

Response to the London Heathrow Airspace and Future Operations Consultation

Summary

This report sets out the Council's response to London Heathrow's consultation on airspace and future operations. The consultation began on Wednesday 8th January and ends on Wednesday 4th March 2019. The material is set out under six consultation topics:

- Airspace change;
- Managing noise at an expanded Heathrow;
- Respite through runway and airspace alteration;
- Directional preference;
- Night flights – early morning arrivals;
- Night flights – other night restrictions.

The consultation requests feedback in response to specific questions contained at the end of each topic section. The Council's response considers the material provided for each of the topic areas and responds from Surrey Heath's perspective. The letter of response is included at Annex 1.

Portfolio: Special Projects

Date Portfolio Holder signed off report: 30 January 2019

Wards Affected

ALL

Recommendation

The Executive is advised to RESOLVE that the response set out in the letter at Annex 1 of this report be agreed as the Council's formal response to London Heathrow Airport's consultation on airspace and future operations.

1. Resource Implications

- 1.1 There are no resource implications beyond that provided for within the agreed budget for 2018/19.

2. Key Issues

- 2.1 London Heathrow Airport is consulting on plans for its future expansion. The current consultation follows an earlier consultation held in January-March 2018 relating to airspace change and airport expansion that the Council previously responded to.
- 2.2 The Airspace Design Principles that were previously consulted on have been applied to develop airspace Design Envelopes which demonstrate the general locations where future flight paths will be located. However, specific flight path options have not yet been developed, and instead will be consulted on at a later date.

- 2.3 Officers have considered the material provided within the six consultation topic areas in order to identify the key issues, from Surrey Heath's perspective.

Airspace Change for Expansion and Existing Two Runways

- 2.4 Airspace Design Envelopes have been produced as part of the Consultation. The proposed Design Envelopes indicate that there will be more incidences of overflight in Surrey Heath, also covering a wider area of the Borough. The Council's response puts forward concerns about the noise and air quality effects this would bring about and also the potential impacts in respect of quality of life arising from noise pollution, and possible implications for people's health and wellbeing arising from air pollution. Based on this information, the Council raises an objection to the Airspace Design Envelopes as proposed by London Heathrow and puts forward preferences for where future flight paths should be located within the Envelopes. The information regarding flight path preferences has been provided from officers in the Environmental Health Team. It is based on minimising the amount of movements to and from Heathrow over the Borough and thus noise greater than 65dB, and the improved accuracy that performance based navigation provides.

Managing noise for an expanded Heathrow

- 2.5 As part of the consultation, London Heathrow proposes a new noise objective and an approach to developing a package of noise measures for an expanded Heathrow. The Council's response is supportive of Heathrow's aim to limit and reduce the effects of noise for communities. However, the response strongly suggests that a commitment emphasising that noise arising from night flights will be minimised should be explicitly referenced in the finalised noise objective. This would help ensure that Heathrow's ambitions go beyond the limitation of noise, also seeking to minimise the number of people who are impacted by noise. The Consultation informs that a Noise Envelope Design Group (NEDG) will be established, consisting of technical experts. The Council's response states that it is expected the NEFG should develop strong links with local groups and boards representing communities impacted by noise. This is considered essential, in order for the NEDG to fully understand the concerns and interests of local people.

Respite through runway and airspace alternation

- 2.6 The consultation asks whether it would be preferential to have longer periods of respite less frequently or a shorter period of respite every day. The Council's response notes that in principle, airspace alteration and respite zones should offer less overflight to impacted communities. However, having reviewed both the existing flight paths and the proposed Design Envelopes, it is the Council's opinion that the new

arrangements would introduce an increased number of flight paths, more of which would be in areas that are currently not overflown. Concerns are raised again by the Council in relation to the flight path alteration measures. The Council's response adds that airspace alteration should be operated fairly, ensuring affected communities are afforded equal levels of respite, as far as possible.

Directional preference

- 2.7 Directional preference options are presented as part of the Consultation, which include an easterly or westerly directional preference or a 'no preference' approach. Currently, there is a westerly directional preference in operation at Heathrow, meaning the majority of flights arrive from the east and depart to the west. Having reviewed the Airspace Design envelopes, the Council's response advises that the operation of an easterly directional preference would provide a fairer balance, which, in practice, would mean operating approximately a 50/50 split in easterly and westerly operations due to the prevailing wind direction being from the southwest. In addition, the Council suggest that intervention should take place to change the direction of aircraft arrivals once departure operations have ceased at night. This would help to provide relief for communities to the west and southwest of Heathrow and strike a fairer balance for those impacted by noise.

Night flights - Early morning arrivals

- 2.8 In relation to early morning arrivals during London Heathrow's operational night time period, the consultation asks whether respondents' preference is for London Heathrow to use one runway for scheduled arrivals from 5.30am (Option 1) or use two runways for scheduled arrivals from 5.45am (Option 2). There is also a commitment to extend the scheduled flight night time ban so that a 6.5 hour ban is established. The Council's response is supportive of this commitment. However, clarification is sought regarding whether the implementation of a later start time for scheduled flights would generate a period of increased aircraft movements and associated noise over the proceeding hours up to 7.00am. In respect of the 6.5 hour ban, the Council suggest, in principle, Option 1 would appear to be more desirable, as the consultation material advises this would facilitate a later start for scheduled flights, at 6.00am, on two of every three days. Irrespective of this, the response also notes that in the interests of Surrey Heath residents' quality of life, the ban period should end no earlier than 6:30am.

Night flights – Other night restrictions

- 2.9 Other restrictions for night flights are also set out in the consultation. Feedback and suggestions are sought on how the quietest aircraft can be encouraged at night. The Council expresses support for a comprehensive review of Heathrow's landing fees, in order to achieve night flight noise reductions. This could include lower landing fees to

incentivise quieter aircraft, and the introduction of fines as a deterrent for noisier, more disruptive aircraft, so that it would not be viable for such flights to be operational at night. The Council also asks what the average number of flights per night arriving during the restricted recovery period is, and suggests implementation of an annual target reduction to this figure. In addition to the Government's statutory requirements for night time quota point reductions, the Council encourages London Heathrow to implement supplementary annual voluntary reductions. It is considered that this would send a clear message to airlines and affected communities that Heathrow is fully committed to reducing night time noise.

3. Options

3.1 The options for the Executive to consider are:-

- (i) To **AGREE** the response to the London Heathrow consultation on airspace and future operations, as set out in Annex 1 of this report.
- (ii) To **AGREE** the response to the London Heathrow consultation on airspace and future operations, as set out in Annex 1 of this report with any additional comments which the Executive may wish to make.
- (iii) To **NOT AGREE** the response to the London Heathrow consultation on airspace and future operations, as set out in Annex 1 of this report.

4. Proposals

4.1 It is proposed that members agree to submit the letter of response attached at Annex 1 as Surrey Heath Borough Council's formal response to the London Heathrow consultation on airspace and future operations.

5. Supporting Information

5.1 The London Heathrow Airspace and Future Operations consultation documentation and information is available at <https://afo.heathrowconsultation.com>

6. Corporate Objectives And Key Priorities

6.1 Underpins the theme of *People* set out in the Council's Five Year Strategy by ensuring Surrey Heath's interests are fully considered in respect of future air quality and aircraft related noise so that people can live happily and healthily. Also underpins the theme of *Place*, helping to make Surrey Heath a clean, green and safe place where people enjoy and contribute to a high quality of life and a sustainable future.

7. Policy Framework

7.1 The consultation process Surrey Heath is responding to is of a strategic nature. The proposals impact a large number of local authorities, including Surrey Heath.

8. Consultation

8.1 London Heathrow Airport's consultation on airspace and future operations runs between 8th January and 4th March 2019.

Annexes	Annex 1 - letter of response to London Heathrow Airport
Background Papers	Link to the Heathrow Airspace and Future Operations Public Consultation – https://afo.heathrowconsultation.com/
Author/Contact Details	Christopher Kirk - Senior Planning Officer Christopher.kirk@surreyheath.gov.uk
Head of Service	Jenny Rickard – Executive Head of Regulatory

Consultations, Implications and Issues Addressed

Resources	Required	Consulted
Revenue	✓	✓
Capital		
Human Resources		
Asset Management		
IT		
Other Issues	Required	Consulted
Corporate Objectives & Key Priorities	✓	✓
Policy Framework		
Legal	✓	✓
Governance		
Sustainability	✓	✓
Risk Management		
Equalities Impact Assessment		
Community Safety		
Human Rights		
Consultation	✓	✓
P R & Marketing		

Review Date:

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