

Heathrow Community Noise Forum – 23 November 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
Cllr Chris Turrell	Bracknell Forest Council
Gerry Ceaser	LAANC
Peter Szanto	Elmbridge
Hannah Cook	Spelthorne Borough Council
Cllr David Hilton	Windsor & Maidenhead
Cllr Tony Popham	Elmbridge Borough Council
Christine Taylor	Harmondsworth & Sipson RA
Margaret Majumdar	EANAG
Rob Buick	Englefield Green
Paul Conway	Englefield Green
Cllr Carol Manduca	Runnymede Borough Council
Rosalie James	AN3V
John Stewart	HACAN
Isobel Pastor	DfT
Tim Johnson	CAA
Ian Jopson	NATS
Dan Foster	NATS
Harri Howells	NATS
Spencer Norton	BA
Nicole Porter	Anderson Acoustics
Matt Gorman	Heathrow
Cheryl Monk	Heathrow
Jane Dawes	Heathrow
Richard Norman	Heathrow
Laura Jones	Heathrow
Zoltan Bazso	Heathrow

Apologies

Cllr Conrad Sturt	Surrey Heath
Kathleen Croft	Stanwell Moor RA
Graham Young	Richings Park RA
Cllr Wendy Matthews	South Bucks Council
Cllr David Sleight	Wokingham Council
Cllr Rebecca Jennings-Evans	Surrey Heath Council
Surinderpal Suri	Hounslow Council
Rob Beere	AN3V
Darren Rhodes	CAA
Dean Plumb	BA

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 much had happened since the last meeting, most notably the Government's announcement on Heathrow expansion, and that a lot of work had taken place within the different working groups which would be picked up as part of the meeting.

2 Previous minutes and actions

- 2.1 **Responsibilities of organisations:** This document has been circulated and no comments have been received. Stephen Clark (SC) raised a question regarding departure routes and said he is still unclear as to which organisation is actually responsible for where a plane is once it takes off. He added that this should form part of the DfT consultation to which MG agreed.
- 2.2 **Circulate action plan:** This has now been circulated.
- 2.3 **Noise monitor location requirements:** This is currently in progress. The new noise monitors will have different requirements to the old ones. For example, the new 4G monitors will be smaller and will require more power. An updated specification document is being put together through working group 1. Richard Norman (RN) explained that the exact type and locations of the additional noise monitors will be agreed by working group 1.
- 2.4 **Strawberry Hill noise monitoring report:** This is now with TAG for comments. SC said that he would be keen to meet with Andersons Acoustics to discuss this.
- 2.5 **Noise monitoring report template:** This has now been circulated to members. Peter Willan (PW) voiced concern about not having enough time to input comments. However Richard Norman (RN) observed that comments had been received from other members and cautioned against allowing further changes and causing more delays in publishing the community noise reports.
- 2.6 **2017 forum & working group format:** Forum dates for 2017 will be circulated and papers sent out in advance. PW expressed concern about the volume of information that is available and knowing which information is most was relevant. MG acknowledged that there is a lot of information to absorb, particularly for residents who may have other commitments in addition to their involvement with the HCNF or working groups. He explained that Heathrow is keen to make as much information available as possible but will try to make it easy to absorb. However, given the complexity and nature of the work undertaken by the HCNF and working groups, perhaps this is not surprising.

3 Opening discussion

- 3.1 MG gave an overview of the Forum's developments this year and drew attention to some of the process improvements and actions that have been delivered within the HCNF. These included the circulation of presentations ahead of meetings; a formal industry pre-meet had been set up ahead of the HCNF; Heathrow had invited other senior industry representatives from the CAA to attend the Forum. Tim Johnson is here today specifically to explain the airspace change process and Andrew Haines, Chief Executive at the CAA has been invited to the February meeting. MG asked the group to put forward any questions they had for Tim Johnson ahead of February's Forum.

- 3.2 MG acknowledged that some members of the HCNF felt there has been a lack of action. He pointed out that some things take longer to consider and address than others. However he cited examples of places where progress had been made, for example the modification of a vent under the wing of the Airbus A320 series aircraft which has significantly reduced the 'whistling' noise caused by this aircraft type. Around half of A320 movements have now been retrofitted.
- 3.3 With regards to Heathrow expansion, MG talked through the indicative timeline of the planning process (available [here](#)). He advised there was nothing new to share at the moment but would keep the group updated as and when new information becomes available.
- 3.4 Isobel Pastor (IP) clarified the detail on the two separate Government consultations, one for the National Policy Statement (NPS) and one for airspace policy, and that they would likely begin in the new year.
- 3.5 MG stated that while the HCNF was initially set up to inform members and influence airspace strategy, it now needed to consider if Heathrow expansion should be discussed as part of the forum. He said that much of airspace modernisation will take place in relation to Heathrow expansion so it would seem logical. However, he acknowledged that there are differing views from the group. MG asked the group to feedback on how they would like to use the forum going forward.
- 3.6 MG then mentioned that there had been some questions as to whether Heathrow actively promoted the news story that appeared in the press a few weeks ago regarding the number of noise complaints Heathrow had received. MG clarified that Heathrow did not actively promote the story. He explained that Heathrow had been approached by a BBC journalist asking about the noise complaints and that they were directed to the Noise website where the complaints reports are published.
- 3.7 SC felt that some residents do not receive proper responses to their complaints or that they are not acted upon. MG said that Heathrow recognises that noise is an issue and that the airport is trying to address these issues through the agreed action plan where possible. However changes to flight paths and policies are not made purely on the basis of the number of complaints received from a particular area.
- 3.8 PW asked about airspace modernisation and when local residents would know what it would look like and mean for local people. MG explained that airspace modernisation is a lengthy process and that Heathrow's current understanding is that full airspace modernisation is to be implemented around the mid 2020's.
- 3.9 Jane Dawes (JD) added that while airspace modernisation was a number of years away and subject to extensive consultation, there are a number of things that Heathrow is currently looking at as part of today's airspace. These include the Compton departure route and arrivals efficiency which are currently being explored through the working groups.
- 3.10 MG agreed to circulate a paragraph or two on airspace modernisation and how the consultation process will work. **ACTION CM**

- 3.11 **Action plan and working groups:** RN briefly talked through the pack that was circulated ahead of the meeting that went through the deliverables of 2016 and the work that had been on-going through the working groups. He talked through discussions that had taken place in the recent working groups to consolidate them for 2017 in order to reduce the number of meetings and to allow Forum members to gain a better oversight of the work across the different groups. The presentations can be found [here](#). He advised that the dates of next year's working groups will be circulated.

ACTION CM

- 3.12 David Hilton (DH) questioned why the presentations had not been circulated in advance. Laura Jones (LJ) confirmed that this had taken place, and a show of hands revealed that the majority of the group confirmed this too. A follow up email from Heathrow after the presentations had been sent out was agreed upon in case the size of attachments had prevented the email from being received in some cases.

4 Airspace Change Process (ACP) update – Tim Johnson (CAA)

- 4.1 Tim Johnson (TJ) provided the forum with an insight into the airspace change process. The presentation is available [here](#). In terms of the decision-making process on airspace, TJ explained what the CAA was responsible for and how the ACP works. He discussed the distinction between Government policy (such as whether flight paths should be concentrated along a narrow path or deliberately dispersed) and the CAA's role as the regulator.
- 4.2 Paul Conway (PC) asked TJ to explain the ownership of the CAA. TJ explained that it is a public corporation which is funded through charges of who it regulates, and that is it has no direct funding from the Government.
- 4.3 John Stewart (JS) asked whether there was anything in the guidance that covers impact from changes when there are two airports concerned. He cited an example of people living in South East London who are affected by Heathrow and London City airports and how these people could suffer more. IP explained that while individual airports are responsible for proposing changes to them, part of the CAA's process considers the impact of these on other airports.
- 4.4 DH pointed out that under current guidance, noise is the priority up to 4,000ft and wanted to know how this was monitored. He asked what the metrics were and whether the regulator had any powers if aircraft are not above 4,000ft as he felt that there is no process to manage non-adherence to current policy. TJ explained that the CAA has enforcement and sanction powers generally, and in terms of airspace changes there is the post implementation review.
- 4.5 IP explained that environmental considerations around carbon efficiency and noise may be competing with each other, and reiterated that currently altitude priorities are noise up 4,000ft and then above that it's environmental.
- 4.6 SC voiced his concern that the CAA is judge and jury and there is no independent way for people to have fair and independent process – he felt that consequently noise and health can be trumped by economic considerations.

5 Steeper Departure Trial Update

- 5.1 Rachel Thomas (RT) gave an update on the steeper departure trial on the Detling easterly departure route. The presentation can be found [here](#). She explained that the HCNF had raised concerns about the gradual lowering of climb performance over recent years which the analysis confirmed and that this was the reason for the trial. RT then outlined the importance of fully understanding the implications of any changes to climb profiles. The trial implementation timeline was shared and can be found in the presentation.
- 5.2 Gerry Ceaser (GC) commented that while he could see the benefits of this trial, he is concerned that this could likely cause a much larger noise cone and cause dis-benefit to more people. RN responded that this is why a trial would be conducted and data gathered using noise monitors deployed along the route. He explained that this would be important to better understand any unintended consequences of a steeper climb gradient. MG also added that there is a need to gather and assess evidence before any decisions are made.
- 5.3 Margaret Majumdar (MM) asked whether the findings on the Detling easterly departure route would be expected to be the same on the Brookmans Park departure route. RT responded that it was too soon to know.
- 5.4 SC welcomed the clarity of the presentation but expressed concern about the creation of 'noise ghettos' where the level of aircraft noise becomes unacceptable. He stated the need to consider other measures to determine what an acceptable level of noise is, and said he thought Heathrow was looking at minimum climb rates at other airports. Jane Dawes (JD) confirmed that Heathrow has tried to obtain this data from a number of other European airports but it has been a struggle as they don't all capture the same information.

6 Vectoring Update

- 6.1 Dan Foster (DF) gave a presentation on why aircraft are sometimes vectored off the standard instrument departure (SID) and associated noise preferential route (NPR). The presentation is available [here](#). DF explained that aircraft are required to follow NPRs up to 4,000ft and if they don't they are considered to be off track. He said that overall track keeping is very good at Heathrow with around 96-97% of aircraft staying within the NPR up to 4,000ft. He then went on to explain that safety is the overruling priority, and that weather avoidance, police helicopters and airspace infringements by light aircraft are the most common reasons for ATC needing to vector aircraft below 4,000ft. He advised that two reports are currently being prepared to look more closely at the reasons for directing aircraft off the NPR and he will report back on this next year. **ACTION DF**
- 6.2 MG commented that the work is seeking to bring a greater understanding of what causes a small proportion of aircraft to be off track and what can be done to improve this.
- 6.3 Rosalie James (RJ) asked if there is a similar policy for arrivals as there is for departures. DF explained that there isn't an equivalent of an NPR for arrivals as there are no fixed arrival routes from the holding stacks. He went on to explain that there is a procedure called CDA (Continuous Descent Approach) that monitors aircraft leaving the holding stacks until they join the final approach approximately 10 miles from the airport. RT added that ATC instruct aircraft to remain as high as possible for as long as possible (the CDA model) and CDA compliance is monitored and published.

7 Swanwick Airspace Optimisation

- 7.1 Harri Howells (HH) gave an overview of the Swanwick airspace optimisation project taking place at higher levels across southern and central England. The presentation is available [here](#) and relates to new RNAV1 Standard Arrival Routes (STARs) for Heathrow and Gatwick arrivals from the South and South West. None of the changes affect flights below 7,000ft. HH explained that the purpose of the project is to reduce complexity for controllers and improve safety and efficiency.
- 7.2 PW asked what the noise level is at 7,000ft. HH advised that no single answer exists, but that the noise impact of any changes made above 7,000ft would be expected to be minimal. There was a question as to whether these changes would affect the way aircraft leave the stack to begin their approach. RT explained that the continuous decent approach would continue to begin from the stack until final approach.

8 AOB

- 8.1 Ian Jopson (IJ) wanted to make members aware that he had asked colleagues in Terminal Control (TC) at Swanwick who control aircraft on their approach to Heathrow what measures they would suggest to better manage noise, especially in more sensitive time periods. He will come back to the HCNF with these details. **ACTION IJ**

9 Date of next meeting

Thursday 2nd February 2017, 1pm-4pm, Heathrow Academy.