

Heathrow Community Noise Forum – 21 September 2016

1:30pm – 4:30pm Heathrow Academy – meeting notes

Attendees

Name	Borough / Organisation
John Coates	Richmond Council
Peter Willan	Richmond Heathrow Campaign
Stephen Clark	Teddington Action Group
Kathleen Croft	Stanwell Moor RA
Cllr David Sleight	Wokingham Council
Cllr Chris Turrell	Bracknell Forest Council
Gerry Ceaser	LAANC
Peter Pzanto	Elmbridge resident
Hannah Cook	Spelthorne Borough Council
Cllr David Hilton	Windsor & Maidenhead
Cllr Wendy Matthews	South Bucks Council
Cllr Rebecca Jennings-Evans	Surrey Heath Council
Cllr Tony Popham	Elmbridge Borough Council
Christine Taylor	Harmondsworth & Sipson RA
Margaret Majumdar	EANAG
Rob Buick	Englefield Green
Surinderpal Suri	Hounslow
Cllr Carol Manduca	Runnymede Borough Council
Rosalie James	AN3V
Rob Beere	AN3V
John Stewart	HACAN
Ingrid Hainy	Airport Coordination Limited (ACL)
Steve Leighton	Helios
Darren Rhodes	CAA
Isobel Pastor	DfT
Nicole Porter	Anderson Acoustics
Ian Jopson	NATS
Dan Foster	NATS
Dean Plumb	BA
Matt Gorman	Heathrow
Derek Provan	Heathrow
Cheryl Monk	Heathrow
Jane Dawes	Heathrow
Richard Norman	Heathrow
Laura Jones	Heathrow
Richard West	Heathrow
Zoltan Bazso	Heathrow

Apologies

Stuart Lindsey	CAA
Dave Curtis	NATS
Cllr Conrad Sturt	Surrey Heath
Graham Young	Richings Park RA
Paul Conway	Englefield Green

1 Welcome and apologies for absence

- 1.1 Matt Gorman (MG) welcomed members and observers in the public gallery and noted apologies for absence.

2 Previous minutes and actions

- 2.1 **Responsibilities of organisations:** A document was circulated which set out who is responsible for policy and procedures for different phases of departure (the document can be found [here](#)). Darren Rhodes (DR) took the lead on producing the document. MG suggested that comments should be fed back through the Community Relations team and the document will be added as an agenda item for the next meeting.
ACTION CM
- 2.2 **HNF meeting notes:** MG confirmed that the 2015 meeting notes from the Heathrow Noise Forum (HNF) have now been added to the HCNF website and the 2016 notes will be added soon (the meeting notes can be found [here](#)). It was noted that the HNF has now been renamed the Heathrow Strategic Noise Advisory Group (HSNAG).
- 2.3 **Noise monitor locations review:** This item is on the agenda.

3 Opening discussion

- 3.1 MG made some opening comments. He observed that the Forum is evolving so that a lot of activity now takes place in the Working Groups at a more detailed level and feeds back to the Forum. He thought this was proving to be very valuable. He also raised the comments made recently by Heathrow's Chairman Lord Deighton about the potential of introducing a small amount of additional capacity before the opening of a third runway. He stated that this would not alter any of the community and environmental commitments Heathrow had made with expansion and that more will be announced on this soon. Rob Beere (RB) wanted to know how many additional flights were being proposed and MG responded that it was approx. 25,000 flights annually.
- 3.2 Peter Willan (PW) asked about progress that Heathrow has made towards airspace modernisation. MG advised that the Government has begun a process to modernise airspace with its Future Airspace Strategy (FAS) however timescales had slipped and the most recent timeline is now 2024 for full scale modernisation of airspace around Heathrow to be implemented, following extensive public consultation.
- 3.3 He explained that some modernisation has already taken place at London City and Gatwick airports but nothing has been introduced at Heathrow yet. This will require extensive public consultation and will also require Government to consult on airspace policy. Derek Provan (DP) added that the second phase of LAMP (London Airspace Management Programme) is currently expected to be introduced around 2024 which requires modernisation of NATS equipment.
- 3.4 PW asked if progress reports are available in the public domain as residents are currently in the dark about what modernisation might mean and what might happen to flight paths. MG commented that modernisation was still at the very early stages. Isobel Pastor (IP) advised that the CAA has published information which covers the high level principles of modernisation. The Aviation Environment Federation (AEF) was involved in the preparation of this information. Ian Jopson (IJ) added that NATS will be open and transparent in consulting on any plans for airports and higher airspace.

- 3.5 David Hilton (DH) stated that the Forum was created as a consequence of residents complaining that flights had not returned to pre-trial routes after the airspace trials. Analysis has shown that some flights are now lower and he wanted to know why. He pointed out that his community representative Kate Mann has given up on the Forum because she didn't feel like progress was being made.
- 3.6 MG responded by summarising the situation to date. He said that last year community feedback to Heathrow was that flight patterns had not gone back to normal after the airspace trials however when Heathrow checked its systems it showed that flights had returned to pre-trial routes. He said that in response to this two things had happened:
- 1) Webtrak had been audited to ensure residents could be confident in the data that Heathrow was using and;
 - 2) Detailed independent analysis has been carried out which has revealed changes which would not necessarily be evident from a 2D map but which could nonetheless be perceptible to local communities, such as some flights being lower on some routes, some increase in concentration on some routes, and changing patterns such as an increase in the number of aircraft on southerly routes.
- 3.7 MG explained that since then Heathrow has been looking at the changes identified to see what can be done. He said it was as important to be able to set out what isn't and is achievable in the short term. The HCNF has now developed an Action Plan (available to download [here](#)) and this is what Heathrow will be held to account on.
- 3.8 MG explained that Heathrow operates under an existing policy and regulatory framework. He gave an example of aircraft altitudes. While there is evidence that the average height of aircraft on some routes has decreased, he explained that airlines are operating within existing Government guidelines. MG said that while Heathrow does not have powers to force aircraft to fly higher we are committed to exploring what can be done and to putting forward recommendations to Government and the industry. Before that it's important that robust evidence is collected about whether making aircraft fly higher is better for people on the ground. He said this is not yet proven and may just shift the noise somewhere else. So Heathrow will undertake a trial to test this. MG said that this is just one example where action was being taken. He understood that residents may be frustrated at the time change takes but he felt it was important to explain the steps involved and that making changes is not always straightforward.
- 3.9 DH said that this message is not coming across. MG expressed surprise because he thought there had been constructive engagement with DH and his borough. MG said that that no other airport is doing this amount of engagement or research. He cited the respite research which is currently on-going both in the laboratory and in the field to understand how best to provide respite which will help inform the implementation of precision navigation. He said this was leading-edge research and being carried out well ahead of the introduction of airspace modernisation. MG proposed that the Action Plan should be circulated again. **ACTION CM**
- 3.10 DH raised a point from the previous meeting (para. 4.6) regarding noise being a priority below 4,000ft. Darren Rhodes (DR) had said this requirement only related to airspace change and DH felt this was a "shameful" position to adopt. Isobel Pastor (IP) pointed out that this was a misunderstanding and explained that DR had not meant that noise was not a priority below 4,000ft, he was just pointing out that altitude-based priority is a specific tool for developing flight paths. She stressed that this does not mean that noise is not a factor outside of that process.

- 3.11 Christine Taylor (CTa) stated that some residents from Harmondsworth and Sipson feel that the HCNF only meets to make the airport look good in preparation for a third runway but it's not achieved anything. Rosalie James (RJ) added that residents in her area shared DH's view and thought it would show good will if residents could be told that the industry has listened and were taking action. She expressed frustration that community representatives keep on having to go back to residents saying that the Forum is undertaking studies but that no action is being taken.
- 3.12 MG pushed back citing the Action Plan and all the work that is being carried out through the Working Groups. He said that regardless of expansion Heathrow will continue to operate and airspace will still need to be modernised. The Forum will play a key role in this. MG reiterated that full airspace modernisation is some years away. He stressed that the HCNF is an influential committee and members will play an important role as plans are developed. He hoped members would stick with the Forum but acknowledged that it was the choice of the community representatives whether to come along. He said that if membership tails off then Heathrow will look at a different way of doing things.
- 3.13 DH observed that members understand that airspace modernisation will bring change and choose to stay involved to ensure residents' views are considered. He said they also hoped to change the attitude of the aviation industry. His perception was that some progress had been made but nothing tangible has happened as a result of people making complaints over the last two years.
- 3.14 John Stewart (JS) expressed concern that the group was in danger of pre-empting what the Working Groups were about to report back and hoped they might answer some of the points being made.

4 Update from Working Group 1 - Monitoring and verification

- 4.1 Zoltan Bazso (ZB) gave a progress update for Working Group 1. The presentation can be found [here](#). He confirmed that further gate analysis is underway and hoped that reports for five locations will be complete by the end of the year. A noise monitoring programme is being developed and is discussed below. The NLR verification report confirming the accuracy of Webtrak data has now been published and is available to download [here](#). The noise monitoring report format is being updated and is also discussed below.
- 4.2 **New noise monitoring deployment strategy:** New permanent and mobile noise monitors are being deployed. There was a broad discussion about who was responsible for choosing the monitor locations. ZB explained that the locations would be decided through Working Group 1. RN added that the Forum would take a view about where to place them every year and members should submit proposals through the Community Relations team. Requests from residents will also be taken into account.
- 4.3 ZB outlined plans for deploying monitors along the Detling route as part of the departure profile study. PW wanted to know why these monitors were needed. ZB explained that they would help to show changes in noise levels between different noise abatement procedures (known as NAPD1 and NAPD2) as well as the effect of increasing climb gradients.

- 4.4 ZB explained that the 50 new noise monitors are 4G enabled for real time data streaming so it will be possible to view noise levels in Webtrak. He said that the first 20 monitors are currently being calibrated while the remaining 30 will arrive from the manufacturers by the end of the year. 12 of these will be used to replace the existing permanent monitors to the east and west of the airport. New monitors will also be deployed in new locations where possible within technical, security and 4G coverage constraints.
- 4.5 Chris Turrell (CTu) asked about the obstacles to finding suitable locations. ZB explained that background noise levels can cause problems and that private gardens are normally preferable to publically accessible sites for security reasons. He encouraged the group to continue helping to find suitable locations as it would be better to have too many suggestions rather than too few. RJ asked if there was a list of prerequisites and CM advised that these would be circulated. **ACTION CM**
- 4.6 Tony Popham (TP) suggested that an independent noise regulator should be involved in the noise monitoring programme. MG explained that what TP was referring to was a third runway proposal and that these monitors are being deployed within the current framework.
- 4.7 MG highlighted that the introduction of 50 new noise monitors and the Forum's influential role in the process were good examples of things that has changed.
- 4.8 **Noise monitor template report:** Nicole Porter gave an update on the progress of the new noise monitor report template. The broad areas covered in the report include a summary of the key findings, a description of how the information was produced, analysis of where aircraft fly and how this may have changed, analysis of the noise monitor data and a summary of the noise environment in the wider area and how that has changed. The report will also include an appendix explaining the noise terminology used in the report. NP explained that the template is comprehensive but not exhaustive, aiming to be as factual as possible and provide a common level of understanding. The report includes a number of noise metrics to reflect the community's experience of noise.
- 4.9 Stephen Clark (SC) thanked NP for the amount of work that has gone into preparing the report template and noted that it contained a lot of useful information about the noise environment and how it has changed over time. He stressed that care should be taken on how data is presented, for example a route usage increase of 5% on the DET route was equivalent to a 22% increase in the number of flights along that route. He wanted to know who in Government would take responsibility for the impacts of additional aircraft flying lower. He called on Heathrow to set out what actions can be taken on these issues. MG thanked SC for his considered response and agreed that Heathrow should produce a response to the findings of the report once it was finalised. **ACTION MG**
- 4.10 MG added that Heathrow was looking to communicate the work of the Forum in a balanced way and asked community groups to do the same.

- 4.11 PW wanted to understand the connection between monitor locations and analysis gates. He also asked how members outside Working Group 1 could influence the contents of the report template and whether it was in line with the approach taken by CAA and ERCD. RN explained that the analysis gates mentioned earlier were a separate piece of work, but when a monitor is deployed a gate is put around it to understand what is going on. He added that if PW felt the metrics were not suitable for his area then he was welcome to provide feedback to the group. He acknowledged that the reports should contain a suite of metrics that are suitable for every area but he cautioned against ending up with a report that was so long that nobody would read it. He added that using such a template would allow large sections of the report process to be automated so that reports could be produced more quickly.
- 4.12 Surinderpal Suri (SS) suggested that the report template should include a “significance criteria” to indicate when changes become significant compared to what communities are experiencing now.
- 4.13 MG agreed that the template would be circulated to members for final comment.
ACTION MG

5 Update from Working Group 4 - Research, policy and communications

- 5.1 **Slots and scheduling:** Ingrid Hainy (IH) from Airport Coordination Limited (ACL) gave a presentation on slot coordination. ACL provides coordination services at 39 airports in 7 countries and is responsible for the allocation of slots at Heathrow. The presentation is available [here](#).
- 5.2 DH asked how the process worked in airports that were not controlled by ACL. IH explained that there are independent coordination companies around the world who all follow the IATA guide. RB was curious to know why historic slot use appeared to have a higher priority than curfew. IH responded that he had misunderstood this. Curfew is one of the criteria that must be met, for example there are limitations on what can be done during the night period.

6 Update from Working Group 3 - Night operations

- 6.1 **Quiet Night Charter:** Steve Leighton (SL) from Helios gave an update on the voluntary quiet night charter. The presentation can be found [here](#). He explained that input was being sought to shape changes in how airlines operate during the night quota period. He stressed that this would be a voluntary charter.
- 6.2 A number of suggestions from the group are under consideration including alternating departure routes for late running departures, restricting late running departures on certain nights in the runway alternation scheme, and proposed departure curfews to further reduce late running departures into the night. He cautioned that all of these concepts involved trade-offs. He also noted that a number of departure routes share common paths so this needs to be taken into consideration when considering impacts.

- 6.3 SC thought it looked like the charter was about how to move late departures around rather reduce them. MG observed that over the last couple of years there have been reductions in the number of late runners and the purpose of the charter was to see what further steps can be taken to reduce them further as well as reduce the impact of them. He pointed out that when flights operate after 23:30 it is not a good outcome for anyone – airlines, passengers or communities. SC suggested there should be wider consultation on some of the options outlined. Jane Dawes (JD) confirmed this was under consideration. DH noted there had been ‘quiet acquiescence’ at the RBWM Aviation Forum that aircraft noise should be shared and stressed that consultation was important.

7 Update from Working Group 2 - Operating procedures

- 7.1 JD gave an update on Working Group 2. The presentation is available [here](#). The objective of the group is to explore changes to operating procedures for both arrivals and departures, and to understand the trade-offs in order to identify those that have most potential to improve the noise climate around the airport.
- 7.2 JD reiterated that airspace change is coming and the group is working to establish the optimum departure profiles for Heathrow. Some early work has already been done on this and Martin Stenning (MS) recently gave a presentation about A380 altitudes to Working Group 2. This showed differences in performance between flights travelling to the Gulf and the Far East. It showed that departure profile NADP1 may be quieter in one location while causing a small increase in sideline noise, i.e. to some areas not directly below the flight path. MG added that caution was needed when trialling something different as there may be unintended consequences like this, so it is important to get the data on the table so that good decisions can be made.
- 7.3 SC suggested that the issue was not only the number of people within a certain noise contour but also the number who are most significantly affected. MG observed that this work should be brought together with the work on metrics to establish the overall change.
- 7.4 DH noted that work on this was already underway at Arup’s SoundLab so trials should not be needed. Darren Rhodes (DR) acknowledged that modelling could be used but observed that not everyone accepted modelling as valid evidence, so real data would also be required. However he noted that state-of-the-art modelling would be useful to help understand the potential unintended consequences of increasing aircraft altitudes.
- 7.5 **Arrivals efficiencies:** JD gave a presentation about work being done to address arrivals efficiencies. The presentation is available [here](#). Heathrow has inherent arrival inefficiencies and resilience issues and is considering three potential solutions that may help to address this.
- 7.6 **eTBS:** Strong headwinds are a significant cause of delays. Time Based Separation (TBS) currently helps to minimise the impact and the airport and NATS are looking at ways to enhance this.
- 7.7 **RECAT EU:** Wake vortex is a significant factor defining the safe separation of aircraft and knowledge on this subject has improved in recent years. This could potentially allow improvements on aircraft spacing but the work is very much in its infancy and subject to a stringent safety case.

- 7.8 **Independent Parallel Approaches (IPA):** This is a tool which would allow the airport to better manage delay under TEAM conditions. Heathrow is currently allowed to land up to six aircraft on the departures runway each hour when there is a delay of 20 minutes or more in the holding stacks (although in practice there are far fewer aircraft using the departure runway). JD explained that this practice is not efficient because landing an arrival on the departures runway impacts on departure rates and requires increased spacing between arriving aircraft on the arrivals runway. IPA would allow for a reduction in this spacing, allowing the airport to recover more quickly during disruption.
- 7.9 PW wanted to know how this would affect resilience and how much headroom could be created. DP advised this was currently around 5% and these initiatives would help to improve resilience.

8 AOB

- 8.1 MG noted that the planned update from Working Group 5 on the Compton route review would have to be postponed due to lack of time. He added there was nothing specific that needed to be covered before the next meeting.
- 8.2 MG observed that today's meeting had been more challenging than expected and some learning could be had from it.
- 8.3 He felt that the group had reached the limit of what could be done using PowerPoint presentations in a room and proposed that some of these materials should be circulated in advance to allow members a chance to absorb the information and have a more meaningful conversation.
- 8.4 He observed that this group was set up to be a consultative forum but consideration should also be made to what other sort of consultation should be done. He said he felt strongly about Heathrow doing the right thing and not just carrying out a PR exercise. He hoped that members had noted that Heathrow is taking action in a number of areas - deploying new monitors, developing new ways of reporting, looking at how to share noise more equitably and the work on aircraft altitudes.
- 8.5 He acknowledged that community groups want to see change and confirmed that Heathrow is absolutely committed to this. However change cannot come overnight, there is a process to go through and Heathrow is committed to do that. He said the Forum was established with a genuine intent of trying to approach airspace modernisation in the best possible way as well as finding actions to improve things in short term. He hoped that members would continue with the Forum but understood if some genuinely thought it was not a good use of their time.
- 8.6 Margaret Majumdar (MM) observed that there was a huge amount of work being done through the various Working Groups and was disappointed that there was not enough time to look at each presentation. She proposed that Forum meetings should be extended to a whole day in 2017. MG said that Heathrow would consider how best to run the Forums in future and set out proposals for consideration in advance of the November meeting. **ACTION MG**

Date of next meeting

Wednesday 23 November 2016, 1pm-4pm, Heathrow Academy