

Heathrow



OUR JOURNEY TO

QUIETER

# Noise Action Plan 2024-2028

A summary of our draft proposals – June 2023

**We want to limit and reduce the number of people whose quality of life is affected by the noise we create and ensure that all our targets lead to improvements for our local communities.**

Our commitment to quieter nights and quieter flights is part of our Heathrow 2.0 Sustainability Plan.

Heathrow will take a leading role in decarbonising the aviation sector and ensuring the communities around the airport can be a great place to live and work.

## Delivering the same benefits, just quieter

Heathrow brings huge economic benefits both locally and nationally. As one of the largest single site workplaces in the UK, Heathrow is proud to employ over 70,000 people, over half of whom live in Heathrow's five local boroughs.

Nationally, Heathrow is the UK's global gateway and plays a critical role underpinning the UK's economic success, connecting UK regions and nations to over 200 destinations in over 80 countries, across all four corners of the globe. As the UK's front door we welcome friends, families, businesses, trade, and investment to the UK all the way from Sydney to Seattle.

But for all the benefits that Heathrow delivers, we know that aircraft noise remains an issue for those living around the airport. That's why we strive to work together with our airlines, NATS (our air traffic controllers), the Government and our local communities to manage and reduce the effects of aircraft noise.

**Heathrow is committed to being a quieter airport, across everything we do.**

We are continually looking at how we can reduce noise from aircraft taking off and landing, and from our operations on the ground.

**A great deal of progress has been made, and we plan to become even quieter.**

How we would like to reduce noise has been set out in a proposed Noise Action Plan 2024-2028, which can be viewed online at [www.heathrow.com/quieter](http://www.heathrow.com/quieter).

The proposed Noise Action Plan contains draft actions that Heathrow is proposing to carry out to manage ground and air noise for local communities over the next five-year period

It has a particular focus on measures to improve our neighbours' wellbeing and increasing our actions to help reduce the impact of noise, including minimising sleep disturbance from night flights.

This brochure provides a summary of the Noise Action Plan along with an overview of some of the key actions we are proposing.

## We have already made progress

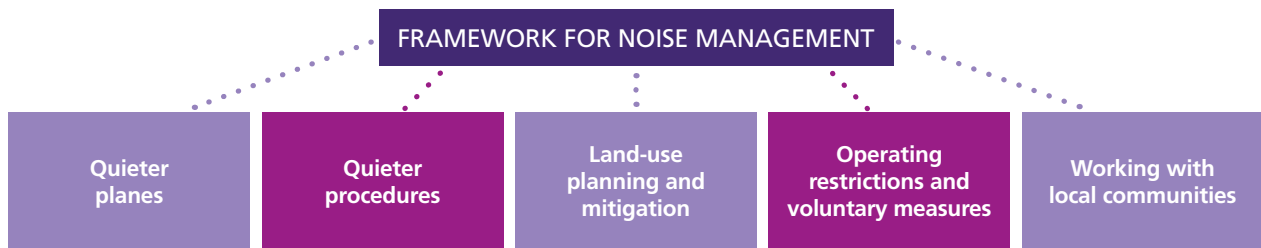
A great deal of change has been made since we published our last Noise Action Plan for 2019 to 2023 and a commitment to reduce disturbance and annoyance from noise has been a key part of our strategic plans for some time. This includes our Heathrow 2.0 Sustainability Strategy, the Noise Insulation Scheme (NIS), Fly Quiet & Green, and the Quiet Night Charter.

Since the publication of our last NAP in 2019, we have made progress in many areas, including:

- The complete review of our Noise Insulation Scheme (NIS) to allow for improved management of stakeholder expectations, including the creation of an independent panel to advise on the priority of premises, including schools, to be treated each year.
- Continued improvement of ventilation facilities at our local schools, developing our window and Adobe building programmes.
- The launch of our new Fly Quiet and Green league table to incentivise airlines to use their quietest aircraft and best operational practices. We updated and relaunched the scheme in Q1 2023.
- A significant improvement in the fleet with the quietest Chapter 14 aircraft category representing 79.6% of total aircraft movements in 2022, up from 60.8% in 2018.
- Publishing many studies on noise management at Heathrow, that cover government policy, perceived value of the respite provided by runway alternation, adherence reports on government policy on the night restriction regime, Airspace Noise and ATM Performance, Summer and Noise Action Plan Contours, a Steeper Climb Gradient Trial Report (DET 09R departure), and Noise data for the first three years of Airbus A350 operations.
- Significant progress in research and development in the detection of landing gear deployment.

At Heathrow Airport, we hold ourselves accountable and have established a set of fundamental measures that we consider to be the bedrock of our responsible business practices. These measures are designed to minimise the impact of noise on the environment and communities surrounding our operations, such as:

- Annually reviewing the landing charge differentials as part of the Conditions of Use (CoU) consultation. This enables us to incentivise airlines to use quieter aircraft and promote the use of noise reduction technologies.
- Complying with DfT Night Noise Restrictions and implementing our own internal noise reduction policies, such as minimising engine run-up times.
- Adhering to planning conditions (480,000 movements cap) and prioritising community engagement to better understand their concerns and feedback on noise issues and then take appropriate actions to address and mitigate these concerns.
- Monitoring and reporting Aeronautical Information Publication (AIP) noise abatement compliance levels, using the latest technology and best practices to continuously improve our noise reduction systems.
- Undertaking regular internal audits of our noise management systems, processes, and databases, ensuring that we remain up to date with the latest regulations and technologies.
- Benchmarking with peer airports through Airports Council International (ACI) membership/chair of Noise Task Force, exchanging knowledge and collaborating on noise reduction research.
- Contributing to the work of International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and Committee on Aviation Environmental Protection (CAEP) through working group membership, actively participating in shaping global aviation noise reduction policies and promoting sustainable development.
- Annually commissioning the production and reporting of the noise contours report to include summer contours (Leq 16hr day), night (Leq 8hr, Leq 6.5hr), and 'Environmental Noise Directive strategic mapping' noise contours (Lden, Lday, Lnight), as well as additional supplementary contours and information.



## Noise Management at Heathrow

Our Framework for Noise Management sets out our approach under five key headings, and we will continue to take a range of actions to manage and reduce noise in these areas.

We have set out some of the key commitments in our proposed Noise Action Plan under the following headings.

### Quieter planes

*The pace of change in new technologies used to construct and power aircraft continually provides an opportunity to reduce noise. To reduce the noise directly made by aircraft, we propose the following:*

- **Establish a Fleet Forecasting Forum (FFF)**  
With input from the aircraft manufacturers, the top ten airlines by movement and technical experts, to predict the pace of future technology and likely take up at Heathrow. This is a critical group which will enable us to build credibility and accuracy into our noise forecasts as we look to meet the noise abatement objectives set out by the DfT and in Heathrow 2.0.
- **Review landing charges**  
In parallel, we intend to review the landing charge structure to balance sustainable growth and environmental objectives. Through the FFF we will identify opportunities to incentivise the accelerated adoption of new technology at Heathrow. The aim is to accelerate the transition to a Chapter 4-free fleet before 2045 (aircraft with a noise certificate older than 2018).

For new aircraft type variants operating at Heathrow, we will conduct an operational performance study with guidance from the CAA.

#### Other commitments

- We will continue to revise our CoU to require operators of A320 family aircraft to inform the Business Support Centre of those aircraft registrations that have not been retrofitted with vortex deflectors.
- We will continue to seek an entire phase-out of Chapter 3 aircraft over the course of the NAP through the publication of a league table of operators continuing to use these aircraft and increasing the differential with the quietest group of aircraft.

- We will forecast fleet changes and their impact and track progress in our annual noise contour reports.
- We will calculate the noise footprints of the top 10 aircraft types and their predecessors and replacement equivalents.

### Quieter procedures

*The flight configuration or path that planes take when arriving or departing from Heathrow, influences the level of noise experienced on the ground. How we manage operations can help to reduce noise for communities. To reduce noise from how we operate, we propose to:*

- **Establish a Technical Engagement Forum (TEF)**  
With membership from the aircraft manufacturers, the top ten airlines, NATS and Heathrow Operations to undertake a review and renewal of the arrivals, departures, and ground operations Code of Practice by 2026 aimed at supporting the achievement of the noise abatement objectives.
- **Develop and trial operational practices**  
Aimed at increasing the level of predictable respite, particularly at night. This will include the implementation of easterly alternation during the daytime.

#### Other commitments

- Through the Quiet Night Charter, we will continue to support the achievement of the DfT night noise objective.
- We aim to enhance the data and understanding of the effectiveness of operational interventions such as landing gear deployment, ground noise, hybrid Noise Abatement Departure Procedures, creation of respite, slightly steeper approaches, and other AIP requirements.
- Review the departure noise limits and fines. The work with members of the TEF and the Noise and Airspace Community Forum (NACF) will allow us to develop a preferential night route trial aimed at providing predictable periods of respite from night operations.
- We will undertake a review of the Fly Quiet and Green programme through the TEF, propose amendments by 2027, and raise the monitoring level of Continuous Descent Approach (CDA).

## Land-use planning and mitigation

Heathrow has implemented several Noise Insulation Schemes (NIS) in the past to assist local residents experiencing high levels of aircraft noise. We have completely reviewed our noise insulation and ventilation schemes for local communities, residents, and community buildings. We also improved our Community Building Noise Insulation Scheme for schools.

To help reduce noise in the homes of neighbouring communities, we propose to:

- **Launch a new Noise Insulation Scheme Round in 2024**

This will be launched through a newly created independent Prioritisation Panel. The panel will be responsible for ensuring a fair hierarchy of the initial phasing of residential insulation and school ventilation. The new grant scheme aims to provide 100% funding until finalisation for approximately 20,000 homes in local communities.

- **Establish a new MoU with Local Authorities**

To ensure that noise exposure is in line with building development and awareness of noise exposure for new and existing inhabitants, we will establish a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on land-use planning and airport operations with local authorities within the 55 Lden contour.

We aim for this to facilitate the exchange of relevant data relating to the development of new noise sensitive land use and future noise exposure levels. This MoU will foster collaboration and cooperation, promoting effective communication and working relationships. This is so that partners are better equipped to manage the impact of airport operations on surrounding communities and the environment, while ensuring that the growth of the airport is sustainable and benefits all stakeholders.

- **New tools and systems**

We will also invest in tools and systems to leverage increased access to noise data from our existing noise monitor network in a more efficient way. By developing creative monitoring techniques to pinpoint aircraft noise emissions and remove the noise baseline from readings, we will provide more accurate information to our local partners.

## Operating restrictions and voluntary measures

The number of air traffic movements at Heathrow is currently capped at 480,000 per year, and there are also restrictions on night flights. We will continue to restrict scheduled night flights in line with government policy and publish how well airlines comply.

To help further reduce noise at night, we propose to:

- **Support the Quiet Night Charter**

We will work with airlines and NATS to support the Quiet Night Charter, a voluntary Charter to be relaunched this year, to reduce noise and the number of flights late into the night. Our aim is to have year-on-year improvements in reducing noise.

- **Better manage night time ground noise**

We will review and develop the existing Operational Safety Instructions (OSI). These changes will relate to the use of Ground Power Units (GPU) to reduce carbon footprint and local air quality, and the limitation of Auxiliary Power Unit (APU) usage to abate noise. We also intend to reassess conditions and monitoring of engine testing to restrict this source of noise to a strict minimum. We will be working with international partners to develop a standard for the use of Preconditioned Air (PCA) and are investigating the modernisation of our infrastructure.

Additionally, we will continue leading the work with the Airport Council International (ACI) colleagues to collate a database of night restrictions internationally.

## Working with local communities

Heathrow recognises the importance of working with local communities and is committed to engaging with them through various channels and forums. Progress already made includes the formation of the Noise and Airspace Community Forum (NACF), which replaced the Heathrow Noise Community Forum (HNCF). The new forum has a newly appointed independent chair and will play a pivotal role in bringing together industry and local stakeholders to help shape Heathrow's approach to noise management.

Looking ahead, to better understand and address community concerns, we will continuously investigate innovative methods of detecting changes to operations that might impact residents. Other commitments in the proposed Noise Action Plan include:

- **Independent research into the Noise Insulation Schemes (NIS)**  
Independent academic research into the effectiveness of the NIS programme in reducing highly sleep disturbed (HSD) and highly annoyed (HA) individuals and enhancing quality of life.
- **Reporting progress to the NACF**  
We will track the delivery of the NIS programme and report progress to the NACF. We will undertake a social survey of noise attitudes of communities within the associated area. In collaboration with the NACF, we will develop a joint position on gaps in noise-related research.
- **Global learning**  
We will also work with ACI Europe and ACI World colleagues to develop a network of knowledge sharing on best practices and learning from international airports. With the help from the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) and the industry we will provide the NACF with annual updates on ongoing noise-related research.
- **An annual report**  
Transparency is important to us, and therefore we will produce an annual Noise Action Plan (NAP) Report, which will include an annual noise monitor summary report for our permanent monitors, progress on our actions, and delivery of NIS programmes. An annual external audit of the NAP report will be conducted to ensure transparency, with the audit supplier being selected through the Council for the Independent Scrutiny of Heathrow Airport (CISHA).

## Glossary

<b>ACI:</b>	Airports Council International
<b>CAA:</b>	Civil Aviation Authority
<b>CAEP:</b>	Committee on Aviation Environmental Protection (ICAO technical committee)
<b>CoU:</b>	Conditions of Use (of our Facilities and Services at the Airport)
<b>ICAO:</b>	International Civil Aviation Organisation
<b>Lday:</b>	The A-weighted average sound level over the 12 hour day period of 07:00-19:00
<b>Lden:</b>	The day, evening, night level, Lden is a logarithmic composite of the Lday, Levening, and Lnight levels but with 5 dB(A) being added to the Levening value and 10 dB(A) being added to the Lnight value
<b>Lnight:</b>	The A-weighted average sound level over the eight hour night period of 23:00-07:00
<b>NACF:</b>	Noise and Airspace Community Forum



## Have Your Say

**We recognise the importance of reducing disturbance and annoyance levels, and we are committed to working together with the community to achieve this goal.**

Your feedback will help us develop our Noise Action Plan which will set out how we manage noise from 2024 to 2028.

It will be used to inform our team, who will consider all feedback received before we submit our final Noise Action Plan to the Secretary of State for approval.

**The consultation is open for six weeks from Monday 5th June to Monday 17th July 2023.**

There are a number of ways you can find out more about our proposals and provide us with your comments:

### **Our consultation website:**

Visit [www.heathrow/quieter.com](http://www.heathrow/quieter.com) to:

- Understand more about the proposals, view and download the Noise Action Plan
- Leave your feedback online
- Book onto an online information event (webinar)
- Book a slot at a Meet the Team event to discuss your feedback directly

### **Tell us what you think by:**

- Writing to us at: **FREEPOST Noise Action Plan**
- Sending an email to us at [quieter@heathrow.com](mailto:quieter@heathrow.com)

If you would like a large text or alternative format of this document please contact us on **0800 344 844**