

## Protecting against airport noise

Proposals for schemes to  
address current airport noise for  
communities close to the airport

**Consultation period:  
21 September to 21 December 2004**





Terry Morgan, Managing Director, BAA Stansted

## The purpose of this consultation

I know from the extensive dialogue I have with local representatives that airport-related noise is an important issue for local communities. The Government's White Paper, *The Future of Air Transport* (published last December) outlines several ways to control, mitigate and compensate for the impact of noise.

As requested by the White Paper, we are now developing plans to address the issue of daytime noise. This consultation document seeks your views on how BAA Stansted can best address existing daytime noise impacts, through noise insulation and other measures.

The UK Government is currently consulting on night noise controls at Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted airports over the period from about 2005 to 2011. BAA will take into consideration any policy proposals which result from that consultation.

The White Paper also requires airport operators to bring forward schemes that will deal with significantly increased daytime noise levels which might result from future airport growth and we will do this in 2007 when the relevant noise contours are published.

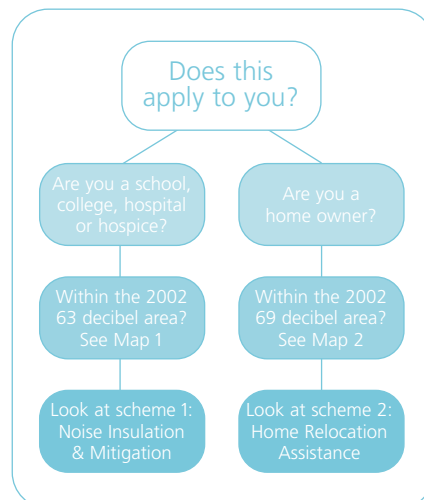
The White Paper makes it clear that the Government wants to see a continuation of the voluntary noise mitigation schemes that BAA currently runs, and that the measures outlined in this paper should be applied as a benchmark for mitigating and compensating for aircraft noise in the years to come.

## Our proposals

In its White Paper, published in December, the Government set out a requirement for us to consult on two principal issues in relation to reducing the impact of aircraft noise on communities close to airports. These were:

- noise mitigation and insulation for particularly noise-sensitive buildings, such as schools and hospitals
- assisted relocation for homeowners currently exposed to high levels of noise, if they want to move.

Although we have our own ideas about how best to achieve the White Paper requirements, as set out in this consultation paper, we also want to hear your views, so that we can refine our proposals and implement fair and effective schemes as quickly as possible.



We are asking for your input because your views and experience are important, and will help us to construct an effective scheme. This consultation:

We are seeking views from local residents who are affected by certain levels of aircraft noise, parish, district and county councillors, local authority Chief Executives and Leaders, airlines, the airport consultative committee and other community stakeholders.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Terry Morgan".

Terry Morgan, Managing Director,  
BAA Stansted  
21 September 2004

# noise insulation & mitigation for noise-sensitive buildings



Map 1: Stansted Airport 63 decibel noise contour (2002) ■ 63 decibel noise contour

## 1 Objectives

This part of the consultation paper asks for your views on how BAA Stansted can provide noise insulation and other mitigation measures for noise-sensitive buildings: for example, schools and hospitals.

The Government has asked airport operators to ensure that noise-sensitive buildings, which are exposed to a medium-to-high level of airport-related noise, are noise-insulated. Where this is not possible, we need to explore other ways of mitigating the noise.

Alternative measures might include providing environmental grants to schools, making quiet rooms available for certain kinds of lessons or funding outdoor trips away from the airport environment.

The Government says that a “medium-to-high” level of aircraft noise is 63 decibels or more, averaged over 16 daytime hours<sup>1</sup>. But we appreciate that as aircraft noise is measured as an average, there may well be periods when it may be noisier, and periods when it is quieter.

## 2 What will be covered?

The White Paper asks airports to bring forward noise measures within an area which is exposed to 63 decibels or more, averaged over 16 daytime hours. We have based this on the current 2002 noise contour. We will review this contour before finalising the scheme, to ensure that any operational anomalies in 2002 are taken account of. Map 1 shows this area around Stansted airport.

In line with the White Paper, BAA proposes to apply the scheme to the following types of building around its airports:

- public and private nurseries attached to schools
- primary and secondary schools
- higher/tertiary education colleges
- public and private hospitals
- hospices.

BAA already has experience of providing noise insulation at a number of its airports in these circumstances.

<sup>1</sup> This is technically referred to as the 63dB(A) Leq. Throughout this consultation paper, for ease of understanding, when we refer to “63 decibels”, we are referring to an average contour of 63 dB(A) Leq over 16 daytime hours. This is based on the standard contour for 2002, rather than contours expressing the effects of weather on modal split for that particular year.

However, in the case of Stansted, examination of the noise contours suggests there are few, if any, buildings of this nature close to the airport. If, as a result of this consultation, any noise-sensitive buildings are found, then BAA Stansted would propose dealing with them in the following way.

### 3 How will it work?

#### i) Schools and Colleges

##### Level and standard of noise insulation

BAA Stansted would meet 100% of the costs of secondary glazing or noise insulation in classrooms and other learning areas. The White Paper suggests that this should be to the same standard as insulation for houses.

BAA Stansted will use only specialist noise insulation glaziers, and will appoint them by competitive tender.

##### Prioritising the work

Installing noise insulation in schools can be a disruptive as well as lengthy process. This is because there is only a limited number of specialised glaziers, and because it is not easy to insulate classrooms and other learning areas during term-time.

We would therefore need to develop a set of criteria to help prioritise and phase this work in partnership with local education authorities. We would also need to develop interim mitigation measures for schools or colleges which would not get insulation immediately.

##### Alternative measures

In some cases, it will not be possible or appropriate to provide the level of noise insulation that is required. This might be because the design or condition of the building makes it difficult to provide effective noise insulation. This is where we would seek to explore alternative mitigation measures.

BAA Stansted is considering the following range of financial measures that could provide an alternative in such cases:

- a package to the school or college to provide their own quiet learning areas
- assistance to rebuilding part of the school or college to an agreed noise design standard, up to a defined cost threshold.

#### ii) Hospitals and Hospices

The White Paper suggests that the acoustic insulation in hospitals and hospices should be the same as applied to houses. So just as we would insulate learning areas in schools, we would also insulate wards, theatres, treatment rooms and, possibly certain corridors.

Again, it may be that in some circumstances it is not possible to provide noise insulation. If this is the case, we again propose to explore a range of alternative measures. As hospitals and hospices can vary greatly, we would seek to develop and fund these on an individual basis and would welcome suggestions.

##### Funding

After a detailed survey of the work needed, it is proposed that BAA Stansted provides direct funding to the occupants of these noise-sensitive buildings for them to oversee the programme of work using BAA contractors. But we welcome views on alternative funding through local education authorities and primary care trusts.

#### 4 Criteria for eligibility

Our only criterion for this scheme is that the building is a public or private school, tertiary college, hospital or hospice and is within the 63 decibel noise contour of the existing airport. Map 1 shows this area around Stansted airport.

We are using the current 2002 noise contours as a starting point for these schemes. We will review this contour before finalising the scheme, to ensure that any operational anomalies in 2002 are taken account of. In 2007, when the noise contours are published for 2006, the scheme boundaries will be reviewed. In 2007, when the noise contours are published for 2006, the scheme boundaries will be reviewed.

The only other qualifying factor is that the building – or the relevant part of it – should not have been built or converted for use after the publication of the White Paper on 16 December 2003. We would expect that any development that has been given planning permission since the White Paper's publication would have been built with appropriate noise insulation, according to UK Government planning policy guidance.

We are planning to undertake a review of the scheme criteria and scale of assistance in 2010.

#### 5 Timing

If this scheme is adopted, we could begin as quickly as possible on implementation. As we mentioned above, BAA Stansted would need to put the insulation work out to competitive tender.

We would anticipate priority being given to buildings in areas of the highest level of noise exposure (ie closest to the airport), but we might need to take time to develop the overall work programme, working through a steering group with Primary Care Trusts and Local Education Authorities. We welcome views on this.

We know that it will be important for local authorities, health and education professionals and all local people to know what will happen in their area, and we will be contacting all eligible organisations when we launch the scheme.

This consultation closes on 21 December 2004. We hope to publish the final scheme's details in early 2005.

#### Questions

We would welcome your comments on our proposals and invite your views on the following questions. The responses we receive will be used to influence the detail of the final schemes. Responding to this consultation does not indicate endorsement of the proposals in this paper.

- 1 Apart from those named, should any other parts of hospitals, hospices, schools and colleges be noise-insulated?
- 2 Should funding for noise insulation be given directly to the school or hospital, rather than via local education authorities or primary care trusts?
- 3 Should there be alternative forms of noise mitigation for hospitals, hospices, schools and colleges?
- 4 If work needs to be prioritised, should it be based on exposure to noise alone for all types of building?
- 5 Do you have any other comments about the scheme?



Map 2: Stansted Airport 69 decibel noise contour (2002) ■ 69 decibel noise contour

### 1 Objectives

We understand that high levels of noise can be very disturbing. Both the Government and BAA Stansted recognise this and its importance to local communities. The White Paper asks airport operators to offer help with the cost of relocation for people living in the area with the highest levels of noise. The White Paper defines this as 69 decibels or more, averaged over a daytime of 16 hours<sup>2</sup>, based on the 2002 noise contour. But we appreciate that as noise is measured as an average, there may well be periods when it may be very noisy, and periods when it is quieter.

This part of the consultation paper asks for your views on how BAA Stansted can offer assistance with the costs of moving house to home owners currently exposed to the highest levels of noise, if they want to move.

We are very conscious that moving house costs money and can be stressful. We must emphasise that this scheme is optional for anyone who is eligible who wants to move. BAA Stansted is not asking anyone to move.

### 2 What will be covered?

Map 2 shows the 2002 noise contour for the 69 decibel area.

The scheme will cover you if you are an owner-occupier within this area. The detailed eligibility criteria are set out below.

### 3 How will it work?

The scheme would provide you, as an eligible home owner, with a financial package to help you with the cost of moving away from the area where the noise level is high.

To make sure that the package is fair and that it provides genuine assistance, we think that it should be made up of a percentage of the open market value of your house, plus a lump sum payment, which is linked to the Retail Price Index. There would be a cap of £10,000 on each package.

We will offer 1.5% of the completion sale price, plus a lump sum payment of £2,500.

<sup>2</sup> This is technically referred to as the 69dB(A) Leq. Throughout this consultation paper, for ease of understanding, when we refer to "69 decibels", we are referring to an average contour of 69 dB(A) Leq over 16 daytime hours. This is based on the standard contour for 2002, rather than contours expressing the effects of weather on modal split for that particular year.

Below is an example of how the formula would work.

#### Example

Value of your house:	£200,000
1.5% of sold value:	£3,000
lump sum:	+£2,500
total relocation assistance	=£5,500

The table below shows what the package would be for a range of property values.

#### Relocation Assistance

Property sale value	Relocation Assistance
£100,000	£4,000
£150,000	£4,750
£200,000	£5,500
£250,000	£6,250
£300,000	£7,000
£350,000	£7,750
£400,000	£8,500
£450,000	£9,250
£500,000 or above	£10,000

If you think you will be eligible for relocation assistance, you will be able to apply in writing to BAA for an 'in-principle' determination before contracts are exchanged. BAA would then issue a letter stating in principle if you were likely to satisfy the qualifying criteria, and an estimate of the likely relocation assistance sum to be awarded.

After exchange of contracts, your solicitor would then confirm your application for the relocation assistance package by sending BAA Stansted a written statement to confirm that the qualifying criteria had been satisfied. We will endeavour to provide the relocation assistance within a week of completion of sale.

Requests for the relocation assistance will be considered at any time until the scheme expires. We propose to run the initial scheme for five years, to allow for review in 2010.

## 4 Criteria

We mentioned earlier that there will be eligibility conditions for the scheme.

Some of these conditions are designed to make sure that property speculators do not take advantage of the scheme by buying property in the area just to benefit from any compensation scheme.

### i) Type of property and qualifying interest

At the time of applying for assistance, you must have what is known as a "qualifying interest" in the property you are proposing to sell.

This means you must be the owner-occupier<sup>3</sup> of the property.

If the property is commercially let, or if you are a tenant, you cannot be eligible.

### ii) Length of ownership and occupancy

You must have owned and lived in the property for at least six consecutive months before the launch of the scheme (scheduled for early 2005).

### iii) Beneficial Interest

You must retain no beneficial interest or right of occupation of the property you are proposing to sell.

### iv) Moving to a quieter area

This assistance is designed to help people who are disturbed by high levels of noise to move to a much quieter area. For that reason, BAA Stansted would not provide relocation assistance for moves to property within the 2002 63 decibel contour.

## 5 Timing

We intend to implement this scheme in Spring 2005.

## 6 Boundary Issues

A common criticism of noise contour-based schemes is that they lead to apparent inconsistencies.

Examples of this are that one property falls within the boundary while the house next door does not, or that houses on one side of a road fall within the boundary while houses on the other side do not.

For this reason, it is sometimes argued that the boundary should be widened in certain areas to accommodate so-called "natural" boundaries, such as a road or a field boundary. Others argue that the boundary should be widened further to take in an entire community.

In BAA's experience these boundary adjustments are equally arbitrary and can also lead to inconsistencies.

An example of one such inconsistency is that properties which lie closer to the noise contour, but which do not lie within an identifiable community, are excluded while others more distant from the contour

qualify. It is these circumstances which have led BAA Stansted to propose a scheme which follows the 2002 63 and 69 decibel standard noise contours fairly strictly.

## Questions

We would welcome your comments on our proposals and invite your views on the following questions. The responses we receive will be used to influence the detail of the final schemes. Responding to this consultation does not indicate endorsement of the proposals in this paper.

- 1 Is the relocation package formula of £2,500 plus 1.5% of the house's sold value acceptable?
- 2 Is a cap of £10,000 on the package reasonable?
- 3 Should the initial scheme run for five years, allowing a review in 2010?
- 4 Do you agree that there should be qualifying criteria designed to prevent unfair speculation in the local market?
- 5 Do you have any other comments or suggestions about the Home Relocation Assistance scheme?

## Responding to this consultation

The consultation was launched on 21 September 2004. The deadline for responses is 21 December 2004.

You can send up your response in several ways:

- by completing the enclosed form and sending it in the freepost envelope
- on the internet at [www.baa.com/stanstednoise](http://www.baa.com/stanstednoise)
- by sending your comments in an email to [stanstednoise@baa.com](mailto:stanstednoise@baa.com)

## Next steps

All responses will be reviewed and assimilated by an external consultant, appointed by BAA. We will then finalise the details of the scheme.

We hope to have finalised the details of the scheme by early next year. We would then expect to be able to begin operating relevant schemes in Spring 2005.

<sup>3</sup> For ease of understanding, in this document, the terms "owner-occupier" and "owner" are used to refer to someone who must have occupied the whole (or a substantial part) of the plot as a private dwelling in right of a freehold interest, or a lease of which three years remains unexpired. They must have done so for the whole of the six months before the launch of the scheme.

If you would like this document in an alternative format, such as large print, Braille or audio cassette, please call us on 0800 731 4247. Alternatively, a fully accessible version of this document can be found on our website.



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Design by Loewy Group +44 (0)20 7798 2000.

Printed in England by Geoff Neal Litho.

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