

# Independent Parallel Approaches (IPA)

## **An interim measure**

Heathrow wants to bring in 25,000 more flights a year between 2022 and when any new runway opens (expected to be 2026).

Some of these flights would use existing flight paths.

Others would use new dedicated flight paths. **These are the Independent Parallel Approaches. Flights would only use these new flight paths if delays were building up at the airport.**

**These flight paths would only be in existence until a third runway opened.** If a third runway opens they would cease. Only if Heathrow remains a two runway airport would they continue.

## **Why are IPAs being brought in?**

At present when planes land over London, they switch runways at 3pm to give people in West London a break from the noise. However, Heathrow is allowed to land a small number of planes on the ‘wrong’ runway, i.e. out of alternation, if delays are building up. There are not very many of them. On Westerlies, after 7am the average over the last 5 years has been 15 a day. On Easterlies (when planes land over Windsor) it was 23. For the hour between 6am and 7am, when Heathrow has always been allowed to use both runways for landings, the average per night over the last 5 years has been 18.

The problem is that two planes can’t land on parallel runways at the same time. This means that, in order to allow a plane to land on the ‘wrong’ runway, the gap between planes landing on the other runway has to be extended, thus reducing capacity. IPA is an attempt to get round this.

## **What is Heathrow proposing?**

New direct flight paths will be introduced from the holding stacks to the airport for planes coming in on the ‘wrong’ runway. At this stage we don’t know exactly where these flight paths will be.

## **The new flight paths**

What Heathrow has published are the broad areas where one or more of these new flight paths may be. The areas are outlined here:

<https://afo.heathrowconsultation.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2019/01/Making-better-use-of-our-existing-runways-Final-single-pages.pdf>

**At this stage the fact you are in an area only means you *might* have a flight path overhead. The detailed flight paths will not be published and consulted on until 2020.**

There will be at least one new flight path from each of the ‘holding stacks’ (the places where planes wait before being guided down to Heathrow).

There are four of these:

- Bovington (near Amersham)
- Lambourne (near Epping)
- Ockham (near Leatherhead)
- Biggin Hill (near Bromley)

For operational reasons there will be fewer flight paths from the Biggin Hill stack.

### **The nature of the flight paths**

They will be dedicated flight paths, reserved for these additional planes. They will be narrow and concentrated.

### **How many aircraft will use them?**

Between the hour of 6am and 7am, there will be a maximum of 25 flights. That is not per flight path but across all the flight paths. Heathrow expects the average figure will be a total of about 18 flights. Between 7am and 11pm, Heathrow expects that the average will be in line with today, around 15 flights per day Westerlies but with peaks of up to 40 per day.

### **What about heights?**

The planes on the IPA routes will join closer than 8 nautical miles so they will be lower than today as they join their final approach. Once on the approach they will be the same. But they will make their approach over areas not commonly overflown by Heathrow arrivals. Click here for height details:

<https://afo.heathrowconsultation.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2019/01/Making-better-use-of-our-existing-runways-Final-single-pages.pdf>

### **Will I get both departures and landings?**

Heathrow design principles say that their routes should ‘Avoid overflying communities with multiple routes.’ Heathrow will aim to achieve this but cannot commit 100% to being able to do so.

**Written by John Stewart, chair HACAN**