



TEDDINGTON ACTION GROUP

Against Increased Aircraft Noise and Pollution

Matt Gorman
Sustainability and Environment Director
Heathrow Airport Ltd

10 October 2016

Dear Matt,

Community Noise Forum

Thank you for your letter of 26 September 2016 regarding the Heathrow Community Noise Forum. We agree that the discussion felt heated but this is an indication of the level of frustration that communities feel that despite the HCNF having existed for nearly two years, there has been absolutely no improvement in noise conditions to date.

In response to your three main reflections:

1. It is deeply concerning that the industry is permitted to make a series of changes (overnight if they wish) without consultation and any assessment in advance of the noise impacts, but communities are expected to wait for years for analysis and evaluation of the changed noise environment to be undertaken. A far more valuable process from our perspective would be for proper analysis and consultation to be undertaken before any changes are made.
2. In respect of the improvement plans that you refer to, these focus entirely on gathering more data and undertaking further analysis. They are not by any means concrete actions that will result in an improved noise environment, but instead could be construed as further delaying tactics while more changes are introduced by stealth. It is also impossible to believe when there is clear data (as per the results from the Strawberry Hill Noise Monitor) that planes are lower and louder, that a steeper climb gradient would not reduce noise. Your comment that the HCNF should avoid *"pushing for a change without good evidence and then discovering unintended consequences"* is extremely difficult to accept given this is exactly what the industry has done for the last two years in pursuit of its own objectives.

We appreciate that not all of the actions that communities want to see are within Heathrow's control and agree with you that the DfT and CAA should be held accountable for their policies that have led to such widespread community unrest. However, this does not absolve airports and airlines from any responsibility and your comment that community impacts (noise) need to be balanced against industry impacts (e.g. increased fuel burn) is a significant cause for concern. It is established that new procedures have been permitted that result in lower flights 10- 12 km from the airport at altitudes between 1500 and 2000 feet. We understand that reduction in noise is the Government's overriding priority at heights below 4000 feet and would ask what representations have been, or are proposed to be made, to government by Heathrow to redress this situation on behalf of communities?



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3. In terms of reaching consensus on difficult issues, how easy this is to achieve will be largely dependent on the industry's willingness to balance the impact on communities with its desire for greater profit. To date, overflowed communities have been expected to pay all of the costs of industry expansion.

Whilst we welcome your suggested improvements to HCNF processes, we are very concerned that you see the ultimate goal of the Forum as delivering airspace modernisation. This is not the reason why communities have given up their time to attend – which is probably exactly why so many groups are so dissatisfied with the process to date and are seriously questioning the value of their investment in time. If we are really expected to believe that the HCNF has any influence whatsoever, then we need to see improvements in the current noise environment – before any further steps towards airspace modernisation are implemented. To this end we would expect to see Heathrow come forward now with specific and tangible plans to achieve noise reductions.

Finally, given the unbearable situation many of our communities face today with existing flight numbers, we wish to put on record that we object in the strongest possible terms to an additional 25,000 flights per annum from Heathrow as was suggested at the last CNF meeting.

Yours sincerely,

Stephen Clark
TEDDINGTON ACTION GROUP

Cc: Tania Mathias MP
Community Groups on the HCNF
Isobel Pastor, Department for Transport
Darren Rhodes, Civil Aviation Authority