

# HORLEY TOWN COUNCIL



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Dear Sirs

## **Gatwick Airport Night Flights Consultation: Response from Horley Town Council**

We welcome the opportunity to comment on this consultation as outlined in our response below:

Horley, a town of some 29,000 residents, is located on the northern edge of Gatwick Airport. In respect of aircraft noise, it benefits from a regulation in the AIP that flights departing from the airport should not overfly the town. However, over time residential development to the north, Westvale Park, has resulted in some of our residents living under the route 4 NPR.

To the south, the Horley Gardens Estate is closest to the airport and therefore most subject to aircraft noise as are those residential areas along the Balcombe Road [B2036] which are impacted by flights on final approach to runway 26 or the climb out from runway 08.

We are disappointed that the DfT has elected to roll over the current night flight regulations for a further three years and what this means to our residents, at a time when we could have expected to benefit from improvements in the night noise environment. However, we are aware that this decision was taken to benefit from the outcomes of the Aviation Night Noise effects [ANNE] and the Aviation Noise Attitudes Survey reports which will provide up to date and relevant information on the health impacts to our residents subject to disturbance from night flights.

We remain concerned that under the current regime Gatwick is able to exceed the number of movements above the summer allocation of 11,200 ATMs using the roll over or roll back facility and dispensations. So, the actual number of night ATMs can be well inflated above the published cap. In 2023, the number of non-dispersed flights was 9,022 and dispensations 2,921, although it could be said that we did benefit from 3,654 avoided flights.

The DfT has stated they have concerns how the dispensations are granted which, on review, did not qualify. We presume these are subsequently recorded as non-dispersed.

....Continued overleaf

We would like to see changes to the roll over and roll back rules, such that any benefits from using this facility should only impact on the following summer season and not from the winter season. This would have a greater impact going forward, as using a winter season unused ATMs does not help in mitigating the impacts from night flights.

There is also the matter of dispensations being granted for known causes, which can be predicted to occur every summer ie weather and ATC disruption through strikes. The DfT does appear to be aware of this and the way forward by requiring airports to submit a letter to the Secretary of State, at the end of the summer season about the number of dispensations but, more importantly to us, those causes which are likely to reoccur in future years. Dispensations should be for unpredictable situations not those which occur every year in our opinion.

We would welcome the views of the DfT on how they will use the information from this letter to improve the next and future regimes.

The Town Council trusts that its views contained in this response will be given due consideration. We further hope that by using new technology and better and more resilient operational procedures, the impacts to our residents from the night noise environment will be much improved over time.

Yours faithfully



**Joan Walsh**  
**Town Clerk**