



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

The Rt Hon Heidi Alexander MP
Secretary of State for Transport
Department for Transport
Great Minster House
33 Horseferry Road
London
SW10 4DR

23 January 2025

Dear Secretary of State,

Re: Gatwick Airport Noise Pollution

We are writing to you as the elected representatives of the countless towns and villages in Kent, Surrey and Sussex where life is blighted every single day by the noise of take-offs and landings at Gatwick Airport.

We wish to draw your attention to the lack of proper independent noise monitoring around the airport, which we feel makes it impossible for the Department to make an informed decision about further expansion. We urge you to delay your decision on the Northern Runway Project until proper monitoring infrastructure is in place and the true impact of noise on the lives of our constituents is properly understood.

It is clear that aircraft noise isn't being comprehensively or accurately monitored. In most of our constituencies there is only one active noise monitor and in some there is no noise monitoring at all. This is even though Gatwick Airport has a statutory obligation to monitor noise and report aircraft in breach of airspace noise restrictions.

Furthermore, all these monitors are privately operated by Gatwick itself, with limited independent oversight. The airport is marking its own homework – there is no transparency on how data is being collected or how the locations for these monitors have been determined. Additionally, should the Government push ahead with its airspace modernisation plans flight paths will be altered, and many of these devices will become redundant.

The World Health Organization's guidelines, upon which the Civil Aviation Authority's noise policy is based, considers overall continued volume of noise, which exceeds 55 LAeq during daytime, to be a serious annoyance, and 45 LAeq during night, to be a serious disturbance to sleep.

However, Gatwick's implementation of noise contours, which records the overall continued volume of noise produced by aircraft in the areas under their arrival and departure routes, only extends as far as Helen's Castle and Ellen's Green at either side of the runway.

The little monitoring which is taking place paints a worrying picture. A noise monitor located over 17 miles away from the runway in Rusthall, Tunbridge Wells recorded aircraft noise in excess of 60



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

decibels over 500 times in November and over 1500 times during each of the summer months last year.

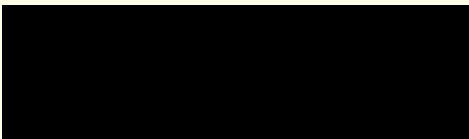
The Government must decide by the end of February whether to approve an expansion proposal, which would bring Gatwick's Northern Runway into use. If this proposal goes ahead, Gatwick would more than double in size – with passenger numbers increasing to over 80 million per year. Gatwick would continue to serve short haul routes; but significantly expand its long-haul capacity – effectively becoming a second Heathrow.

Our communities already suffer from Gatwick's business model – which places an emphasis on short-haul low-cost carriers that arrive late at night and depart early in the morning. In summer, Heathrow permits only 3,250 movements per month at night whereas Gatwick allows over 11,200.

Opening the Northern Runway will only mean higher volumes of long-haul traffic, worsening the effects of noise on the health of our communities. However, the absence of noise monitoring devices means there is no reasonable evidence to support any assessment of the expansion's impact on noise pollution.

We therefore urge you to delay the decision-making process on the proposal to bring the Northern Runway into use at Gatwick Airport until independently controlled noise monitoring has been established across the whole flight path and in all affected towns and villages. The Department should then wait for at least a full year's worth of data to be available before making a decision.

Yours sincerely,



Mike Martin MP

Member of Parliament for Tunbridge Wells

Chris Coghlan MP

Member of Parliament for Dorking and Horley

Alison Bennett MP

Member of Parliament for Mid Sussex

Tom Tugendhat MP

Member of Parliament for Tonbridge

John Milne MP

Member of Parliament for Horsham

Andrew Griffith MP

Member of Parliament for Arundel and South Downs