

Ban night flights at Heathrow airport, says MP Greg Hands

Jack Dixon, London News | MAR 9, 2017

Chelsea and Fulham MP Greg Hands has urged transport chiefs to impose a ban on all night flights at Heathrow airport.

The Conservative minister renewed calls for all planes to be grounded between the hours of 11pm and 6am.

Mr Hands said he was frequently woken up at night by noise from aircraft passing over west London and suggested that local people's lives were being unfairly disrupted.

He also pointed to research from international health bodies, including the World Health Organisation and the British Medical Journal, that highlights the damaging impacts of sustained sleep deprivation on people's wellbeing.

In a letter to Lord Ahmed, the parliamentary under secretary of state for transport, Mr Hands argued that there should be a "comprehensive" ban on night flights at Heathrow.

He added: "For the past 27 years I have lived beneath the Heathrow flight path and, like many hundreds of thousands of Londoners, I am frequently woken up by aircraft noise.

"These Londoners have jobs to do and families to look after, for which they require a good night's sleep.

"Accordingly, not only are people losing sleep because of being disturbed by aircraft noise during the night, but their daily lives are being indirectly affected by it."

Mr Hands said that banning night flights for a seven-hour period each day would "lessen the detrimental impact on hundreds of thousands of Londoners living beneath the flight path".

And he called for transport bosses to follow the lead of Frankfurt airport – the fourth busiest in Europe – which has banned night flights between 11pm and 5am since 2012.¹

Mr Hands added: "I find it unacceptable that the convenience, quality of sleep, and the health of millions of residents in London and the wider South East under the flight path is sacrificed for the sake of a few thousand inbound passengers per night.

"The 16 flights per night at Heathrow is still 16 too many. While I welcome the Department for Transport's stated intention not to decrease the current restrictions but to encourage the use of quieter aircraft, I remain convinced that there should be a comprehensive ban on night flights at Heathrow airport between 11pm and 6am."

A public consultation on separate plans for a third runway at the airport was held at Hammersmith Town Hall earlier this week.

Hammersmith and Fulham council, alongside local campaign group h&fnothirdrunway, has strongly objected to the proposals due to air pollution and extra congestion.

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(Highlights, footnotes and minor edits may have been added, but only to add analysis & clarification)

¹ aiR footnote: per [wiki](#), the five busiest European airports are Paris-CDG, London-Heathrow, Frankfurt, Amsterdam-Schiphol, and Istanbul-Ataturk; each had between 465K and 476K operations in calendar year 2015.