

The Airbus Whine

If you are still wavering on whether you should respond to the consultation process and take a gamble that overflying aircraft will not be a problem, then read on.

Those new to aircraft noise will also experience the debilitating whine of the Airbus A318/319/320 series of aircraft which are now accounting for a substantial proportion of aircraft movements from Gatwick Airport.

This high pitched noise from these aircraft noticeable on the long low flight to arrivals has been known to the Civil Aviation Authority since 2005.

Yet, only acknowledged by them publicly on 16 October 2013 when they admitted:

“high pitched whine could be heard on the ground at relatively large distances from the London Airport and that similar concerns had also been raised around Paris and Frankfurt airports. Measurements undertaken have confirmed the tonal noise is due airframe noise not engine noise and is on all present A320 family variants.”

The CAA went further and confirmed that:

“The tone is emitted around 500-600Hz, close to peak sensitivity of the human ear, hence it is very perceptible. Very audible during intermediate approach phase 7-15nm from landing.”

In other words it could have a distressing impact on all those that were within audible range. If Point Merge were allowed this type of noise, focused on a few flight paths, would make life unbearable for those underneath them and particularly so for night flights.

The high pitched whine can be abated with modification to the wing fuel filler caps which the airlines operating out of Gatwick Airport have so far failed to fit.

The UK Government may have to step in and force them to make the same modifications being introduced by Lufthansa where they have recently agreed to modify 157 aircraft of their A320 fleet and more recently Air France has also agreed to modify its entire fleet.

Until this is done on similar aircraft using Gatwick Airport night time flying of this series of aircraft should be banned. Lufthansa may well have been prompted to make these modifications by a Leipzig court banning night flights at Frankfurt Airport in 2012.