

Heathrow Community Noise Forum

Meeting notes (20 October 2021, 13:00 – 15:00, Microsoft Teams)

Confirmed attendees

Name	Borough / Organisation
Steve Braund	Buckinghamshire Council
Cllr Christine Richardson	Elmbridge Borough Council
Ajit Bansal	London Borough of Hounslow
John Coates	London Borough of Richmond upon Thames
Cllr David Hilton	Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead
Cllr Chris Howorth	Runnymede Borough Council
Sue Janota	Surrey County Council
Margaret Majumdar	Ealing Aircraft Noise Action Group (EANAG)
Paul Conway	Englefield Green Action Group (EGAG)
Robert Buick	Englefield Green Action Group (EGAG)
Christine Taylor	HASRA
Armelle Thomas	HASRA
Paul Beckford	HACAN
Deborah Petty	Molesey Residents Association
Bridget Bell	Plane Hell Action
Graham Young	Richings Park Residents Association
Peter Willan	Richmond Heathrow Campaign
Stephen Clark	Teddington Action Group (TAG)
Dave Gilbert	Teddington Action Group (TAG)
Carole Marr	The Windlesham Society
Tina Richardson	The Windlesham Society
Simon Scholey	British Airways
Darren Rhodes	CAA
Seonaid Reed	CAA
Ian Greene	DfT
Rebecca Christie	DfT
Gary Marshall	DfT
Pete Glass	NATS
Robin Clarke	NATS
Brendan Kelly	NATS
Becky Coffin	Heathrow
Jennifer Sykes	Heathrow
Matt Prescott	Heathrow
Richard West	Heathrow
Cllr Pat Tedder	Surrey Heath Council
Tim Walker	Forest Hill Society

Apologies

Name	Borough / Organisation
Malcolm Richards	Wokingham Borough Council
Nigel Davies	Englefield Green Action Group (EGAG)
Malcolm Beer	LAANC
Cllr Dr Wendy Matthews	Buckinghamshire Council
Cllr Peter Szanto	Surrey County Council

Spencer Norton	British Airways
Ian Jopson	NATS
Michael Glen	Heathrow
Andy Knight	Heathrow
David Knights	Heathrow
Rick Norman	Heathrow

1 Welcome and Introduction

- 1.1 Becky Coffin (BC), Director of Communities and Sustainability at Heathrow, welcomed members and guest presenters to the virtual forum and noted apologies for absence.
- 1.2 BC advised that no comments had been received on the previous meeting notes from 28 July, so these will now be marked as final. She went through the actions from the previous meeting as detailed below.
- 1.3 **Arrange a dedicated meeting on higher climb rates and collate previous questions for use in the meeting (1.3/1.5).** BC confirmed that the meeting took place on 13 October and thanked those who attended. Rick Norman (RN) had informed her that it was a constructive session where the departure noise study carried out by Kjeld Vinkx (KV) in his former role as independent technical advisor to the forum had been discussed at length. The group has agreed to meet again and will report back to the HCNF once they have concluded the sessions and identified some next steps. DG asked for the next meeting to take place before the next HCNF meeting. **ACTION RN**
- 1.4 **Agenda item to explain factors that affect departure heights (3.2).** BC confirmed that Pete Glass (PG) from NATS would be presenting on this later in the meeting.
- 1.5 **Follow-up on early morning flight questions (4.2).** BC advised that RN and Paul Beckford (PB) had a productive conversation around night flights after the last forum, covering a range of different aspects, and that both were keen to work with DfT as part of the ongoing consultation process. PB confirmed this and added that it had been useful to have a constructive conversation and gain a proper understanding of what could be done to improve things for overflown communities.
- 1.6 Peter Willan (PW) noted that he had previously given a presentation proposing that there was enough capacity to move all of the early morning arrivals and pre-07:00 flights to after 07:00, and asked Heathrow to explore this further. BC responded that Heathrow had made it clear in their response to the DfT night flight consultation that the capacity was not there but added that RN would provide a more detailed response. **ACTION RN**
- 1.7 **Consider next steps for carbon discussion (5.3).** BC advised that Matt Prescott (MP), Head of Carbon Policy & Innovation at Heathrow, would be presenting on this later. She reiterated previous comments that the HCNF was a noise forum and not a carbon forum. However, following PW's presentation on the topic at the last meeting, it was considered appropriate to come back with an overview of Heathrow's net zero plans.
- 1.8 **Impacts on the upper atmosphere (5.5).** Rebecca Christie (RC) advised that DfT were considering responses to the Jet Zero Consultation, including on non-CO₂ impacts from aviation, and they will publish their Jet Zero Strategy in due course. They will continue to keep non-CO₂ emissions from aviation under review and adjust policy as more evidence becomes available, including working closely with Manchester Metropolitan University to ensure they are basing their policy development on the latest available climate science.

2 Business update

- 2.1 **Passenger numbers.** BC notified members that there had been some opening up of travel since the last HCNF, with a focus on getting the business back to friction-free travel for fully vaccinated passengers. There has been significant progress with the move to a single red list, changes to testing requirements and greater recognition of other countries' vaccination programmes, but there is still more to be done, particularly in reducing the cost of tests and simplifying the process for travellers. Heathrow welcomed 2.57m passengers in September, 60% down compared to September 2019 with a loss of around 4.2m passengers. Overall, the UK remains far behind Europe in traffic figures and bookings. The overall forecast for 2021 remains between 13m and 36m passengers, with the higher number reflecting the planned opening up of the US market in November. Daily traffic levels in September ranged between 645 and 798 movements, with a range of 704 to 862 so far in October, still a long way below pre-pandemic levels of 1,300 flight movements a day.
- 2.2 Robert Buick (RB) asked if Heathrow was behind Europe because Heathrow has a lot of long-distance flights to Asia and the Far East. BC responded that Europe also served those destinations, but the UK's border policy has been different from other countries.
- 2.3 **Heathrow 2.0.** BC advised members that a new version of the Heathrow 2.0 sustainability strategy was coming soon, covering areas such as noise, carbon, employment, diversity and skills. She added that Heathrow's Noise Action Plan (NAP) would cover the noise aspects in more detail and a revised plan was expected to be shared with members in January 2022.
- 2.4 **ICCAN** BC discussed the recent announcement that the Independent Commission on Civil Aviation Noise (ICCAN) was being disbanded. She commented that Heathrow had always supported the role of an independent and impartial advisory body on noise management, so it was disappointing that ICCAN was disbanded before it was given sufficient time to garner wider support across different stakeholders. She noted that Heathrow would continue to champion the value of an independent voice to provide impartial advice and looked forward to understanding more about the role of the CAA Environment Panel and DfT following this decision.
- 2.5 **Forums review update.** BC reminded members that Heathrow was currently reviewing the structure of its engagement forums, a process which started last year and included consultation in January. She advised that the HCNF will evolve into a new group, the quarterly Noise and Airspace Community Forum (NACF). The NACF will have a similar structure to the HCNF, but in response to the consultation it will have an independent chair. The consultation also highlighted the importance of engagement with a variety of diverse groups and a clear code of conduct. She added that the NACF will feed up to the Council for the Independent Scrutiny of Heathrow Airport (CISHA) which will replace the Heathrow Community Engagement Board (HCEB) in January 2022 and take on its Airport Consultative Committee (ACC) role. She advised that the next steps were to work on the role specification and selection process for the independent chair, with changes expected to take place in early 2022.
- 2.6 PW noted that the HCNF was not a decision-making body and asked if Heathrow would still be making the decisions. BC advised that CISHA will put recommendations to Heathrow, but it will not have executive decision-making powers; those will remain with Heathrow.
- 2.7 PB asked for more details about expanding and diversifying the membership under the new NACF structure. BC advised that Andy Knight (AK) would provide more details.

- 2.8 *[Following the meeting, AK confirmed that Heathrow has an aspiration to refresh the membership as much as is possible within available resource, with the intention for this to be a shared vision with the successful independent chair applicant who would be equally involved in driving that change. He added that Heathrow wanted to establish a code of conduct that would provide guidelines around maximum numbers of participants from each group to ensure everyone has a seat at the table and a chance to be heard.]*

3 Community Presentations

- 3.1 BC handed the meeting over to Paul Conway (PC) to chair the community presentations. PC explained that Stephen Clark (SC) and PW would be giving presentations which had been informally discussed by most of the community group representatives and had their full approval. He appreciated that they may contain questions that could not be answered directly but hoped these would be properly addressed at the next meeting. The presentations are provided alongside the meeting notes.
- 3.2 **Airspace Modernisation Issues Arising from Workshop.** SC gave a presentation on the potential impact of Performance Based Navigation (PBN), asking Heathrow, CAA and DfT explain how they will avoid overflowed communities in the UK suffering the disastrous outcomes experienced in the US. He asked who would be held accountable for the effects on the impacted population and asked Heathrow to state how it would address these issues.
- 3.3 **Business Case for Airspace Redesign Principles.** PW requested a re-evaluation of the business case for airspace modernisation in the context of a reduced growth forecast. He noted that the DfT Jet Zero consultation had stated that airspace modernisation would allow the aviation industry to deliver a further £29 billion to the UK economy, but believed this figure was overstated by 30% and asked for the benefits to be requantified. He also requested an evaluation of the impact of PBN on affected communities.
- 3.4 BC thanked both members for their presentations. She advised that some points around airspace modernisation may be covered later in the meeting, and reminded members of Heathrow's previous comments on PBN, explaining that PBN has been mandated and that Heathrow was looking at how to implement this in the best way for communities. She noted that some of the questions were for Heathrow and others were for DfT and CAA, so she invited relevant members to either respond now or contact Heathrow after the meeting to collate answers to the questions raised.
- 3.5 Rebecca Christie (RC) said she would be happy to take some of the questions away to discuss with Heathrow and CAA. She clarified that policy options were not based on the £29 billion forecast and the DfT would be doing their own cost-benefit analysis. BC took an action to come back with answers on the questions raised. **ACTION BC**
- 3.6 RB noted that at the last HCNF SC had asked Matt Ross (MR) of the Airspace Change Organisation Group (ACOG) if they had looked at the introduction of NextGen in the USA. MR had said he would speak to SC after the meeting to discuss the lessons learned from this and RB asked if this had happened. SC advised he had not spoken to MR and RC committed to ask ACOG for an update. **ACTION RC**
- 3.7 PC asked Heathrow to consider restoring funding for the Forum's independent technical advisor so that he could be reinstated in January 2022. **ACTION BC**

4 Airspace change update

- 4.1 Jenni Sykes (JS) gave an update on Heathrow' Airspace Change Proposals (ACP). The presentation is provided alongside the meeting notes. JS explained that Heathrow's previous ACPs for the Compton route and Independent Parallel Approaches (IPA) had been withdrawn following the successful progression of Heathrow's broader ACP for airspace modernisation. The Slightly Steeper Approaches Trial ACP has also been withdrawn as this has now been approved for adoption as a permanent procedure.
- 4.2 JS advised that Heathrow has been engaging with stakeholders on Design Principles for airspace modernisation through workshops and focus groups and welcomed stakeholder feedback, reminding members that all feedback should be submitted via the correct channels by emailing airspace@heathrow.com. A summary will be provided at the next round of workshops starting in November.
- 4.3 Cllr Christine Richardson (CR) asked if the Design Principles matrix had been sent to Elmbridge Council. PW also asked if LAANC had been contacted about the workshops. *[These were both confirmed after the meeting.]*
- 4.4 SC questioned how it was possible to arrive at Design Principles without an evidence base and reiterated that the issues he raised earlier should be addressed before going ahead. RC explained that there would be a requirement to change legislation around PBN so that would involve consultation. She noted that the CAA was looking to reinstate the technical group and PBN would be a part of that. With regard to implementation of PBN in the US, while she agreed that lessons could always be learned internationally, she noted that just as SC had referred to Heathrow as being different from other communities, the US was also different, so it was not possible to make exact comparisons. She added that while PBN was seen as a large element of airspace modernisation, that did not mean that every route at every airport would involve concentration. She assured SC that DfT were aware of the potential impacts of PBN and would look at what it meant for Heathrow specifically and also for the whole of the airspace modernisation programme.

5 eTBS Pairwise

- 5.1 Brendan Kelly (BK) gave a presentation on eTBS Pairwise, the latest evolution of Time-Based Separation (TBS) for arrivals, to be implemented at Heathrow in Spring 2023. The presentation is provided alongside the meeting notes.
- 5.2 BK explained that there were various factors that determine the spacing between arriving aircraft, such as turbulence from the aircraft in front (wake vortex), and that wind conditions could cause delays, environmentally unfriendly holding and cancellations. In 2015, Heathrow introduced TBS to change the requirements for spacing between aircraft from distance to time, resulting in a 62% reduction in headwind-related delay, 30% fewer go-arounds and a 115,000-minute reduction in holding delays. In 2018, enhanced TBS (eTBS) was introduced to take account of additional factors such as aircraft speed changes. However, he explained that the current spacing rules were still very generic, with aircraft types grouped resulting in some aircraft being over-separated. eTBS Pairwise will improve this by identifying safe separation distances between specific types of aircraft, resulting in the ability to land up to a maximum estimated additional 1.5 aircraft per hour to provide further operational resilience, less arrival holding, lower fuel burn and lower CO₂ emissions.

- 5.3 Cllr Chris Howorth (CH) said he understood how this would benefit airlines and airport operators, and also accepted that there may be some community benefit from reduced go-arounds and holding but asked if there was any chance that the improvements could be used to reduce night flying rather than squeezing more flights into the airport. JS confirmed that the resilience benefits would support reduced delays throughout the day which would lead to a reduced risk of late runners. PB asked if it was possible to quantify how many night flights might be reduced. JS advised that more detailed analysis would be undertaken by NATS in the next phases of the project which would provide more information about the delay reductions and operational resilience benefits.
- 5.4 *[Following the meeting, JS added that while it would help the airport recover more quickly from large events that cause airport-wide delays, it would not help with delays due to individual circumstances or events that occur for other reasons late in the day. She noted that the number of late runners had reduced over the years and that this was partly due to the original implementation of TBS and eTBS and the resilience benefits that they (and other initiatives) deliver. The deployment of eTBS Pairwise will support more resilient running of the existing schedule with reduced arrival delays and faster recovery from arrival queues, resulting in some late runners being prevented or brought in earlier.]*
- 5.5 Bridget Bell (BB) asked why the discussion was focussed on night flights. JS responded that a question had been asked about potential benefits to the community. eTBS Pairwise supports operation resilience and so has the potential to help reduce the requirement for some night movements.
- 5.6 PB asked if there were any noise reduction benefits as this was being presented at a noise forum. JS acknowledged that there would be no change in the noise footprint associated with this concept but explained that it was being presented at the forum so that communities were aware of changes to operations, in line with Heathrow's commitment to keep communities updated.
- 5.7 Armelle Thomas (AT) claimed that there had not been go-arounds over Harmondsworth village for the last 52 years, but they were now occurring frequently. BK explained that there have always been missed approaches at Heathrow, typically one to three per day, normally because the aircraft in front is slow to vacate the runway. He advised her that he had designed the missed approach procedure 25 years ago and did not believe it had changed, but he said he would look into it for her. **ACTION BK**
- 5.8 DG asked if this technology could be used to raise the holding stacks from 7,000ft to 10,000ft. BK replied that was a different issue related to airspace design which JS was leading on.
- 5.9 *[Following the meeting, JS explained that the eTBS project, and planned updates to eTBS pairwise, are about changing the separation between successive aircraft on final approach. eTBS will enable reduced arrival delays (which are largely borne out through stack holding) for the same level of traffic demand. However it will not change the altitudes of the holding stacks. Moving the stacks would require an airspace change proposal (ACP) under the CAP1616 process, including an assessment of the impact to flights between the stack and the final runway approach. Heathrow's airspace modernisation programme is now underway, and this programme will include the review and redesign of all routes into and out of Heathrow, including the location and altitudes of any future holding stacks. Heathrow does not have plans to make any changes to holding stacks prior to the introduction of its new airspace design through the airspace modernisation ACP.]*

6 Factors That Affect Departure Heights

- 6.1 Pete Glass (PG) from NATS provided an overview of factors that can affect departure heights in response to a question from Justine Foley at the last forum. He discussed the effect of aircraft type, load, atmosphere and route interactions on departure climbs. The presentation is provided alongside the meeting notes.
- 6.2 DG suggested that raising the height of the holding stacks would help avoid some of the issues caused by route interactions. JS reiterated that this would be looked at as part of Heathrow's airspace modernisation programme and encouraged members to provide feedback to help shape the Design Principles for options development.

7 Net Zero Overview

- 7.1 Matt Prescott (MP) provided an overview of Heathrow's net zero plan in response to a presentation from PW at the last meeting. He noted that global industry momentum for net zero was growing and outlined solutions for taking the carbon out of flying. The presentation is provided alongside the meeting notes.
- 7.2 PW raised questions about demand management and the payback period for Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF). BC proposed that PW and MP schedule a discussion after the meeting, a summary of which would be provided when the actions are covered at the next meeting. **ACTION MP**

8 AOB

- 8.1 No other business was tabled. BC thanked members for joining the meeting and advised that the meeting notes would be circulated later than usual due to annual leave.

Date of next meeting

Wednesday 26 January 2022 (1:00pm – 3:30pm)