



Neil Greig
**Head of Planning Policy & Economic
Development, Babergh District Council**
Corks Lane, Hadleigh, Ipswich IP7 6SJ

DX NO: 85055 Exchange: Babergh
Main Switchboard: **01473 822801**
Website: www.babergh-south-suffolk.gov.uk

Mr E Kench
Kiln Cottage
Stone Street
Boxford
CO10 5NR

Your Ref:
My Ref: 6/03/38

Please ask for: **Neil Greig**
Phone Direct Line: **01473 825783** ☎
Fax: 01473 825708
Email: neil.greig@babergh.gov.uk

1 September 2003

Dear Mr Kench

BOX RIVER NEWS

I am writing in response to the front page article in September's Box River News in the hope that you will be prepared to publish this letter in the next edition. Babergh will in any case be placing this letter on its website (www.babergh.gov.uk) for public viewing.

Dear Sir

It was unfortunate that your front page article about aircraft flightpaths over the Box Valley did not tell readers about the actions which Babergh District Council have taken as a result of the consultation. The Council welcomed the opportunity to comment and have written to National Air Traffic Services making the following points:

- The Council could not make meaningful comments due to the lack of accessible, understandable information on the proposal. Greater clarity should have been provided on the noise and environmental impact of the proposals on identified communities.
- If the proposals are implemented we request that steps are taken to minimise the environmental impact on the Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty *and all of the Babergh District* (my emphasis).
- Request that we are consulted, and our views taken into account, if there are any further substantial increases in air traffic or night flying over the Babergh District.

This is the formal decision on the consultation and was made by the elected members of Babergh. The article did not cover this critical information in relation to the content of the response and wrongly suggested that un-elected officers made the decisions.

Whilst your article eventually refers to National Air Traffic Services need to increase airspace capacity to accommodate anticipated growth in air traffic as the reason for the changes, it gives the impression that the changes have come about because Babergh wanted aircraft moved away from flying over Dedham Vale. The proposals were driven by the capacity needs and the diversion from Dedham Vale is incidental to this. Babergh did not trigger the changes.

Finally, the consultation was from National Air Traffic Services seeking the views of Babergh Council. We would not normally undertake further consultations ourselves as the Council includes members covering the whole of the district elected to represent local views. In addition, the analysis of the proposals was made shortly before the report to Committee and it was only at this late stage that it became apparent that the changes would affect other areas of the district. The written summary of the proposals makes no reference to aircraft overflying Bildeston and Boxford. The Council's comments about the nature of the consultation material reflect these problems in having to interpret complex and confusing maps.

Yours sincerely

Neil Greig
Head of Planning Policy & Economic Development

cc Tim Yeo, Member of Parliament