

Committee: Cabinet

Date: 2nd
September 2021

Title: Government consultation on night flights restrictions at Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted Airports beyond 2024, plus national night flights policy.

Portfolio Holder: Portfolio Holder for Planning and the Local Plan

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Key decision:
No

Summary

1. This covering report introduces Cabinet to the report and appendices presented to the Stansted Airport Advisory Panel (STAAP) on 18th August regarding the Government's consultation on future night flights policy beyond 2025 both at the designated airports (Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted) and nationally.
2. Cabinet's attention is drawn to paragraphs 1-8 of the STAAP report, which set out the history of this consultation since it was first published in December of last year.

Recommendations

3. That Cabinet ratifies the response to the Government, and
4. That the Director of Public Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder be authorised to sign-off the Council's final response for submission by Friday 1st October.

Financial Implications

5. None.

Background Papers

6. None.

Impact

7.

Communication/Consultation	This consultation runs until 3 rd September, but the Department for Transport has agreed that the Council's response can be submitted by email no later than 1 st October.
Community Safety	To be carried out by the Government.
Equalities	To be carried out by the Government.
Health and Safety	To be carried out by the Government.
Human Rights/Legal Implications	To be carried out by the Government.
Sustainability	To be carried out by the Government.
Ward-specific impacts	Those parts of the District affected by night flights
Workforce/Workplace	Officer and Member time in considering the Council's response.

Situation

8. The STAAP report and appendices are attached to this covering report. Appendix A is the suggested response that was presented to STAAP.
9. The following table sets out the comments raised by STAAP, and how they are covered in the Council's response:

Comment (with report paragraph reference where relevant)	How covered (with report paragraph reference where relevant)
Paragraph 17 – Government and airlines stress the importance of night flights to the economy, but rarely cite figures. Holiday traffic takes money out of the economy. Where is the balanced analysis?	Paragraph 4 refers to the Government's proposal to carry out a more meaningful evaluation of the costs and benefits of night flights within the next three years. Covered in the response to the question on the economic value of night flights.
More about benefits than	Will add in as a comment to the question

<p>noise. Government pays lip service to the WHO guidelines – doesn't quote from them. Should be forced to put in quotes.</p>	<p>response</p>
<p>To what extent do night flights benefit the local economy. Unless they are necessary to fit into arrivals windows at other airports, they should be deemed non-essential.</p> <p>Plenty of space now to accommodate 3am and 4am flights during the day.</p>	<p>Paragraph 51 refers to the Government's expectation that demand for night flights is minimised where alternatives are available. Can be added as an extra point to the response to the question on health impacts of aviation noise at night. The extent of any benefit to the local economy in particular requires to be understood..</p>
<p>Paragraph 23 – change “clear sensitivities for local communities” to “clear sensitivities for local communities under flightpaths”. Add “and airlines” after “airport operator”.</p>	<p>Noted. Change responses to the questions on the findings of the night flight dispensation review and on views on the proposals for the night flight dispensation review.</p>
<p>Residents experience actual noise events, not averaged ones.</p>	<p>Noted. Covered in paragraph 30 and in the response to the question on whether the QC system is best for limiting noise at the designated airports.</p>
<p>Paragraph 22 – are the comments on giving greater scrutiny to airport noise and track keeping working groups warm words only?</p>	<p>Reflected in comment in paragraph 23 and in the response to the question on views on the proposals for the night flight dispensation review.</p>
<p>Stansted is taking more than its fair share of night flights.</p>	<p>Paragraph 51 refers to the Government's expectation that demand for night flights is minimised where alternatives are available. Can be added as an extra point to the response to the question on health impacts of aviation noise at night.</p>
<p>Concern at abuse of the dispensations scheme in summer.</p>	<p>Comment actually relates to the carryover / overrun arrangements explained in paragraph 44 and appendix B. Covered in paragraph 47 and the question on benefits</p>

	of the current carryover process.
Concern that noise from night flights affects age / vulnerable groups differently, particularly those who may go to bed earlier.	Comment can be added to the question on the health impacts of aviation noise at night, including a request that further SoNA research looks at this.
Stansted has twice as many night flights as Heathrow.	Can be added in as a comment on the response to the question on the economic value of night flights.
Paragraphs 51-53 – no emerging technology that will make any real difference to aircraft noise signatures other than minor developments on flaps and undercarriages. What about the effect of emerging technology on the noise signature of older cargo planes?	Can be added in as a comment on the question about the advantages or disadvantages that the emergence of new technology will have. Would be caught by the tightening of QC restrictions referred to in paragraphs 36 and 37 and in the response to the relevant questions on total and scheduling bans on QC4 and QC2 aircraft.
Clarity requested over paragraphs 54-56.	Provided verbally at the Panel meeting. Does not affect response.
Night noise is a major disruption to residents who live beyond noise preferential routes.	Comment can be added to the question on the health impacts of aviation noise at night, including a request that further SoNA research looks at this.
View of the Panel is that there should be no night flights, except for genuine emergencies.	Noted. This can be added as a concluding comment, as there is an “any other comments” question. Further thought and work is suggested to see how it could fit in with the Government’s proposal to carry out a more meaningful evaluation of the costs and benefits of night flights within the next three years.
Panel requested a post-Cabinet workshop to understand the issues in more detail.	For separate consideration re timing, who would run it and what value would be added to the response.

Risk Analysis

10.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
The Government is not able to take the Council's views into account as part of the consultation process.	1 The consultation process is designed to allow all views to be considered.	2 Greater weight could be given to the economic case for night flights than to the environmental case for their restriction.	Respond to the consultation.

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.