

# MDA No.: 1323

## Title: Night Flight Restrictions

### 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 On 13 July 2021, the Environment Committee noted the following standing delegation, which was agreed by the London Assembly at its Annual Meeting on 1 May 2013:

*That authority be delegated to Chairs of all ordinary committees and sub-committees to respond on the relevant committee or sub-committee's behalf, following consultation with the lead Members of the party Groups on the committee or sub-committee, where it is consulted on issues by organisations and there is insufficient time to consider the consultation at a committee meeting.*

- 1.2 Following consultation with party Group Lead Members, the Chair agreed the Committee's response to the Department for Transport's consultation on night flight restrictions, as attached at **Appendix 1**.

### 2. Decision

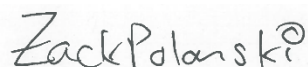
- 2.1 **That the Chair, in consultation with party Group Lead Members, agrees the response to the Department for Transport's consultation on night flight restrictions, as attached at Appendix 1.**

#### Assembly Member

I confirm that I do not have any disclosable pecuniary interests in the proposed decision and take the decision in compliance with the Code of Conduct for elected Members of the Authority.

The above request has my approval.

**Signature:**



**Printed Name:**

**Zack Polanski AM**

**Date:**

**2 September 2021**

### **3. Decision by an Assembly Member under Delegated Authority**

#### **Background and proposed next steps:**

- 3.1 Night flight restrictions have existed at Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted for over 40 years. The current system was established in 1993 and places limits on both movements, and the amount of noise energy that can be emitted at each airport. Further restrictions have been placed on the operation of the noisiest aircraft. The current night flight regime at the designated airports includes an operational ban on the noisiest aircraft between 23:00 and 07:00 and restrictions on movements and noise energy at each airport between 23:30 and 06:00.
- 3.2 Following consultation with party Group Lead Members, the Chair agreed the Committee's response to the Department for Transport's consultation on night flight restrictions, as attached at Appendix 1 under the standing authority granted to Chairs of Committees and Sub-Committees.
- 3.3 The exercise of delegated authority approving the consultation response will be formally noted at the Environment Committee's next appropriate meeting.

#### **Confirmation that appropriate delegated authority exists for this decision:**

Signature (Committee Services): F.Bywaters

Printed Name: Fiona Bywaters

Date: 17 August 2021

Telephone Number: 07825 028 318 / 020 7983 4425

#### **Financial Implications: NOT REQUIRED**

Note: Finance comments and signature are required only where there are financial implications arising or the potential for financial implications.

Signature (Finance): Not Required

Printed Name:

Date:

Telephone Number:

#### **Legal Implications:**

The Chair of Environment Committee has the power to make the decision set out in this report.

Signature (Legal):



Printed Name: Emma Strain, Monitoring Officer

Date: 23 August 2021

Telephone Number: 020 7983 6550

**Supporting Detail / List of Consultees:**

- Tony Devenish AM (Deputy Chairman), Léonie Cooper AM and Hina Bokhari AM

**4. Public Access to Information**

- 4.1 Information in this form (Part 1) is subject to the FoIA, or the EIR and will be made available on the GLA Website, usually within one working day of approval.
- 4.2 If immediate publication risks compromising the implementation of the decision (for example, to complete a procurement process), it can be deferred until a specific date. Deferral periods should be kept to the shortest length strictly necessary.
- 4.3 **Note:** this form (Part 1) will either be published within one working day after it has been approved or on the defer date.

**Part 1 - Deferral:**

Is the publication of Part 1 of this approval to be deferred? NO

If yes, until what date:

**Part 2 – Sensitive Information:**


Only the facts or advice that would be exempt from disclosure under FoIA or EIR should be included in the separate Part 2 form, together with the legal rationale for non-publication.

Is there a part 2 form? NO

---

**Lead Officer / Author**

Signature:



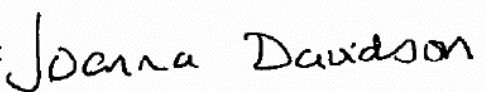
Printed Name: Luis Alvarado

Job Title: Senior Policy Advisor

Date: 17 August 2021

Telephone Number: 07733305791

**Countersigned by Executive Director:**

Signature: 

Printed Name: Joanna Davidson

Date: 3 September 2021

Telephone Number: 07813 796 175



**Zack Polanski AM**  
**Chair of the Environment Committee**

Department for Transport  
[night.flights@dft.gov.uk](mailto:night.flights@dft.gov.uk)

(Sent by email)

2 September 2021

**Position of the London Assembly Environment Committee on the Department for Transport (DfT) consultation on Night flights restrictions at Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted airports beyond 2024, plus national night flight policy**

**Committee position on the Government's *Night flight restrictions* consultation**

To a large extent, the position of the London Assembly's Environment Committee (the Committee) has not changed since it responded to the *Night Flying Restrictions at Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted Stage 1 Consultation*<sup>1</sup> in 2013. At that time, the Committee stated that it had '*consistently sought to minimise the negative impacts of aviation on Londoners, argued against night flights, and specifically opposed any increase in night flights.*'

In January 2019, the Committee published a report called *Aircraft noise*<sup>2</sup> which recommended that '*There should be no night flights, and limits on early morning flights should be retained, and preferably strengthened, for example by extending the time of no or very limited flights to 7.00am.*'

---

<sup>1</sup> Night flight consultation <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/>

<sup>2</sup> Aircraft noise report <https://www.london.gov.uk/media-centre/london-assembly/aircraft-noise>

In February 2019, in response to the *Heathrow Airspace and Future Operations consultation*<sup>3</sup>, the Chair of the Committee, Caroline Russell AM, stated ‘*We oppose night flights altogether. The greatest impacts of health and wellbeing come from night noise which disrupts sleep.*’

#### Revision of night flight dispensation guidance

The Committee welcomes proposals to make conditions for dispensations more stringent and increasing transparency around the process as per the Committee’s previous recommendations. This will make operators more accountable for dispensations and subject to periodic reviews to assess compliance as well as opportunities to further improve the process.

The Committee is concerned that there may be more extreme weather in future that leads to more disruption to flights, and hence more use of dispensations. The latest IPCC modelling suggests there will be an increase in severe wind storms in Northern Europe<sup>4</sup>.

The Committee is keen to know more about dispensations based on reducing fuel emissions. The Government must find a way to reduce aircraft stacking above London, without allowing these aircraft to fly within restricted times.

#### The structure of the night flight restrictions at the designated airports beyond 2024

The Committee is unhappy with the proposal to increase the duration of night flight regimes from 5 years to 10 years. Shorter regimes, to enable continuous review of the effects of the regime on the environment, allow for mitigations to be put in place to address any negative impacts. The Government needs to show clearly how it will address potential negative impacts of night flights before it increases the duration.

The Committee supports the tightening of the restrictions on the noisiest aircraft but urges the Government to move further and faster. Airlines have considerable flexibility in the aircraft they deploy on any particular route and the Government can and should be using the night noise regime to influence decisions on future aircraft acquisition and route allocation.

The Government has said it is open to broadening the night quota period from 11pm to 7am. We would welcome such a development. This is consistent with the Committee’s recommendations made in the *Aircraft noise* report of 2019.

The Committee supports closing the loophole of carrying overnight flight quotas by removing it altogether. The Committee also does not agree with allowing night quota allowances to be banked as this does not encourage the reduction of night flights.

#### National night flight policy

There is a fine balance between health impacts and economic value of night flights and more work is needed to estimate the cost of the effects of night noise and pollution. The economic value of health impacts whilst uncertain, could be high. Depression and anxiety can have life-changing impacts, and productivity losses (poor performance and tiredness) due to disrupted sleep are a direct and immediate economic loss. Most significant could be the effects on children – impaired performance at school, for children who spend their school careers living under the flight path. In many cases, this translates to reduced learning, lower skills and qualifications and

---

<sup>3</sup> Heathrow consultation <https://www.heathrow.com/company/>

<sup>4</sup> IPCC AR6 WGI Regional Fact Sheet Europe

[https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg1/downloads/factsheets/IPCC\\_AR6\\_WGI\\_Regional\\_Fact\\_Sheet\\_Europe.pdf](https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg1/downloads/factsheets/IPCC_AR6_WGI_Regional_Fact_Sheet_Europe.pdf)

therefore lower productivity and income over the future working life of those individuals, compared to what they would have achieved if they had been able to go to school well rested.

The Committee supports the Government's proposal to include a night noise reference in its overall noise objective in the aviation policy framework. However, as previously stated in the 2019 Committee report *Aircraft noise*, the Committee would prefer there to be no night flights.

To summarise, the Committee's positions on the main themes raised in the consultation are:

- There should be no flights between 11pm and 7am.
- Conditions for dispensations should be more stringent and the process more transparent.
- The Committee is keen to know more about dispensations based on reducing fuel emissions.
- The Government must find a way to reduce aircraft stacking above London and ensure this does not take place during restricted hours.
- Shorter night flight regimes will enable continuous review of the effects of the regime on the environment and allow for mitigations to be put in place to address any negative impacts.
- The ability for operators to carry over night flight quotas should be removed altogether.
- There should be a night noise objective in the Government's aviation policy framework.

Should you need anything from the London Assembly Environment Committee, do not hesitate to reach out to me.

Thank you very much.

Yours,

*Zack Polanski*

**Zack Polanski AM**  
**Chair of the Environment Committee**