

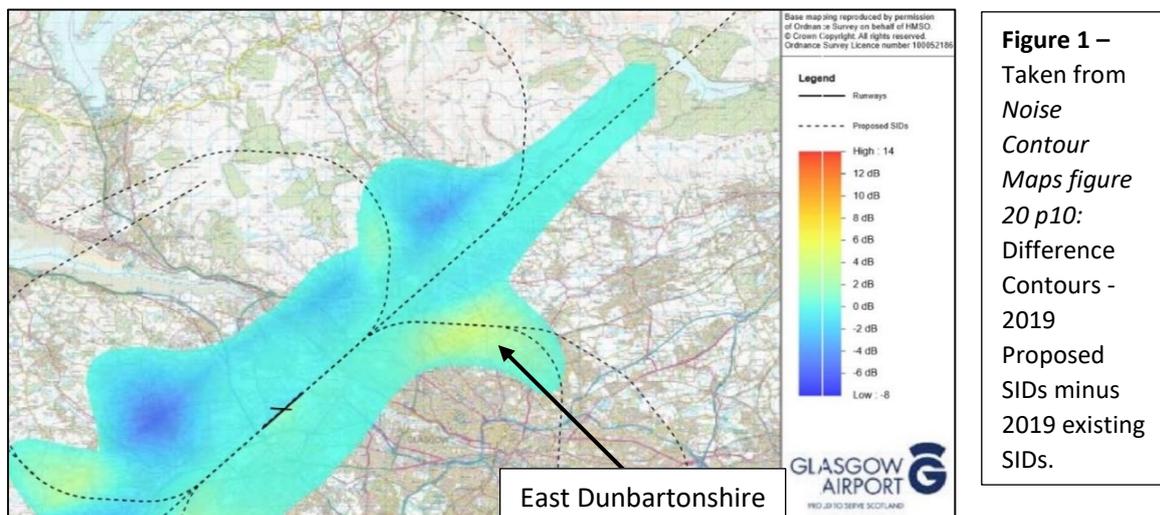
Objection to proposed changes to Glasgow Airport's departure routes

The proposed changes to Glasgow Airport's departure routes should not be implemented. As MP for East Dunbartonshire, I have considered all the responses I have received from constituents regarding the Glasgow Airspace consultation to inform my contribution. This objection is based on two primary concerns: noise abatement, and the way the consultation has been handled.

A change.org petition launched by residents objecting to the proposed changes has gained over 900 signatures. More than 400 constituents showed up to the drop-in session in Bearsden, which demonstrates the strength of feeling on this issue. Overwhelmingly the responses I received were in objection to the proposed changes to the take-off routes. The majority of these were from the Kessington, Chapelton and Westerton areas of Bearsden, and some were from Milngavie.

Noise

My constituents have primarily contacted me with their concerns regarding the adverse effects of noise produced by Glasgow Airport. Many feel it is unfair to state that one of the objectives of the proposal is a reduction in noise when so many residents will experience such a sudden increase in noise pollution.



Noise level increases

Residents in the south of Bearsden are concerned that the average noise level they experience will increase by 6-8 Db very suddenly. This is a dramatic change for residents who have not had to live with the adverse effects of aircraft noise before.

Many of my constituents are concerned about the impact the changes would have on their quality of life, their health, and on the value of their homes should they sell in future.

Those who contacted me from Kessington and Chapleton bought their homes under the premise that they would not be beneath the flight path. It seems unfair to impose such significant airspace changes on residents who have actively chosen to live where they do to avoid the flight paths.

The Glasgow Airspace documents argue that the scenario with the proposed airspace change reduces the number of people experiencing the adverse effects of noise from departing flights from the airport by less than 3% by 2029.¹ Using Fig. 1, this would mean that communities south of the city centre look likely to be the beneficiaries of such changes, notwithstanding the impact of arrival routes. If this is accurate, it does not justify the significant burden placed on residents not currently under the flight path. Glasgow Airport should provide statistics on the number of households likely to experience noise pollution for the first time should these changes go ahead.

Night flights

The frequency of flights during unsociable hours is a significant concern to a number of my constituents in Bishopbriggs, Milngavie and Bearsden. The constituents who have contacted me feel that the number of night flights they experience is already at an unacceptable level. These flights have a detrimental effect on residents' sleeping patterns, which impacts their health and wellbeing.

There need to be more stringent regulations around night flights. Glasgow Airport cannot continue to state that these flights occur because of 'operational factors'. This does not offer enough of an explanation to residents significantly inconvenienced by these flights.

¹ Glasgow Airspace Consultation Document, p46. https://www.glasgowairport.com/media/2284/glasgow-airport_airspace-consultation-document-revised15318.pdf

Departure route altitude

Low-flying flights can be extremely stressful for residents, especially for those not used to living under flight paths. The altitude of all four departure routes is less than 4000ft over East Dunbartonshire. According to Government regulations, when considering requests to change airspace design, the CAA should apply the following altitude-based priorities:

“In the airspace from the ground to below 4,000 feet the Government’s environmental priority is to limit and, where possible, reduce the total adverse effects of noise on people.”²

“Where options for route design from the ground to below 4,000 feet are similar in terms of the number of people affected by total adverse noise effects, preference should be given to that option which is most consistent with existing published airspace arrangements.”³

The Mains Estate Residents’ Association (MERA) completed a topographical comparison between the areas under the current and proposed flight paths. They found that due to the higher ground surface level of North Baljaffray and Mains Estate, the height of aircraft above these areas will be significantly lower than the current flight path height over Main Street in Milngavie.



Figure 2 – Proposed Departure Routes (SIDs) with indicative heights above ground level. Taken from *maps and plans*.

² Department for Transport, *Air Navigation Guidance*, 2017, p17, 3.3a. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/653978/air-navigation-guidance-2017.pdf.

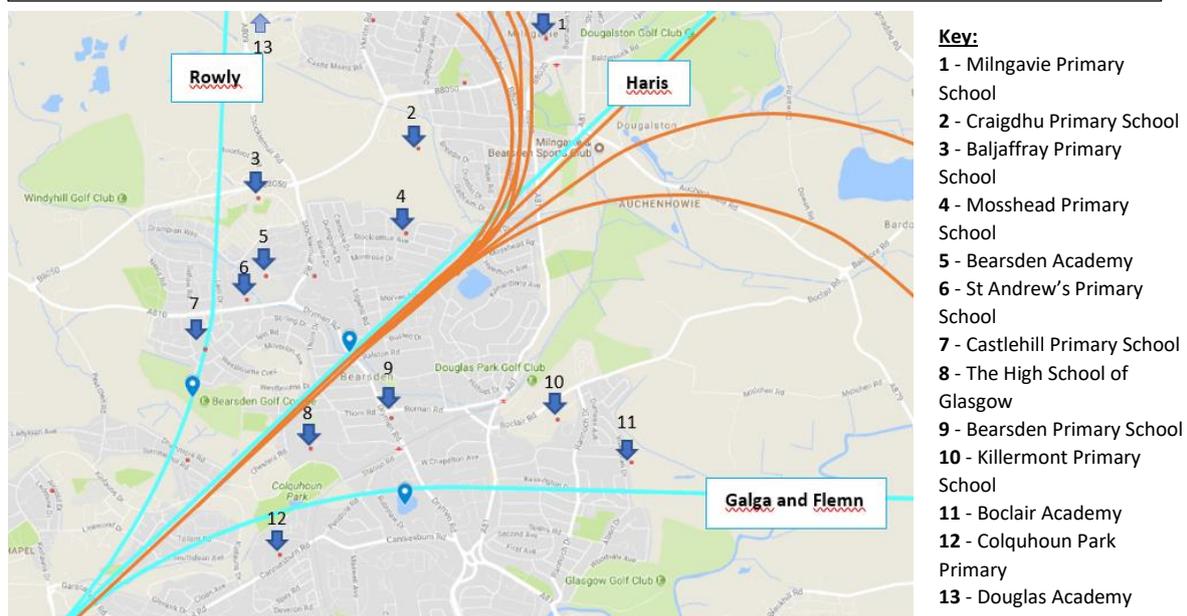
³ Department for Transport, *Air Navigation Guidance*, 2017, p17, 3.3b. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/653978/air-navigation-guidance-2017.pdf

Impact on schools

Several of my constituents in the south of Bearsden are concerned about the number of schools that would experience noise pollution as a result of the proposed changes to departure routes.

- Residents in Milngavie and the south of Bearsden are concerned that the proposed changes to departure routes increase the number of schools within close proximity of the flight paths (*illustrated in fig 3*).
- Residents are worried that the increased noise and air pollution will impact their children's quality of life and their education.

Figure 3 – Proposed departure flight paths in blue, local schools indicated by blue arrows and numbers. Approximate current departure flight paths in orange



Aircraft deviation

The deviation of aircraft from the current flight paths is also of great concern to a number of my constituents.

- Constituents in Bishopbriggs who do not live under the current flight path have told me they are frequently disturbed by noise from aircraft flying overhead. This may be because of the inaccuracy of the current navigation system. However, this has never been communicated to these residents.
- Many constituents, including some objecting to the flight path changes, support the need to change the navigation system, because of the current inaccuracy of flight paths.

However, some constituents are concerned that the new navigation system will heavily concentrate flights over certain areas. The consequences of implementing the change in navigation system without the change in flight paths have not been well communicated in the consultation documents.

The consultation process

A significant number of my constituents were extremely disappointed by the way the consultation was organised.

- Some Bearsden residents did not receive any notification from Glasgow Airport about the consultation.
- Those who work during the day were frustrated because they were unable to attend the consultation drop in sessions held in the constituency, as both ended in the early evening.
- Some constituents who attended the Bearsden Community Hub drop-in session found that the frequency of flights was not made entirely clear to them.
- Residents in Kessington and Chapleton were informed that the average number of flights is likely to be between four and six an hour, though there could be up to eleven flights per hour on busier days.

If the above numbers are accurate, they have not been well communicated in the consultation documents, and they provide an extremely broad spectrum. Further, the consultation team should not be relying on residents attending the drop-in session in order to communicate their flight statistics.

The consultation documents

- These were not well received by the majority of my constituents, both supporting and objecting to the proposals.
- Consistently constituents were extremely frustrated by the complexity of the documents, and many contacted me unsure of the implications of the proposed changes on their homes.
- One of my constituents is a chartered engineer with 18 years of experience in the aerospace industry and she found it extremely difficult to understand the information in the documents.
- The consultation documents are impenetrable. The overuse of acronyms and technical terminology makes it impossible to understand the proposed changes.

Tools provided by Glasgow Airport

- The interactive flight path map on the Glasgow Airport website is a helpful aid that allows constituents to view where the proposed flight paths will be in relation to their home.
- However, one of my constituents is concerned that the map illustrating the proposed changes is only indicative of the optimum scenario.
- My constituents would have liked a similar tool to be developed to illustrate the noise they should expect to experience from the changes. This would be particularly

useful for those who have not lived under a flightpath before, as the documents do not communicate the actual implications of noise pollution on people's lives.

- It would have been advantageous if the consultation team could have provided an area specific impact assessment of the noise pollution with and without the proposed changes, as opposed to relying on residents attending the drop-in sessions.

Disappointingly, there were no redesign alternatives to the proposed departure routes specified in the consultation documents. Many constituents felt the tone of the documents suggested the changes were inevitable. Further, if the changes do not go ahead the implications for specific constituencies under the current flight paths have not been made clear. This information would have been of great value to my constituents under the current flight path in the north of Bearsden.

Support

It should be noted that three of my constituents were in support of the proposed changes.

- They feel the proposed routes would offer some relief to residents in the north of Bearsden by reducing overhead departures, as they point out the arrival route will remain over the north of Bearsden.
- There is a need for further information regarding the implications of applying the new navigation technology on the current flight paths.
- Residents supporting the changes feel that the proposed earlier turn-offs would be fairer as the noise would be dispersed, which is important considering the potential expansion of Glasgow Airport and the accuracy of the new navigation technology system.

Conclusion

In total I received 37 representations on this issue. Two of these were on behalf of large community bodies (Canniesburn Place Residents Committee, and Mains Estate Residents' Association) representing a large number of constituents. The majority of the responses I received were from Kessington, Chapleton and Westerton. However, I did receive three responses from the north of Bearsden in support of the changes, and some mixed responses from Milngavie.

I am concerned that the Noise Action Plan may have been overshadowed by the Airspace proposals.

Everyone who responded was concerned about the noise levels produced by Glasgow Airport. Noise pollution must be addressed by the airport for the benefit of the entire constituency, no matter what the outcome of their airspace change is.

Many residents from Kessington, Chapleton and Westerton are immensely concerned about the impact the proposed changes would have on their health and quality of life. They feel it is inconsiderate to implement such a significant change on residents that have not before

had to deal with the adverse effects of noise pollution, with no mitigation measures or alternative redesign options suggested.

A change.org petition objecting to the proposed changes gained over 900 signatures, and more than 400 residents turned up to the drop-in session in Bearsden, which demonstrates the strength of feeling about this issue. This highlights a need for further consultation on the proposed changes, and a clearer consultation process that is more easily understandable for people who do not have an in-depth technical knowledge of airspace and flight paths.

Further consultation is necessary to communicate the need for the proposed changes. The airport must include mitigation measures for schools and households that would potentially experience an increase in noise pollution. Moreover, the impact of implementing the proposed new navigation technology, with and without the changes to flight paths, must be made clear to constituents, for them to be able to make an informed decision.

Glasgow Airport should not be allowed to proceed with the proposed changes to their departure routes. Their proposals do not meet the criteria set by the Government, which specifies that the impacts of noise must be prioritised in routes under 4000ft. Further, the number of people benefiting from the proposed changes is not significant enough to justify the adverse noise impacts residents in the south of Bearsden would experience.