

Noise and Airspace Community Forum (NACF)

Summary Minutes (23 July 2025, 13:00-16:00, London Heathrow Marriott)

These summary minutes are not intended to be a verbatim record of the meeting, but a summary of the topics and views of forum members and a note of any actions agreed. They should be read in conjunction with a copy of the presentations given at the meeting.

Confirmed attendees

Name	Borough / Organisation
Andreas Lambrianou	Chair
Spencer Norton	British Airways
Duncan Futter	British Airways
Wendy Matthews	Buckinghamshire Council
John Burton	CAA
Stuart Lindsey	CAA
Ben Lippitt *	CAA
Darren Rhodes	CAA
Mark Izatt	CISHA
Adrian Eaton *	DfT
Margaret Majumdar *	Ealing Aircraft Noise Action Group
Paul Conway	Englefield Green Action Group
Peter Rafano	Envirosuite
Tim Walker *	Forest Hill Society
Paul Beckford *	HACAN
Christine Taylor	Harmondsworth and Sipson Residents Association
Armelle Thomas	Harmondsworth and Sipson Residents Association
Becky Coffin	Heathrow
Lisa Forshew	Heathrow
Samantha Fountain	Heathrow
James Mackenzie	Heathrow
Jonathan Pam	Heathrow
Pierre Sohier	Heathrow
Richard West	Heathrow
Michael Thornton *	Heathrow Strategic Planning Group
Dr John Lees *	Iver Village Residents Association
Surinderpal Suri *	London Borough of Ealing
Deborah Petty	Molesey Residents Association
Robin Clarke	NATS
Bridget Bell	Plane Hell Action
Graham Young	Richings Park Residents Association
Peter Willan	Richmond Heathrow Campaign
Robert Tudway	Richmond Heathrow Campaign
Maryann Morgan	Sunninghill & Ascot Parish Council
Cllr Nirmal Kang	Surrey Heath Borough Council
Dave Gilbert	Teddington Action Group
Stephen Clark	Teddington Action Group
Richard Harbord *	Windlesham Society

Apologies

David Matthews (NATS), Cllr Michele Gibson (Spelthorne Borough Council), Nigel Davies (Englefield Green Action Group), Rob Buick (Englefield Green Action Group).

Action Log

Date and Paragraph	Description	Comments	Resolution Date	RAG status
27/11/2024 para. 3.19	Separate meeting to continue Noise Action Plan discussion	Update provided at forum	23/07/2025	
26/03/2025 para 1.6	DfT to respond to Frontiers Economics scoping study	DfT liaising with Defra for response		
28/05/2025 para 2.4	Provide update on the impact of airport closure	Update provided at forum	23/07/2025	
28/05/2025 para 2.5	Consider adding target lines to the data dashboard	To be considered as part of interactive dashboard development	23/07/2025	

Summary of previous open or recently closed actions

1 Welcome and Introduction

- 1.1 Andreas Lambrianou (AL) welcomed members to the forum and noted apologies for absence.
- 1.2 AL announced that the previous summary minutes had been finalised. He reviewed the previous actions as shown in the Action Log above.
- 1.3 Armelle Thomas (AT) asked for a figure to be changed from 7,450 to 4,750 (para. 1.3). (The summary minutes were updated following the meeting.)
- 1.4 Bridget Bell (BB) asked when DfT would follow up with Defra (para 1.6). **ACTION AL**
- 1.5 Peter Willan (PW) repeated his call for a study into moving night flights to the daytime period. Mark Izatt (MI) advised that DfT had just announced a new research project into the benefits of night flights at designated airports in the UK. PW did not believe the scope of the study was wide enough.
- 1.6 AT referred to the comment that Heathrow's noise contour had reduced by 41% since 2006, noting that the number of people in the contour had grown because of HMOs.
- 1.7 Dave Gilbert (DG) referred to a comment in the March summary minutes (para 6.6) from Ian Greene (IG) who stated that "DG knows he disagrees with many of the assertions in his presentation". DG asked to discuss this with DfT and AL proposed writing to him separately.

2 Data dashboard

- 2.1 Samantha Fountain (SF) presented the Operations Dashboard for June 2025. The dashboard is available on Heathrow's website [here](#).
- 2.2 SF advised there had been 111 nights without late running flights (between 23:30-04:30)

in the first half of the year. Wendy Matthews (WM) asked if the figure excluded dispensed flights. SF explained that it meant there were no flights whatsoever during that time period. WM asked for a breakdown of the reasons for non-dispensed flights in June. SF responded (via the chat) that the 13 non-dispensed arrivals were due to 2 technical issues, a passenger delay and 10 rotational delays. The 10 non-dispensed departures were due to 9 technical issues and 1 rotational delay. None of these flights met the DfT criteria for dispensation.

- 2.3 SF provided an update on the impact of the airport closure as a result of the substation fire on 20 March. She advised that there had been no late runners or dispensations as a result of the power outage, with just one late departure on 22 March due to an unrelated technical issue.

3 New website tools

- 3.1 Pete Rafano (PR) gave forum members a first look at an upcoming suite of online tools designed to help communities understand how they are overflowed. These add to the existing [WebTrak](#) and [xPlane](#) tools. The new tools include plots of flight paths, noise contours, dashboards showing the height and frequency of aircraft, and analysis of noise level and overflight data at Heathrow's noise monitor locations. The new suite of tools is due to be launched in the next six to eight weeks.
- 3.2 Surinderpal Suri (SS) asked if the noise contours used measured data. James Mackenzie (JM) explained that the contours were produced by the CAA using modelled data verified with measured data.
- 3.3 PW commented that the reduction in the noise contour was partly due to the changing fleet and asked if it was possible to look at weight data. JM explained that the contours were getting smaller because aircraft were getting quieter, regardless of their size. Darren Rhodes (DR) noted that aircraft weight was publicly available from UK operators, but it was irrelevant as noise exposure was what mattered. He reiterated that noise had reduced regardless of any increase in aircraft weight, so this was already accounted for in the data.
- 3.4 Michael Thornton (MT) observed that the new dashboards incorporated data from other airports and asked if it related to the aircraft's origin or destination. PW explained that if an aircraft arrived at or departed from Farnborough then it would show as a Farnborough flight. MT asked if all overflights were included. PW explained that the tool showed all overflights up to 10,000ft.
- 3.5 PR noted that the noise level tool had been produced in response to forum feedback. SS asked if it could show near real-time data. PR explained that it presented monthly data and that WebTrak should be used for near real-time data.
- 3.6 DG asked what metrics were used and if the noise level data could be compared with the contours. PR explained that the noise levels shown were maximum levels (L_{Amax}) and DR added that the contours were not produced for calendar months so they would not be comparable.
- 3.7 MT asked if the new tools could show aircraft details. PR explained that these were provided in WebTrak.
- 3.8 Deborah Petty (DP) asked if members could provide feedback once the suite of tools was launched. Jonathan Pam (JP) said he would welcome feedback and could offer a tutorial if useful.

4 Technical Engagement Forum Work Plan

- 4.1 Pierre Sohier (PS) gave a presentation on the work plan of the Technical Engagement Forum (TEF), a partnership between Heathrow, major airlines, Boeing, Airbus, and NATS. He explained that the TEF will focus on voluntary noise reduction initiatives through operational improvements. The plan will target a 10% reduction in noise impact by 2030 vs 2019 levels, with the focus on reducing highly annoyed (HA) and highly sleep disturbed (HSD) populations. The primary emphasis will be on night-time noise reduction. Expected outcomes focus on reducing HA and HSD values associated with Heathrow operations, supported by the exploration of various operational improvements. These may include adaptation to aircraft procedures, optimised use of existing technologies, and creative strategies to managing night-time respite.
- 4.2 DP asked what incentive there was for airlines to change their departure procedures. Spencer Norton (SN) explained that it was all part of working together to establish what can and cannot be done.
- 4.3 SC thought the concept was good but expressed concern about trust, motivation and external oversight. PS highlighted the importance of maintaining confidentiality with airlines.
- 4.4 AT felt that a 10% reduction in noise impact over 11 years was not ambitious enough. PS explained that it was important to understand that the dose-response relationship for HA and HSD was an exponential curve.
- 4.5 PW commented that Heathrow's Noise Action Plan (NAP) had a legal basis, so it was not enough to rely on trust. John Burton (JB) advised that NAPs have legal foundations (stemming from the Environmental Noise Directive (END) 2002/49/EC, transposed into UK law via the 2006 Regulations) and Defra-compliant elements.

5 UK Airspace Design Service (UKADS) Update

- 5.1 Stuart Lindsey (SL) gave an update on the creation of UKADS to coordinate and sponsor future airspace changes to deliver modernised airspace design. He explained that NERL (NATS En-Route plc) would be tasked with providing UKADS, which should be up and running by the end of this year. He advised that UKADS would initially focus on modernising the complex airspace around London, including airspace change required for any Heathrow third runway. He noted that a new Airspace Design Support Fund was being set up to help cover relevant costs of airspace modernisation in other parts of the UK. He explained that a UKADS Advisory Board would act as a mechanism for stakeholder engagement and that UKADS activities would be subject to DfT/CAA oversight. He added that the co-sponsors' 'minded to' position was that the residual services being provided by the Airspace Change Organising Group (ACOG) should be subsumed into the part of NERL providing UKADS.
- 5.2 DP asked how UKADS would succeed where ACOG had failed. She was also concerned that communities would have no understanding of the oversight process. SL explained that UKADS would have a different structure and different powers to ACOG, and that oversight would come through the CAP1616 process.
- 5.3 SC asked SL for a formal response to a letter sent on behalf of community groups highlighting concerns around environment impacts and lack of local knowledge in contrast to Heathrow's good engagement and understanding of local issues. SL confirmed he would respond. He recognised the value of relationships between local

communities and airports. He also stressed the importance of responding to consultations, noting that while UKADS would manage the consultations he envisaged airports would also be present to provide context.

- 5.4 SC asked how a third runway at Heathrow would fit into the plans. SL responded that it was too early to say, noting that the Government had asked Heathrow to submit its proposals and there should be more clarity next week. Becky Coffin (BC) added that the Government had also invited other promoters to submit proposals.
- 5.5 DG noted that the Aviation Noise Attitudes Survey (ANAS) was running late and was critical for policy decisions. SL explained that the CAA would take account of whatever policy was set by the DfT and that it was a matter for DfT when they set policy. John Burton (JB) added that the results of the study were expected in 2026 Q1 subject to peer review and potential challenges.

6 Noise Action Plans Review

- 6.1 JB provided an update on the CAA's review of the effectiveness of Noise Action Plans as a method of noise management. He advised that the review was now complete and that the CAA had proposed 13 recommendations to Defra and the DfT for consideration. The final report and summary of recommendations is set out in [CAP3110](#).

7 Feedback from Communities

- 7.1 Margaret Majumdar (MM) commented (via the chat) that there were too many dispensations due to weather and that further work was needed to determine whether and how the criteria should be narrowed. SF explained that the process was not set locally so it would be a matter for the DfT, adding that regular updates on dispensations were provided at the forum.
- 7.2 DP mentioned Heathrow's current development plans and highlighted a carbon negative aggregate called ACLA that Surrey County Council had used successfully in a road resurfacing trial. BC confirmed that modernisation work would be required regardless of expansion and asked DP to provide further details. (These were passed on to Heathrow's Carbon team after the meeting.)
- 7.3 DG asked if Heathrow's Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) target was in progress and which aircraft were using it. BC confirmed that a target was in place and Heathrow was working with airlines on an incentive mechanism to encourage uplift. SN added that SAF was blended into normal fuel, so it was used by every aircraft.
- 7.4 DG gave a presentation on noise monitoring and modelling around Heathrow, raising questions about what was included in noise modelling, the effect of excluding certain noise sources, raising flight paths to allow higher helicopters and London City flights, model validation and the ANEEM aircraft noise exposure system.
- 7.5 DR explained that there was no association between background noise and attitudes to aircraft noise, as set out in [CAP1767](#). He added that the background noise level at Richmond Golf Course could reach 50dB at 02:00 due to wind noise.
- 7.6 JM noted that work to monitor ground noise activity as part of Heathrow's Ground Noise Management Plan (GNMP) was ongoing. The work would first identify dominant sources and then look at how sound propagates. DR added that engine testing was classified as ground noise and was best treated as industrial noise for calculation purposes.

- 7.7 DG asked if go-arounds were included in the noise contours. DR confirmed they were not, noting how few there were compared to the 480,000 flights at Heathrow and citing the difficulty in modelling them as not all go-arounds start near ground level. Christine Taylor (CT) expressed concerns about safety, noting that Heathrow was surrounded by houses and some residents were worried following the recent incident in India.
- 7.8 DR explained that modelling helicopter noise was less advanced and more complicated than aircraft noise, with no internationally agreed method. He noted that the only area exceeding 51dB L_{Aeq} was around London Heliport in Battersea. He advised that the overlap between Heathrow and London City flights occurred when London City was on easterly operations, which was around a quarter of the time. He noted there was limited overlap above 51dB, becoming more substantial at 45dB. He added that there was no interaction with Gatwick Airport as the routes were well separated.
- 7.9 DR advised that DG's analysis of sideways noise was flawed as the data excluded 35% of the quietest measurements. He stressed that it was not possible to validate very low noise levels in an urban environment.
- 7.10 DG asked about the minimum duration threshold for regulatory noise monitors and the length of loudness events. DR advised the minimum threshold was 5 seconds, that maximum noise level measurements do not have a duration and cautioned against the use of the word loudness which was a different metric.
- 7.11 DG asked how long the various monitors have been in situ. **ACTION SF**
- 7.12 DP offered to host a community noise monitor in her garden. AL advised that there was a process for requesting monitors. (DP's request was registered after the meeting.)

Date of next meeting

Wednesday 24 September (13:00-16:00).