

27 May 2020

Dear SAEN

Myself and other councillors have received a few individual template letters regarding the Southend Airport ("London Southend Airport").

Unfortunately they did not give emails in the main for reply so I am responding to you as the overarching organisation.

I am responding on behalf of the Liberal Democrat group on the Council which comprises myself and Cllrs Collins, Wexham, Hooper and Thompson.

Back in 2011 when the Council considered the then proposals for the Airport which incorporated night flights, Cllr Wexham put forward a motion on behalf of the then Liberal Democrat Group, that night flights should not be allowed. Sadly that was unsuccessful and we now have a situation of an allowance of 120 movements at night per month.

Up until last year, although there were issues relating to the Airport that residents raised, the issue of night flights had not been a particularly specified problem more than others. However, with the advent of the Amazon flights this situation has escalated with many complaints as you know.

I think you probably know that the legal agreements which that were entered into with the Airport in 2011 are legally binding documents with the Council which cannot be changed without the agreement of the Airport. Having said that the number of current night flights is within the specified quota of 120 movements per month.

The renegotiation of the legal agreements is possible if a new planning application is submitted by the Airport for substantial expansion or changes, but we suspect in the current economic climate surrounding airports this may now be on the back burner for some time.

The Liberal Democrat group remains opposed to night flights and has been, with others, pursuing other avenues to improve the environmental situation at the Airport. I have led these approaches with the Airport and as a result they have agreed to the preparation of an Environmental Action Plan and are liaising with me as the Cabinet member for the Environment.

In addition, we have successfully persuaded the Airport to adhere, except in given circumstances, to the agreed routing.

The only way we can see to get things changed is through Parliament which means our MPs, who sit as part of the Government, and we would encourage residents to lobby them to put forward for a change in the national legislation, to severely restrict night time movements at regional airports, which we would support.

I am sorry if you feel all these efforts are to no avail but we believe that we have made substantial progress in actually opening up a dialogue with the Airport on these issues which did not exist previously and they in turn have listened to us and committed to the action plan.

As you know from the news the aviation industry is going through a woeful time at the moment so I think it hardly surprising that they are less vocal and not engaging because like the Council it is also distracted by other issues.

Once we get out of this crisis we will once again be picking up the reins of the campaign to get changes not just to the night flights but in other environmental areas, and indeed we suspect airlines and operators of airports will also be reviewing their positions in the light of their impact on environmental concerns.

We doubt the plans for expansion at Southend will come forward in the short term due to the current situation in the aviation industry so what we are doing is the way forward in our view to gain improvements in environmental terms, coupled with the efforts you can make with the MPs.

Kind regards  
Cllr Carole Mulroney  
Cabinet Member for Environment and Planning  
Liberal Democrat Group Leader & Councillor for Leigh Ward  
Southend-on-Sea Borough Council

Working for Leigh

Due to the current health emergency our monthly surgery is suspended. You can of course  
contact me by email or telephone  
[www.southendlibdems.org.uk/contact](http://www.southendlibdems.org.uk/contact)