

Heathrow Consultation January – March 2018

Heathrow launched its biggest ever consultation on 17th January. It closes on 28th March. In reality, it is two consultations running in parallel. One asks for views on the design principles that should guide the new flight paths Heathrow will be introducing (whether or not it is given permission for a third runway). The other sets out options for a number of aspects of the new runway.

Why a consultation now?

Surprise has been expressed that Heathrow launched this 10 week consultation before Parliament has voted on the third runway but, under the new planning rules, promoters of a project are encouraged to do an initial consultation on their project once it has become clear that the Government is minded to go for it. Theresa May announced in October 2016 that the third runway was the Government's 'preferred option'. Parliament is expected to vote on the proposal by the summer of this year. If it backs the new runway, it becomes Government policy and Heathrow is then required to draw up and consult on its detailed runway plans.

Where can I find the details?

For an overview go to: www.heathrowconsultation.com

For details of the 40 exhibitions: <https://www.heathrowconsultation.com/events/>

Borough venues where the documents are on display:

<https://www.heathrowconsultation.com/document-inspection-locations/>

Airspace change consultation: <https://www.heathrowconsultation.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/2755-HRW-3R-AIR-Principles-booklet-WEB.pdf>

Expansion consultation: <https://www.heathrowconsultation.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Expansion-Consultation-Document.pdf>

How to respond: online via the project website www.heathrowconsultation.com ; by letter to Freepost LHR EXPANSION CONSULTATION or by email to expansion.feedback@heathrowconsultation.com

How important are the consultations?

The airspace consultation is the beginning of a process that will see the biggest change to Heathrow's flight paths since the airport opened more than 50 years ago. It may have particular relevance to politicians representing South and South East London, East London and parts of Surrey and Berkshire where the flight path changes have the potential to bring some respite to communities currently overflown all day.

The expansion consultation concentrates on some of the local impacts of a new runway such as the changes it would mean to the M25 and to the local roads. These sections may be of most relevance to politicians representing areas closest to Heathrow. But it also includes the discussion of the conditions – such as the length of a night flight ban – which will be of real interest to politicians across a wide area.

The Airspace Consultation

The consultation is an invitation to people to help shape the new flight paths.

The flight paths at Heathrow will be changing significantly whether or not a third runway is built.

It is part of a worldwide trend driven by new technology called Performance-Based Navigation (PBN). In essence, it means aircraft can be guided more precisely as they land and take-off. Flight paths will be along a few, predictable, concentrated routes. This will allow more aircraft to use an airport, reduce fuel costs for airlines, cut CO₂ emissions from each plane, improve the resilience of airports and probably cut the number of air traffic controllers required. Given the scale of the benefits, it is little wonder the aviation industry is investing billions in PBN. It has already been introduced at over 150 airports across the world. This consultation is Heathrow's first step towards the introduction of PBN flight paths. It is consulting on the principles on which its new flight paths will be based. HACAN takes the view that this is a once-in-a-generation opportunity for politicians and residents to help shape the new flight paths so that they work for the community as well as the industry.

Timescale

Jan – March 2018: Consultation on the design principles to inform new flight paths.

2019: Consultation on the noise envelopes. These will have emerged from the first consultation and will outline the broad areas where the flight paths will be.

2021: Consultation on the options for detailed flight paths.

2022: Submission to CAA of new flight paths.

2022/3: Announcement of new flight paths.

The Options

The option chosen will determine the impact of flight paths on communities for decades to come

There are three options set out for the basic design of the flight paths. In some ways they are very different options and the one chosen will determine the impact of flight paths on communities for decades to come.

1. “Minimise the total number of people overflown, with routes designed to impact as few people as possible. This option would minimise the total number of people overflown by directing flights over the areas of lowest population. This is likely to result in some routes over areas that don't currently experience overflight from aircraft using Heathrow. In addition, aircraft will be more concentrated on a route than they are today”.

2. “Minimise the number of people newly overflown, keeping routes close to where they are today, where possible. This is likely to result in a concentration of aircraft over the areas overflown by aircraft using Heathrow today, meaning that these areas are likely to experience more aircraft overhead than they do currently”.

3. “Share routes over a wider area, which might increase the total number of people overflown but would reduce the total number of people most affected by the routes as the noise will be shared more equally. This option would spread the routes over a wider area to share the impact of overflight. This would result in a larger number of people being overflown, but each route would be flown less frequently than under option (a) or (b)”.

HACAN's view: The first two would options would cut the number of people impacted but those overflown would be severely affected as they would be subjected to concentrated, all-day flying. All the surveys show that people prefer the sharing of routes: multiple flight paths, rotated, to give each community gets a break from the noise each day. It would be our preferred option.

Heathrow is also asking for views to the following questions about flight paths:

Where there is a practical option, should the new flight paths be directed over urban or rural areas or should neither be prioritized?

Where there is a practical option, should flight paths be specifically directed over parks and open spaces rather than built up areas or should none of them be prioritized?

A longer route to cut noise might increase climate change emissions - should noise be prioritized over climate change emissions?

The more sophisticated the technology installed in aircraft, the more feasible it would be to design a sophisticated flight path - should the new routes be designed so they only accommodate the planes fitted the most up-to-date technology?

HACAN's View

The new flight paths need to be safe but also rooted in the principle of fairness. In practice this means:

- Multiple flight paths, rotated, to that each community gets guaranteed breaks from the noise each day*
- No all-day flying over any community
- No 'noise ghettos' (i.e. areas where flights are concentrated all-day long without any respite)
- New areas to be avoided wherever possible but, where it is not possible, flights to be phased in
- The number of areas which get both take-offs and landings to be kept to the absolute minimum
- Hot spot areas to be prioritised for compensation and mitigation
- At levels below at least 10,000 ft noise should be prioritized over climate change emissions.

* Some communities argue for phased dispersal rather than rotated flights paths.

The Expansion Consultation

This focuses on infrastructure issues which will be of most interest to politicians representing areas relatively close to the airport. But it also outlines the conditions to reduce the impacts on local communities of a third runway which Heathrow is offering. **These conditions which would accompany any permission given for a 3rd runway are critical for all communities and are discussed on the back page.**

Expansion Timescale

Jan – March 2018	1 st Consultation
Summer 2018	Parliamentary vote
2019	2 nd Consultation
2020	Local Planning Inquiry
2021	Works begins
2025	New Runway opens

Heathrow is assuming in drawing up this timetable Parliament votes for a third runway, there is no successful legal challenge to the decision and that nothing else delays or stops the process.

The Options

The expansion options are listed in a long document:

<https://www.heathrowconsultation.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Expansion-Consultation-Document.pdf>

The length of the new runway: Heathrow outlines three options: to leave it at 3,500 metres; to reduce it to 3,200 metres by shortening it at its western end; to reduce it to 3,200 metres by shortening it at its eastern end. Heathrow says “Runways shorter than 3,500 metres will need less land, providing an opportunity to move either one or both runway ends away from Colnbrook and Sipson, also reducing noise for local communities. However, they may not provide the same flexibility in how we operate, potentially resulting in longer aircraft taxiing times and more variable passenger journeys.”

Repositioning of the M25: Heathrow says: “Our current thinking is to re-position the M25 carriageway approximately 150 metres to the west, lower it by approximately 7 metres into a tunnel and raise the runway height by 3 to 5 metres so that it passes over the M25 between J14a and J15. The motorway will then re-join its current route. Crossing a motorway with a runway or taxiway has been done successfully at other airports around the world such as Paris (Charles de Gaulle) and Atlanta. We believe this approach is the most deliverable as it would allow construction to proceed while the existing M25 motorway remains in operation.”

There are also options lists for: changes to the local road network, diverting local rivers, the provision of new hotels and other buildings, future terminal capacity and the relocation of some parking facilities.

Rail access: Heathrow says: “Improvements to Heathrow’s rail access are already being made. The introduction of the Elizabeth line (Crossrail) and Piccadilly line upgrade will improve rail services over the coming years. HS2 will connect Heathrow to key cities in the Midlands and the North via an interchange at Old Oak Common. We want to work with others to support delivery of the following additional initiatives: increase the frequency of trains and extend operating hours on the Elizabeth line; provide a fair and reasonable contribution to the costs for a new Western Rail Link to Heathrow allowing direct rail services to Heathrow from Reading and the west; work with stakeholders to support the development of a new direct rail link to Heathrow from the south.” There is, though, no clarity on how much the new rail infrastructure will cost or who will pay for it.

Air Quality: Heathrow says: it will enter into “a binding commitment” to guarantee “that new capacity at an expanded airport will only be released when it is clear that the airport’s contribution will not delay the UK’s compliance with EU air quality limits.” Improvements to air quality will largely depend on Government action to tackle vehicle emissions. But in this consultation Heathrow floats ideas about introducing a congestion charge, a drop off/pick up charge or a low emissions charge and is asking for views on the proposals.

HACAN’s view: HACAN’s remit doesn’t cover a number of these issues, not do we have a strong view on matters such as the repositioning of the M25, changes to the local road network or the diversion of local rivers. However, nailing down the new rail schemes and who pays for them, is crucial as without them in place Heathrow will not be able to achieve its stated aim of ensuring that by 2030 at least 50% of people will come to/depart the airport using public transport, with the figure rising to at least 55% by 2040. Nor will it be able to fulfil its hugely ambitious target of making sure there will be no more airport-related traffic on the roads when a third runway is in place than there is today. The amount of traffic on the roads will also have a knock-on effect on the ability to control air quality levels.

The Conditions

The Government sets the conditions. It has made clear that any permission to build a third runway will be accompanied by a number of conditions to protect the environment and local people. They will be included in the National Policy Statement (NPS) which is the document Parliament votes on to give (or refuse) permission for a third runway. HACAN has taken legal advice as to whether conditions can be added at a later stage. They cannot.

The key conditions Heathrow is offering	HACAN's 6 key conditions
<p>Night flights – we will introduce a ban on scheduled night flights for 6.5 hours (at a time to be determined) between the hours of 11pm and 7am</p> <p>Noise envelope – we will consult on and establish our plans for a clear, legally binding noise envelope that will give certainty to local people on how we address noise</p> <p>Respite – we will provide predictable periods of respite so local people will know when no planes will fly over their homes</p> <p>Property Compensation – we will compensate those who would lose their homes at market value plus an additional 25%, legal fees, stamp duty and moving costs</p> <p>Community Compensation – we will spend over £1bn on community compensation (noise and property) and support the introduction of a scheme to ensure airport users pay to compensate local communities for the impacts of the airport</p> <p>Community Engagement Board – we will establish an independent Community Engagement Board which will have real influence on how money is spent on compensation and community support</p> <p>Independent Aviation Noise Authority – we back the creation of an independent aviation noise authority with statutory powers</p> <p>Air quality – new capacity at an expanded airport will only be released when it is clear that the airport's contribution will not delay the UK's compliance with EU air quality limits</p> <p>Fourth runway – we would accept a commitment from Government ruling out a fourth runway</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">  A tougher night flight regime than the 6½ hours currently on offer  Guaranteed respite for all communities within 25 miles of Heathrow  A noise envelope that sets firm limits on noise and flight numbers  World class compensation  A Community Engagement Board  A fourth runway to be ruled out <p>We back Heathrow's conditions on the Independent Noise Authority and on Air Quality</p> <p>The conditions should be set out in primary legislation agreed by Parliament to provide the firmest guarantee possible there will be no going back on them.</p>

➡ **If a third runway is built strength of the conditions attached will be critical to the quality of life of people in all constituencies impacted by Heathrow.**

➡ **During this consultation we will be sending round a further briefing focusing on the conditions.**

This briefing was written by John Stewart, chair of HACAN, the regional organisation which gives a voice to residents impacted by Heathrow's flight paths. He can be contacted at johnstewart2@btconnect.com www.hacan.org.uk January 2018