



Department  
for Transport

Crispin Blunt MP  
House of Commons  
London  
SW1A 0AA

From the Parliamentary  
Under Secretary of State  
**Robert Goodwill MP**

Great Minster House  
33 Horseferry Road  
London  
SW1P 4DR

Tel: 0300 330 3000  
E-Mail: robert.goodwill@dft.gsi.gov.uk

Web site: [www.gov.uk/dft](http://www.gov.uk/dft)

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30 OCT 2015

*Dear Crispin*

Thank you for your letter of 1 October, about aircraft noise and performance-based navigation (PBN) at Gatwick Airport.

Your letter reflects the issues well and the Government recognises them. We are aware that while the technology presents opportunities, it also poses challenges in how it can be implemented responsibly. It is extremely important that we listen to the concerns of communities on these matters so that the technology can deliver all of the benefits it can offer. This includes not just greater efficiency, safety, and resilience in the sector, but also quicker journeys and fewer delays for passengers and environmental benefits such as fewer emissions and noise benefits. In terms of noise, PBN offers an opportunity, through more precise navigation, for aircraft to generate less noise for people on the ground because planes can be directed away from populated areas, and can ascend quicker.

As you say, the Aviation Policy Framework states that the Government believes that in most circumstances, it is desirable to concentrate aircraft along the fewest possible number of specified routes. It goes on to say that there should be the opportunity for respite routes to be considered, where appropriate: "However, in certain circumstances, such as where there is intensive use of certain routes, and following engagement with local communities, it may be appropriate to explore options for respite which share noise between communities on an equitable basis". I am aware that there is a perception that this disincentivises respite in all but exceptional circumstances.

I agree that we must think about this carefully. Officials are currently considering some of the issues you have raised and are working with the Civil Aviation Authority to consider any further guidance which may be appropriate.



We are keen to ensure that the right options are explored and that communities can play a role in finding solutions which are locally suitable when airspace changes must be made.

I hope you have found this response helpful.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'R. Goodwill', written over a large, loopy circular flourish.

**ROBERT GOODWILL**