

ANNEX E: Supporting statement to accompany night-time noise abatement objective

Policy Objective

To limit and where possible reduce, the adverse effects of aviation noise at night on health and quality of life, whilst supporting sustainable growth and recognising the importance to the UK of commercial passenger and freight services.

Explaining the Night-time Noise Abatement Objective

Taking into account the positive benefits that aviation brings, we want to reduce where possible, or otherwise mitigate and minimise, the impacts on health and quality of life resulting from sleep disturbance caused by aviation noise at night.

The government recognises the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) Assembly's Balanced Approach to aircraft noise management. The Balanced Approach requires that decisions in relation to an airport's operations take into account both health and economic factors. It also means that where there is a noise problem at an airport, it should be addressed in accordance with the Balanced Approach and be managed in a cost-efficient manner.

Definitions

To limit and where possible reduce

An overall reduction in total adverse effects is desirable, but in the context of sustainable growth an increase in total adverse effects may be offset by an increase in economic and consumer benefits. In circumstances where there is an increase in total adverse effects, "limit" would mean to mitigate and minimise adverse effects, in line with the Noise Policy Statement for England (NPSE) ¹.

¹ [Noise Policy Statement for England \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/672222/noise-policy-statement-for-england-2020.pdf)

Health and Quality of Life

As set out in the NPSE, the World Health Organisation defines health as a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity, and recognises the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health as one of the fundamental rights of every human being.

It can be argued that quality of life contributes to our standard of health. However, in the NPSE it has been decided to make a distinction between “quality of life” which is a subjective measure that refers to people’s emotional, social and physical well-being and “health” which refers to physical and mental well-being.

It is recognised that noise exposure can cause annoyance and sleep disturbance both of which impact on quality of life. It is also agreed by many experts that annoyance and sleep disturbance can give rise to adverse health effects. The distinction that has been made between “quality of life” effects and “health” effects recognises that there is emerging evidence that long term exposure to some types of transport noise can additionally cause an increased risk of direct health effects. The government intends to keep research on the health effects of long term exposure to noise under review in accordance with the principles of the NPSE.

Sustainable Growth

The NPSE refers to sustainable development as a core principle underpinning all government policy. For the UK government the goal of sustainable development is being pursued in an integrated way through a sustainable, innovative and productive economy that delivers high levels of employment and a just society that promotes social inclusion, sustainable communities and personal well-being.

The goal is pursued in ways that protect and enhance the physical and natural environment, and that use resources and energy as efficiently as possible.

There is a need to integrate consideration of the economic and social benefit of the activity or policy under examination with proper consideration of the adverse environmental effects, including the impact of noise on health and quality of life. This should avoid noise being treated in isolation in any particular situation, i.e. not focussing solely on the noise impact without taking into account other related factors.