

What's BPC's position regarding Farnborough Airport's expansion plans?

BPC has responded to Farnborough Airport's consultation on its expansion proposals, voicing our objections. There's a lot of local concern regarding Farnborough Airport's expansion proposals. The economic benefit seems all on the side of the airport, while the harm (noise, emissions, and pollution) is on the side of the public.

This consultation is open until Wednesday 18 October – see: '[About Farnborough Airport Consultation](https://www.farnboroughairport2040.com)' ([farnboroughairport2040.com](https://www.farnboroughairport2040.com)) and '[share your views](https://www.farnboroughairport2040.com)' ([farnboroughairport2040.com](https://www.farnboroughairport2040.com)). If any parishioners want to respond to this, our notes are below, in case these are useful:

Q1. Farnborough Airport's role in the economic success of the area – 'Additional Comments':

- Facts do not support the economic contributions that Farnborough Airport claims to make to employment and to net income, either for the local area or for UK as a whole.
 - Most of the organisations involved in flight operations are off-shore and do not contribute to the UK exchequer - only £2.8m in Corporation Tax was paid in 2021.
 - Aviation enjoys significant tax subsidies compared to other forms of travel: half of Farnborough Airport's revenue is from fuel sales that generate no taxable income.
 - It is claimed that 'Farnborough Airport' provides 3,000 jobs locally, but the majority of these have nothing to do with flights - only 156 jobs relate to flight operations.
 - Most private jet passengers' journeys are for leisure rather than business, even though the airport only has a permit for business flights.
 - Farnborough Airport's claims regarding economic benefits for the local area do not take into account the economic disadvantages caused in rural areas, including Binsted parish.

Q2. Is it important for Farnborough Airport to plan for future? - stupid question, but here's some 'additional comments':

- Farnborough Airport future business plan needs to properly consider wider social and environmental costs, not only the financial benefits to Farnborough Airport
- Overall, the proposed expansion would have a disastrous impact on emissions and climate change. UK's long term focus is on carbon reduction, and expanding Farnborough private jet capacity undermines this. 99% of destinations are served by commercial flights.

Q3. Proposed changes to operations – 'Additional Comments':

We oppose ALL elements of Farnborough Airport's proposal to further increase its numbers of flights by 40%. Specifically:

- We object to plans to increase the number of flights from 50,000 to 70,000 a year. Farnborough airport's expansion is purely to serve private jets, which are the most polluting and highest emission form of travel apart from space travel – with up to 40 times more emissions (CO₂) per passenger mile than commercial flights. The carbon footprint of the elite who use private jets is far greater than that of the majority of the population. It is shocking that there is an average of just 2.5 passengers per plane. And that 40% of planes at Farnborough fly empty. 99% of destinations from Farnborough are served by commercial flights.
- We object to plans to more than double weekend flights from 8,900 to 18,900
- We object to expanding opening hours at weekends/Bank holidays, to 07:00 - 21:00 – if the airport is genuinely for business use, increasing number of weekend and holiday flights is unnecessary.
- We object to allowing more heavier aircraft (by changing the definition of restricted aircraft weight category from 50 - 80 tonnes, to 55 - 80 tonnes), the associated increase in allowable flights within this category (from 1,500 to 2,100 annually), and the increase in those allowed to fly at weekends (from 270 to

570). We are concerned about increased noise and by the increasing use of long-haul (heavier) private jets by a rich elite.

- We are also worried that:
 - There is no restriction on the maximum number of flights per hour – so flights could be every few minutes early in the morning or late in the evening, rather than spread out during the day.
 - There are no penalties when planes fly outside of the approved flight times or when the airport has breached planning conditions were put on the airport in 2010 when the previous operator (TAG) got planning consent to change the airport for commercial use.

- **Current air traffic levels are already a huge concern** - For people in our large parish of Binsted, the current number of private jets overhead is already a big concern. What was once a quiet, rural, peaceful area in the South Downs National Park is already plagued with constant background aircraft noise, due to the changes to flightpaths and expansions that have already taken place at Farnborough - which has become UK's largest private jet airport. Our area used to have about 5 flights a day. The current number of flights to and from Farnborough alone (32,600 in 2022) often results in over 100 a day as there are additional flights to Fair Oaks and Blackbushe using the same flightpath. This is before Farnborough ramps up to its already-permitted capacity of 50,000 flights p.a.

Q4. Community Funding - balancing economic benefits and environmental impact - "Additional Comments":

- The financial compensation that is proposed through the "sustainability fund", "community environmental fund" and "sound insulation grant scheme" is grossly inadequate. This funding misses the point that we CANNOT insulate our outdoor spaces from noise – we cannot wrap up our gardens, parks, meadows, woods, and farmland!
- The compensation funds do nothing to mitigate the adverse health impacts that noise and air pollution have on human health (for example, on sleep deprivation, mental health, or air pollution), or indeed the adverse impacts that noise has on wildlife.
- Noise monitoring has not been validated, as was required by 2010 planning consent.
- No measurements of noise have been made apart from those at Farnborough Airport, despite the CAA's commitment to MPs that it would.
- The whole of Binsted parish lies squarely in Farnborough's take-off flight track, and also lies in the zone where aircraft arriving from the north or south are likely to be flying at under 4,000 feet. At congested times, our area finds itself under circling planes waiting to land.
- Section 3.9 of the PIR presents noise analysis over Churt as representative of postal district GU10. Churt is on the southern border of GU10, and furthest from Farnborough Airport. This is misleading as most residents of GU10 are closer and experience aircraft noise at lower altitudes. In the same section, altitudes above mean sea level (MSL) are presented, rather than the topographic ground level (GL). Binsted parish is significantly above MSL. This is important, given that passing aircraft are flying at under 4000ft.
- **Binsted's rural area is suffering disproportionately** Routing aircraft over rural areas to reduce the total number of people overflown by planes means that our sparse parish population is massively disadvantaged by being overflown by tight flight routes to which all planes are encouraged to adhere. Aircraft now travel in much tighter corridors, keeping to exactly the same flight track, over the same people. This is why people in our parish who were previously overflown only a few times a day are now overflown as many as 100 times a day. Being on these flight tracks also means that, since the introduction of the controlled airspace at Farnborough, much larger numbers of Gatwick and Heathrow flights now overfly our area.
- **Binsted parish lies in the South Downs National Park**, which should be protected from aircraft noise under Dept. of Transport guidelines. 'Air Navigation Guidelines 2017' (designed so that the CAA's flightpaths reduce the impact on National Parks and AONB) are not being followed. A re-evaluation of Farnborough's existing flight paths over SDNP is required. Certainly no *increase* in air traffic is acceptable.

- No measurements or analysis have been conducted of pollutants and air quality under the flight paths. The most dangerous form of airport pollution (ultrafine particles) is not being measured at all.
- No assessment of the health impact to residents under the flight paths.

Q5: Open section for comments.

- Air transport is hard to decarbonise. The UK's Climate Change Committee says there should be no more airport expansion until there is a way of mitigating aviation's emissions.
- It is inappropriate to discuss this further proposal for airport expansion before the conclusion of 'The Post Implementation Review' (PIR) of the change in Farnborough's airspace (ACP), implemented in February 2020. Many residents' original concerns about the PIR still remain, such as:
 - The airport's failure to measure aircraft noise outside the airport perimeter
 - Safety issues regarding the uncontrolled airspace, which now has many more aircraft compressed into it at lower height (with less experienced pilots).
 - The PIR only considers Farnborough aircraft and excludes the many flights using airspace around Farnborough e.g. flights to and from Blackbushe, RAF Odiham, Fairoaks, LHR, LGW, Lasham. It is misleading to represent the Farnborough Airport flights as the total in the local airspace.
- Farnborough Airport's proposal is littered with greenwashing claims that make false promises about biofuels, electric flights and offsetting. The publicity focuses on tiny reductions in emissions made (for example by *'the EV leasing scheme made available to employees of Farnborough Airport'*) to divert attention from the massive, avoidable emissions consumed by using private jets rather than commercial airlines, and from the UK's urgent need to decarbonise.