

## Heathrow Community Noise Forum

Meeting notes (28 July 2021, 13:00 – 15:20, Microsoft Teams)

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### Confirmed attendees (excluding observers)

<b>Name</b>	<b>Borough / Organisation</b>
Cllr Dr Wendy Matthews	Buckinghamshire Council
Cllr Christine Richardson	Elmbridge Borough Council
Cllr Linda Burke	London Borough of Ealing
Ajit Bansal	London Borough of Hounslow
Colin Stanbury	London Borough of Richmond upon Thames
Cllr Chris Howorth	Runnymede Borough Council
Cllr Peter Szanto	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
Justine Foley	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)
Tina Richardson	The Windlesham Society
Matt Ross	ACOG
Darren Rhodes	CAA
Seonaid Reed	CAA
Ian Greene	DfT
Rebecca Christie	DfT
Rupert Basham	ICCAN
Ian Jopson	NATS
Pete Glass	NATS
Mike Hornby	NATS
Dale Reeson	Heathrow
Becky Coffin	Heathrow
Rick Norman	Heathrow
Jennifer Sykes	Heathrow
Michael Glen	Heathrow
David Knights	Heathrow
Andy Knight	Heathrow
Richard West	Heathrow

### Apologies

<b>Name</b>	<b>Borough / Organisation</b>
Howard Simmons	ICCAN
Gary Marshall	DfT
Spencer Norton	British Airways
John Coates	London Borough of Richmond upon Thames

Carole Marr  
Deborah Petty  
Sue Janota  
Cllr David Hilton

Aircraft Noise Three Villages (AN3V)  
Molesey Residents Association  
Surrey County Council  
Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead

## 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. She welcomed new members Cllr Christine Richardson (Elmbridge Borough Council) and Andy Knight who replaces Laura Jones as Operational Impacts and Community Engagement Lead at Heathrow.
- 1.2 BC noted that no comments had been received on the previous meeting notes from 28 April, so these will now be marked as final. She went through the previous actions as detailed below.
- 1.3 **Arrange a dedicated meeting on higher climb rates (2.12).** Rick Norman (RN) advised that he had met with Darren Rhodes from CAA and Kjeld Vinkx (KV) who carried out a departure noise study for the community groups in his former role as independent technical advisor to the forum. He had also spoken to Dave Gilbert (DG) and others to establish the best way forward, which will involve having a further session with a small group before reporting back to the forum with next steps. **ACTION RN**
- 1.4 **Confirm whether Heathrow will fund KV to attend the dedicated meetings (2.13).** BC confirmed that KV would be funded to attend the meetings.
- 1.5 **Collate questions on higher climb rates that had not been fully answered (2.14).** BC advised that these had been collated for use at the dedicated meeting. DG asked if they could be shared, and RN confirmed that they could. **ACTION RN**
- 1.6 **Arrange an agenda item to discuss how the Airspace Change Proposal (ACP) process will work in relation to Airspace Modernisation (5.5).** BC advised that Matt Ross (MR) from the Airspace Change Organising Group (ACOG) will discuss this later in the meeting.
- 1.7 BC provided a short business update. She advised that Heathrow's financing remains resilient despite growing losses due to Covid-19 which now stand at £2.9bn. Heathrow has reduced its cash burn by over 50% and has taken financing action to cover its commitments until October 2022. She noted that less than 4 million people travelled through Heathrow in the first six months of 2021, a level that would have taken just 18 days to reach in 2019. Despite recent changes to the traffic light system, testing requirements and travel restrictions could see Heathrow welcome fewer passengers in 2021 than in 2020. She added that the UK was falling further behind its European competitors, with cargo volume 18% down on pre-pandemic levels while Frankfurt and Schiphol were up by 9%. Trade routes between the EU and the US have recovered to nearly 50% of pre-pandemic levels while the UK remains 92% down.
- 1.8 BC noted that throughout the pandemic, the safety and security of passengers and colleagues has remained a priority, so Heathrow was proud to have gained recognition from the Airports Council International and the CAA for the measures put in place throughout the terminals. Heathrow has also been awarded a 4-star Covid-19 Airport Safety Accreditation by Skytrax, the highest achieved by a UK airport.

- 1.9 BC advised that traffic levels in July so far have ranged between 430 and 624 daily movements, a long way down on Heathrow's pre-pandemic levels of 1,300 daily movements. She explained that future traffic levels remain uncertain as airlines continue to adjust their schedules to react to external events and government announcements.

## **2 Community Forums Review Update**

- 2.1 BC gave an update on the review of Heathrow's engagement channels which was being undertaken due to the impacts of Covid-19 on the business. The presentation is provided alongside the meeting notes. She reiterated that Heathrow had consulted with stakeholders in January and thanked those who took the time to participate in the consultation process. Initial proposals for a new forums structure were now being worked on to streamline Heathrow's engagement and make it more effective.
- 2.2 BC advised that Heathrow plans to hold a new quarterly Noise and Airspace Community Forum (NACF), replacing the current HCNF but with a similar structure. It is proposed for the new forum to have an independent chair to ensure the right balance is struck between Heathrow's agenda and that of the community. Many consultation respondents also felt that it was important to engage with a wide range of diverse stakeholders to ensure a variety of voices and opinions around the table. BC noted that Heathrow will be looking to engage with new groups over the coming months and welcomed feedback from members on any groups that might be good additions to the forum. She also advised that the new forum would have a new code of conduct which all attendees would be asked to adhere to. She explained that Heathrow was also looking to create stronger links between forums, so the new NACF will be directly involved with the new version of the Heathrow Community Engagement Board (HCEB). She advised that the overall forums structure was not yet complete, and the need for sub-groups or working groups would be considered where they would be most useful, noting that some groups could convene as and when needed. She reiterated that these were initial thoughts and built into a wider forum structure which was still being worked through. More detail will be provided in the coming months and members were encouraged to submit feedback after the meeting.
- 2.3 Christine Taylor (CT) asked if the same independent chair would be used for all forums. BC advised that this was not the expectation, although it would not be ruled out if the right person came through the recruitment process. However, the best candidate for each forum would be sought and the NACF chair would be expected to have a certain amount of technical knowledge. Margaret Majumdar (MM) asked if the appointment panel for the independent chair would include community representatives. Andy Knight (AK) confirmed that it would, and that more information would be provided as the plans develop.

## **3 Reducing Departure Noise – Next Steps**

- 3.1 DG put forward his proposals for the next steps to minimise noise disturbance from departures based on KV's study. The presentation is provided alongside the meeting notes. He asked RN to confirm the timescale for the dedicated meeting on the issue. RN noted that DG's presentation raised a number of questions including the interpretation of the Aeronautical Information Publication (AIP). He explained that KV had limited availability in August so the meeting would most likely be at the end of August or start of September, with 6 or 7 people involved to come up with the next steps and move the debate forward.

- 3.2 Justine Foley (JF) claimed there was an increase in low flights over her area 13 miles from the airport. Jennifer Sykes (JS) explained that increases in the frequency of aircraft could be due to changes in demand as the impacts of Covid-19 change for different countries. She added that some locations at these distances were affected by aircraft required to be positioned below arrival tracks due to other traffic, as current airspace is inefficient and needs to be modernised. DG asked which routes were affected by this issue. JS responded that she would provide examples. [Post meeting clarification: It later transpired that JF was located under a Noise Preferential Route (NPR) just 6 miles from the airport. It would be rare to see aircraft levelling off due to other traffic within the NPRs, this is more commonly seen further out. Within the NPRs there can be range of altitudes due to factors such as weather conditions, aircraft type and aircraft weight. A presentation covering both regions and factors that can influence aircraft heights within each will be provided at the next meeting, including common regions where aircraft may be impacted by other traffic.] **ACTION JS**

## 4 Early Morning Arrivals

- 4.1 Paul Beckford (PB) gave a presentation describing the history and new location of Hong Kong Airport, resulting in flight paths which overfly the sea and avoid the population centre or only overfly it after 30km. He noted that flights now operated through the night at Hong Kong, so the early morning British Airways flight could now depart later and arrive at Heathrow after 07:00. He suggested that the historical legacy of early morning arrivals at Heathrow was therefore no longer relevant and asked for details of the economic benefit they provide and whether that would still hold true for forecast demand levels. The presentation is provided alongside the meeting notes.
- 4.2 PB asked DfT to review the historical early morning arrivals slots where Far East airports can now operate at night without impacting their local population and very early arrivals into Heathrow could be pushed back later. Rebecca Christie (RC) asked for a copy of his questions and he responded that he would send them by email. RN advised that although the impact of night flights at Hong Kong was much reduced, they still had a night quota system in place and communities impacted by night-time operations. PB responded that he would pick this up with RN after the meeting. **ACTION PB**

## 5 Managing Aviation Demand and Emissions

- 5.1 Peter Willan (PW) gave a presentation on global and UK aviation demand and carbon reduction initiatives. He stated that no single initiative would achieve Net Zero Carbon and put forward a number of recommendations including carbon pricing, air passenger duty and a quota scheme to manage efficiency, hybrids and sustainable aviation fuels. The presentation is provided alongside the meeting notes.
- 5.2 RC thanked PW for this presentation and noted that everyone had the opportunity to submit their views as part of the government's decarbonisation consultation. She advised that the issue was a priority across government, that they had started mobilising actions and those should start coming out over the next few months. She noted that ACOG's airspace modernisation masterplan would also provide more details of airspace changes that would bring benefits for carbon, noise and capacity, so that would also need to be considered and the conversation would continue over the next few years.

- 5.3 BC agreed that carbon was an important issue and a focus at Heathrow. She noted that former HCNF chair Matt Gorman (MG) was now leading on carbon strategy and suggested that his team could provide a presentation at a future meeting to show what Heathrow was doing in this area. However, she was aware that the HCNF was a noise forum and asked Paul Conway (PC) to find out if community group members would like carbon covered at future meetings. PC suggested an alternative option would be for PW to meet MG prior to a summary presentation at the next meeting. **ACTION BC**
- 5.4 Cllr Chris Howorth (CH) felt that noise and carbon were both important issues and it might be useful to have one or two meetings a year that linked both areas. However, he considered noise to be a large enough topic for this group and members interested in emissions should engage with the relevant workstream instead.
- 5.5 Stephen Clark (SC) asked if the DfT would be considering other climate change impacts that aviation has on the upper atmosphere, with DG citing contrails and CO2 levels as examples. BC suggested that RC take the question away. **ACTION RC**

## 6 Airspace Modernisation and the Role of ACOG

- 6.1 Matt Ross (MR) gave a presentation outlining ACOG's role to coordinate the delivery of key aspects of the UK Government's Airspace Modernisation Strategy, including the development of a masterplan to identify which individual but interdependent airspace design changes need to be developed together to deliver the range of benefits that modernisation will bring. The presentation is provided alongside the meeting notes.
- 6.2 SC asked if ACOG had looked at the introduction of NextGen in the USA, saying that it had led to legal challenges due to community concerns. MR said he would speak to SC after the meeting to discuss the lessons learned from this.
- 6.3 DG noted that ACOG's programme would be managed according to government policy based on the Survey of Noise Attitudes (SoNA) which he claimed was not robust and did not take account of change impacts. He asked how much ACOG has discussed the issues with communities who understood them and stated that any growth would result in more community impact. MR advised him that the airspace proposals would be developed by the airports following the CAA's airspace change guidance CAP1616 which provides an opportunity for local stakeholders to have their say on issues such as noise impacts. He emphasised that ACOG would not be creating airspace designs, their role was to ensure optimisation of the overall system such as where there was potential for overlaps in designs, a need for deconfliction and to ensure designs fit together effectively.
- 6.4 PW noted that NATS had produced figures in 2017 around delays and punctuality based on substantial increase in demand and asked if WebTAG analysis would be done on this. MR replied that ACOG was looking into what was possible.
- 6.5 Armelle Thomas (AT) asked if the government's £5.5m funding for airports to develop and evaluate design options was just for Heathrow or the whole of the UK. RC advised that it was for all airports and would be distributed according to the work steps that each airport has to follow. AT asked if ACOG and its chair were independent. MR explained that CAA and DfT had decided that a separate body was required which was independent of the airspace change sponsors, i.e. NATS and the airports. He added that their chair had a military background, and more details about ACOG were available at [www.acog.aero](http://www.acog.aero). AT added that the main stakeholders were those affected by Heathrow and their operations so they should be at the core of consultation.

## 7 Heathrow's Airspace Modernisation Plans

- 7.1 Jennifer Sykes (JS) presented an update on Heathrow's airspace modernisation plans, explaining that Heathrow was commencing an airspace change for the current two-runway environment to meet the government's timeline for airspace modernisation. This will modernise and redesign all arrival routes into and out of the airport. She noted that expansion plans remained on pause as Heathrow prioritises recovery from Covid-19. She stated that the aim of this new airspace change is to minimise the number of airspace changes, as well as future changes needed, with the requirements for the redesign of the Compton departure route, easterly alternation and parallel approaches captured within the new airspace change covered by the re-design, rather than progressed separately. The presentation is provided alongside the meeting notes.
- 7.2 PW asked if all of the flight path changes would be included in one airspace change proposal. JS confirmed it would be designed as one airspace change although it was possible it may be deployed in phases, it was too early to know at present.
- 7.3 PB asked if Heathrow's airspace modernisation plans would include any changes related to expansion. JS reiterated that the airspace change would be based on Heathrow's existing two runways. However, where possible, Heathrow would seek to minimise further airspace changes (for the routes to their current two runways) required for any future expansion of the airport.
- 7.4 Robert Buick (RB) suggested that mention of Independent Parallel Approaches (IPA) sounded like expansion and Margaret Majumdar (MM) added that IPA would harm communities by sending arrivals over new residential areas. PB asked if IPA would be used as part of the process to improve efficiency or add more flights. Dale Reeson (DR) acknowledged that IPA had a contentious history but explained that it was just a technology that makes both runways independent of each other. He explained that it did not mean that Heathrow was proposing to look at the previously discussed flight paths for IPA, just that Heathrow would look at how technology could be used to remove the dependency of the two arrival streams within this re-design of the airspace. He added that the airspace change proposal was not seeking to increase capacity above the current 480,000 movement cap; any such increase would have to be sought through the Town and Country Planning Act or a Development Consent Order.
- 7.5 DG asked if it was possible to highlight where airspace changes would improve the noise environment. JS explained that the design process had not started yet. The first discussion would be around the design principles which would then be used to shape the proposals, so it was not possible to give examples yet. DG thought this should be at the forefront of the design principles, and BC advised that he would be able to provide that feedback during the first stage of the engagement process.
- 7.6 BB was concerned that improving efficiency and reducing fuel burn were considered more important than noise with regard to IPA. CH responded that reduced fuel burn would provide an emissions benefit, and if it resulted in reduced holds it may reduce noise in some areas. DR noted that the previous design principles consultation included noise in the design principles and so had the potential to be the case again, subject to the feedback in the engagement. PW responded that noise should be included as part of the objectives. Ian Jopson (IJ) advised that DfT and CAA have specific rules on altitude-based priorities, where noise should be a priority and where emissions should be considered. RN added that noise would be a key area of focus in the airspace change proposal and his role would include seeking out opportunities to reduce noise impacts. BC reminded members that they would have a chance to provide their views as part of the design principles stage of the process and Seonaid Reed (SR) also encouraged members to participate in this.

## **8 West of UK Airspace Deployment**

- 8.1 Mike Hornby (MH) gave an update on airspace changes taking place in the west of the UK, involving the systemisation of routes to enable a new route network above 7,000ft and the introduction of Free Route Airspace above 24,500ft. The presentation is provided alongside the meeting notes. He advised that the changes would affect Heathrow operators but there should be no noticeable effects at Heathrow or the surrounding area. He added that an industry consultation would take place later this year prior to planned implementation in 2023, but members were also welcomed to comment if they wished.

## **9 UK Aeronautical Information Publication (AIP) Administrative Updates**

- 9.1 Mike Glen (MG) advised members of a number of administrative changes to the Heathrow Aeronautical Information Publication (AIP) which will come into effect from September 2021. He explained that this was purely an administrative amendment to align multiple sections of the AIP, so it did not involve changes to tracks over the ground or changes to procedures flown today. SC suggested that the update would be an ideal time to address steeper departures and descents. MG reiterated that the changes were purely administrative, and that any change to a procedure would have to go through the regulatory change process.

## **10 AOB**

- 10.1 AK informed members that from 2 to 14 August Heathrow would be changing to single runway operations overnight from 20:00 to accommodate essential surface repair works in the touchdown area of the northern runway (09L). He added that the works would not take place if there was a risk of low visibility the following morning, so the decision to proceed with the works would be made on a daily basis.

## **Date of next meeting**

Wednesday 20 October 2021 (1:00pm – 3:00pm)