

Frequently Asked Questions (29/09/23)

If you have a question to Farnborough Noise Group, others probably have the same question. Email us on FranboroughNoise@gmail.com and we will try to answer it.

Q – Will we be able to fly on scheduled flights from the airport in the future?

A – The airport is licenced for business flights only, not holiday flights. It is also licenced for charter flights only and has a maximum weight restriction. Commercial flights would require a change in licence which is extremely unlikely as the airport is in the middle of an urban area and every airport nearby would challenge such a request as they would be losing business.

Q – Why is the airport asking for an increase in flights when it isn't anywhere near its licenced capacity?

A – The airport is restricted to 8,900 flights at weekends within its 50,000 annual limit. The ratio of weekend flights to weekday flights is fixed by Rushmoor Borough Council so to increase the number of weekend flights, it has also applied for an increase in total flights.

Q – Who can fly from the airport?

A – Anyone with sufficient money can fly from the airport but it must be for business purposes – That is what the airport is licenced for.

Q – Why are so many flights to holiday destinations if the airport is only licenced for business flights.

A – Good question. A study by Possible (<https://www.wearepossible.org/latest-news/jetting-away-with-it>) showed that a large number of flights from Farnborough are for holiday purposes but no enforcement action by Rushmoor Borough Council has been taken.

Q – The airport has done a lot to be nearly carbon neutral so why are people not more supportive?

A – The airport has done a lot to reduce its ground-based emissions but these only account for 1.4% of all emissions. 98.6% of emissions are from the flights themselves and these will increase with more aircraft operating. Flight emissions are unabated.

Q – People claim different numbers for the emissions from private jets, some say 5 time more than commercial aircraft and others say 40 times more. Which is right?

A – Private jets are generally smaller than commercial jets (though some private jets operating out of Farnborough are Boeing 737s or Airbus A320s). Some “private jets” are propellor driven that are more efficient and have fewer seats. Not surprisingly they use less fuel than a commercial jet, but they have many fewer seats. The fuel consumption data is very different for different sized aircraft. In addition, for aircraft operating out of Farnborough, there are on average only 2.5 passengers per

plane (including the big jets) and 40% of aircraft fly empty as they are picking up passengers as a charter/air taxi service. Taking these things into account per passenger mile flown, private jets are 30 to 40 times more emissions than a full commercial flight in a modern wide-bodied aircraft.

Q – If private jets are bad for the environment but people using them are wealthy, why don't they pay more to compensate for the harm they cause?

A – Aircraft fuel is not taxed and has no duty, which is unreasonable as we pay a lot of tax and duty for fuel for our cars. Taxing aviation fuel would go a long way to making air travel much fairer for everyone. The current UK government has stated that it will not tax aviation fuel or frequent fliers. An alternative would be to pay for the carbon capture of emissions from private jets. It is easy to work this out as Farnborough airport provides data on its CO2 emissions and the cost of capturing CO2 from the air is known. It works out at about £25m for the flights in 2022. This would wipe out the profit of the airport or passengers would have to pay more for their flights.

Q – The new flightpaths south of Farnborough have caused a lot of noise problems for people living in what were previously quiet rural areas. Why doesn't the airport move them over roads or towns where there is already noise?

A – The flightpaths were specifically designed to be over rural areas as one of the measures was “reduce the number of people overflown”. This same principle is being used in the CAA's Airspace Modernisation Strategy that is planning to double the number of commercial flights by 2030. Farnborough's flightpaths are sandwiched between other controlled airspace for Gatwick (to the east), Southampton (to the south west) and Odiham (to the north west). So they can't easily be moved without impacting of the flightpaths.