



# Airspace and Noise Community Forum

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Dear Minister

In its 2018 Green Paper, Aviation 2050, the government consulted on a proposed new noise objective. It committed that the proposed objective and other actions would result in *"a stronger and clearer aircraft noise framework which addresses the weaknesses in current policy and ensures industry is sufficiently incentivised to reduce noise"*. This announcement, coupled with the creation of ICCAN, was welcomed by overflowed communities.

The new overarching noise policy you announced recently differs from the one the government consulted on, and from previous policy, in material respects. It introduces principles on which there has been no consultation and which will, in our view, substantially weaken the protection available to communities from aircraft noise, with potentially significant health and quality of life consequences.

Three related elements of the new policy are of particular concern.

First it explicitly makes aircraft noise management subsidiary to "sustainable growth". Given the government has made clear, in the context of its Jet Zero policy and recent planning decisions, that it regards all currently forecast aviation growth as being sustainable, this amounts to a licence for the industry to increase noise at any airport that is seeking to grow.

Secondly, the only obligation the new policy imposes as regards noise is for the industry to seek to mitigate its impacts. By contrast, previous policy required, and Aviation 2050 proposed, that aircraft noise should be limited and established a general principle that noise should reduce as airport capacity grows. By re-defining "limit" to mean simply "mitigate and minimise", the new policy removes both any requirement for objective, quantified noise limits and any suggestion that growth should be conditional on the industry achieving noise reductions.

We do not believe it is acceptable for the government to weaken community protections from aircraft noise, without proper engagement and consultation, in the way the new policy does.

Thirdly, the policy continues to rest on undefined and unexplained concepts. The requirement to reduce noise "*where possible*" and mitigate noise "*as much as is practicable and realistic to do so*" are recipes for inaction and dispute.

For all these reasons, the new policy will not achieve the balance between community and industry interests that the government has repeatedly said it is seeking to achieve. In addition, the new policy fails to meet any of the commitments the government made in 2018. It is materially weaker than previous policy, for the reasons set out above. In almost all respects it is no clearer than previous policy. And it contains no arrangements to incentivise the industry to reduce noise, rather it sends a clear signal that the government has no serious interest in meaningful action.

The government acknowledged in Aviation 2050 that the public is becoming more sensitive to aircraft noise and that there are health and quality of life costs associated from exposure to this noise. It is extraordinary that the policy it has now announced would substantially weaken already inadequate community protections and renege on the commitments it made then.

We understand that the government intends to say more about aircraft noise policy later this year. We therefore ask you to use this opportunity to reconsider, to engage constructively with all parties and to bring forward new proposals that would achieve the goals your government committed to in 2018.

We are copying this letter to the Chair of the Transport Select Committee, the Chairs of the Airport Communities All Party Parliamentary Group and members of the Department's Airspace and Noise Engagement Group.

Yours sincerely,

Charles Lloyd, ANCF Lead

On behalf of:

Aviation Environment Federation (AEF)  
AXO (Airport Expansion Opposition) Southampton  
Belfast City Airport Watch  
Communities Against Gatwick Noise Emissions (CAGNE)  
Ealing Aircraft Noise Action Group (EANAG)  
Englefield Green Action Group  
Gatwick Area Conservation Groups (GACC)  
Gatwick Obviously Not (GON)  
Group for Action on Leeds Bradford Airport (GALBA)  
HACAN East

Harmondsworth and Sipson Residents Association (HASRA)  
Heathrow Association for the Control of Aircraft Noise (HACAN)  
Ian Smith (ANCF Member)  
Luton and District Association for the Control of Aircraft Noise (LADACAN)  
Molesey Residents Association  
Parish Council Airport Association  
People Against Aircraft Intrusive Noise (PAIN)  
People against Gatwick Noise and Emissions (PAGNE)  
Plane Hell Action SE  
Richings Park Residents' Association  
Richmond Heathrow Campaign  
Southampton Friends of the Earth  
Stansted AirportWatch  
Stop Heathrow Expansion (SHE)  
Teddington Action Group (TAG)  
The Iver Parish Council  
Tunbridge Wells Aircraft Noise Study Group  
Wentworth Residents Association