

TAKE OFF

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A FLIGHT PATH REVOLUTION

The wide-ranging consultation Heathrow launched this month signals the biggest change in flights paths for 70 years

Heathrow is proposing the biggest shake-up to its flight paths since the airport opened in 1946. The plans are part of a comprehensive public consultation exercise launched on January 8th. Heathrow is also seeking views on changes to night flights, runway alternation, westerly preference and its proposal to bring in an extra 25,000 flights a year in advance of any third runway being built.

This consultation lasts until March. There will be a second consultation in June focusing on the more local impacts of any third runway. It will include new car parks, new local roads, diversion of any rivers, construction and waste issues as well as air pollution impacts. Heathrow hopes to put its final plans to a planning inquiry in 2020 and, if it gets the go-ahead, to open the new runway by 2026.



- For details of the current consultation, see middle pages.

HACAN Comment

The elephant in the room is the third runway. It will mean over 700 more flights a day. A lot of what is behind this consultation is how they can be accommodated. A third runway is particularly bad news for people who will find themselves under an approach or departure path for the first time. It will also mean that people in West London who currently enjoy a half day's break from the noise will find that cut to a third. But HACAN's approach, as confirmed at our last AGM, has been to continue to oppose a new runway but also to fight hard for the best deal for residents, if it goes ahead. We are particularly pleased that the idea of respite is embedded into Heathrow's plans. Many areas will get relief for the first time. Heathrow could have adopted the approach taken by London City and most of the American airports and introduced all-day flying over selected communities with no respite. For over a decade HACAN has argued that, with or without a 3rd runway, respite is essential.

CAN A 3RD RUNWAY BE STOPPED?

Heathrow still faces hurdles. The **legal challenges** to Parliament's decision to back the new runway will be heard in the High Court in March with a decision by mid-April.

Heathrow's proposals must be approved by a **Planning Inquiry**. This, though, is not a Terminal 5-type inquiry. By law, it can't last longer than 6 months, it can only consider the detailed plans (not whether a 3rd runway is right in principle) and most submissions are in writing rather than given through cross-examination.

In the current volatile political climate **an early General Election** cannot be ruled out. A new Government might take a different view on the runway.

HEATHROW'S 'BIGGEST EVER CONSULTATION'

A journalist said to HACAN that this must be the 'biggest ever' consultation that Heathrow has undertaken. He could well be right. It certainly is likely to affect people under Heathrow's flight paths for decades to come.

It seeks views on a number of inter-related topics:

1. Runway Alternation

At present when planes land over London they switch runways at 3pm to allow people in West London a half day's break from the noise. If a third runway is built that break would be reduced to a third. The consultation is asking for people's views on how this should happen: for example, do you prefer entire days with planes and then days without any or would you go for a period of respite each day.

Runway
alternation would
be reduced in West
London

At present when planes land from the west there is no runway alternation. Planes land all-day long over Windsor on the northern runway. The proposal is that, if a third runway is built, this will change and the pattern will be the same as will be introduced for planes landing over London, giving Windsor some respite for the first time.

For details on runway alternation, see pages 15-21 of the consultation document:

<http://hacan.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Heathrow-Airspace-and-Future-Operations-Consultation-document-Final-low-res.pdf>

2. Airspace Alternation

Even if Heathrow remained a two runway airport, there would be changes to its airspace. Across the world air traffic controllers are moving from ground-based systems to a satellite-based one to guide planes in and out of airports. This will result in narrower, more precise flight paths. These will save airlines' time and fuel, should cut the CO2 emissions from each aircraft and improve the resilience of airports.

Areas like SE
London could get
a half day's respite
for the first time

Precise, narrow flight paths mean concentration. In order to avoid concentrated all-day flying over communities, Heathrow is proposing to introduce a number of precise flight paths and rotate them. This is what they are calling airspace alternation in their consultation document. This will apply to areas a bit further away from Heathrow and also to departing flights. It could mean, for example, that SE London and parts of Berkshire could get a half day's break from the noise for the first time. At this stage they don't know where these new routes will be but they have included maps of areas that might have one or more of these routes.

For an overview on airspace alternation, see pages 22-24 of the consultation document.

But for more detail on how the proposals might affect your area go to:

<https://afo.heathrowconsultation.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2019/01/3649-HRW-3R-A3-maps-booklet-AW-update-2-V1.pdf> But note: not all postcodes impacted seem to show up so best to look at the diagrams as well.

3. Westerly Preference

Aircraft usually need to land and take off into the wind. In a typical year in London a west wind blows about 70% of the time. This is when planes land from the east over London and take off to the west. But there is a catch. When there is a slight east wind of up to 5 knots, planes still land over London. This is known as westerly preference. The consultation is asking whether people want **Westerly Preference** to be retained or **Easterly Preference** or **No Preference** to be introduced instead.

Heathrow's preferred option is **Managed Preference**: "we are thinking of moving to a 'managed' preference which would involve changing the direction of arriving and departing aircraft based on a set of criteria or rules designed to limit overall noise effects on communities and to help deliver periods of relief for them."

For an overview on airspace alternation, see pages 27-29 of the consultation document.

4. Night Flights

When in June Parliament voted to give Heathrow permission to draw up plans for a third runway, it stipulated that it must provide a six and a half hour break at night from scheduled flights – up from 5 hours at present. Heathrow is asking for views on the hours when that break should take place. This includes the option of starting flights as early as 5.30am but only on one runway so communities under the other two get nothing until 6am. This pattern could then be altered week by week or even day by day. At present departures don't start until 6.20am (all the early aircraft are arrivals). The consultation doesn't say whether Heathrow proposes to change the time of the first departure. We suspect this is unlikely because these early morning departures are often used by passengers arriving on the night flights.

For details on night flights, see pages 30-36 of the consultation document

4. Extra flights in advance of a third runway

Heathrow wants to bring in an extra 25,000 flights a year on the existing runways before any third runway opens. This is known as Independent Parallel Approaches (or "IPA"). At present Heathrow is allowed to land a small number of planes on the 'wrong' runway, i.e. out of alternation, if delays are building up. Between 7pm and 11pm, this currently amounts to 15 a day. For the hour between 6am and 7am when Heathrow has always been allowed to use both runways for landings there are currently 16/18 flights an hour landing on the 'departures' runway. The problem Heathrow has right now 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 overall capacity. IPA is an attempt to get round this. New direct flight paths will be introduced from the holding stacks to the airport for planes coming in on the new runway. At this stage we don't know where these flight paths will be. Heathrow expects the number of planes using these new flight paths will be limited: in total no more than 40 a day: probably less than 15 after 7am; with no more than 25 an hour between 6am and 7am.

New dedicated flight paths will be needed for these extra flights

For more details on Independent Parallel Approaches: <https://afo.heathrowconsultation.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2018/12/Making-better-use-of-our-existing-runways-Final-low-res.pdf>

Responding to the Consultation

The consultation runs from 8th January to 4th March.

The full consultation document can be found at: <http://hacan.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Heathrow-Airspace-and-Future-Operations-Consultation-document-Final-low-res.pdf>

The list of venues where there will be an exhibition: <http://afo.heathrowconsultation.com>

You can respond:

- Online via www.heathrowconsultation.com
- Via email at feedback@heathrowconsultation.com
- By writing to Freepost, LHR AFO Consultation

HACAN aims to produce its response as soon as possible. We will put it, plus a summary of its key points, on our website and on our facebook page to assist you with your responses.

A Separate National Consultation

On December 17th the Government published its **Green Paper** with proposals for its new aviation strategy which it will release in the second half of 2019. It is an important document. It sets out proposals for UK aviation policy until 2050.

There will be a 16 week consultation ending on 11th April 2019

Link to the Green Paper:

<https://aviationstrategy.campaign.gov.uk>

In summary the Green Paper:

- sets out to cater for the significant growth in flying it predicts will take place in the UK and around the world;
- argues that this growth can take place without exceeding the UK's aviation climate targets;
- assumes a third runway will be built at Heathrow;
- contains some welcome noise proposals;
- sets out measures to improve and monitor air pollution from aircraft

The HACAN summary: <http://hacan.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Green-Paper-summary-four.pdf>

Join Us!

If you are not a member already, join us! **For just £15 a year**, you can receive regular information from us, join in our campaigns. For details check out our website www.hacan.org.uk, call us on 020 8876 0455 or email us at jdm.stewart@virgin.net

Can members who pay by **Standing Order** note that the amount needs to be changed from £13 to £15 in accordance with the rise in membership.

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If you want **national aviation news**, reports and briefings, check out www.airportwatch.org.uk

To track **flight paths** on screen check out Webtrak on <http://webtrak.bksv.com/lhr>

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It keeps you up-to-date with events and activities

The next six months will be packed with campaigning activity. We are only able to send out 2/3 issues of this newsletter each year as postage is high (the more of you who are able to take online copies the better: let us know if you want to switch). So the way to keep abreast of events is to check our website which is updated on a regular basis and to sign up to Update. Many of you already have. Update is emailed out usually every fortnight. It lets you know what is planned and how you can get involved. **Email** jdm.stewart@virgin.net to be put on the update list.

We would like to phase out paper copies of Take Off. If we do not have an email address for you, or if it might be out-of-date, could you email it to jdm.stewart@virgin.net

Professor Walter Holland

We are sorry to report that Professor Walter Holland died last year aged 88. Walter was a longstanding and active member of HACAN and our President for several years, including during the Terminal 5 Inquiry. He had a very distinguished medical career, specializing in clinical epidemiology and social medicine. In 1998 he became a Visiting Professor at the London School of Economics. He is survived by his wife, Fiona, who remains an active member of HACAN, 3 sons and 7 grandchildren. We want to put on record our appreciation of all the work Walter did for HACAN.

London City Airport

In the autumn of last year the CAA backed the concentrated flight paths London City Airport introduced in 2016. This was a big blow to communities living under them. Now there are renewed fears that in its Master Plan, due out in March, London City will outline proposals to seek planning permission to lift the annual cap of 111,000 flights permitted to use the airport. At present there are around 83,000 flights each year but the airport is trying to attract more leisure flights in order to bring in more planes during the quieter times of the day (mid-morning to mid-afternoon). The better news is that London City, under a lot of pressure from our sister organisation HACAN East, has recognized that its planes impact areas many miles from the airport. It has installed mobile noise monitors in the Forest Hill/Dulwich area after good work by people from the Forest Hill Society.

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