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To: [farnboroughairport@rushmoor.gov.uk](mailto:farnboroughairport@rushmoor.gov.uk)

Re: **Farnborough Airport FAL planning application**

Dear Rushmoor Council

19<sup>th</sup> February 2024

Last October I submitted comments as part of the consultation process for Farnborough Airport Ltd 2040 expansion proposals.

I now write to **OBJECT** to the subsequent planning application submitted by Farnborough Airport Ltd on 6<sup>th</sup> November 2023 to Rushmoor Council.

When I met with Simon Geere CEO and Les Freer COO of Farnborough Airport Ltd (FAL) on 6<sup>th</sup> October 2023 we discussed the proposals at length – in particular, to increase the number of flights from 50,000 to 70,000 per year. This is an issue which is very important to people in my constituency and those neighbouring. If approved, the proposed changes could have far-reaching implications for many who live under the flight paths and close to the airport.

In my role as the Member of Parliament for South West Surrey and as Chancellor of the Exchequer I understand both the significance of Farnborough Airport to the UK's ability to attract international investment and how important the airport is to our local economy. Since Farnborough's CAA licence was granted in 2003 and its subsequent redevelopment as a commercial aviation centre, Farnborough Airport has established itself as a leader in the business aviation sector and continues to drive economic growth both locally and nationally.

I am, however, acutely aware that this expansion comes at a cost for local people, and I am keen to help ensure our responsibilities to these people and other responsibilities - especially environmental concerns - are properly addressed by FAL and in this planning application.

I have been contacted directly by hundreds of residents in writing and many more have voiced their opinion verbally to me. Many local Parish and Town Councils have contacted me on behalf of their residents and have objected, so I will not repeat their excellent and detailed analysis.

I note that many residents of Churt, Farnham and surrounds maintain strong opposition to the application and are very concerned about noise, emissions, and the proposed increases to 7-day air traffic.

Using FAL's main headings from their consultation I comment as follows:



### 1. Annual Flight Limit

In 2022 FAL handled 32,600 flights - by 2030 it is anticipated flights will be nearing the existing flight limit of 50,000 per year. FAL contests that market demand would be 70,000 per year by 2040.

The 70,000 forecast is an ideal case scenario for FAL, presently a number unconstrained by the response from local people via the consultation process and this planning and approval process. Whatever final number is agreed, it must take into consideration the views of and impact upon the many people affected.

### 2. Weekend Annual Flight Limit

FAL is proposing to increase the weekend flight limit of 8,900 flights (17.8% of the current limit) to 18,900 (27% of the proposed flight limit).

This is a doubling of flights over weekends, something I completely understand local people under the flightpath find unreasonable and a severe imposition. Many residents have referred to an erosion of their mental health and feel that the large increase in weekend flights would significantly negatively impact them. I therefore find this element of the application hardest to reconcile.

I asked FAL for further information to understand in more detail the statement that travel patterns have changed over time to incorporate a 7-day working week. I also note that the impact of 'business clustering' referred to in the marketing documentation is very hard to quantify.

I have not received further detail from FAL to date which would change my view; I strongly feel the proposed overall quantum of weekend flights needs to be revisited and adjusted downwards.

### 3. Weekend Operating Hours

FAL is looking to extend the 8am-8pm weekend hours to 7am-9pm. While I understand the number of flights is not proposed to increase, I cannot see how, given the proposed increased number of overall weekend flights, this can be the case?

### 4. Restricted Aircraft Weight Category

The proposal is to adjust the weight category from 55-80 tonnes in order to accommodate next generation aircraft. FAL is also proposing to increase allowable larger flights from 1,500 to 2,100 (270 to 570 weekend) flights per year. I note this is primarily a response to changes in new aviation aircraft construction.

Again, I believe the increase in weekend flights at this higher weight is too high.





**Environmental Concerns and AONB (Now National Landscape)**

We cannot ignore the environmental impact of an increase in flights, which will inevitably increase total emissions and Farnborough Airport's carbon footprint. The FAL consultation documentation confirms these increases up to 2040 with a projected decline thereafter. The nature of a business airport is such that fewer passengers per flight and thus emissions per passenger are significantly higher per customer.

When I met Simon and Les last October, we discussed the adoption of new, more efficient aircraft and fuel technology, albeit agreed it is hard to pin down exactly when these changes will kick in. Wherever possible, carbon offsetting should take place; I endorse all actions to support a direct reduction in emissions and carbon footprint and trust this is sufficiently addressed in the application.

Much of Farnborough Airport's wider flightpath is over AONB (now called National Landscape) countryside, which are specifically designated as places of quiet escape and tranquillity. I restate previous strong concerns about the volume and height of flights over AONB countryside. For these reasons I therefore fully support continuation of appropriate environmental restrictions at Farnborough Airport - in line with whatever is finally agreed in respect of flight numbers if this planning application is approved.

**Noise**

Simon Geere, Les and I discussed at length the issue of increased noise for residents of Farnborough, Ash and many other locations. I am still keen to understand what the total projected increase in noise is and following my request I am disappointed not to have received further evidence or clarity on this. FAL is aware this is a key issue for my constituents. Given the lack of evidence I am unable to provide any more comfort or support regarding noise. I reiterate the concerns of my constituents.

Government policy continues to focus on limiting and, where possible, reducing the number of people in the UK adversely affected by aircraft noise and the impacts on health and quality of life associated with this noise. I trust that this policy will be addressed and considered fully in determining this application.

**Public Safety Maps**

I agree with the new condition submitted to produce public safety zone maps in accordance with the Civil Aviation Authority/Department for Transport requirements.

Please don't hesitate to contact me,

Best wishes,

Jeremy