

**Committee:** Stansted Airport Advisory Panel

**Agenda Item**

**Date:** 3 September 2014

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**Title:** DfT Night Flying Restrictions at Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted

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Item for information

## Summary

1. This report advises the Panel about the Government's decision on the new night flying restrictions for Stansted Airport. The Government has announced a new three year regime which will maintain the main features of the existing one.

## Recommendations

2. That the Panel notes the report.

## Financial Implications

3. There are no financial implications associated with this report.

## Background Papers

4. None.

## Impact

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Communication/Consultation	<p>The DfT embarked on a two-stage consultation to replace the existing night flying regime. The Stage 1 consultation looked at how the existing regime has operated and asked for views on the structure and content of the new one. The consultation also sought views on how to assess the costs and benefits of night flying in drawing up the new regime. The Panel received a report on the Stage 1 consultation on 11/4/13. The Council's response was sent on 19/4/13.</p> <p>This Stage 2 consultation set out the Government's proposals for the new regime, taking into account the views it received in Stage 1, the recently published</p>
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	Aviation Policy Framework (APF) and the results of the Heathrow Operational Freedoms Trial. The Panel received a report on the Stage 2 consultation on 28/1/14. The Council's response was sent on 29/1/14.
Community Safety	None
Equalities	None
Health and Safety	In drawing up the new regime, the Government says it has balanced any perceived economic benefits of night flights against the effect on human health, especially sleep disturbance.
Human Rights/Legal Implications	None
Sustainability	None
Ward-specific impacts	The regime impacts all parts of the district overflown by aircraft at night.
Workforce/Workplace	Officer time in preparing this response.

## Situation

6. The Government has confirmed that it is not making any significant changes to the night flying restrictions before the Airports Commission publishes its final report in 2015. It has therefore announced a three year regime to 2017, which will retain the main features of the current regime.

7. The Government says of its decision to roll forward the current regime:

*“This will help give certainty around the night noise environment for those living near airports. Our aims include to maintain stability until decisions have been made about any new airport capacity and to ensure operational capacity at these airports is not affected pending such decisions. Three years is shorter than recent regimes but by this time the Government of the day should be in a position to have reviewed these night flying restrictions in the light of decisions made about any new airport capacity”.*

8. The movement and noise quota limits for Stansted will be as follows:

Winter 2014/15	Summer 2015	Winter 2015/16	Summer 2016	Winter 2016/17	Summer 2017
<b>Movement limits</b>					
5,000	7,000	5,000	7,000	5,000	7,000
<b>Noise quota limits</b>					
3,310	4,650	3,310	4,650	3,310	4,650

Source: *Night Flying Restrictions at Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted, DfT July 2014*

9. These are the same movement limits that have endured since 2006/7, and the same noise quota limits since 2011/12. The night period remains 23:00 – 07:00 and the night quota period stays as 23:30 – 06:00.
10. The Government says that in its Stage 2 consultation it received evidence which suggested: *“unforeseen increased demand for night flights in the summer at Gatwick and Stansted which, if it were to materialise and continue, would mean that the existing movement limits would imposed additional costs to industry by 2017”*. It is presumed that “additional costs” means that the movements limit would bite at that point restricting night flying and that the airport operators have asked the Government either for a “predict and provide” approach or for more flexibility to carry over unused movements.
11. The Government says it is not convinced that these projections are robust, and a consultation on the next regime, which would take account of any actual increase in demand, is expected to begin early in 2016. The Government will monitor the new regime from the outset and this will provide evidence on whether operational capacity at Gatwick and /or Stansted is being affected before 2017.
12. The Government has extended the operational ban on QC8 and QC16 aircraft to the entire night period. This is a minute benefit to residents affected by aircraft noise at Stansted. In 2011, there was one QC8 cargo departure at Stansted between 23:00 – 23:30, and in 2012 there was one QC8 passenger departure (a privately operated flight by a state owned aircraft). There were no QC16 departures at Stansted in either year. Unscheduled arrivals rated at QC8/16 are not currently prohibited during the night period, but an aircraft this noisy on arrival would most likely be a “Chapter 2” aircraft which was phased out in 2002.
13. The Government has decided not to bring trials within the dispensation guidelines. This is because trials have to last for more than a short period in order to get detailed evidence. The power to issue dispensations is intended to be used only for specific occasions or short term events, and longer term trials would require public consultation with affected communities.
14. In the Stage 2 consultation the Government proposed a number of environmental objectives for the three airports. The setting of environmental objectives is required under EU law. The following objectives have been set for the three year period of the new regime:

<b>Environmental Objective</b>	<b>How it will be measured</b>
1. Limit and where possible reduce the number of people significantly affected by aircraft noise at night.	Area and number of people within the 6.5 hour night quota period contours, and in particular the 55dB contour.  Population changes due to new housing development will be taken into account in measuring changes in number of people.
2. Maintain a stable regulatory regime pending decisions on future airport capacity and, at Gatwick and Stansted in particular, to allow growth in movements up to existing night movement limits and within noise quotas.	Movements and noise quota used in the night quota period
3. Encourage the use of quieter aircraft during the night quota period so as to reduce the overall impact of aircraft noise and in particular the likelihood of sleep disturbance.	Average QC points per movement.  Proportion of movements made by the noisier types of aircraft (QC/4 and QC/2) during the night quota period.

Source: *Night Flying Restrictions at Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted, DfT July 2014*

## Risk Analysis

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Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
That the future night flights regime implemented in 2017 will have a detrimental impact on the quality of life of local residents.	2. There is some risk because the Government will have to balance the economic case for night flights against local environmental considerations.  Whilst the Government has rolled forward the	2. Any increase in night flights would affect the quality of life of local residents.	The Council will need to respond to the consultation on the 2017 regime when it is launched in 2016.

	<p>existing movement and quota limits, Stansted currently operates well within both. However, the headway will be reduced as passenger (and cargo) throughput increases along with the number of air transport movements.</p>		
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1 = Little or no risk or impact

2 = Some risk or impact – action may be necessary.

3 = Significant risk or impact – action required

4 = Near certainty of risk occurring, catastrophic effect or failure of project.