

Heathrow Community Noise Forum

Meeting notes (27 April 2022, 13:00 – 15:30, Microsoft Teams)

Confirmed attendees

Name	Borough / Organisation
Cllr Dr Wendy Matthews	Buckinghamshire Council
Steve Braund	Buckinghamshire Council
Surinderpal Suri	London Borough of Ealing
Cllr Linda Burke	London Borough of Ealing
Ajit Bansal	London Borough of Hounslow
John Coates	London Borough of Richmond upon Thames
Cllr David Hilton	Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead
Cllr Chris Howorth	Runnymede Borough Council
Sue Janota	Surrey County Council
Margaret Majumdar	Ealing Aircraft Noise Action Group
Armelle Thomas	Harmondsworth and Sipson Residents Association
Paul Beckford	HACAN
Colin Stanbury	Local Authorities Aircraft Noise Council
Deborah Petty	Molesey Residents Association
Bridget Bell	Plane Hell Action
Neil Maybin	Richmond Heathrow Campaign
Peter Willan	Richmond Heathrow Campaign
Stephen Clark	Teddington Action Group
Dave Gilbert	Teddington Action Group
Carole Marr	The Windlesham Society
Ben Lippitt	CAA
Rebecca Christie	DfT
Gary Marshall	DfT
Ian Greene	DfT
Pete Glass	NATS
Becky Coffin	Heathrow
Richard West	Heathrow
Michael Glen	Heathrow
Andy Knight	Heathrow
David Knights	Heathrow
Lisa Forshew	Heathrow
Sarah Jane Pickthorne	Heathrow
Alex Goman	Taylor Airey
Andreas Lambrianou	Incoming Independent Chair

Apologies

Paul Conway	Englefield Green Action Group
Nigel Davies	Englefield Green Action Group
Christine Taylor	Harmondsworth and Sipson Residents Association
Malcolm Beer	Local Authorities Aircraft Noise Council
Tina Richardson	The Windlesham Society
Spencer Norton	British Airways
Darren Rhodes	CAA
Ian Jopson	NATS
Rick Norman	Heathrow

1 Welcome and Introduction

- 1.1 Becky Coffin (BC), Director of Communities and Sustainability at Heathrow, welcomed members to the virtual forum and noted apologies for absence.
- 1.2 BC noted that no comments had been received on the previous meeting notes from 26 January, so these would be marked as final unless there were any comments now. Armelle Thomas (AT) was unhappy with the outcome of discussions around the health impacts of sleep disturbance. However, BC explained that the meeting notes could only reflect what had been said at the meeting, adding that in future it would be helpful to receive any such comments in advance.
- 1.3 BC went through the actions from the previous meeting as detailed below.
- 1.4 **Circulate Heathrow's response to the Government's consultation on night flight restrictions (1.6).** This is now available to download from Heathrow's website [here](#).
- 1.5 **Respond to questions about Continuous Descent Approach (CDA) measurement (6.5).** This will be covered later in the meeting.
- 1.6 **Discuss compliance monitoring data with HACAN and present data at forum (6.9).** BC confirmed that the meeting took place and that the data was on today's agenda.
- 1.7 **Include virtual tea breaks in future online meetings (11.1).** BC confirmed that there would be a short break halfway through the meeting.

2 Business Update

- 2.1 BC advised that Heathrow had welcomed 9.7 million passengers in Q1 2022 in line with forecasts. January and February were much weaker than expected due to Omicron-related travel restrictions, while March demand increased after the unexpectedly quick removal of all UK travel restrictions on 18th March. She noted that a last-minute surge of bookings over Easter had stretched resources, resulting in BC and other non-operational colleagues from across the business serving passengers in the terminals, helping over 95% of passengers through security within 5 minutes.
- 2.2 BC noted that Heathrow had updated its 2022 passenger forecast from 45.5 million to 52.8 million, representing a return to 65% of pre-pandemic levels. However, she added that demand remained volatile with passenger numbers expected to drop off significantly after the summer. She cautioned that Heathrow was still not making a profit and total pandemic losses had now topped £4 billion, so there was a long way to go before the airport returned to its pre-pandemic position.
- 2.3 BC advised that Heathrow had been working with its airlines and ground handlers for many months to meet demand. She noted that nearly 80% of markets still had Covid-19 testing and vaccination requirements so there was still some congestion, but the situation was improving all the time. She anticipated that some days over the summer would be close to pre-pandemic levels, so Terminal 4 will reopen by July and recruitment is currently underway to fill over 12,000 vacancies across the airport, including 1,000 new security officers.
- 2.4 BC noted that the updated Heathrow 2.0 sustainability strategy was published in February, setting out Heathrow's goals and targets for the next decade. The strategy focusses on achieving Net Zero and making Heathrow a great place to live and work.

3 Community Forum Review Update

- 3.1 BC recapped that Heathrow has been reviewing its engagement channels following the impact of Covid-19 on the business. Last year Heathrow consulted with forum members and the majority had felt the appointment of an independent chair would add value to the forum. She announced that the role had now been successfully filled, following unanimous agreement of the selection panel comprising Paul Beckford (PB), Cllr David Hilton (DH), Spencer Norton (SN) and former chair Matt Gorman (MG). She confirmed that the successful candidate was Andreas Lambrianou (AL) and that he was attending today as an observer.
- 3.2 PB added that he had been pleasantly surprised by the interview, with AL showing a good range of experience, knowledge of the local area and of conflict resolution which would be crucial. He added that the fact that all four panel members from various backgrounds had been unanimous in their decision spoke volumes. DH echoed PB's comments and thought that the appointment would be a very positive outcome.
- 3.3 AL thanked PB and DH for their kind words. He was excited and privileged to be able to work with members and contribute to the important work and hoped that he would bring some independence and impartiality. He highlighted his previous experience chairing for the NHS and working in and around Heathrow, Hounslow and London, providing him with some knowledge of health interests in those areas. He thanked outgoing chair BC for her contribution to the forum.
- 3.4 BC reminded members that a poll had been sent out last week asking whether they would prefer to attend future meetings online or in person. She encouraged members who had not yet voted to do so.

4 Community Slot

- 4.1 BC handed over to PB to introduce the community slot in the absence of Paul Conway (PC). PB noted that night flights remained a crucial issue for residents, with the same night flight regime now in operation for a number of years. He felt that the key priorities should be a reduction in noise from night flights and improvements to the evidence base, including a robust understanding of the health impacts.

5 Night-Time Noise Impacts

- 5.1 Dave Gilbert (DG) gave a presentation on the impact of noise at night. The presentation is provided alongside the meeting notes.
- 5.2 DG stated that people are woken up by noise events at night and not by average noise levels. He expressed concern over the increase in population impacted since 2006 and the need for improved validation of the Aircraft Noise Contour Model (ANCON) at lower noise levels. He added that there was a lack of understanding of annoyance and sleep disturbance caused by aircraft noise at night and suggested that the CAA document *CAP 2161: Survey of Noise Attitudes 2014: Aircraft Noise and Sleep Disturbance* was not fit for policy use. He proposed that community representatives should meet with DfT and that the night noise regime should be tightened.

- 5.3 Peter Willan (PW) noted that DG's presentation referred to noise events from 23:00 to 07:00. He pointed out that both runways were used for arrivals during the final hour of that period using a procedure known as Tactically Enhanced Arrivals Mode (TEAM) and asked how it worked. MG provided links to Heathrow's website showing a description of TEAM ([here](#)) and statistics on TEAM usage ([here](#)). Bridget Bell (BB) stated that there was no obvious difference to arrivals due to non-existence of night flight rotations in SE London. Wendy Matthews (WM) added that it was the same for those to the north of the airport. Linda Burke (LB) asked if the latest Covid-19 advice about keeping windows open would have any impact on how noise guidelines were being revised.
- 5.4 Ian Greene (IG) noted that some of the points raised were responses to the Government's consultation on night flight restrictions. He said that the DfT recognised that the N-above metric was how people experienced noise and they were looking at whether to include that in future. However, he cautioned that a lot of health-based evidence was based on average metrics, and he was aware that policy needed to be evidence-based.
- 5.5 IG explained that noise model validation at lower noise levels was problematic due to background noise. He noted, however, that validation was built into ANCON, unlike some models used in other countries, so he had confidence in the ANCON model. He noted that the CAA document *CAP2302: A Low Noise Arrival Metric* addressed the issue of aircraft arriving in a quieter way. DG agreed but felt that the metrics used for Continuous Descent Approaches (CDA) needed to be addressed.
- 5.6 IG advised that CAP 2161 was not being used for policy. He explained that the DfT had just commissioned a piece of research work on self-reported sleep disturbance, the second phase of which would involve objective monitoring of disturbance to help provide better understanding to inform future night flight regimes. He added that the next night flight consultation would take place in 2023. With regard to the request for community groups to meet with DfT, IG explained that they were currently taking in the consultation responses and were looking to conclude that before any further engagement. He added that they would seek steers from ministers before developing policy further.
- 5.7 DG referred to the SoNA review undertaken by the former Independent Commission on Civil Aviation Noise (ICCAN). IG confirmed that they had spoken to ICCAN and that the outcomes were being taken on board for the DfT study. DG expressed a lack of trust and thought that there was no point proceeding with the study unless it was open and independent. IG responded that the DfT steering group included representatives from all interested parties, including PB as community representative. PB proposed that the DfT should present the research to the forum when it was ready.
- 5.8 Stephen Clark (SC) asked if the study was being conducted by health experts and if they would consider a range of metrics. IG advised that the work was being led by university-based researchers and social researchers and would look at a full range of metrics. SC suggested that the next SoNA study should involve external expertise. Deborah Petty (DP) added that it would be important to provide details of geographical coverage and sample sizes. IG responded that he expected the CAA to pick up the learnings from the ICCAN review and suggested inviting them to a future forum to discuss the work. **ACTION RW**

6 Other Community Matters

- 6.1 PB provided an update on the forum's departure study work, noting that Heathrow was waiting for a quote from the CAA's Environmental Research and Consultancy Department (ERCD) to undertake the work. Chris Howorth (CH) asked if there would be further meetings to discuss the study. PB confirmed that there would be another meeting once the quote was received.
- 6.2 PB advised that HACAN would review the updated Heathrow 2.0 sustainability strategy and would respond in writing.

7 PBN Benchmarking Report

- 7.1 David Knights (DK) introduced Alex Goman (AG) from Taylor Airey to present its Performance Based Navigation (PBN) benchmarking study. He observed that PBN had been a topic of debate at the HCNF for a while and thanked Taylor Airey for carrying out the work. He noted that it was an independent study and that he would outline the key messages that Heathrow had taken from the work after the presentation.
- 7.2 AG advised that the study had been commissioned by Heathrow as part of its Noise Action Plan (NAP). The scope of the study was to develop a common understanding of PBN; to understand the perceptions of stakeholder communities; to identify good and bad practice in PBN design, stakeholder engagement and implementation; and to perform benchmarking analysis and case studies to draw conclusions and make recommendations. He explained that the study looked at a number of airports around the world that had implemented PBN and had publicly available information. Heathrow had been assessed based on policy, design and communication on its Airspace Change Proposals (ACPs) to date, as PBN had not yet been implemented at Heathrow. He noted that Heathrow scored 3/5 or 4/5 across all metrics. The study identified a number of recommendations for the UK Government and airspace change sponsors in the areas of policy, design, assessment and engagement. The full report is provided alongside the meeting notes.
- 7.3 SC was concerned that the study's Terms of Reference were focussed on engagement and process rather than on outcomes. He stressed that the focus should be on how to avoid the creation of 'noise sewers' seen in the US and that there needed to be a focal point of responsibility for protecting the public. PB noted that the study did not provide a comparison of the impact of PBN on local communities and asked if further work would be undertaken in that area. PW questioned whether PBN was feasible given the large population around Heathrow. He suggested that an environmental and economic appraisal should be carried out now rather than at the end of the design process. AG encouraged members to study the full report and appendices which covered issues such as the impact on communities and the appraisal of options.
- 7.4 DK advised that Heathrow was generally supportive of Taylor Airey's recommendations and would learn lessons from other airports' experiences of PBN. He presented an overview of Taylor Airey's recommendations and Heathrow's response to each one. He explained that the CAP1616 process does not allow for early identification of flight paths but does allow for detailed and lengthy consultation once flight path options are available. He added that Heathrow was planning to engage stakeholders throughout the development of airspace design options. The presentation is provided alongside the meeting notes. DP asked if Heathrow would provide an explanation of how it arrived at flight path options so that residents could fully understand and trust the outcomes. DK replied that it was Heathrow's intention to share this information and plans for wider engagement would be covered as part of the next presentation.

- 7.5 Surinderpal Suri (SS) asked if the options appraisal would take account of areas where Local Authorities had permission to develop. DK explained that this would be part of the design process, adding that a lot of work had already been carried out on local factors as part of Heathrow's expansion work and those learnings would also be considered in the design process.

8 Airspace Modernisation Update

- 8.1 Lisa Forshew (LF) gave an update on Heathrow's airspace modernisation programme. The presentation is provided alongside the meeting notes. LF advised that Heathrow had passed the Stage 1 Gateway of the CAP1616 airspace change process and was now beginning Stage 2, known as the 'Develop and Assess' Gateway. She advised that Heathrow remained on target to implement new flight paths from 2027 to 2030. She advised that four engagement activities were planned during Stage 2 in addition to regular forum updates. These would cover methods and metrics, a comprehensive list of design options, the design principle evaluation and the initial options appraisal.
- 8.2 DP suggested that the methods of analysis for the design principle evaluations should be explained upfront. LF confirmed that this would be covered in the first set of workshops.
- 8.3 SC criticised the metrics used in CAP1616 and stated that there was no point looking at supplementary metrics if they were not going to be part of the assessment. DG added that people were more likely to be annoyed by an increase in aircraft noise and that CAP1616 did not include a sensitivity to take account of the impact of change. Ben Lippitt (BL) advised that a review of CAP1616 policy was currently underway with a consultation expected in the summer, so he encouraged members to take part and share their views.
- 8.4 Rebecca Christie (RC) challenged some of the assertions being made by members, noting that many of the points had been covered at previous meetings. She advised that there was no desire to do anything that would harm communities, and that while there would be obvious routes that could be chosen on paper as being the most efficient or effective, multiple factors were involved so there was no pre-determined choice. She added that there were also international obligations around PBN and that DfT would be working closely with the Airspace Change Organising Group (ACOG) on its masterplan.

9 Operational Update

- 9.1 MG gave an overview of Continuous Descent Approaches (CDA). He explained that the current CDA metric was brought in as part of the Sustainable Aviation Arrivals Code of Practice, with measurement from 6,000ft judged to be the best harmonised metric to benchmark all of London's designated airports. He advised that this avoided any issues with the point at which aircraft switched from a standard pressure setting on their altimeter to a localised one, known as transition altitude, which takes place at 6,000ft for the UK and varies worldwide. He explained that due to the way the pressure setting was handled and corrected by the radar, there was a risk that an artificial level segment could have been created in the Noise and Track Keeping (NTK) system caused by a change in pressure setting when the aircraft descended through the 6,000-7,000ft altitude band. He noted that this was particularly prevalent on high pressure days, adding that radar data processing had now been upgraded to apply a more consistent pressure correction so this should no longer be an issue.

- 9.2 MG advised that Heathrow was currently reviewing the possibility of moving the metric to 7,000ft. He advised that it could not go higher because of level segments flown in the holding stacks. He explained that the amendments had been made to the NTK system and that Heathrow would investigate changing the metric in due course. He added that a long period of analysis would be required to include different runway directions and conditions, but this would be worked on as soon as possible.
- 9.3 With regard to the definition of a level segment in the UK Aeronautical Information Publication (AIP), MG explained that discussions had taken place with airlines when the metric was set, and it had been agreed that a 2.5nm level segment over the course of the descent would not require any fluctuations in thrust to maintain level flight. He added that any segment length beyond this would likely require a thrust increase.
- 9.4 There was no time for MG to present compliance monitoring data, so this will be added to the agenda for the next meeting.

10 AOB

- 10.1 SS proposed that the forum's working group should be restored so that issues could be discussed in more detail. BC responded that this would be considered. **ACTION RN**
- 10.2 PB asked for an update on the Heathrow Community Engagement Board (HCEB). BC advised that the transition to the new Council for the Independent Scrutiny of Heathrow Airport (CISHA) was underway. She noted that candidates for the new chair position were currently being reviewed ahead of selection and interviews in the coming months. She added that CISHA was also developing a new website which would set out further details on its new structure and interaction with other forums including this one. She advised that further specific enquiries could be directed to Rebecca Cox at HCEB.
- 10.3 BC closed the meeting by formally handing over to AL to chair the forum under its new title of the Noise and Airspace Community Forum (NACF). She advised that her team would be working with AL to provide him with the necessary background to take the forum forward.

Date of next meeting

Wednesday 13 July 2022 (1:00pm – 3:30pm)