

## Heathrow Community Noise Forum – 19 July 2017

### 1:00pm – 4:00pm Heathrow Academy – meeting notes

#### Attendees

| <b>Name</b>         | <b>Borough / Organisation</b> |
|---------------------|-------------------------------|
| Christine Taylor    | HASRA                         |
| David Gilbert       | Teddington Action Group       |
| Cllr David Hilton   | Windsor and Maidenhead        |
| Gerry Ceaser        | LAANC                         |
| Graham Young        | South Bucks                   |
| Hannah Cook         | Spelthorne Borough Council    |
| Jayne Chace         | Teddington Action Group       |
| John Stewart        | HACAN                         |
| Margaret Majumdar   | EANAG                         |
| Rob Beere           | AN3V                          |
| Rob Buick           | Englefield Green              |
| Rosalie James       | AN3V                          |
| Peter Willan        | Richmond Heathrow Campaign    |
| Surinderpal Suri    | Hounslow Council              |
| Cllr Wendy Matthews | South Bucks                   |
| Nicole Porter       | Anderson Acoustics            |
| Spencer Norton      | BA                            |
| Darren Rhodes       | CAA                           |
| Stuart Lindsey      | CAA                           |
| Tim May             | DfT                           |
| David Elvy          | DfT                           |
| Dale Reeson         | NATS                          |
| Robin Clarke        | NATS                          |
| Geoff Clark         | Virgin Atlantic               |
| Cheryl Monk         | Heathrow                      |
| Derek Provan        | Heathrow                      |
| Jane Dawes          | Heathrow                      |
| Laura Jones         | Heathrow                      |
| Matt Gorman         | Heathrow                      |
| Michael Glen        | Heathrow                      |
| Paula Abbott        | Heathrow                      |
| Pete Rafano         | Heathrow                      |
| Richard West        | Heathrow                      |
| Xavier Oh           | Heathrow                      |
| Zoltan Bazso        | Heathrow                      |

#### Apologies

|                        |                         |
|------------------------|-------------------------|
| Cllr Conrad Sturt      | Surrey Heath            |
| John Coates            | Richmond Council        |
| Kathleen Croft         | Stanwell Moor           |
| Paul Conway            | Englefield Green        |
| Rebecca Jennings-Evans | Surrey Heath            |
| Stephen Clark          | Teddington Action Group |
| Sarah Bishop           | DfT                     |
| Ian Jopson             | NATS                    |
| Richard Norman         | Heathrow                |

## 1 Welcome and apologies for absence

- 1.1 Matt Gorman (MG) welcomed members and observers in the public gallery and noted apologies for absence. He observed that the room layout has been changed in response to feedback from members, with the aim of creating a more collaborative atmosphere.

## 2 Previous minutes and actions

- 2.1 MG confirmed that all of the actions from the previous meeting had been completed or would be covered during the meeting.

## 3 Airspace / expansion update

- 3.1 Jane Dawes (JD) gave an update on the airspace change process. The presentation can be downloaded [here](#). She described how Heathrow is planning to carry out three stages of consultation for the design of airspace for a third runway. Ahead of the airspace changes that will come with expansion, changes to the current operation also need to be made. These include procedures to improve arrivals efficiencies through the introduction of Independent Parallel Approaches (IPA) and changes to the Compton easterly departure route. Both of these will require public consultation. John Stewart (JS) asked if these would be separate from the third runway consultations. Jane Dawes (JD) confirmed they would but the timing was not yet confirmed. MG observed that the Government plans to put its National Policy Statement (NPS) before parliament during the first part of 2018. Heathrow's first consultation is expected to take place before that although the timing has yet to be finalised.
- 3.2 Peter Willan (PW) felt that the airspace change process was not fit for purpose, pointing out that its objectives were deficient and it was designed for single flight paths rather than multiple ones. MG responded that Heathrow's plan with expansion was to present the whole picture rather than on a single flight path basis. Tim May (TM) added that the DfT was currently analysing responses from its consultation on Airspace Policy and hopes to publish the Policy in the Autumn, so this should be in time to inform Heathrow's consultation. PW added that Tier 3 changes were important to residents. TM observed that the DfT were not proposing any regulatory approval process over Tier 3 changes.
- 3.3 David Hilton (DH) asked if the DfT would issue guidelines to the aviation industry. TM advised that the Government will publish new guidance but this was not expected to include guidance to the aviation industry. A new independent noise body would look at that. DH added that airspace from 0 to 4,000ft is regulated but above that altitude airlines can do what they like. He suggested that DfT needed to give some thought to what is reasonable in this airspace. TM responded that DfT are proposing to regulate traffic in that space, for example in the area of systematic vectoring, and introduce a more rigorous process that assesses noise impacts in airspace changes. So airspace change sponsors will need to look at noise metrics and take more account of noise than they currently do.

## 4 Cranford Agreement update

- 4.1 MG gave an update on the current status of the Cranford Agreement. He reminded the group that this was a verbal agreement dating back to 1950s, resulting in limited departures from the northern runway during easterly operations. In 2010 the Government confirmed that the agreement should be removed. However, new taxiway works are required for Heathrow to enable full runway alternation on easterly operations. The London Borough of Hillingdon refused Heathrow's planning application but permission was granted earlier this year following a planning appeal. However, over the last few months Heathrow has been assessing whether these taxiway works fit with an expanded airfield design. This work has indicated the potential need to reposition the taxiway works further to the east. This would change the environmental impact and result in a new lengthy planning application, so Heathrow has chosen to pursue this work through the DCO process instead.
- 4.2 David Hilton wondered why Heathrow had not thought of this before. MG acknowledged that hindsight was a wonderful thing, but observed that planning for a third runway had moved on since the original planning application had been submitted. He appreciated there would be some frustration for some communities. DG asked why the taxiways could not be built in accordance with the current plans. MG explained that this would just mean undertaking works that would need to be undone as the airport expands.

## 5 2017 Work Plan update

- 5.1 Pete Rafano (PR) gave a progress report on the Forum's work plan as outlined below. A copy of the work plan can be downloaded [here](#).
- 5.2 **Monitoring:** Noise monitor deployment is currently ongoing. The new noise monitors will appear on Webtrak as they are deployed. A number of new monitors have been installed to the east of the airport as part of the steeper departure study. Work is underway to identify additional sites, including more locations to the west of the airport.
- 5.3 **Gate analysis:** This work analyses aircraft patterns over the last few years and is currently ongoing. The next report will cover Ealing and is almost finished.
- 5.4 **Fly Quiet and Clean programme:** This is an expanded version of Heathrow's previous Fly Quiet programme and ranks the 50 busiest airlines at Heathrow on their work to reduce emissions and noise in their operations. The first league table has now been published [here](#).
- 5.5 **Webtrak 3D:** Work is currently underway to add 3D functionality to Heathrow's map-based flight analysis tool Webtrak. This is now in the final stages of development and will be launched later this year.
- 5.6 **Community Reports:** The new noise monitor report format should be ready to publish soon. Teddington Action Group (TAG) have raised some further questions and these are currently being worked through.
- 5.7 **Slightly steeper approach study 2017:** The second phase of Heathrow's slightly steeper approach trial is currently ongoing and will run until 11 October 2017. This follows the initial trial in 2015/2016 and is required to collect further data during warm weather.
- 5.8 **Landing gear deployment study:** Heathrow is currently working on a research project to use noise monitors under the approach to the airfield to determine when landing gear is being lowered.

- 5.9 **Detling departure profile study:** Noise monitors have now been deployed along the Detling easterly departure route and are collecting baseline data. Early in 2018 the minimum climb profile along this route will be increased from 4% to 5% and noise levels will be compared to identify which areas are affected by positive or negative changes.
- 5.10 **Vectoring:** Two reports have been prepared on vectoring. This is the term used to describe when aircraft deviate from the departure routes. The first report covers vectoring below 4,000ft and is in the process of being signed off. The second report covers vectoring above 4,000ft, however this is currently too technical and more work is required before it is ready for publication.
- 5.11 **Minimum (4%) AIP climb rate analysis tool:** A new tool has been developed to monitor the climb rates of aircraft. This tool is now in operation.
- 5.12 **A320 retrofit:** Airlines are currently in the process of retrofitting their A320 fleets to reduce noise. Xavier Oh (XO) stated that Heathrow is currently updating its database to calculate the current uptake figure. The retrofit is a voluntary measure, but although there is no benefit to the airlines the uptake has been good, with British Airways leading the way. Darren Rhodes (DRh) observed that next year Gatwick Airport will introduce a landing charge for unmodified A320 aircraft. MG responded that Heathrow would see how airlines do before looking at charges.
- 5.13 MG proposed that the work plan could be made more accessible by adding a RAG (Red Amber Green) key for each item. **ACTION RN**

## 6 Factors that lead to an end change

- 6.1 Dale Reeson (DRe), NATS gave a presentation on factors that lead to an end change at Heathrow (i.e. when the wind switches direction at Heathrow and NATS has to switch from westerlies to easterlies or vice versa). MG explained that members had asked for more information on the decision-making process behind when Heathrow changes between westerly and easterly operations. The presentation is available [here](#).
- 6.2 DRe explained that a westerly preference operates at Heathrow. This means that aircraft land and take off in a westerly direction whenever the tailwind component does not exceed 5 knots. He added that the runway surface should also be dry and the *crosswind* should not exceed 12 knots. He stressed the importance of aircraft not exceeding their crosswind limits as safety always comes first.
- 6.3 DRe advised that the wind is generally measured on the ground, but the wind at height is also taken into consideration. He explained that the wind at height is usually further to the right, so strong account is also taken of wind conditions at 2,000ft and 3,000ft on the final approach. Spencer Norton (SN) added that the air crew informs NATS about tailwinds. DRe described how squalls sometimes bring a temporary change in wind conditions which then change back after squall. As a result, NATS do not always switch runway ends in the event of a squall although sometimes they can be so strong that an end change is required. In such cases there is often only a small window so sometimes a change may be required within 20 minutes.

- 6.4 He explained that there is a local Met Office forecaster on site at Heathrow who provides a forecast for end-change timings. The VCR (Visual Control Room) supervisor looks at a number of factors before deciding when to change direction. Making the change during a dip in traffic helps to minimise the impact on the airport. The times 07:00 and 15:00 are also optimal as they correspond to runway alternation timings. Furthermore, there are mandated runway checks which occur twice a day, so this also provides a good opportunity for an end change as it minimises the impact on the operation. Other factors can include technical or security issues, unusual air activity or other incidents in the vicinity of the airport.
- 6.5 MM asked DRe if he was based at Heathrow and if the decision to change ends was made there. DRe advised that he was based in Heathrow's control tower. He added that there are four wind sensors at the four corners of the airport and the decision is made locally.
- 6.6 Peter Willan (PW) asked if westerly preference applied at night. DRe explained that it does not apply and there is a weekly rotation of an easterly and westerly preference. Adherence to the schedule is driven by wind conditions. As a result, there is only around 54-60% adherence to the runway alternation schedule during the night as opposed to around 99% during the day.

## 7 BA 747 track keeping on Midhurst route

- 7.1 SN gave a presentation on plans to improve the track-keeping of British Airways 747 aircraft on the westerly Midhurst route. The presentation is available [here](#). Track-keeping refers to how well aircraft stay within the departure routes. SN explained that as a result of community observations and investigations by Heathrow, it had highlighted an issue with BA's 747 aircraft track-keeping on this route. He observed that the issue was a little like oversteer in a car and was hopeful that a change to an operational procedure would provide a solution. Five flights have been trialled with their training captain which showed significantly improved track-keeping.
- 7.2 Rosalie James (RJ) asked if SN could elaborate on the procedure change. SN advised that it was quite technical but involved applying speed control. He added that BA will work with Heathrow to ensure everything is covered and that there are no unintended consequences.
- 7.3 David Hilton (DH) asked what other airlines were doing. PR pointed out that the main issue on the Midhurst route was the BA 747 aircraft so this was being addressed. Once the solution has been found Heathrow will approach other operators to apply the same measures. RJ asked what would happen if airlines failed to comply, but PR said this was not something that had ever happened. MG advised that overall track keeping on Heathrow's departure routes was very good and was included in the Fly Quiet & Clean league table, which is influential in encouraging airlines to make improvements.
- 7.4 Rob Buick (RBU) referred to a previous meeting about Boeing 787 aircraft and asked for an update. PR advised that some software updates had been looked at, some of which had brought a positive change and some had not. Heathrow was now talking to Boeing to look into this further. He added that this was by far the most complex track keeping issue.
- 7.5 PW observed that a BA departure had flown right over Richmond on Monday evening and wanted to know if the airline could be fined. PR asked PW to send him the details so he could look into it. **ACTION PR**

- 7.6 RBU asked if there was any progress in adding the departure corridors to Webtrak. PR advised that the suppliers Bruel & Kjaer were currently putting this into production and it should be available before the end of the year. He added that the flight track would change colour in the event of a track-keeping violation, providing information on the route, height and time of the violation.

## 8 Ground noise management plan

- 8.1 Xavier Oh (XO) gave a presentation on Heathrow's ground noise management plan. The presentation is available [here](#). He listed the main sources of ground noise as engine ground runs (EGRs), taxiing and auxiliary power units (APUs). He noted that runway noise from take-off and landing is classed as air noise. Other potential ground noise sources include airside vehicles and airstarts. SN explained that an airstart is like an APU on wheels.
- 8.2 RJ asked why airlines carry out an EGRs at night. SN advised that the only downtime for airlines is during the night. Jane Dawes (JD) explained that there are limits to the amount of time airlines are allowed to carry out EGRs at night. Paula Abbott (PA) added that airlines are asked to plan to avoid night time ground runs. Christine Taylor (CT) said she had previously reported a noise disturbance but nothing had appeared on the EGR log or noise monitor data. PA responded that the process was now being tightened following input from forums like this. XO said he would also look into installing a noise logger on her property. CT welcomed the Forum addressing ground noise, observing that in the past some residents had felt it was not worth complaining.
- 8.3 Surinderpal Suri (SS) suggested that ground noise should be treated as industrial noise with measures put in place to mitigate it. MG responded that there is some mitigation already such as Heathrow's noise insulation schemes. Rob Beere (RBe) asked if noise from the airport could be dealt with by councils, but SS advised this was not possible because it is not classed as a statutory nuisance.

## 9 Night Flights update

- 9.1 PR gave an update on night flights. The presentation is available [here](#). He explained that the Government sets the limits on the number of flights allowed between 23:30 and 04:30. He reported on the number of late runners so far this year, and gave examples of the work going on behind the scenes to reduce late runners.
- 9.2 Rosalie James (RJ) asked why 23:30 was used as she thought there were supposed to be no flights after 23:00. Tim May (TM) explained that the movement limits set by the Government have always been for the 6.5 hours from 23:30 to 06:00. RJ suggested that the DfT should legislate what happens after 23:00. PR explained that the noisiest types of aircraft cannot operate between the hours of 23:00 and 23:30. MG observed that the airport's new sustainability plan, Heathrow 2.0, aims to halve the number of late runners after 23:30 by the year 2022. He added that a voluntary agreement with the airlines would be necessary to help achieve this.
- 9.3 MG advised that the number of late runners had been reported to the Heathrow Airport Consultative Committee (HACC) and would be made available to this group. JS asked if an aircraft is categorised as a late runner if it takes off later than planned but is still before 23:30. MG proposed that a glossary of terms could be added. Gerry Ceaser (GC) asked if the figures could be broken down into arrivals and departures. MG advised that the vast majority were departures but this could be looked at. **ACTION PR**

- 9.4 Margaret Majumdar (MM) wished to register the fact that flights had kept West London awake after 23:30 last night, including one at 00:10 which was very slow and loud. PR advised that this was due to thunderstorms affecting the operation and causing significant delays. MG asked whether pre-notification of widespread disruption on Twitter would be helpful but nobody expressed support for this.
- 9.5 RBe asked the DfT about Luton Airport flights after 23:30. TM responded that Luton Airport is allowed night flights and has its own night flight restrictions. Robin Clarke (RC) explained that airlines would be using a direct route at that time of night and thought they were at around 12,000ft over Lightwater, although RJ thought they were closer to 10,000ft. RC said he would look into the altitudes to make sure they were as they should be. **ACTION RC**
- 9.6 PW expressed frustration over the DfT's recent announcement on the night flight regime. He felt there had been no movement on this. He believed there was no economic case for night flights and that there was plenty of capacity during the day to absorb the 16 night flights and shoulder period flights. TM understood his disappointment but advised that the Government's job was to balance the cost to communities with the benefits to airlines and passengers who use those services. He added that the Airports Commission had found there was no case for banning those flights.

## 10 Steeper departure update

- 10.1 Matt Gorman (MG) gave a verbal update on Heathrow's steeper departure study. He recounted that analysis carried out through the Forum had shown that the average height of some of the lowest flights has fallen. Heathrow is now undertaking a steeper departure trial along the easterly Detling route. Noise monitors have been deployed along the route and are gathering baseline data prior to increasing the minimum climb rate from 4% to 5% in 2018.
- 10.2 MG mentioned that some community groups had challenged the length of the study and whether 5% was sufficient. Following discussions with Teddington Action Group (TAG) Heathrow had agreed to commission an independent expert to look at climb gradients at Heathrow and other airports, model the noise levels and study the impacts. This work would be undertaken through Working Group 2. He advised that steeper departures may not necessarily be quieter because more thrust may be required. This could also mean higher emissions, so noise is not the only issue. However, the airport understands the concerns of communities on this issues. DG welcomed the proposal of an independent expert.
- 10.3 MG advised that Heathrow has looked at the climb procedures at other airports. He noted that the most comparable airports were Amsterdam Schiphol, Paris Charles de Gaulle and Frankfurt. The procedures at Amsterdam are the closest to those at Heathrow. Frankfurt has published climb rates of up to 12% but these are limited to certain aircraft types. At Paris the requirement appears to be 6% but there is uncertainty about where this applies from and what the requirements are, so more work is needed to understand the differences.

- 10.4 DRh advised that he had been commissioned by the DfT to review the departure noise limits at 6.5km from the start of roll. However, he was aware that the issue was more extensive than what happens at the 6.5km point. He explained that he has started collecting data on real operations such as A380s from various airports. One finding was that the definition of climb gradient is not the same at different airports, so it is not possible to compare different airports as they measure from different points. MG asked about the timeline of the study. DRh advised it was possible there could be a draft report by end of year although this may be ambitious. DG asked if DRh could share the terms of reference of the study with the group. DRh thought this would require permission from DfT but said he would look into it. **ACTION DRh**
- 10.5 DH advised that residents were aware that aircraft had got lower without the need for analysis. He was frustrated that airlines make changes and it takes two years of analysis to correct them. He suggested that it was incumbent on the CAA and DfT to consider these issues.

## 11 Noise Action Plan

- 11.1 XO discussed the achievements of Heathrow's two previous Noise Action Plans (NAPs). Heathrow's noise management framework looks at five key areas covering quieter planes, quieter procedures, land-use planning and mitigation, operational restrictions and working with local communities. From 2006 to 2016 the measures taken have resulted in a 9% reduction in the number of people within the Lden 55 dBA noise contour despite an increase in overall population. The presentation is available [here](#).
- 11.2 XO also gave an update on the work underway through the working groups to develop a new NAP for the period 2019 to 2023. The presentation is available [here](#). He discussed last year's audit of Heathrow's current NAP. 15 actions were audited, 12 of which were found to be on track or completed (green) and 3 were behind but not at risk (amber). Work on the three amber actions is underway. DH stressed the importance of making the new NAP a meaningful document with targets. MG welcomed the fact that Forum members would be involved in shaping its content. CT asked if the recent focus on ground noise was a result of the audit or the Forum. MG thought it was probably both.

## 12 AOB

- 12.1 PW asked if a study could be done to calculate the potential noise impact of increasing aircraft size and occupancy. JD advised that it was not possible to get take-off weights from airlines as this was commercially sensitive information. DRh observed that while in some cases an increase in passengers had led to larger aircraft on a particular flight, this should be set against Boeing 747s being replaced by modern aircraft.
- 12.2 SS mentioned Heathrow's noise insulation schemes and suggested that uptake in the local communities had not been great. Some residents felt the enhanced double glazing brought no improvements and others had complained about having to contribute 50% of the cost. CT commented that her area was not covered by the schemes so she had installed her own triple glazing but it was not as good as her previous glazing. MG observed that Heathrow had recently reopened its Quieter Homes Initiative (QHI) scheme, providing free noise insulation for those most affected by aircraft noise. This had resulted in good measured noise improvements and positive feedback. He thought it would be good to look at noise insulation at a future meeting. **ACTION RN**
- 12.3 RBU asked when the Survey of Noise Attitudes (SoNA) night time report would be published. DRh advised that it was currently under final review and should be available in August or September.



12.4 RJ observed that for the first time some concrete things had come out of attendance at the Forum. She said she could see the benefit of the work being done on flight paths and ground noise. She hoped that NATS and DfT would also work with communities in the same way. She implored DfT to look at where the flaws are in the current system, and challenged NATS on why aircraft fly at 10,000ft when they could fly at 20,000ft. RBe felt that the point of this group was to try and change the constraints and rules that don't work for communities. TM advised that the Government is planning to start work on an aviation strategy to put in place by 2018. This will provide an opportunity for people to feed in to the process. MG was pleased to hear RJ's positive comments. He noted that Heathrow wants to improve noise around the airport and that is very much what he sees the purpose of this group to be.

### **Date of next meeting**

Wednesday 20th September 2017, 1pm-4pm, Heathrow Academy.