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Government publishes draft Airports National Policy Statement consultation, to pave the way for Heathrow runway

On 2nd February the government announced the start of the DfT's consultation on the draft "Airports National Policy Statement: new runway capacity and infrastructure at airports in the South East of England". It is the necessary first stage in the process of getting consent for a Heathrow 3rd runway. The consultation lasts for 16 weeks, ending on 25th May. The text associated with the draft NPS says little new, that we had not heard before. It is rich in statements like: "...proposals show this Government is not only making the big decisions but getting on with delivering them" and "...will ensure Britain seizes the opportunity to forge a new role in the world after Brexit"

No real practical, enforceable constraints appear to be placed upon Heathrow, other than it will have to put in place "measures to mitigate the impacts of noise including legally binding noise targets, periods of predictable respite and a ban of six and a half hours on scheduled [note, scheduled only] night flights" ... and "implementing measures to deliver on its commitments of no increase in airport related road traffic..." And that: "Planning consent will only be granted if the new runway can be delivered within existing air quality limits and climate change obligations." The only noise body offered is the "Independent Commission on Civil Aviation Noise" - ie. a Commission, with no powers, not an Authority with powers. 2.2.2017
<http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=33807>

Heathrow NPS – the main (probably) insuperable obstacles the runway faces



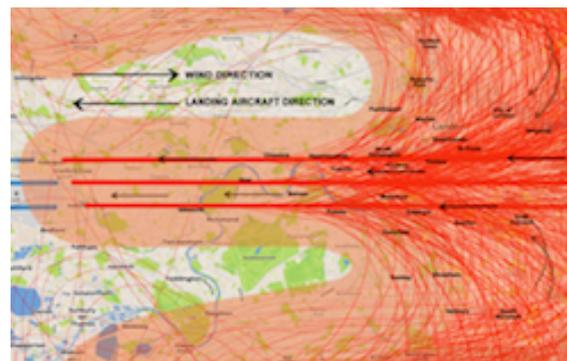
The government hopes to get a 3rd Heathrow runway approved, but it realises there are a large number of massive obstacles. The purpose of the NPS (National Policy Statement) consultation is to attempt to persuade the country, and particularly the MPs who must ultimately vote on it, that these obstacles can be successfully overcome. At present, there are no apparent solutions to many of the problems.

The government hopes the NPS can get outline agreement for the 3rd runway, with no effective policy on aircraft noise, and how it is managed and distributed; there is no policy on aviation CO2 emissions; there is no policy on how much of the aviation industry in the UK is focused on the south east. Instead, the intention is to get the Heathrow runway approved (in blind Brexit panic ...) come what may – and then sort out the resulting problems afterwards.

At the link below, there are some very brief outlines of what some of the insuperable hurdles are - and why the government is a very long way from resolving the difficulties. The three main environmental issues are noise, CO2, and air pollution. The economics is complicated, but there is a note on that too.

When Chris Grayling makes bland PR statements about the runway, or the papers regurgitate undigested blurb from the DfT, it may be useful to remember how very thin some of these statements are, and how far the government would have to go, to find even partial solutions. <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=33809>

Illustration (by a volunteer - not official) shows areas likely to be affected by noise from a 3 runway Heathrow (arrivals on westerlies) though no flight path detail has been given by the DfT. Orange area is noise dispersal area, about 1.5km to the side of a flight path.



DfT hold 20 consultation events in areas near Heathrow plus 13 around the UK - promoting 3rd runway

The DfT is holding a large number of consultation events in the coming two months, both in areas affected by Heathrow, and after that, across the UK. The first event locally was on 13th February and the final one is 20th April in London. The DfT backs the runway, and so the information given out is very much in support of the runway. The DfT has sent out 1.5 million leaflets about the consultations, with simplified text backing the runway (and ignoring any negative impacts) - which look like Heathrow's own PR about their expansion plans. The events locally are from 11am to 8pm on weekdays (10 - 5pm on Saturdays).

People have to register to attend events outside London. The DfT has paid staff to man them all. People are encouraged to attend the events, and ask the DfT staff questions. However, the level of knowledge by some of the DfT staff on environmental matters is very low. People are advised not to make their responses in the consultation events, but do them in a considered manner, from home, when they have had time to assess all the information, both for and against the 3rd runway.

Some questions suggested by local councils, that residents might like to have answers to:

*Will there be new flight paths over my house?
What noise levels will I experience with an expanded Heathrow?
What air pollution will I experience with an expanded Heathrow?
What road congestion will I experience with an expanded Heathrow?
How will it impact local transport and roads?
How else will my neighbourhood be impacted?*

And there are many more suggested questions people might like to ask, shown at the link below.
<http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=33987>

How will people to be – newly – intensely overflowed by Heathrow flight paths know they need to make their voice heard?

There is a considerable problem with the DfT consultations on the National Policy Statement on Heathrow, and their Airspace modernisation consultation. If there is a 3rd Heathrow runway, tens or hundreds of thousands of people - who are not currently overflowed - would be. They would also be likely to be overflowed intensively - as the intention of the airspace management industry is to use narrow routes, and have planes directed down these accurately. That means the same people would get plane after plane overhead, often most of the day, perhaps on most days or on many days per year.

However, many of these people have no idea yet that this threat may await them. They will neither be aware there is a consultation to which they should respond, nor of the severity of the noise burden to which they may be subjected. No flight path details are yet known, and probably will not be known for another couple of years. There is a considerable risk (as at Frankfurt with their 4th runway) that people could find themselves, once a runway opens, with a level of noise they had been warned of, and for which they were not prepared. The DfT is sending out 1.5 million leaflets for its NPS consultation (that effectively just promote the runway). But how will the relevant households know that this might be a matter of real significance for them in the future? Unless people are fully informed, with proper information, the consultation is not adequate. <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=33835>

Heathrow villages set for destruction get no consultation event from DfT

Residents, community representatives and local MP John McDonnell are outraged that the public consultation on the DfT's draft National Policy Statement on expanding Heathrow does not have a public exhibition event in any of the Heathrow Villages. The villages face the prospect of being demolished to make way for the runway. Though 20 local events are planned by the DfT, in areas not far from Heathrow and affected by it, the nearest one to the Heathrow villages is in West Drayton, not easy to reach by public transport from many of the villages. Previous public consultations on Heathrow expansion have always included exhibition events for those who would lose their homes. <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=33873>

Council leaders attack ‘dishonest’ Heathrow NPS promotional leaflet, circulated widely by DfT



Conservative town hall leaders have accused the Government of “misleading” up to three million people over the impact of a 3rd Heathrow runway, and a “dishonest approach.” The leaders of Wandsworth, Richmond, Hillingdon and Windsor and Maidenhead council tore into the DfT over the “shamelessly one-sided” consultation leaflet sent to around 1.5 million households and businesses (an estimated 3 million people). The leaders say the leaflets fail to include any details of proposed new flight paths, or the extra numbers of flights, or the reduction in “respite” periods that would happen, due to the 3rd runway.

There is also no proper information on likely increases in traffic, and therefore in air pollution. The leaflet is instead ecstatic about alleged economic benefits it might bring, and unashamedly big up pledges of home price compensation for compulsory purchase, future insulation schemes (over up to 20 years?), and some apprenticeships. The leaders believe the leaflet is intended to mislead, and its dishonest approach is undermining the fragile trust residents have in politics. Areas that are already badly overflowed by Heathrow planes, such as Clapham, Lambeth, Pimlico, Marylebone, Westminster, Streatham, Mayfair and Kennington were not included in the consultation exercise.

Lord True commented that the leaflet is “propaganda in its finest.... the more we read into the full consultation material the more concerned we are at the Government’s selective presentation of the third runway’s impacts. They should be proactively informing flight path communities about major changes like the loss of daytime respite periods but that’s not been their approach.”“The Government need to stop the spin.” The whole NPS consultation is being done, deliberately by the DfT, in the absence of noise information needed by residents. <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=34093>

Critique of 11 claims by DfT, in its pro-Heathrow runway leaflets, for NPS consultation

The DfT has sent out 1.5 million leaflets to households in areas not too far from Heathrow. The leaflets make no attempt whatsoever of balance, and are merely advertising the runway plans and promoting them. Many of the claims are misleading, or so abbreviated as to be unclear. At the link below there is a critique of the claims, point by point, and links to evidence backing up the criticisms. If anyone has received a leaflet, and wonders about the facts, this webpage may give some useful information.



Just a few examples of the dubious statements in the leaflet: the figure of £61 billion economic benefit is given, leaving out the proviso that this is over 60 years - and only includes benefits, before taking off costs.

There is much made of the generosity of the compensation to be given for compulsory purchase, but in reality anything much below 125% would be derisory, and way below world standards. The claim about six and a half hours of no scheduled night flights omits to mention how many flights, scheduled before 11pm, often take off almost to midnight. And though there may be 6 more domestic links from Heathrow, these are likely to be unprofitable and may not last for long. The loss of long haul routes from other UK airports, due to a larger Heathrow, is conveniently ignored. <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=33994>

How to respond to the NPS consultation - or complain to Sir Jeremy Sullivan about it

You can register on the website and fill in the online form (it remains open to edit, and you can continue to amend or add to it until 25th May) at <https://tinyurl.com/DfT-NPS-consultation>
The form itself is <https://runwayconsultation.dialoguebydesign.com/>

You can also complete an online response form at <https://tinyurl.com/NPS-response-form> and either email it to RunwayConsultation@dft.gsi.gov.uk or print it and post it to **Freepost RUNWAY CONSULTATION**

You can send in as many responses as you want, as long as they have different content. So if you send in a response, and then realise you want to add something, that is OK. The DfT say they will read everything.

The important thing is that people sent in a response, even if it is just a few sentences in your own words. Don't feel you have to answer all the questions.

If you believe the consultation has not been good enough, if it contains inaccuracies, omissions, or unjustified claims, or has not been conducted properly, you can contact **Sir Jeremy Sullivan**, who has been appointed to see that the consultation is properly carried out.

Email him: independentadviser@runwayconsultation.gsi.gov.uk

Flight paths of Heathrow 3rd runway travel over, and parallel to, M4. Safety and distraction issue?

The planned north-west runway at Heathrow, that the UK government is very keen to push through, runs close to the M4 motorway. This is a very busy stretch of road, with much of the traffic associated with Heathrow, in one way or another. The arrival flight paths from both the east and the west, onto the 3rd runway, would cross the M4 twice in each direction. Planes might be as low as 500 feet when they cross the M4 coming from the west. The flight path would run close to other parts of the M4 for some distance, very close to the airport with planes in their final approach where they are most noisy.



An A380 has a wingspan of 260 feet. An A380 at 500 feet directly above the motorway is just two wingspans away. Currently along the boundary roads of the airport there are barriers, to prevent drivers seeing the planes - at ground level - and being distracted. However, with planes flying low overhead or parallel to the M4 for some distance, no barriers would be able to obscure the view. It is not clear whether any consideration has been given by the DfT to the problem of driver distraction (or even driver nervousness) to have planes quite so low, flying parallel and fully in view. There are around 130,000 vehicles per day on that stretch of the M4 - meaning over 6,000 per hour - it is a very busy section of road, and due to become yet busier with a new runway. Few major airports have busy motorways with approximately the same alignment as the flight path. Will the government take into account potential motorist safety problems of this motorway / flight path clash? 13.2.2017 <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=33949>

Court rules that legal challenge by 4 councils cannot be heard until final Heathrow NPS published

Four councils that are negatively affected by Heathrow, plus Greenpeace and a local resident, applied for a legal challenge against the DfT because of its plans for a Heathrow 3rd runway. The case has now been struck out, at the High Court, by Mr Justice Cranston, on the grounds that the court had no jurisdiction to hear the claim, because of the provision in the Planning Act 2008 which said that proceedings may only be brought in a six-week period that followed once the NPS was adopted, or if later, published. The claim is "precluded" until the NPS is published, and that might be the end of 2017 or early 2018. The court can then consider the challenge - the merits of which were not questioned, just the timing.

The claimants argue that the Government has failed to recognise the project's unlawful air quality impacts and that the consultation held to make the decision was fundamentally flawed. They also argue that there was a failure by government to consult residents before going back on promises made repeatedly that a 3rd runway would not be built. The claimants say the plan is "unlawful" because local people bought houses and sent children to schools etc due to repeated Tory promises it would not happen. The councils argue that their residents had a "legitimate" expectation" the project would not be approved, due to assurances received. They have identified 19 "broken promises" made by David Cameron, Theresa May and other political figures saying the 3rd runway would be scrapped. John Sauven (Greenpeace) said: "Today's ruling was about the timing of our legal challenge, not its merit. It doesn't change the fact that ministers have no solution to the huge air and noise pollution problems caused by a third runway."

Ravi Govindia (Wandsworth) said "The country is now going to waste more time developing a scheme that will never pass a simple legal test on air quality. Nothing is going to change between now and 2018 to make this scheme any less polluting." 30.1.2017 <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=33774>

5 arrested for blocking Heathrow tunnel – traffic chaos with tunnel closed 2 hrs 30 mins

Protesters from the Rising Up group caused tailbacks on the M4 heading towards Heathrow airport, in their latest action against plans to build a third runway. A video posted by the group shortly before 8.30am on 21st February showed a car blocking the Heathrow Tunnel that accesses Terminals 2 and 3. They draped a sign reading 'No new runways' over the car, and there was an activist lying next to the vehicle, locked to it, on the road. The Met police said officers arrested two people for obstructing a highway, and in total five people were arrested. Three protesters were locked to one of the vehicles and two were drivers of two cars.



The tunnel was closed for over two hours, and the M4 spur road was also temporarily closed, while police worked with airport staff to remove the people locked to the third car. A contra-flow was put in place in the outbound tunnel to facilitate the movement of traffic around the blocked tunnel. There were delays in surrounding roads. Transport for London said just after 11am the tunnel re-opened. The protest follows a flashmob the group held at Heathrow on the weekend. The degree of bias, and absence of balance or information on negative impacts of the expansion, in the DfT consultation, has angered many people. The protesters are particularly concerned about carbon emissions.

21.2.2017 <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=34038>

Noise groups consider night flights consultation inadequate, as it fails to balance society costs against economic benefits

The government's night flights consultation ends on 28th February. (It was launched on 12th January - details at <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=33598>). Campaigners against unacceptable levels of aircraft noise believe the consultation is unacceptable, because it prioritises the economic benefits of night flights over the costs to society of noise at night. The groups say people responding to the consultation should point out that the government's role as regulator is to assess carefully the benefits and costs of night flights and strike an appropriate balance. Setting an objective of "maintaining the existing benefits of night flights" precludes such an assessment. They say the Government cannot start its options appraisal process by assuming what the answer should be.

The groups acknowledge that some of the Government's proposals are helpful, such as the inclusion of currently exempt aircraft in the limits, and the potential reduction in the total amount of noise that can be generated at night. They believe the Government should implement its proposals for a two-year period only, and commit to carrying out a full assessment of the costs and benefits of night flights in that period. In the longer term the groups believe night flights should be eliminated entirely, as the DfT suggests they might be at Heathrow, recognising the increasing evidence that they can have serious health consequences for people overflown. 30.1.2017 <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=33783>

Below are links to some of the responses by groups.

RHC challenges economic need for night flights at Heathrow, when slots can be provided during the day

The Richmond Heathrow Campaign has submitted a detailed response to the night flights consultation. One particular point they make is that Heathrow does not actually need flights between 11pm and 6am or even 7am. The airport proposed adding 25,000 more flights per year, if it is given planning consent for a new runway, before the runway is built. That would require change to its current cap of 480,000 per year.

That means Heathrow would be able to add 25,000 more flights per year - around 68 more per day, or about 4 - 5 per hour more (half take offs and half landings). Heathrow says it is full, but would be able to fit in these extra flights, if it wants to. Therefore, if these slots are possible, some of the flights currently in the night period could be moved into the day period. However, there are concerns that the extra 25,000 flights per year would mean loss or runway alternation, that is seen as vital for those currently overflowed by Heathrow approach flight paths.

The RHC believes late running flights and increased numbers of flights between 6 and 7am are largely ignored by the consultation and people may wish to comment on that. For the sake of people's health, the noise disturbance to sleep has to be ended, with no flights before 7am. There needs to be a ban on scheduled and ALSO **unscheduled** night flights starting by 2020, irrespective of any decision on a 3rd runway. Details here <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=34053>

GACC response to night flights consultation: “Ban all night flights by 2030, and cut the noise at night”

GACC (Gatwick Area Conservation Campaign) has produced its response to the DfT's night flights consultation. Anyone interested in the detail is advised to read the full response, with references. Some of the points made by GACC are that the claims of the economic benefits of night flights at Gatwick are flimsy and not substantiated; there should be a thorough analysis within the next 2 years of the balance between the economic benefits and the health impacts/widespread disturbance of night flights, leading to a reduction in both the number of flights and noise quotas; there should not be an increase in the number of night flights at Gatwick in winter; GACC supports the reduction in noise quotas to match (and go below) existing usage, encouraging purchase by airlines of less noisy planes.

Many GACC members feel strongly that there should be a total ban on all night flights; GACC agrees with Stop Stansted Expansion that government should announce that night flights will be phased out by 2030; GACC strongly supports the suggestion that the noise quotas may be reduced by 5% a year so as to be 20% lower by 2022. 1.2.2017 <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=33803>

CAGNE joins the call for a night ban at Gatwick

The long awaited Department for Transport (DfT) night flight consultation intends the new regime to last for 5 years, with no cut in the number of night flights in this time. There will be minimal, and theoretical, cuts in the quota count (a scoring system based on how noisy planes are). Sally Pavey, Chair of CAGNE said the consultation continues to ignore the impact night flights have on people's health. The government should, instead of just looking at economic benefits (largely to airlines) consider the health implications of high levels of noise at night, not allowing enough quiet hours for healthy sleep. The consultation proposes allowing many more night flights in the winter period at Gatwick. Gatwick already has the most night flights. In summer 2016, Heathrow had 2,949 (3,250 allowed), Gatwick had 11,303 (11,200 allowed) and Stansted 7,370 (7,000 allowed). This number of night flights is "simply unacceptable to residents around Gatwick." They should be phased out, not increased. 29.1.2017 <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=33767>

AEF deeply disappointed by Government's lack of ambition on night flights

The Aviation Environment Federation commented: "We are deeply disappointed by the Government's lack of ambition to get to grips with the night noise problem at London airports. Our members often tell us that the number of overflying aircraft they experience at night is a real problem, regardless of the marginal improvements in the noise performance of individual aircraft that have taken place over time. A growing body of evidence indicates that night noise has harmful effects not only in terms of annoyance but also increased risk of cardiovascular disease, strokes and heart attacks. Noise at airports around the UK remains persistently above the maximum levels recommended for health by the World Health Organisation. The Government has also retained its definition of the operational night noise period as 6.5 hours, 90 minutes less than the standard definition used by the WHO."

More on their website at <http://www.aef.org.uk/2017/01/13/government-misses-opportunity-to-reduce-night-flights-at-heathrow-gatwick-or-stansted/>

Court in Austria blocks 3rd runway at Vienna airport, as climate harm outweighs a few more jobs



A court in Austria has ruled that Vienna Schwechat Airport cannot be expanded with a 3rd runway, on climate change grounds. It said the increased greenhouse gas emissions for Austria would cause harm and climate protection is more important than creating other jobs. The court said the airport's ability to reduce the emission of greenhouse gases by its own measures were not sufficient, and emissions would rise too much. It also said it was important to conserve valuable arable land for future generations to provide food supplies. The airport and Vienna city (20% shareholder of the airport stock corporation) want to appeal.

Legally they should not be able to because ordinary appeal was excluded. The airport must overcome the very high hurdles of an extraordinary appeal, but opponents fear they will try to get this. The appeal would have to make transparent what is at stake: is Austria going to take climate change seriously or not?

In the UK we have the same problem, but our courts are clearly not mandated in the same way in relation to climate change (air quality is separate). Vienna airport is using the same false arguments that the DfT and Heathrow are using here - that building a 3rd runway would (allegedly) reduce the amount of carbon emissions and noise because they claim (against common logic) that "fuel consumption and the noise are reduced, because the waiting times of the aircraft would be avoided at peak times."

The airport hopes the runway would bring more tourists into Austria to spend their money, and would be needed by 2025. The airport had 22.8 million passengers in 2015. It is a mystery how such a low number of passengers could require 3 runways, when there is barely enough to fill one, let alone two, runway.
10.2.2017 <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=33930>

Plans for third runway at Heathrow 'will blight 47,000 additional homes with dangerous levels of air pollution'

The Daily Mail reports that a 3rd Heathrow runway would expose 47,000 additional homes to dangerous air pollution from NO₂ because more vehicles will travel to the airport. The runway would cause a rise in the number of cars, coaches and lorries - raising levels of NO₂, that come especially from diesel engines. The Commons Environmental Audit Committee (EAC) says the runway would rise breaching air pollution limits, and it has 'no confidence' the Government can meet its target to fix the problem, or that 60% of all new cars would be ultra-low emissions by 2030.

Figures from the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders show 1.29 million new diesel cars were registered last year, which was 48% of all new car purchases. EAC Chair, Mary Creagh, said there was no evidence of any "step change" in the Government's approach that the Committee had called for in their previous report. London Mayor Sadiq Khan has proposed a £3,500 diesel scrappage scheme to pay people to replace their old diesel cars, but this may not be popular. As well as over 47,000 homes likely to be exposed to worse air pollution, due to Heathrow expansion, the air near Wraybury Reservoir (a SSSI for birds) would also be have illegal air pollution. The Supreme Court has ordered the Government to produce a new air pollution strategy by April, after ruling that its Air Quality Plan is based on 'optimistic emissions data'.
24.2.2017 <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=34098>

Air pollution from PM_{2.5} particulates implicated in increasing risk of premature births



Reducing air pollution from the tiny particles, PM_{2.5} may help to prevent 2.7 million premature births per year worldwide, according to a study published in Environment International. The worst problems are in south and south east Asia, including India and China. The PM_{2.5} particles come from sources such as diesel powered vehicles, and fires. Worldwide about 10% of births are classed as preterm, and these babies may have significant short and long-term health

implications - depending on how early they were born. Problems associated with prematurity are the top cause of death among children under 5 years old, and have also been associated with learning and

developmental disabilities as well as an increased risk of psychiatric disorders. The number of premature births caused by this air pollution in the UK per year might be as much as 4,500. The study considered that about 18% of all pre-term births (worldwide) were associated with the particulate pollution in 2010. Other factors linked to pre-term birth are maternal age (young and old), multiple pregnancy (twins etc.), social and personal/lifestyle factors such as poverty, maternal education, prenatal care, physical activity, diet, and alcohol and drug consumption. 19.2.2017 <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=34031>

Particulate emissions by electric cars as bad as conventional – due to more tyre and brake wear

While electric vehicles are a welcome technology, enabling a cut in local air pollution from diesel and petrol cars and vans, (as long as the electricity they use has been sustainably produced) they may not be a wholly "silver bullet" solution. Improbable as it sounds, a new study shows that much of the particulate air pollution in cities comes from from vehicle tyres and brakes, and road surface wear and re-suspension of road dust. There is a positive relationship between vehicle weight and these non-exhaust emissions - the heavier the vehicle, the more wear on tyres and brakes. As electric vehicles tend to be around a quarter heavier, for the equivalent size of vehicle, than their conventional equivalent internal combustion engine counterparts they produce more of this pollution. Therefore electric vehicle PM emissions - overall - are comparable to those of conventional vehicles.

The study found that these non-exhaust sources account for around 90% of PM10 and 85% of PM2.5 from traffic. They conclude: "Future policy should consequently focus on setting standards for non-exhaust emissions and encouraging weight reduction of all vehicles to significantly reduce PM emissions from traffic." Heathrow is pinning its hopes for cutting air pollution on more use of electric vehicles.

12.2.2017 <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=33946>

Heathrow airport workers might get financial payout to encourage those with diesel cars to scrap them, to cut NO2

It is rumoured that workers at Heathrow may be offered around £2,000 each, to replace their diesel cars with less polluting electric or petrol models, to try to overcome the problem of NO2 air pollution. There are around 76,000 staff at Heathrow, and they are estimated (Evening Standard) to drive up to 27,000 diesel vehicles. Detailed proposals are still being worked up, with talks due to take place with airlines, retailers, cargo operators and other airport employers.

Discussions are understood to have taken place about the possibility of a pilot diesel scrappage scheme, by the DfT, in various areas of the UK with the worst pollution (perhaps Heathrow is one) before a nationwide rollout. An earlier Government scrappage scheme to get older, more polluting vehicles off the roads involved motorists being offered £2,000. Half of this came from the government, and half from the motor industry which benefited from more new car sales. Heathrow wants the M4 out to the M25 to be included in the Low Emission Zone to clamp down on polluting lorries and vans. It hopes that by cutting this pollution (much of which is from vehicle trips associated with Heathrow) it can be allowed a 3rd runway, keeping air pollution just within legal levels. Meanwhile, the EC is expected to soon take the next step in legal action against Britain for failing to cut illegal NO2 levels. 9.2.2017 <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=33913>

Government allows ending of Cranford Agreement, so Heathrow planes can take off to the east from north runway



On 2nd February, later in the day after the announcements on the NPS and the airspace consultations, the DfT added news that the government has agreed to end the Cranford Agreement. This would have been a major announcement in itself, but craftily buried with the other news. The Cranford Agreement was an undertaking, set up about 60 years ago, that planes taking off towards the east would only use the southern runway, not the northern runway. This protected people in Cranford from appalling noise. The ending of the agreement means less noise from arrivals

(when the airport is on easterlies - about 30% of the year) from the west - so places like Windsor, Datchet, Colnbrook and Poyle - under the northern runway approach path - could have half as many arrivals per day (around 330 rather than 630).

But areas like Old Windsor, Wraysbury and Stanwell Moor could see the number of arrivals on easterlies from 26 to 328 a day (on the southern runway). For take offs, areas south west of the southern runway will see fewer planes, but areas north east of the northern runway will have more planes. It is likely some people in the very noisiest areas might be able to get some insulation from Heathrow, but not a lot. There are also implications for the distribution of air pollution from the planes. A condition of the planning permission gives Heathrow three years to enact the new infrastructure to implement the changes.

3.2.2017 <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=33882>

DfT starts consultation on UK Airspace Policy, to manage increasing use of airspace

Alongside the draft NPS, the Government published separate proposals to "modernise" the way UK airspace is managed. This consultation: "UK Airspace Policy: A framework for balanced decisions on the design and use of airspace" ends on 25th May and is (quote): "...seeking views on how aircraft noise is managed effectively while updating airspace policies. Proposals will look at how the number of aircraft entering and leaving our airspace can be managed effectively – using the latest technology to make airspace more efficient, reducing the need for stacking and making journeys faster and more environmentally friendly."

They will also include draft guidance on how noise impacts should be assessed and used to inform decisions on airspace. The consultation also includes proposals on the role of an **Independent Commission on Civil Aviation Noise**, (ICCAN) which we will establish. The Commission would build relationships between industry and communities and ensure an even fairer process for making changes to the use of airspace and flight paths."

Cynics might enjoy the craft in the wording: "... more environmentally friendly" and "even fairer". If only. The government is aware that the current policy of trying to "minimise the number significantly affected by aircraft noise" does not work, with P-RAV technology, and highly concentrated narrow routes. That has not proved to be "fair" at all. 2.2.2017 <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=33822>

AEF says DfT airspace "modernisation" consultation: provides little future noise reduction

AEF comments that the main rationale for change is catering for more demand - ever more planes. As stated in the consultation document, "modernising our airspace is about exploiting the latest technology to unlock the national social and economic benefits which a thriving aviation sector offers."

Though proposed new powers – in a very limited way – for the Secretary of State to "call in" plans for some planned flight paths are welcome, there is little else to give real benefits to people overflowed. On proposals for more consultation and engagement etc, the AEF says: "Improvements to the process in terms of transparency and communication won't tackle the underlying need to reduce noise." Government hopes future noise reductions will be achieved through the introduction of slightly less noisy aircraft and a reduction in stacking, but these measures will only have a marginal impact -given the likely increase in the number of aircraft. Even if there is some reduction it is unlikely to be a universal improvement with the consultation noting that "while many communities will have reduced noise in the future, it is inevitable that some will remain for others."

In addition, the SoNA study (2014) now published shows people are more annoyed by aircraft noise than they were in the past, despite technological improvements. That means noise must be taken seriously. On the plans to set up an Independent Commission on Civil Aviation Noise (ICCAN) AEF says while this will provide advice, verify noise data etc, with "no requirement to deliver a noise reduction strategy, and without enforcement powers, or the teeth to make binding recommendations, the Commission's effectiveness may be limited." Anyone affected by aircraft noise should read the whole AEF comment.

6.2.2017 <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=33904>

Consultation by Transport Committee on “modernisation” of airspace, especially to add a new runway

As well as the DfT on the Heathrow NPS and on airspace change, there is an inquiry by the Commons Transport Committee, on management and "modernisation" of airspace. That means more narrow flight paths, intensively used, in order to free up airspace so more planes can be accommodated. The south east of England is already (perhaps equal to the area round New York) the most intensely used area of airspace in the world. To fit in another fully used Heathrow runway, space must be found to deal with the extra planes.

It is considered as a "given" that expanding air travel is good, and whatever is needed for this must happen. The effect on those on the ground is likely to mean more narrow flight paths, with high levels of traffic down each. That means potentially very high noise levels for those affected, often for most of each day, on most days. The Committee say without "modernisation" the economy suffers, due to flight delays and business is lost. This ignores the fact that about 70% of Heathrow is leisure passengers. The excuse is also made that fuel is saved by aircraft, in taking the shortest route - which is good, but this cost saving to the airline should be balanced by the social cost of the added plane noise. The Transport Committee consultation ends on 31st March. 27.1.2017 <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=33792>

CAA publishes SoNA study, showing high levels of annoyance from aircraft noise well below 57dB



On 2nd February the CAA published a report on a survey about attitudes to aircraft noise, done in 2014. It is called SoNA (Survey of Noise Attitudes). It follows the ANASE study done several years earlier, that was shelved by government, as its methodology was questioned, and it showed high levels of annoyance in response to plane noise. The SoNA study found some adverse effects of plane noise annoyance occur down to 51dB LAeq 16hr. The conventional level of averaged noise considered a problem is 57 dB LAeq, and noise is measured on a logarithmic scale.

The SoNA report also found sensitivity to aircraft noise has increased, with the same percentage of people being highly annoyed at 54dB LAeq 16hr in SoNA as there was at 57dB LAeq 16hr in the ANIS study that was done in 1985. This gives further evidence to the demand that the government no longer uses the 57dB LAeq metric as its main noise measure. The debate continues about the merits of averaged noise over 16 hours in summer, with metrics measuring the number of plane noise events in a given time. The study says "there is insufficient evidence to link chronic health outcomes with event-based noise metrics, and SoNA 2014 found these performed less well than LAeq 16hr as a predictor of annoyance." But the findings may show "it may be appropriate to use N65 as supplementary measure for daytime noise..." 6.2.2017 <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=33850>

Rise in complaints in St Albans district about Luton plane noise – residents are angry

Three campaign groups, representing St Albans, Harpenden and wider-Hertfordshire have banded together to call upon local politicians to do more on the problem of increasing aircraft noise, than merely call for a review or consultation on the problem. Campaigners from the alliance of HarpendenSky, Save our Skies (SoS) and Herts-based LADACAN say St Albans is at risk of ‘turning into Heathrow’ unless the rise in noise pollution is stopped. Luton had more passengers than ever in 2016, at about 14.5 million.

There was also a 150% increase in complaints about noise. Residents in Hertfordshire want Bedfordshire, which owns the airport, to suffer more of its noise. Luton airport is owned by Luton council, and people in Hertfordshire say as Bedfordshire gets the profit, they should take more of the pain. Planes are getting bigger, heavier and noisier, and are flying even earlier in the morning and later at night. There is more noise affecting Flamstead, Redbourn, Harpenden, St Albans, and on to Sandridge and Stevenage. People overflowed by increasingly narrow flight paths want politicians to do something and challenge the airport. However, politicians are always nervous of saying anything that might do perceived damage to economic growth, such as demand a ban on night flights.

15.2.2017 <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=33971>

Irish Finance Minister raises prospect of reintroducing air travel tax, as industry is under-taxed



Minister for Finance Michael Noonan has said the air travel industry may be considered to be under-taxed and the ability to apply the tax should remain in order to raise revenue. He said some form of air travel tax should be reintroduced, as air travel pays no VAT and no fuel duty. There is currently in Ireland a report by the National Civil Aviation Development Forum, that is recommending that Air Passenger Duty (APD) is formally abolished. APD was reduced in Ireland from €3 per passenger to zero in 2014. It had been €2 for short haul trips and €10 for long haul trips until 2010, and then a flat rate €3 for all trips from 2010 to 2014.

Mr Noonan strongly rejected the proposal to remove APD, insisting the levy - at just €3 has no impact on the aviation industry, or passenger demand. He said the tax was a “useful tool for raising revenue and paying for externalities associated with air tax such as emissions, noise pollution, etc”. APD was only cut due to very heavy lobbying by the aviation industry. There is now an aviation development forum in Ireland, set up since the Brexit vote. It comprises senior representatives in Irish aviation, is chaired by the Department of Transport, and aims to help the aviation industry to grow. 4.2.2017

<http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=33868>

Tax experts criticise lack of detail in Scottish Government’s plan for new Air Departure Tax (ADT)

The Chartered Institute of Taxation (CIOT) is calling for independent analysis into the impact of reducing and axing Air Passenger Duty (APD) in Scotland. The CIOT says there is not enough detail about plans to replace APD with Air Departure Tax (ADT) from April 2018 and says a special report could “strengthen” the rationale behind the change. APD earned Scotland £275 million in 2015-16 and the CIOT, a trade body representing tax professionals, says the Scottish Government’s Air Departure Tax Bill is short on information about proposed rates, bands and exemptions for the replacement.

There are also no fiscal forecasts on how halving duty from next April or eventual abolition will be achieved. First Minister Nicola Sturgeon has said the change will benefit families and other holidaymakers who “may well welcome a reduction in the cost” of going abroad. They may therefore go abroad more often, spending money they would otherwise have spent in Scotland. Moira Kelly of CIOT said: “There is a case to be made for using this legislation to outline who will pay what, when they will pay it and who will be exempt In the absence of information such as this, it is very difficult to say with any degree of certainty what benefits, if any, this change will make.” 15.2.2017 <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=33969>

Government likely to ignore climate advice by CCC, turning just to carbon trading, to try to push Heathrow runway through

Chris Grayling and the government plan to ignore the assessment of the government’s own independent climate advisers, the Committee on Climate Change, on how to manage the CO2 emissions from a 3 runway Heathrow. The Environmental Audit Committee wrote to Grayling on 19th December, asking how he planned to square the CO2 emissions and the CCC advice with DfT plans. His response shows there is no way it can be done, and building the 3rd runway means not meeting the UK aviation cap - recommended by the CCC - of 37.5MtCO2 by 2050, meaning about 60% passenger growth above 2005 level. Grayling says ministers “have not taken a view on whether to accept the CCC’s planning assumption,” ie. rejecting the advice. He goes on to note that “a future global carbon market would allow emissions reductions to be made where they are most efficient across the global economy”. Then he says “measures are available” even if the aviation sector grows by more than 60%. This goes against the CCC’s own calculation that these levels of growth would mean “all other sectors will have to prepare for correspondingly higher emissions reductions in 2050.” Grayling hopes carbon trading will cut emissions - but in reality there are no effective carbon trading mechanisms that would do this well enough.

28.1.2017 <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=33752>

See also the scathing report by the EAC (above) on 23rd Feb <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=34058>

Government needs to provide clarity on possible jobs across the UK created by 3rd runway

When the Government announced Heathrow as its preferred option in October 2016 it downgraded the economic benefits of a 3rd runway substantially. The Airports Commission Final Report assessed the economic benefit to the whole of the UK, over 60 years, might be up to £147 billion (their assessment of need scenario). Heathrow often uses a much higher figure of “up to £211 billion” and omit to say it is for all the UK, over 60 years. In October, the DfT, calculating the possible economic benefits in a different way, thought a more likely figure was £61 billion. This is benefits only. But if the costs are taken off, the benefit falls to something more like £6 billion (£2 – 11 billion or so range).

Heathrow, and the DfT, say there will be huge benefits to the regions, and large numbers of future jobs. The figures Heathrow has on its website are based on the £147 billion estimate. These have not been corrected, in the light of the reduced DfT estimate. So what is the actual value of a third runway to the English regions, Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland? All that we do know is that it will be considerably less than the promises made by Heathrow to so many MPs and local councillors. The onus is on Heathrow and the DfT to come up with revised estimates of the employment benefits to the regions. So far, it has failed to do so.
26.2.2017 <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=34146>

Ice block (presumably off plane approaching Heathrow) damages roof just west of Windsor

There have been a number of incidents, at many airports, of lumps of ice falling off planes overhead, coming in to land. Ice can form naturally on aircraft flying at high altitudes, and this can break away and fall off when the plane comes down through warmer air. There was another recent incident of this, to someone under the approach path into Heathrow, just west of Windsor. On 10th February (some time between 7 am and 8.30am) some ice crashed through the roof of a house in Oakley Green Road near Windsor. The owners of the house were not hurt, though there is substantial damage to the roof.



This is another incident where it is fortunate the ice fell onto a roof, and not onto people. Such a large object falling onto someone would kill or seriously injure them. Builders secured the property before the weekend and repairs were set to begin the next week. The CAA says this sort of incident is “relatively rare” and the CAA website says: “As the safety regulator for UK civil aviation, the CAA requires UK aircraft operators to minimise the risk of ice falls by performing regular maintenance to prevent leaks and take prompt corrective action if a defect is found. The CAA is unable to investigate the potential origin of an ice fall, but does record reports of this nature.” 18.2.2017
<http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=34021>

Pope: CO₂ compensation for air travel is hypocrisy



Pope Francis has denounced CO₂ compensation for air travel as hypocritical. He said: “The planes pollute the atmosphere, but with a fraction of the sum of the ticket price trees are planted to compensate for the damage inflicted.” If this logic were extended, one day it would come to a point where armaments companies set up hospitals for those children who fell victim to their bombs. “This is hypocrisy.” He said this was one of the greatest ethical problems of today's capitalism, that industries were producing waste and then trying to conceal it or treat it to make it invisible.

He demanded an economic system that would not only reduce the number of victims, but also require no sacrifices or offsets at all. He was speaking to about 1,000 entrepreneurs from around the world who are committed to the social economy. With offset schemes for air travel, passengers can transfer money to so-called compensation agencies, which invest the money in climate protection projects in developing countries. Critics see in this practice a modern form of indulgences, which leads to increased flights.
9.2.2017 <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=33921>

About 1,200 people pack Frankfurt Terminal One for the 200th Monday protest against noise



At least 1,200 noise protesters gathered at Terminal 1 of Frankfurt airport on 30th January for the 200th Monday protest. These have been going on, most Monday evenings, since the 4th runway opened in October 2011. Thousands of people living around the airport find the noise burden to which they are subjected intolerable. One problem was that there was no proper information about flight paths before the runway opened, and the imposition of the noise took many by surprise.

On most Mondays at least 300 people attend. Some Mondays there are many more.

Their demands are that there must be a night flight ban between 10pm and 6am. The noise ceiling should not only be on the paper, but a noticeable reduction in noise. They would like to see the runway closed, but that is not likely to happen. Campaigners say the airport had been built for 40 years, but none of the growth forecasts so far had been fulfilled, and it is now taking low-cost carriers to fill the capacity. They say all trips of under 1,000 kilometres should be made by train, not by air. They want an aviation industry that is environmentally responsible, and without subsidies. One speaker at the rally described the current noise as a "terror against the people of the region". Resistance will continue.

31.1.2017 <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=33859>

Some Useful Links

- For large amounts of up-to-date news on airports and aviation, see **AirportWatch's** news pages <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/latest-news/> with many topic sub-sections
- For daily transport news in the UK - **Transportinfo** at transportinfo.org.uk
- **Transport & Environment (T&E)** <http://www.transportenvironment.org> Twitter @transenv
- News & expert analysis by **AEF (Aviation Environment Federation)** www.aef.org.uk @The_AEF
- **HACAN** www.hacan.org.uk Twitter @HACAN1
- **GACC (Gatwick Area Conservation Campaign)** www.gacc.org.uk/latest-news
- **Stop Heathrow Expansion (SHE)** <http://www.stopheathrowexpansion.co.uk>
- **Richmond Heathrow Campaign** <http://www.richmondheathrowcampaign.org>
- **Stop Stansted Expansion (SSE)** <http://stopstanstedexpansion.com/>
- **CHATR Chiswick Against the Third Runway.** <http://www.chatr.org.uk/>
- **Links to many of the groups at Heathrow** <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=1307>
- **HACAN East** at London City Airport. <http://hacaneast.org.uk/news> Twitter @HACANEast
- **Belfast City Airport Watch** <http://www.belfastcityairportwatch.co.uk/>
- **Edinburgh Airport Watch** <http://www.edinburghairportwatch.com/>
- **AirportWatch Europe** <http://www.airportwatcheurope.com> Twitter @AirportWatchEU
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