] 14 years ago I'll admit that I didn't really notice the London City Airport or Heathrow planes going over our property.

I realise that airports obviously want to increase their turnover and expand their business as much as possible. My understanding is that as part of those plans the London City Airport flight path changed in 2016 to the low-level flight path it now uses for flights going into the airport.

This change in 2016 resulted in a 'double layer overflight' problem in the airspace above my home and garden. Flights from London City Airport and Heathrow currently make all-day low-level flights between the hours of 04.20 to 23.00.

I would like to point out that until this inquiry, at no time was I nor my husband made aware of, or given, any opportunity to contest or comment on the potential impact that these low-level flight paths could have on us, prior to them being put in place, or indeed up to today.

What I would like to portray is how the constant noise resulting from these changes has had a direct impact on me and my enjoyment of our home and garden - particularly since I retired in March 2022.

And it is with some distress that I am aware that London City Airport are planning to expand their operation hours to take away the only respite we have from their flights between Saturday and Sunday lunchtimes. Thereby increasing the noise and environmental impact that we are already suffering. Whilst decreasing again the enjoyment of our home and garden.

Impact on the use of our garden

All here, I'm sure, are aware that the noise and environmental impacts were reduced, and subsequently disappeared during the COVID lockdown periods. My

husband and I were lucky enough to be able to continue to enjoy our garden together during these times.

I / we also couldn't help but notice how much quieter, and how much more pleasant it was whilst no flights were taking place.

Once I knew that I would be able to take advantage of my early retirement opportunity, I very much looked forward to enjoying my home and garden in a way that had not been possible before, due to work pressure and the limited time I had had during my working week.

Since retiring, and particularly following the period where no flights were taking place during the lockdown periods, I have noticed even more the impact these low-level flights have by going directly over our property, and how much this has impacted on my / our entitlement to enjoy our home and garden.

One of my hobbies is reading or listening to music quietly in the garden on a warm summers' day. This has been severely compromised by continual noise pollution from the overhead flights, with the only respite being between Saturday and Sunday lunchtimes.

I realise that the flights from City Airport have become more frequent over the years – it is a business after all – and I also note that the number of flights going over our home varies depending on the wind direction. Although they do appear to be much more frequent during the spring / summer months. As a result, I no longer feel able to enjoy these - previously relaxing - pastimes due to the intrusion of noise from the planes above.

Over the last two summers since being retired, the noise has been so loud that it can be difficult to hear my radio or television if I have the French doors open whilst sitting in our living space at the back of our house. I have on numerous occasions, had to close the doors to get some respite from the intrusive noise that the flights make.

Surely it can't be right that I have had to do this.

Sleep Intrusion / Interruption

In addition to the impact on the use of our garden, the flights can also affect our sleep. As stated earlier the flights start from 04.20 in the morning and continue until 23.00 in the evening.

The double low-level flight paths have woken us up on numerous occasions.

This is a particular issue during the spring / summer / early Autumn months when we like to keep our bedroom windows open. Getting to sleep can be a challenge during these months as well.

To try to mitigate the noise we have stopped opening the windows during autumn / winter now, although the planes can still be heard through the bedroom window vents.

Flight Paths – London City Airport / Heathrow

As already mentioned, we live under two low-level flight paths that serve London City and Heathrow. And although we have some respite from the London City flights, there is no such respite from the Heathrow ones.

In addition to the concern already raised on the impact to my health and wellbeing, I am very worried about the level of pollutants that could be released by the planes that fly over our home.

Unfortunately, I suffer from mild asthma (which was diagnosed in 2016) and I worry whether it could be further affected by plane air pollutants. My concern is that this environmental risk could further restrict the times that I can enjoy my garden in the future.

As mentioned earlier, neither I nor my husband were made aware of any attempt by London City Airport to carry out consultation with residents affected, prior to the low-level inbound flights starting in 2016.

I was also very sad to learn that there are plans to expand the London City Airport operation hours. This would potentially take away our only respite period between Saturday and Sunday lunchtimes which, as already mentioned is particularly precious to me.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I understand that there may well be a strong business case for offering more flights and more routes from London City Airport, but my concerns remain as to the continuing noise and environmental impact that the current low-level flight paths have on my (and my husbands) health and well-being.

Why do the flights have to constantly go over our home?

Why isn't it possible to spread the flight paths out - even by a few hundred metres or at a higher trajectory - to reduce the impact on residents below?

I also believe it would be a disaster for those living under the low-level flight path to lose the slight respite we have from the London City planes at the weekend.

I sincerely hope that serious thought and action will be given towards minimising the impacts already being suffered by those living under these flight paths, and that assurances will be sought, and given, on how these negative impacts will be considered and eradicated, or at the very least minimised as much as humanly possible, when proposing any future business expansion plans.

Thank you for your time.