

Heathrow Community Noise Forum

Meeting notes (26 January 2022, 13:00 – 15:30, Microsoft Teams)

Confirmed attendees

Name	Borough / Organisation
Cllr Dr Wendy Matthews	Buckinghamshire Council
Steve Braund	Buckinghamshire Council
Cllr Christine Richardson	Elmbridge Borough Council
Surinderpal Suri	London Borough of Ealing
John Coates	London Borough of Richmond upon Thames
Cllr David Hilton	Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead
Cllr Japneet Sohi	Runnymede Borough Council
Sue Janota	Surrey County Council
Malcolm Richards	Wokingham Borough Council
Margaret Majumdar	Ealing Aircraft Noise Action Group (EANAG)
Paul Conway	Englefield Green Action Group (EGAG)
Robert Buick	Englefield Green Action Group (EGAG)
Tim Walker	Forest Hill Society
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
Alastair Rosenschein	Richmond Heathrow Campaign
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
Darren Rhodes	CAA
Rebecca Christie	DfT
Gary Marshall	DfT
Tim May	DfT
David Matthews	NATS
Robin Clarke	NATS
Becky Coffin	Heathrow
Rick Norman	Heathrow
Jennifer Sykes	Heathrow
Richard West	Heathrow
Michael Glen	Heathrow
Andy Knight	Heathrow
David Knights	Heathrow
John Henderson	Heathrow

Apologies

Name	Borough / Organisation
Cllr Peter Szanto	Surrey County Council
Nigel Davies	Englefield Green Action Group (EGAG)
Spencer Norton	British Airways
Ian Jopson	NATS
Pete Glass	NATS

1 Welcome and Introduction

- 1.1 Becky Coffin (BC), Director of Communities and Sustainability at Heathrow, welcomed members to the virtual forum and noted apologies for absence.
- 1.2 Peter Willan (PW) asked who was present from the Heathrow team. BC listed herself as Director of Communities and Sustainability, Andy Knight (AK) and Richard West (RW) from the Operational Impacts Engagement Team, Rick Norman (RN) Head of Noise, and Jennifer Sykes (JS), Dave Knights (DK) and Michael Glen (MG) from the operational side. She noted that John Henderson (JH) would be joining later.
- 1.3 BC advised that no comments had been received on the previous meeting notes from 20 October, so these will now be marked as final.
- 1.4 BC went through the actions from the previous meeting as detailed below.
- 1.5 **Arrange a second dedicated meeting on higher climb rates (1.3).** RN confirmed that the meeting had taken place on 18 January and that a scope of work had been drafted for a more detailed study on departure profiles and their potential impact. A follow up session will take place in February. Dave Gilbert (DG) asked for the slides from the meeting to be shared with attendees. These were circulated after the forum meeting.
- 1.6 **Respond to PW's claim that there was enough capacity to move all early morning arrivals and pre-07:00 flights to after 07:00 (1.6).** RN advised that Heathrow's response to the Government's consultation on night flight restrictions would be made available, presenting Heathrow's view on night flights and providing extensive detail on those points. He explained that it was not as simple as stating that a certain number of night flights could be moved to the daytime, citing passenger demand, commercial viability, the economic value of night flights and how they feed the first wave of connections to other parts of country and Europe. He acknowledged there were different views around the room, but Heathrow had provided a long and detailed response to the DfT that would be shared with members. **ACTION RN**
- 1.7 **Respond to community presentation questions (3.5).** BC noted that most of the questions had either been covered during the last meeting or subsequently as part of correspondence around design principles for Airspace Modernisation which would be covered later in the meeting. There had been a request for an Environmental Impact Assessment and BC confirmed that Heathrow would be undertaking a full assessment of the proposals which would be clearly communicated to members at the appropriate time in the process.

- 1.8 BC noted that there had also been a suggestion that the World Health Organisation (WHO) guidelines should be used as a starting point for assessing adverse impacts. Tim May (TM) advised that the DfT had set up a process in 2018 led by the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA) which was looking at all recent evidence on the health effects of noise, including the WHO guidelines, and a report summarising the findings was being drafted. He added that under current airspace guidance adverse effects are measured from 52dB, but that could change in the future.
- 1.9 **DfT to follow up with the Airspace Change Organising Group (ACOG) on lessons learned from NextGen (3.6).** Rebecca Christie (RC) passed on apologies from ACOG and noted that they would be in touch by the end of the week. This was confirmed after the meeting.
- 1.10 **Request to consider restoring the role of independent technical advisor to the forum (3.7).** BC advised that she had responded to Paul Conway's email on 25 November, explaining that Heathrow was in the process of reviewing the role as part of its community forum review. She confirmed that Heathrow was committed to resuming the technical advisor role and would be considering how it would work in conjunction with the new independent chair.
- 1.11 **Investigate whether procedures for missed approaches had changed (5.7).** MG advised that the team had spent a lot of time analysing tracks for missed approaches (also known as go-arounds), especially for runway 27R which results in go-arounds heading north. The analysis had confirmed that there had been no changes to missed approach procedures, with tracks broadly similar to before the pandemic, although he noted that there were far fewer go-arounds in 2021 compared to 2019.
- 1.12 **Heathrow to discuss Net Zero plans with PW (7.2).** PW confirmed that Matt Prescott from Heathrow had been in touch to arrange a follow-up meeting.

2 Business Update

- 2.1 BC advised that 2021 Q4 had been a very changeable quarter. She recalled that there had been a strong focus on climate change in November with the COP26 summit in Glasgow, and that it had been positive to see the UK taking a lead in setting out a path for aviation to achieve Net Zero, with 23 nations signing the International Aviation Climate Ambition Declaration.
- 2.2 BC described how December had been a challenging period for the business, with at least 600,000 passengers cancelling their travel plans from Heathrow due to Omicron and the uncertainty caused by swiftly imposed government travel restrictions.
- 2.3 BC noted that Heathrow welcomed just 19.4 million passengers in 2021, less than a quarter of 2019 and below 2020 levels. She explained that there was significant doubt over the speed at which demand will recover, with forecasts from the International Air Transport Association (IATA) suggesting passenger numbers will not reach pre-pandemic levels until 2025. However, Heathrow hopes to see confidence in travel return this year and forecasts 43 million passengers for 2022. The airport is preparing for a summer peak, and this presents an opportunity to boost jobs locally and to allow many people in the local community to start a career at Heathrow.

3 Community Forum Review Update

- 3.1 AK gave an update on the progress of the HCNF's transition to a revised structure. He advised that recruitment activities for the new independent chair had commenced as planned on 4 January, with online advertisements published by [Guidant Global](#) and other recruitment sites from 17 January. He noted that the number of applications had been low so far but were starting to pick up.
- 3.2 AK reminded members that a panel was being assembled to help with the selection process, with four members comprising current HCNF chair BC and one representative each from industry, local authority and local community groups. He thanked Spencer Norton (SN) from British Airways and Paul Beckford (PB) from HACAN for applying for the industry and community positions respectively. There were no other applications and no objections, so their appointment was confirmed. AK asked if any local councillors or council officers would like to put themselves forward for the remaining position. Cllr David Hilton volunteered, and his appointment was confirmed after the meeting.

4 Community Presentations

- 4.1 BC handed the meeting over to Paul Conway (PC) to chair the community presentations. PC reiterated his request for independent funding to ensure that communities have the resource to put forward proposals based on specialist advice.

5 Night Noise Modelling - Model Comparison and Implications

- 5.1 Dave Gilbert (DG) observed that night noise was a serious concern for communities and was a relevant topic as DfT develops its thoughts on the next night noise regime. He noted that noise contours were calculated through modelling, and that modelling was based on assumptions. He observed that two models were in use, the Aircraft Noise Contour Model (ANCON) and the Aviation Environmental Design Tool (AEDT), but he expressed concern that the models seemed to produce different results. He urged the DfT to validate ANCON, as results from AEDT appeared to show more people affected by night noise. The presentation is provided alongside the meeting notes.
- 5.2 Darren Rhodes (DR) explained that both models were mathematically identical and that both used inputs from Heathrow radar data. He clarified that ANCON did not use assumptions about Continuous Descent Approaches (CDA) but relied on processed radar data. He noted that DG's conclusion that the two models produced different results was based on comparing two different scenarios, one using an annual average night and the other using a summer average night. He explained that an annual average night in 2018 comprised 64% westerly operations while the summer average night figure was 80%, so the AEDT contours were based on 25% more flights to the east of the airport. He added that in the summer there was also a slightly higher number of operations compared to an average annual day, so there would possibly be up to a 30% difference between the two scenarios. He concluded that this would massively close up the difference in the numbers, with any remaining difference being down to differing approaches to modelling uncertainties between the models.
- 5.3 Surinderpal Suri (SS) asked how the models took account of population growth. DR noted that while there was only a census every ten years, CACI provided population estimates every year as well as forecasts up to 2050.

- 5.4 Peter Willan (PW) thought that the models used an absorption correction of 8dB instead of a lower figure of 6dB which would show a larger number of people affected by noise. DR responded that the 8dB assumption had been dispensed with during the transition from ANCON1 to ANCON2 in 1998, with the model now using data provided by the industry which actually reflects the acoustic absorption of around 6.5dB to 7.5dB and varies by aircraft.
- 5.5 DG asked what would be done to validate the models. Following the meeting, DR advised that CAA was considering what more could be done, noting the technical limitations associated with measuring noise so far from the airport in the areas with other noise sources.
- 5.6 RN advised that in developing the AEDT model for use at Heathrow, the consultants had compared the outputs with ANCON and saw good alignment which was consistent with DR's observations. He also noted that the population figures quoted in the presentation showed the number exposed rather than the number sleep disturbed.

6 Arrivals Noise

- 6.1 PB gave a presentation on the impact of aircraft noise from arrivals over communities further away from the airport such as Windlesham and Lewisham. He posed a number of questions around Heathrow's policy for reducing the impact of arrivals noise, Continuous Descent Approach (CDA) and joining point adherence (i.e. the point at which aircraft join the final approach into Heathrow). He also asked if any work had been done to explore the introduction of the Low Noise Augmentation System (LNAS) at Heathrow. The presentation is provided alongside the meeting notes.
- 6.2 RN advised that Heathrow had a number of measures in place to reduce the impact of arrivals noise, such as assessing landing gear deployment, implementing slightly steeper approaches, working with airlines to retrofit A320 aircraft with deflectors to reduce noise and providing incentives to encourage quieter flights. He noted that when he had first looked at CDA, adherence had been at around 60-65% and was now in the high eighties. He advised that Heathrow works with individual airlines to try and improve their performance year-on-year, but as adherence rises it becomes progressively harder to deliver further improvements.
- 6.3 MG advised that his team was responsible for monitoring a large number of compliance statistics to understand what was happening, identify anomalies and work with airlines to make improvements. He explained that night-time joining point adherence for 2021 was 98.08%. He noted that compliance figures may appear to drop during the summer period, but this was due to the complexities of barometric pressure and radar corrections for high and low pressure. Compliance data is reported to airlines and NATS and Heathrow works with all parties to improve performance. Compliance is also dependent on crew familiarity, with many crews only flying to Heathrow once or twice a year.
- 6.4 MG noted that a diagram showing multiple track profiles in the presentation used real data but the boxes showing distances and heights were indicative. Furthermore, the diagram did not separate out tracks from different time periods so there was no way of knowing which were early morning arrivals and were therefore subject to different criteria. DR asked why the presentation was focussed on data from February 2019. PB explained that was the period provided by Heathrow on the graph. MG added that the data had been provided in response to a separate community group request last year and represented a typical pre-pandemic week. DR noted that much of the information covered in the presentation had been studied before and offered to share a 1989 report.

- 6.5 MG explained that CDA was measured by looking for a segment of level flight in the descent profile from 6,000ft down to the start of the final approach. He advised that average compliance in 2021 was 89.34% and that statistics were published on the Heathrow website at www.heathrow.com/noise. DG observed that the stacks stopped at 7,000ft and asked why CDA was only measured from 6,000ft. He added that CDA compliance allowed 2.5nm of flat flying and suggested a measure of 0.5km or 1km would be more informative to indicate whether further fuel savings or noise reduction could be achieved. MG offered to provide a response after the meeting. **ACTION MG**
- 6.6 MG explained that, following an initial trial with Zurich Airport, LNAS was now an initiative led by the Single European Sky ATM Research (SESAR) programme, using software to constantly analyse the best approach angle and adjust the aircraft's profile. He observed that the software still required certification, funding and manufacturer approval. It is currently being trialled in Zurich, but the terrain and operating environment there are different to Heathrow, so what is appropriate at one airport may not be appropriate at another. He noted that NATS air traffic controllers at Heathrow essentially provide the same information to crews in the form of "distance to go" information, from which crews then manually calculate their descent rate. He added that NATS are currently the only Air Navigation Service Provider (ANSP) in Europe to do this as standard.
- 6.7 JS noted that one of the design principles for Airspace Modernisation was to "use noise efficient operational practices to limit and, where possible, reduce adverse impacts from aircraft noise", so Heathrow would be exploring the options available to meet that principle. However, she advised that different airport environments lead to different requirements, so what is appropriate at one airport may not be appropriate at another. She added that Heathrow could only consider tools which were suitably mature for deployment to ensure confidence that they would be safe and deliver the desired outcomes.
- 6.8 Tim Walker (TW) advised that he was having simultaneous conversations with London City Airport, noting that they were further ahead in their Stage 2 design. He quoted their CEO as saying that Heathrow needed to "lift their lid" to allow London City to fly higher.
- 6.9 RN proposed that compliance statistics could be presented regularly at the forum. PB agreed and requested a separate meeting to discuss the topic further. **ACTION RN**

7 Airspace Design Principles - Community Observations

- 7.1 SC recapped that Community Noise Group representatives had met with Heathrow on 7 January for further engagement on design principles for Airspace Modernisation. He noted that the group had highlighted the significance of Air Navigation Guidance (ANG) at the meeting. He acknowledged that Heathrow had provided a written response today which he had not yet read.
- 7.2 PW advised that he had written to Heathrow earlier in the day and summarised his requested amendments to the meeting minutes. He noted that ACOG was about to publish its masterplan to support the delivery of the Airspace Modernisation Strategy and stressed it would be important to see how other airports would be included, as he had not seen design principles for other airports that shared airspace with Heathrow. He asked for Taylor Airey's report on PBN and Heathrow's engagement strategy timeline to be presented at the HCNF as soon as possible. DK advised that he would be running through the timeline during his presentation. He explained that other airports such as London City would be part of the ACOG masterplan to bring everything together and offer benefits to communities.

8 Heathrow’s Airspace Change Update

- 8.1 DK gave an update on Heathrow’s airspace modernisation plans. He ran through the timeline and provided an overview of the changes that had been made to the design principles since the meeting with Community Noise Group representatives on 7 January.
- 8.2 DK presented the final list of design principles as detailed in Table 1 below.

Our new airspace design must	Be safe
	Remain in accordance with the CAA's published Airspace Modernisation Strategy and any current or future plans associated with it and all other relevant UK policy, legislation and regulatory standards (for example, Air Navigation Guidance). This includes preventing any worsening of local air quality due to emissions from Heathrow’s aircraft movements, to remain within local authorities’ limits
	Use noise efficient operational practices to limit and, where possible, reduce adverse impacts from aircraft noise
	Reduce the contribution to climate change from CO ₂ emissions and other greenhouse gas emissions arising from Heathrow’s aircraft activities
	Enable Heathrow to make the most operationally efficient and resilient use of its existing two runways, to maximise benefits to the airport, airlines and cargo handlers, passengers, and local communities
And should also	Provide predictable and meaningful respite to those affected by noise from Heathrow's movements
	Seek to avoid overflying the same communities with multiple routes including those to/from other airports
	Contribute to minimising the negative impacts of night flights
	Keep the number of people who experience an increase in noise from the future airspace design to a minimum
	Keep the total number of people who experience noise from the future airspace design to a minimum
	Enable the efficiency of other airspace users' operations
	Minimise the impact to all stakeholders from future changes to Heathrow’s airspace

Table 1. Final Airspace Modernisation ACP Design Principles

- 8.3 DK advised that the next stage of the process will be CAP1616 Stage 2 which involves options development and appraisal, subject to successfully passing the Stage 1 gateway on 25 February. The presentation is provided alongside the meeting notes.
- 8.4 BC noted that there were no questions and thanked members for their collaborative approach.

9 Heathrow 2.0 Update

- 9.1 BC and RN presented an overview of the updated Heathrow 2.0 Sustainability Strategy ahead of its announcement during the week commencing 7 February. They noted that the contents of the presentation were draft and asked members to treat it as confidential but noted that they wanted to share an overview with forum members as they were key stakeholders on noise issues.
- 9.2 BC explained that Heathrow had been working on all aspects of sustainability for a long time before putting it all together into a single plan in Heathrow 2.0 containing over 200 commitments in 2018. This has been under review for the last eleven months as many of the commitments had now been achieved and the pandemic had changed what could be accomplished. Furthermore, the sustainability and carbon agenda has changed considerably as the science and data have evolved, so Heathrow has reviewed and updated its plan.
- 9.3 BC recapped that the original Heathrow 2.0 strategy was based around four pillars which had now been simplified into two key areas, namely “net zero aviation” and a “great place to live and work”. These are underpinned by Heathrow’s responsible business foundations to operate an ethical and responsible business and maintain a safe and secure airport. She noted that details around noise would be published in the Noise Action Plan (NAP).
- 9.4 RN advised that there were currently 40-50 actions in the NAP. He noted that Heathrow was a designated airport as far as noise policy was concerned, so the DfT played an important role in noise management and Heathrow’s goal for 2030 was similar to the DfT’s noise management objective. He noted that Heathrow had identified sleep disturbance and annoyance as two of the more significant effects and would be looking to improve on those compared to 2019 levels. He explained that the NAP would set out how those would be measured in the context of aspects outside of Heathrow’s control, such as wind direction and population growth. He noted that key targets would include reducing the noise contour areas, incentivising the use of the quietest possible aircraft and introducing easterly alternation. Night noise targets included the introduction of a protected period of the core night from 00:00-04:30 with no flights apart from dispensed operations, and an increase in the number of nights without aircraft after 23:45.
- 9.5 PW asked if Heathrow 2.0 would be open to consultation. BC advised that it was not a document that Heathrow formally consulted on but welcomed feedback, adding that the NAP would go through a consultation process.
- 9.6 Armelle Thomas (AT) felt that the airport had a lot of work to do if it was going to make Heathrow a great place to live and work, provide better quality of life and give back to the local communities. She complained that quality of life had got worse in the last couple of years and was unsure that Heathrow meant what they said or that the villages most impacted by Heathrow’s operations would see any difference. BC responded that this was the outcome Heathrow wanted to see and would not commit to it if the business did not believe it could happen.
- 9.7 PB asked if there was a prioritisation between the different pillars in terms of resources and time. BC advised that all of the pillars were important and that one was not prioritised over another. She explained that there were plans across all of them, but they would obviously progress at different places as some required different forms of support, such as capital investment for carbon.

- 9.8 SS noted that the concept of providing noise reduction “wherever possible” was taken straight from the government’s Noise Policy Statement for England (NPSE) and felt that Heathrow needed a new policy to go beyond that. He added that if noise could not be reduced at source, then mitigation measures should be put in place that went further than the current noise insulation schemes. RN explained that the language “wherever possible” was used to ensure consistency and follow the existing government objective as closely as possible. He confirmed that Heathrow was also looking at other aspects of noise management and was currently reviewing its noise insulation strategy. He added that the DfT was in the process of reviewing its objectives and wider national policy, so that would also have an effect in terms of noise. Robert Buick (RB) supported SS’s comments on noise insulation, citing Vienna insulating 50,000 homes as an example of what could be achieved.
- 9.9 Christine Richardson (CR) informed members that she was relatively new to the forum. She noted that most of the meeting had only covered arrivals, whereas complaints from Elmbridge were mostly about departures, aircraft not staying within the routes and low flying. RN responded that it had been a coincidence that today’s forum had focussed on arrivals. He assured her that the NAP looked at all aspects of aircraft noise.

10 DfT Update

- 10.1 RC noted that ACOG’s masterplan would be published soon. She explained that it would be an iterative process and would look at interdependencies such as Heathrow and London City Airport where coordination would be required. She noted that during these early stages there were many sponsors of airspace change and many possible options which could cover a wide area, with the caveat that no decisions had yet been made so it would not provide an indication of how the final airspace design would look.
- 10.2 RC advised that the aviation minister had recently announced further funding, enabling airspace change sponsors to continue work through Stage 2 of the CAP1616 process and demonstrating the government’s commitment to airspace modernisation. She added that these were exceptional circumstances to keep this important program going and that further discussions would take place to decide how it would be delivered.
- 10.3 RC announced that the CAA had launched a consultation on the Airspace Modernisation Strategy on 10 January and encouraged members to participate. She advised that it looked at technology development, post-Brexit international requirements and whether the process could be made simpler. She noted that it would not cause a stoppage so airspace change proposals would continue.
- 10.4 TM reminded members that the DfT’s consultation on night flight restrictions had closed in September and the DfT was still working through the responses. A further consultation is planned for Summer 2023 on proposals for the next night flight regime. PB asked if the DfT would be formally responding to the responses. TM explained that would normally take place when the new stage was issued, so they would potentially not be putting anything out before next year.
- 10.5 TM advised that overall noise policy was being taken forward through the Airspace and Noise Engagement Group (ANEG) of which PB is a member, noting that it would look at where noise policy sits post-pandemic.

- 10.6 TM gave an update on progress to transfer the work of the Independent Commission on Civil Aviation Noise (ICCAN) to the CAA. He noted that the DfT had been working with the CAA to finalise the work programme which would formally start on 1 April. In broad terms, the functions would involve advice to Government, provision of information and best practice guidance. He expected this to cover most of the work which ICCAN was doing or was expecting to do. This would include new survey work on noise attitudes to be taken forward by the CAA. He advised that budget was provided for the next three years, noting that it was the same as the ICCAN budget, so the transfer of work was not about saving money. He explained that the CAA would publish these functions once they were agreed. He added that the CAA was recruiting for two new team leaders to start at the end of February. They are also recruiting for a new Sustainability Panel, details of which are available on the [CAA website](#).
- 10.7 SS commented that issues around night noise were quite complex and asked if the DfT would be looking at health impacts to tighten up the policy or further measures to prevent events happening in first place. TM advised that they would be looking at movement limits and noise quota, noting that new evidence from DEFRA would feed into policy decisions.

11 AOB

- 11.1 SS proposed that future online meetings should include virtual tea breaks. **ACTION RW**

Dates of remaining 2022 meetings

- Wednesday 27 April (1:00pm – 3:30pm)
- Wednesday 27 July (1:00pm – 3:30pm)
- Wednesday 19 October (1:00pm – 3:30pm)