# Aston Martin's helipad plans receive planning committee approval amid local concerns



Aston Martin's use of an unapproved helipad near residential areas in Lighthorne Heath has raised significant concerns among local residents over the past five years, but recent developments indicate a resolution may be on the horizon. The Stratford-on-Avon District Council's planning committee has unanimously approved the car manufacturer's new application to establish a lawful site for helicopter landings to transport VIPs and investors.

The council confirmed that since March 2020, Aston Martin had been operating a helipad without the necessary planning consent, leading to a stream of complaints from residents affected by the noise. According to data from the council, six complaints were made to the environmental health team, with some complaints even originating from a councillor. However, due to the statutory regulations regarding noise nuisance not applying to aircraft in flight, the council has been limited in its ability to take enforcement action, as explained by planning officer Joseph Brooke, who noted that "at this moment in time there is no enforcement action being taken."

During the latest discussions before granting permission for the new helipad site, concerns regarding noise levels were prominent. The council's environmental health officer, Jacqui Dicker, elaborated that while the noise levels at the proposed new site are similar to those currently experienced by Lighthorne Heath residents, they would impact a smaller number of houses. Dicker described the expected noise as "clearly above guidelines that we would use to make the assessment," indicating significant potential impacts on residents.

In a strategic shift to gain approval, Aston Martin agreed to limit helicopter operations to no more than 100 days per year, with take-offs and landings restricted to weekdays between 9am and 6pm, excluding bank holidays. This contrasts with a previous proposal that sought more than 125 operational days, including weekends, and extended operating hours from 8am to 9.30pm. Councillor Chris Mills, representing the area, championed this revised proposal, stating, "The new helipad would alleviate this problem and allow residents to have a quiet life, free from the cacophony of noise caused by helicopter blades." He emphasised the economic significance of Aston Martin to the region, arguing that the new helipad would support the viability of the company's Gaydon plant.

Rob Colmer, head of government relations and sustainability at Aston Martin, reinforced the economic rationale behind the helipad, citing a potential £172 million contribution to the regional economy. He articulated that helicopter travel is crucial for attracting overseas investors who require efficient means of transport between various locations, including Silverstone and London. Colmer asserted that having direct access to the helicopter pad is a strategic asset for securing high-value business transactions.

Despite the greater emphasis on potential benefits, some councillors expressed reservations. Councillor Trevor Harvey acknowledged the merits of the proposal but noted a lack of documented evidence detailing the helipad's direct economic benefits, suggesting that a more structured case would have bolstered the application. Harvey highlighted the fine balance between pragmatism and adherence to planning regulations, remarking, "Planning decisions shouldn't be made on a basis that has not been substantiated by evidence, so I am torn."

The planning committee's decision now places Aston Martin one step closer to having a lawful helipad, which proponents believe will alleviate resident concerns while potentially enhancing the company's operational capacity. As the approval moves forward, the ongoing discussions around noise impact and community response will likely remain central to the narrative surrounding the helicopter operations.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.warwickshireworld.com/news/environment/aston-martins-unlawful-use-of-helipad-that-caused-misery-for-some-south-warwickshire-villagers-seems-set-to-end-5079946> - This article provides background on Aston Martin's previous issues with unlawful helipad use, including complaints from residents due to noise, and highlights that these concerns have been ongoing for several years.
* <https://leamingtonobserver.co.uk/news/second-aston-martin-helipad-given-the-green-light-at-gaydon-in-a-bid-to-end-residents-misery-55321/> - This article confirms that Aston Martin has received approval for a new helipad at its Gaydon site, which is part of efforts to address resident concerns about noise, indicating a shift towards resolving the company's unapproved helipad usage.
* <https://www.stratford-herald.com/news/aston-martin-s-plans-for-new-helipad-at-its-gaydon-hq-look-set-to-be-9410547/> - Initially, planners expressed concerns about noise impacts, which were significant enough to consider refusing permission for the new helipad. However, Aston Martin's revised proposal managed to address some of these concerns.
* <http://www.stratfordobserver.co.uk/news/aston-martin-helipad-to-be-given-the-red-light-by-councillors-54986/> - Before the approval, there were recommendations to refuse the application due to concerns over noise, highlighting the initial skepticism among council members about the proposal.
* <https://www.aircharterserviceusa.com/about-us/news-features/blog/the-acs-helipad-in-2024-from-cheltenham-to-coldplay> - While not directly related to Aston Martin's specific helipad issues, this article demonstrates the broader importance of helicopter transportation for high-profile events and corporate needs, similar to Aston Martin's use case for attracting investors.