

## Night-time noise abatement objectives for designated airports

The government sets night-time operating restrictions at Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted airports. These airports are designated for the purposes of noise regulation under the Civil Aviation Act 1982. We last consulted on these controls in December 2020. The decision, published in July 2021, rolled-over the existing restrictions for a period of three years, putting in place the current regime covering the period from October 2022 to October 2025.

Consultation on the next night flight regime can be expected to launch in late 2023. Ahead of that consultation, we are now seeking views and evidence on what night-time noise abatement objectives should be for the designated airports for that next night flight regime. We are also seeking views on how the proposed night-time noise abatement objective should be assessed to ensure it is successful.

The purpose of a noise abatement objective is to act as the enabling statement that provides the focus for any necessary noise measures. The intention of the government is to have a night-time noise abatement objective which is aligned with our national aviation noise policy statement, and which includes measurable and achievable outcomes against which progress can be assessed, and which can achieve a balance between the needs of different stakeholder groups.

For the purpose of the regime to commence in October 2025, we now seek views on using the following night-time noise abatement objective:

"Whilst supporting sustainable growth and recognising the importance to the UK of maintaining freight connectivity, to limit and where possible reduce, the adverse effects of aviation noise at night on health and quality of life".

This night-time noise abatement objective would apply to all three of the designated airports (Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted) and would apply to the night period (11pm to 7am).

**Select the airport for which you wish to provide your views (you may select more than one option).**

- Heathrow (Complete section 'Heathrow')
- Gatwick (Complete section 'Gatwick')
- Stansted (Complete section 'Stansted')

### Stansted

For the purpose of the regime to commence in October 2025, we now seek views on using the following night-time noise abatement objective:

"Whilst supporting sustainable growth and recognising the importance to the UK of maintaining freight connectivity, to limit and where possible reduce, the adverse effects of aviation noise at night on health and quality of life".

**19. To what extent do you agree, or disagree, with our night-time noise abatement objective for Stansted airport?**

- Strongly agree (Skip questions 21, 22 and 23)
- Agree (Skip questions 21, 22 and 23)
- Neither agree nor disagree
- X Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know (Go to question 24)

## Stansted - night-time noise abatement objective

20. Provide a reasoning for your answer.

UDC is aware that the night-time noise abatement objective is a high-level statement and that a more detailed consultation on the night flight regime is to follow later this year.

UDC is concerned with the specific inclusion of the term “freight connectivity” within the proposed statement and the introduction of the term “and where possible”. This suggests greater dispensation will be given to freight activities and a watering down of the existing objective which states “limit or reduce the number of people affected”. The term ‘where possible’ is undefined and weakens, already inadequate night time protections for residents.

It is UDC corporate policy to seek a reduction in night flight activity and therefore noise impacts on residents in connection with Stansted Airport and it is not considered the proposed night-time noise abatement objective assists in achieving this. It appears to do quite the opposite.

## Stansted - night-time noise abatement objective

21. Would alternative wording be preferable for the night-time noise abatement objective?

- X Yes
- No (Go to question 24)
- Don't know (Go to question 24)

## Stansted - night-time noise abatement objective

22. Provide a reasoning for your answer.

UDC does not consider further support need be given to night-time freight at Stansted Airport, nor should the strength of noise night controls, and therefore protections to

residents be weakened purely to support economic growth. An evidence-led and balanced approach, considering economic needs set against negative impacts on sleep and health must be taken.

**23. Provide alternative wording on a night-time noise abatement objective.**

*“Whilst being mindful of the need to support economic growth, to limit and reduce the number of people significantly affected by aircraft noise at night, including through encouraging the use of quieter aircraft, and acknowledging that many historic buildings cannot easily be retro-fitted to mitigate against aircraft noise.”*

## **Stansted - assessing the night-time noise abatement objective**

In recognition that each of the designated airports and its environs has different characteristics, consideration was given to setting different night-time noise abatement objectives for each designated airport. However, on balance, we believe that the core noise abatement aim remains the same at each airport.

The different characteristics of each airport and its environs could be addressed by the use of different metrics to measure achievement against the objective, rather than within the objective itself.

The wording of the night-time noise abatement objective reflects our movement away from an objective focusing on the number of people affected by noise, to a greater focus on the adverse effects on health and quality of life.

Although number of people could obviously remain an indicator used to measure success against the objective, we are keen to hear views and evidence on what metrics could be used to measure success against the objective.

**24. How should the proposed night-time noise abatement objective for Stansted airport be assessed to ensure it is successful?**

The current night-time noise abatement objective is measured by the number of people affected by aircraft noise. This remains a key metric. In the case of Stansted, which is situated in a district home to the second largest concentration of listed, historic buildings in England, this metric should be more nuanced. It should take into account residential buildings for which it is difficult, by way of their built fabric and the inability to well-insulate them against noise, that are located within affected areas.

## Final comments

### 25. Any other comments?

UDC looks forward to providing further comment during the consultation on the night flight regime later this year and is happy to provide further clarification or evidence in terms of the points raised above.