

Heathrow Community Noise Forum – 25 January 2016

3pm – 5.30pm Heathrow Academy - meeting notes

Attendees

Name	Borough / Organisation
Margaret Majumdar	Ealing
John Coates	Richmond
Peter Willan	Richmond Heathrow Campaign
Stephen Clark	Teddington Action Group
Neil Spurrier	Teddington Action Group
Cllr David Hilton	Windsor & Maidenhead
Cllr Chris Turrell	Bracknell
Paul Conway	Englefield Green
Rosalie James	Aircraft 3 villages
Rob Beere	Aircraft 3 villages
Kathleen Croft	Stanwell Moor Residents Assn
Nigel Davies	Englefield Green
David Sleight	Wokingham
Neil Luxton	Elmbridge
Christine Taylor	HASRA
John Stewart	HACAN
Darren Rhodes	CAA
Isobel Pastor	DfT
Dan Foster	NATS
Matt Gorman	Heathrow
Jane Dawes	Heathrow
Cheryl Monk	Heathrow
Richard Norman	Heathrow
Laura Jones	Heathrow
Peter Rafano	Heathrow
Stuart Lindsey	CAA
Ian Jopson	NATS
Dave Curtis	NATS
Dean Plumb	BA

Visitors

Henk Veerbeek	NLR
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Apologies

Cllr Amrit Mann	Hounslow
Natasha Fletcher	Teddington Action Group
Cllr Colin Davis	Spelthorne
Cllr Wendy Matthews	South Bucks
Ajit Bansal	Hounslow
Cllr Rebecca Jennings-Evans	Surrey Heath
Cllr Conrad Sturt	Surrey Heath
Kate Mann	Ascot resident
Graham Young	Richings Park and Iver
Cllr Pat Roberts	Runnymede
Paul Conlan	Ealing
Cllr Ted Plenty	Slough
Surinderpal Suri	Hounslow
Steve Bax	Elmbridge

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

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

2. Previous minutes and actions

- 2.1 The previous minutes were agreed.
- 2.2 **Route contours:** Darren Rhodes (DR) confirmed discussions are on-going with Heathrow regarding producing noise contours to reflect the impact of changes to the Compton route.
- 2.3 **Noise fines:** MG reported that there had been a delay to this data being published but that it would be available soon.

3. Agree action plan and steps for implementation

- 3.1 Richard Norman (RN) presented a draft HCNF Action Plan that has been considered at a meeting earlier that month with Forum members. He explained that in order to ensure momentum in delivering the plan, it was suggested that a number of separate working groups should be set up. MG sought feedback on what had been put forward.
- 3.2 Peter Willan (PW) was interested to understand who would be responsible for publishing findings and reports that came out of the HCNF and how these would be positioned in terms of the views of members or Heathrow.
- 3.3 RN thought that it would vary depending on what the report is and the particular involvement of particular groups. With regards to the data analysis carried out by PA consulting, the technical report would be published as a PA consulting report however it was hoped that the conclusions could be agreed jointly between the relevant members and Heathrow and then published on-line.
- 3.4 PW asked if the Steeper Approaches Trial report would be brought to the CNF for approval. Cheryl Monk (CM) explained that since this was a Heathrow trial that had not been overseen by the HCNF, this would be a Heathrow report although it's finding and conclusions would be brought to the group for discussion and information.
- 3.5 David Hilton (DH) asked if the HCNF would be given the opportunity to make comment on reports published by Heathrow. MG said that Heathrow would be happy to seek comment/input in principal and thought this would add value in moving the debate on particular issues forward.
- 3.6 Stephen Clark (SC) requested that Heathrow provides a clear explanation of the current governance of airspace to help communities understand the aviation 'chain of command' i.e. to answer the question 'who made the decisions (by what criteria and how) that put that aeroplane at that height, over that point, at that time'. He asked that a governance decision 'map' showing the exact relationship of the DfT, the CAA, NATS, the airport and the airlines - and also within Heathrow the various boards, committees, forums and working groups would be very relevant to ongoing discussions. MG agreed this would be helpful. **ACTION MG**

- 3.7 The use of independent consultants was discussed. SC said that access to specialist independent consultants would help ensure members were better informed about technical issues and help communities to ask the right questions and interpret technical responses. MG said Heathrow had already demonstrated its willingness to pay for external consultants and agreed that the use of technical experts/consultants would be useful where relevant.
- 3.8 The discussion turned to timings for the Future Airspace Strategy. MG explained that although the original timescales for airspace change in the South East inc. Heathrow was 2020, the latest view is that these timescales have now been revised to 2023/2024. This is in part due to a review of Government policy which he thought might be the subject of a public consultation later this year. This means that Heathrow won't be putting forward options for airspace changes and consulting on them until there is more clarity on this. However he said this means there is more time for the HCNF members to help shape the principles and design process of future airspace.
- 3.9 Stephen Clark requested a clear explanation of the reviews, processes and likely timescales of FAS and if possible what is proposed by the DfT, CAA, NATS and the airport including the Government's policy review. MG agreed that a two pager will be produced that gives an overview of the latest timings and the involvement of different parties. **ACTION MG.**
- 3.10 SC said he'd written to Heathrow Chief Executive John Holland-Kaye to propose having an airport-specific health report. RN said this has been captured in the Action Plan. He explained that there has been numerous health studies related to aviation including a new WHO report due shortly. He expected the working group to consider these and identify research gap analysis.
- 3.11 MG observed that there's a lot of activity planned to reflect the number of issues raised. This will rely on sufficient engagement from the community to make it work, so this will need to be monitored throughout the year. MG asked volunteers for working groups to email CM. Rob Beere (RB) asked if other members of groups that don't attend the HCNF could be nominated for groups and CM confirmed that they could.
- 3.12 Since there were no further comments MG said he took it that people were broadly happy with the content of the revised Action Plan.
- 3.13 Rosalie James (RJ) sought assurances that other industry bodies other than Heathrow would get involved in delivering the action plan. BA and NATS confirmed that they would play their part.
- 3.14 RJ also sought assurances that this plan would lead to improvements in the local noise environment. MG said that is the objective in identifying specific actions to explore what improvements can be made, and if something can't be done to provide an explanation as to why it can't.

4. Terms of Reference

- 4.1 CM explained that Forum members had met in early January to discuss the revised Terms of Reference (ToR). Since then Teddington Action Group (TAG) had sent their suggested changes.

- 4.2 MG thought that the content had come together well, his only reservation being that the Purpose and Objectives overlapped and suggested this is simplified.
- 4.3 Neil Spurrier (NS) said TAG requested the line regarding feedback to the airport was included in the revised ToR. MG agreed.
- 4.4 NS also wanted a line reinstated under Objectives which said “especially where these communities have experienced a changed noise environment”. John Stewart (JS) expressed concern about what time period that change would refer to, and MG was concerned about the word “especially”, suggesting instead “including communities”. MM agreed with MG, saying it should include the impact on communities who’ve always had noise.
- 4.5 PW wanted the sentence “identify ways in which these impacts can be minimised” changed to “identify ways in which these impacts can be avoided”. MG said that in some cases this would be possible but not always in others.
- 4.6 DH suggested that the section on objectives should be more action-oriented. MG agreed this was a good point, and that the ToR needs to be read alongside the Action Plan.
- 4.7 NS said that TAG had suggested one of the Principals should be to “Recognise the rights of communities under or near Heathrow flight paths to restrictions on the amount of aircraft noise they are exposed”. He did not like the replacement sentence that had been used. NS requested that the words “by minimising health and noise effects of aircraft” were inserted to what was there. PW thought this was too constraining and it should begin with “including by minimising”.
- 4.8 MG was happy for wording to address that concern. He also reiterated that this was a living document and it would be good practice to revisit it each year.
- 4.9 Ian Jopson (IJ) suggested that when referring to people experiencing a change in noise, it should include the phrase “or in future”.

5. DfT – purpose of attendance at CNF

- 5.1 Isobel Pastor (IP) gave a presentation about the Government’s attendance at the CNF.
- 5.2 DH thought that the issue of concentration versus dispersion might require policy change, and also wanted consultation about the advantages and disadvantages of changing the current vectoring rule from 4,000ft to 7,000ft. DH also said that the next consultation needs to be a consultation that people can actually engage in.
- 5.3 IP said they need to make sure the evidence they take is balanced and said what’s good for Heathrow may not be suitable for other airports.
- 5.4 IJ was mindful that different solutions may have different impacts for different communities, so getting the balance right is important.
- 5.5 RJ asked for clarification about whether the concentration of flight paths was Government policy. IP confirmed that the wording in the current Aviation Policy

Framework states “to limit and, where possible, reduce the number of people in the UK significantly affected by aircraft noise”.

- 5.6 MG explained that the policy of concentration had been Government policy for some time, however as aircraft technology had improved aircraft had become better at flying the existing routes more precisely. He went on to say that moving forward, the Future Airspace Strategy will be a whole separate process and there will be significant consultation on this and what the right policy is that informs this.
- 5.7 JS said that concentration was the only thing that Government Policy used to focus on, and that the notion of respite is only something that had been introduced in recent years. His view is that this was positive step-forward.
- 5.8 He said that people under the arrivals final approach value having half a day of respite when they experience concentration for the other half of the day. He went on to say this is what some people further east are calling for since it's an effective way of providing relief from aircraft noise.
- 5.9 PW said that the current policy which states the objective of “minimising the number of people affected” needed further exploration and asked IP to confirm if there would be a consultation on airspace policy this year. IP said there was nothing confirmed regarding a review but she would notify the group as soon as anything was confirmed.
- 5.10 RB said he understood that the DfT was pushing for concentration and that this was agreed with Europe. IP said that she presumed he meant Performance Based Navigation (PBN) and that implementation of PBN was mandated by Europe.
- 5.11 Stuart Lindsey (SL) explained that the policy of concentration along the least number of departure routes was based on old airspace that was 50 years old. He explained that with regard to airspace change, the CAA does not propose changes. The CAA's role is that when a sponsor (e.g. an airport) of a change comes forward, the industry will consult and the CAA will check that the process has been followed.
- 5.12 RB asked who sponsored the change to the Compton route. SL said that the airspace structure for the Compton route hadn't changed, and that traffic had moved within the rules they have so this wasn't an ACP.
- 5.13 SC said that he didn't think anyone who experienced concentration would welcome it and that it shouldn't apply to heavily concentrated areas as this was going to create noise ghettos. He said a study is needed to look at the health impacts.
- 5.14 NS said he understood that current policy was that routes should avoid heavily populated areas as far as possible and wanted to know what DfT says constitutes a heavily populated area. IP said she would take that question to her team. **ACTION IP**
- 5.15 DH said that reducing the number of people significantly affected was a complex question as the number of aircraft movements also plays an important role in determining levels of disturbance to individuals.
- 5.16 RJ asked who sets the rules regarding noise from airspace changes. IP said the CAA looks at the proposal and decides whether to grant that proposal by looking at a number of issues including noise. CAA must take into account environmental guidance from DfT.

- 5.17 RB said that his area is not within the 57 leq noise contour, however the problem was the duration of noise events.
- 5.18 MG said that there were many issues to consider regarding airspace change and it would require a lot of discussion with members. He said that was one of the reasons the HCNF had been set up in the first place. He explained that many US airports have been challenged for introducing pure concentration and although the implementation of PBN is mandated, he explained that Heathrow wants to work closely with communities to find the best way to implement this new technology.

6. NLR data verification – final report

- 6.1 Henk Veerbeek (HV) gave a presentation on the progress of the data verification process which confirmed that Heathrow's data and Webtrak systems are accurate. The full presentation can be found here ([link](#)).
- 6.2 The accuracy of flight apps such as Flightradar24 (FR24) was raised by some of the members who asked how they compared to Heathrow's Webtrak system.
- 6.3 There was some discussion about this. Darren Rhodes (DR) explained why FR24 isn't always as accurate as radar based flight trackers such as Heathrow's Webtrak. He said that these apps don't take into account air pressure and therefore don't correct altitudes based on this.
- 6.4 SL pointed out that there had been a conversation on Twitter about this on 8 January, between FR24 and a person enquiring about the accuracy of FR24. He said that FR24 explained themselves why their height data wasn't always accurate. He explained that their system can report an "uncorrected" height which can be up to 900ft out.
- 6.5 JS said it would be good to have more information like that so that it can be explained to residents and made available on HACAN's website. It was agreed that something is produced by Heathrow and CAA to help explain this **ACTION MG/DR**
- 6.6 MG summarised by saying the verification work carried out by HV shows that Heathrow's Webtrak system is an accurate way of tracking aircraft and it highlighted the limitations of other flight tracking systems freely available.
- 6.7 Nicole Porter (NP) was encouraged that the NLR presentation also showed that INM modelling was accurate, and said she'll be working with HV to further improve their modelling.
- 6.8 The NLR presentation raised a question about the accuracy of the Ascot noise monitor. DH asked whether this affected the noise analysis for the departure trials. NP said there was still confidence in the modelling and MG said the question was noted.

7. Data analysis – next steps & publication

- 7.1 CM explained that additional data analysis for the remaining 4 areas – Englefield Green, Ascot, Lightwater and Bracknell – was almost complete and would be shared with all the groups in the next few weeks. She said there had been constructive discussions with some of the groups about what the data showed and she thought groups had found it helpful to identify changes people may hear on the ground. Over

the next few weeks it was expected that the final conclusions would be discussed with groups and the analysis published on the Heathrow noise website for others to view.

- 7.2 MG said that a further eight gates will be analysed in 2016 with the locations to be agreed to be agreed by the members.

8. AOB

- 8.1 SC asked why they can now hear ground noise six miles from the airport. MM said it was all around the airport and occasionally her area gets it too. MG said he would ask RN to look at this.
- 8.2 Christine Taylor (CT) said that at 03:19 this morning there had been a long roar and wanted to know what it was. CM said it was not necessarily aircraft noise and that RN was doing some work on this.
- 8.3 It was requested that clarity was given about why a separate Heathrow Noise Forum existed in addition to the HCNF and whether the two groups should be merged together. MG explained that the Heathrow Noise Forum (HNF) had been set up 12 months before the HCNF. He said he would consider whether these groups should be combined.

Date of the next meeting

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