

LONDON BOROUGH OF MERTON

SUBJECT: HEATHROW EXPANSION – STATUTORY CONSULTATION

1. Overview

Merton borough lies almost equidistant between London Heathrow and Gatwick airports. The Council recognises the demand for airport expansion and the decision to expand Heathrow that has already been taken. The Council is now and has always been determined to ensure that any expansion has as little negative and harmful impact on the residents and businesses of Merton and we will work hard throughout this and future consultations to mitigate any impact.

Merton Council is concerned about the future impact of Heathrow expansion and the potential for impact to the borough and its citizens. This includes any changes to flight paths over the borough.

Merton and its officers will continue to play a role in the consultation process and we will actively encourage the residents to respond.

Our officers will act as key stakeholders throughout the consultation phases scrutinising the technical detail and highlighting risks to the borough, and report this information back to Leadership.

Unlike some London boroughs, we have not suffered a similar impact from noise and air quality and therefore not actively campaigned against changes.

The impact of Heathrow on the borough will likely be from changes in noise as flight paths change and intensify. Although not directly affected in terms of air quality, as some closer boroughs are, we share the general concern and want to work with partners across London to tackle this problem.

2. The Consultation

This is the third in a series of public consultations organised by Heathrow and focuses on the expansion of the airport. This consultation is 'statutory' unlike the previous two consultations and is a requirement of the Development Consent Order (DCO).

The Planning Act 2008 sets out the procedural and legal framework for Heathrow expansion following the Government's decision to treat the proposed expansion project as a "Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP). NSIPs can by-pass normal local planning requirements and the developer must obtain a "Development Consent Order" (DCO) from the Secretary of State for Transport after an examination of the project by the National Infrastructure Directorate of the Planning Inspectorate.

This consultation is referred to as "Heathrow Expansion" and comprises of a suite of documents, which together run to many hundreds of pages covering 26 different topic areas, each with its own documentation. The topics include:

- The new Preferred Masterplan which incorporates proposals and new timescales for expansion from runway opening in 2026 to 2050.
- The proposals for the future operation of a three runway airport –

including proposals for night flights, and an extra 25,000 movements before the opening of a third runway

- The assessment of effects of the airport's growth on the environment and local communities
- The plans to manage the effects of expansion, including property compensation, noise mitigation (provision of sound insulation to affected properties). The plans include proposed initiatives to mitigate the effects of air pollution, including carbon dioxide and other environmental effects.

This will be the final consultation before Heathrow formally submits its application for a Development Consent Order (DCO). Early indication show that the date for submission will likely be late 2020. Further public consultation will continue over the coming years as plans develop further. (See Appendix A)

The consultation response deadline is on the 13th September 2019

3. Summary of the Consultation

This public consultation is highly complex, often very technical with very poor navigation between the web pages.

The volume of documentation is overwhelming even to professional officers that understand the subject matter, leaving limited opportunity for meaningful general public consumption.

Understanding the consultation has been made even more complex due to subjects being spread between documents and key themes sitting in various locations.

As a public facing and key stakeholder consultation, this is considered to be overly complex, contradictory, difficult to navigate and burdensome to the reader.

An outline of the key themes of the consultation are as follows:

- Plans to lower the M25 for the third runway to cross
- Plans to re-route rivers and waterbodies
- Plans to remove swathes of green-belt land for airport buildings
- Plans for new super-sized car parks to provide for even more airport car parking than today.
- Proposals to introduce a "Heathrow Ultra Low Emissions Zone" including a Heathrow Vehicle Access Charge
- Proposals & options for the introduction of a "6.5-hour ban" on scheduled night flights.
- Proposals to seek removal of the current planning cap of 480,000 annual aircraft transport movements (ATMs) at Heathrow introduced as
- Additional plans seeking permission to expand the two-runway airport in advance of the opening of its proposed third runway by an
- An extra 25,000 extra flights / year
- Proposals for "Environmentally Managed Growth"

- Environmental Impacts of the expansion proposals
- Proposals for mitigation and compensation (noise and property)
- Presentation of a new “Preferred” Airport Masterplan

As in previous consultations (2018 and 2019) no flightpaths are presented in this consultation. Consultees are unable to see at the most basic level to what extent they are likely to be newly overflown or overflown to a greater extent than today.

It is however possible to see from the consultation documents that the future flightpath design for a third runway is unlikely to be similar to current patterns that have been established for many years.

It is felt that for most lay consultees the consultation will have been impenetrable and thus unfair; the unfairness being compounded by a decision to only provide 12 weeks for the consultation over the summer holiday period.

The London Assembly has also recently considered the consultation at meeting on 16th August 2019. In summary the assembly also found that **“the consultation is confusing, and very difficult indeed for anyone who is not an expert to fill in using the online or paper form provided by Heathrow”**

4. Officer Comments on Key Areas

4.1 Early Growth

Heathrow says it will be seeking permission through the DCO process with the aim of providing 25,000 extra movements per year using the existing runways. No offer is being made to ceiling the extra movements. If approved, the proposal will see increased occurrence of simultaneous arrivals (Independent Parallel Arrivals – IPA) throughout the day.

Heathrow claims it is not seeking to increase the number of arrivals before 06:00 and seek to make maximum use of the extra runway capacity in the 06:00 – 07:00 hr when around 25 extra flights are predicted.

The proposal will entail the creation of new flight paths to allow for curved approaches to both the western and eastern ends of the airport. Indicative flight paths produced for earlier consultation (January 2010 – “Making Best Use of Our Runways” showed the possibility of changes to flight paths over the borough of Merton. It is unclear how this will impact on the borough.

The consultation reveals that Heathrow are proposing to phase introduction of the extra movements over a two-year period with the first additional 15,000 movements coming on-stream in year 1 (late 2022), followed by a further 10,000 movements in the lead up to the opening of the third runway.

It is claimed that the 25,000 movements will have a **negligible** impact on noise and whilst providing between 7,100 and 12,000 additional jobs.

There are however concerns over the accuracy of the noise claims. For example, the consultation makes no attempt to properly assess the noise impact on communities who will be newly affected by the concentrated flight paths. Heathrow are not offering a condition to ceiling the extra air traffic movements.

4.2 Assumptions/Transparency

The PEIR and its appendices contain many examples of assumption and assertion that form the basis of the mitigation that cannot be verified by reference to independent and/or published sources. Many conclusions have been reached on the output of Heathrow's own bespoke models and assessments.

The project timetable shows that Heathrow proposes to submit its DCO application and go through the examination stage before it finalises its proposals for new flightpaths. For a meaningful consultation we would suggest that the impact of changes within the borough are considered at this stage.

4.3 Noise

The impact of aircraft noise from Heathrow remains one of the main points of concern for Merton residents.

Heathrow are predicting the year of maximum impact (for noise) to be 2035 when a total of 741,000 movements are predicted from three runway operations. But the promised new generation (G2) of new quieter aircraft have not yet arrived and cannot be guaranteed.

The type and numbers of aircraft flying in future years are key inputs when undertaking aircraft noise modelling. The consultation data on this is only provided at a very high level. However, it is possible to ascertain that very optimistic assumptions have been made about the rate of improved noise performance of future aircraft types.

Given the many uncertainties surrounding the noise performance of aircraft types some sensitivity testing around the new assumptions would be expected, particularly as in this case, the new assumptions vary significantly to those previously used to inform the noise contours adopted by ANPS. No sensitivity tests are provided in the consultation and the Airports Commission assumptions are in fact simply dismissed as being "unlikely".

The PEIR Noise Chapter (Appendix H) presents some local area noise assessments produced by scanning across a range of the indicative flight path design envelopes, first seen for the January 2019 informal consultation airspace change proposals.

Each envelope contains a number of potential concentrated flight paths. Population densities have then been overlaid to estimate numbers of population impacted by each route.

Impact assessments are presented for ten local areas around the airport.

These have been presented only in terms of time averaged "equivalent noise" levels. Time averaged noise levels have been shown to seriously

underestimate adverse community response to concentrated flight paths, particularly for those newly overflowed. No indication of the number of times communities can be expected to be overflowed per day are given.

4.4 Noise Impact - Early Growth.

The data reveals that an extra 40,000 people will be brought into the noise footprint of what the Government defines as its Lowest Observable Effects Level (LOAEL) level, whilst at the higher noise bands some 3,000 additional people are predicted to be impacted at a level that the Government accepts can cause significant effects on health and well being (SOAEL). These numbers are likely to be a significant understatement of actual numbers adversely impacted as the LOAEL level is based solely on a UK 2014 social survey (SoNA 14) rather than 2018 World Health Organisation Guidelines.

Heathrow claims that these extra movements will not in lead to significant adverse health effects as these will be “avoided” through its mitigation and compensation policy (provision of sound insulation). It is not accepted that sound insulation can guarantee these affects, can be avoided through the double-glazing schemes on offer from Heathrow, although it may be possible to mitigate them to some extent.

Night Flight Ban

The ANPS expects HAL to put forward proposals for a ban of at least 6.5 hours on scheduled flights. The Airports Commission gave a very clear recommendation that as minimum this should be from 23:30 to 06:00. The council routinely considers night-time as 23:00 to 07:00.

4.5 Noise Envelope

The Airports National Policy Statement says, that Heathrow must put forward plans for a noise envelope. It is specified that such an envelope should be tailored to local priorities and include clear noise performance targets. As such, the design of the envelope should be defined in consultation with local communities and relevant stakeholders, and on the basis of the expert advice of an independent third party.

Heathrow are proposing that noise limits will be defined in the Noise Envelope according to either of two key metrics (total emissions and/or exposure) either in the format of a noise contour limit and / or overall airport emission levels defined by reference to annual overall quota count (QC) limits.

Any noise envelope should therefore set clear targets for the maximum number of events over a specified level of decibels (e.g. N60) for every take-off and landing flightpath. The numbers will need to take account the extra sensitivity that people newly exposed to noise will report.

4.6 Climate Change

The PEIR presents an assessment of Carbon and Greenhouse impacts both

with and without the DCO expansion project to 2050. The headline result is that the expansion project will lead to a 38% increase in CO₂ emission which attracts an assessment rating of 'Significant Negative'.

Heathrow is already the largest single source of Carbon Dioxide (CO₂) in the UK emitting around 20MtCO₂e/year. (Million of Metric Tons of greenhouse gas standardised to CO₂ equivalent) and overall, emissions from aviation in 2017 were more than double 1990 levels.

The PEIR (Vol 3 Ch9 ref: Graphic 9.7) reveals that expansion will add around 8 – 9 Million Tons (MT) of CO₂ per year every year once the third runway comes on stream compared to a future no expansion scenario. In 2050 it is predicted that the airport will still be responsible for generating over 20 MtCO₂e / year, thus negating out all future improvements that might be expected in a no expansion scenario.

In June 2019, the UK Government accepted the advice of the Committee on Climate Change (CCC) and amended the UK 2050 target under the Climate Change Act to require net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by that date.

It is therefore clear that the scheme of mitigation and offsetting must be significant and robust to counter the impact of the airport.

4.7 Air Quality

Merton is situated far enough from the Heathrow to limit the direct impact of aircraft and road sources emissions directly attributed to the borough, indeed the LAEI for Merton notionally shows no impact.

That said, Merton is committed to tackling poor air quality in the borough and support initiatives that extend to our neighbouring boroughs, therefore sharing concerns over the Londonwide cumulative impact on air quality.

Specifically;

The PEIR claims aircraft emissions have limited impact on ground-level pollutant concentrations beyond the Airport boundary. There is no source apportionment information at receptors presented to support this statement and no evidence has been presented to demonstrate and quantify the "limited impact" claimed.

The ANPS (June 2018) accepts that aircraft emissions do impact beyond the airport boundary, a quantification in the draft ANPS February 2017 identified aircraft movements as contributing around 14.3% NO_x (baseline 2013) at nearby roadside locations, the designated ANPS 2018, which had an updated baseline (baseline 2015) identified that aircraft movements contributed 17% NO_x by the time of the designated ANPS. This demonstrates aircraft movements are an increasing source outside of the airport boundary and cannot be dismissed so lightly.

4.8 Summary Conclusion

In summary, we have found the consultation to be complex, difficult to navigate and overwhelming in terms of the numbers of documents disclosed and the limited timeframe available to review such an overwhelming number of documents.

Many of the mitigation measures are based upon future assumptions, which make a difficult foundation from which to form a valid consultation.

Merton, as a borough that may, or may not, be impacted by future changes to either the Flight Paths or expansion find that the consultation did not help in determining any local impact upon our residents, schools parks and open spaces.

APPENDIX A

Heathrow Expansion – Proposed Programme Plan

2019 (June – September) – Statutory Consultation for DCO

2020 / 21 – Submission of DCO application (to include full Environmental Statement)

2021 DCO Examination & Decision (using indicative flightpaths)

2021 (Post DCO) Submission to CAA of documents for approval for 3rd runway under Airspace Change Statutory framework.

2022 Submission to CAA for Airspace Change (Early Growth – introduction of Curved approaches / IPA)

2022 Approval of “Early Growth” IPA airspace change (CAA) and Breaking of 480,000 atms Terminal 5 movement cap. 1st Tranche Early Growth on 2 runways (10,000 extra atms) Referred to as Phase 1

2022 Construction Works Start – Commencement of Sound Insulation Programme

2022 Statutory Consultation for R3 Airspace Change (flightpaths)

2023 /24/25 2nd Tranche of Early Growth (15,000 movements)

2023 Submission and approval of Final R3 Air Space Change Scheme

2026 Phase 1 Opening of 3rd Runway

2030 Phase 2 of the expansion programme complete with the airport operating at 115 million passengers a year (around 698,000 atms)

2035 Phase 3 Airport operating at 130, mppa (around 741,000 atms)

2050 Phase 4 - Airport operating at 142 mppa (around 800,000 atms)

Appendix B Uploaded Response

Masterplan

1. Please tell us what you think about any specific parts of our Preferred Masterplan or the components that make up the masterplan.

Our Response:

Merton Council is seriously concerned over the impact of noise to the borough.

Despite this consultation, we remain unsure of the potential changes in noise and how this will impact our residents, schools, parks and open spaces.

The increase in flights will be significant; therefore, a borough-specific impact assessment would be required for officers to comment with any degree of confidence at a local level.

The impact of night noise is a particular concern to the borough, from a regulatory perspective we generally consider night time to be 11pm to 7am, therefore outside the night time period offered by Heathrow.

The potential impact of air pollution has not been adequately assessed. The Masterplan should also commit to monitoring and reporting levels of future pollutants such as Sub-PM1 particles.

Documentation suggests that it may not be possible for the airport to achieve the UK's climate target of zero emissions by 2050.

2. Please tell us what you think about the sites we have identified for buildings and facilities we are proposing to move.

Our Response:

Merton Council is remote from these activities; we feel that local authorities representing affected areas are in the best position to response to this question.

3. Please tell us what you think of our boundary design proposals to manage noise and the effects on views around the boundary of the expanded airport.

Our Response:

Merton Council is remote from these activities; we feel that local authorities representing affected areas are in the best position to response to this question.

4. Please tell us what you think about our development proposals and the Measures proposed to reduce effects in these areas.

Our Response:

Merton is genuinely concerned that the increase in air traffic may have a detrimental impact on the borough in terms of noise. We would like assurances that 260,000 extra flights from a 3rd runway will not add to the noise burden the airport already imposes over the borough

Construction

- 5. Please tell us what you think of our construction proposals and the ways we are proposing to minimise effects on communities and the environment.**

Our Response:

Construction activities are expected to be a major source of concern to those living nearest to the airport; local authorities directly affected are best positioned to respond to this question.

Merton Council are leading on the enforcement of Non Road Mobile Machinery (Construction Plant) throughout London and therefore are in a position to help regulate site plant and reduce local air pollution. It is suggested that Heathrow subscribe to, or adopt a similar scheme.

Future Operations

- 6. Please tell us what you think of our runway alternation proposals, in particular we would like to know if you think we should alternate the runways at 2pm or 3pm.**

No comment

- 7. Please tell us what you think of our preferred proposal for a ban on scheduled night flights, and/or whether you would prefer an alternative proposal.**

Our response:

See above, it is difficult to comment at a borough level on this proposal without an understanding the direct impact.

- 8. Please tell us what you think about our proposals for managing early growth.**

Our Response:

We are concerned over the impact of early growth, but conversely understand that there may be a business case to support this. Our concern is the 'incremental' impact on the borough, whilst being reliant upon mitigation measures that is not necessarily certain.

There could be as many as 25,000 more flights which could be affecting areas for the first time.

Surface Access

- 9. Please tell us what you think of our proposals and how we could further encourage or improve public transport access to the airport.**

Our Response:

No comment (see air quality).

10. Please tell us what you think about our proposals for the Heathrow Ultra Low Emission Zone and Heathrow Vehicle Access Charge as ways to manage congestion and air quality impacts.

Our Response:

A ULEZ boundary to limit and restrict certain vehicles around the airport is welcomed, however the consequence of this may prove to be an additional impact on the traffic movement on the M25. We would like to see a feasibility study and traffic routing implications before we fully support this action.

11. Do you have any other comments on our Surface Access Proposals?

We broadly support the concerns that have been raised by our Transport for London Colleagues including the essential requirement of the Airport to meet its aspirations for modal shift.

12. Please tell us what you think about our proposals to manage the environmental effects of expansion.

Our Response:

The PEIR presents an assessment of Carbon and Greenhouse impacts, both with and without the DCO expansion project to 2050. The headline result is that the expansion project will lead to a 38% increase in CO₂ emission which attracts an assessment rating of ‘Significant Negative’.

Heathrow is already the largest single source of Carbon Dioxide (CO₂) in the UK emitting around 20MtCO₂e/year. (Million of Metric Tons of greenhouse gas standardised to CO₂ equivalent) and overall, emissions from aviation in 2017 were more than double 1990 levels.

The PEIR (Vol 3 Ch9 ref: Graphic 9.7) reveals that expansion will add around 8 – 9 Million Tons (MT) of CO₂ per year every year once the third runway comes on stream compared to a future no expansion scenario. In 2050 it is predicted that the airport will still be responsible for generating over 20 MtCO₂e / year, thus negating all future improvements that might be expected in a no expansion scenario.

In June 2019, the UK Government accepted the advice of the Committee on Climate Change (CCC) and amended the UK 2050 target under the Climate Change Act to require net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by that date.

It is therefore clear that the scheme of mitigation and offsetting must be significant and robust to counter the impact of the airport.

13. Please tell us if there are any other initiatives or proposals that we should consider in order to address the emissions from airport related traffic or airport operations?

Our response:

The Council does not necessarily agree with the claims that aircraft flying in and out of the airport have no effect on local air quality.

The detailed air quality assessment should include all the areas where Heathrow expansion impinges on the surrounding environment.

Health and Well Being

14. Please tell us what you think about our proposals to help health and wellbeing.

Are there any other proposals that you think we should consider to address the effects of the Project on the health and wellbeing of our colleagues, neighbours and passengers?

Our Response:

As in previous answers, it is unclear how the expansion and route changes will impact on the borough and the extent of respite offered. Night noise disturbance can have a significant impact upon health and wellbeing.

15. Please tell us what you think about our noise insulation schemes.

Although noise mitigation is welcomed, insulation schemes are a last resort and measures that tackle the 'source' and 'path' of noise are the preferred option. It is difficult as an outlying borough to see how this will be applied within our borough. The perceived difference between personal impact of noise and 'measured' impact can vary considerably. Impact in the borough may be considered by residents as significant but fall outside the significance required for a mitigation scheme.

16. Please tell us what factors are most important as we develop our proposals for noise management, in particular our proposals for the design and implementation of a noise envelope.

Our Response:

Noise Contour Maps represent the traditional method of describing noise impact around airports and when combined with specific targets such as total area per specified contour, provide an ability to visualise on an annual basis the contour shape as well as overall and / or population counts. There are however very real problems with proposal to limit contours to the LOAEL and SOAEL values as these are proposed to be set by reference to the UK SoNA 14 social survey rather than latest WHO (2018) Guideline. Further, as stated above in this report people's reaction to aircraft noise is influenced to a material degree by the numbers of noise events that they are exposed to as well as the time-based averages.

Any noise envelope should therefore set clear targets for the maximum number

of events over a specified level of decibels (e.g. N60) for every take off and landing flightpath. The numbers will need to take account of the extra sensitivity.

Economic Development

- 17. Please tell us what you think of our proposals for maximising new jobs and training. Are there any other ways that we can maximise skills and training opportunities to benefit our local communities?**

Our Response:

Merton is a strong proponent of business interest and the creation of jobs, but remain wary of the impact of the development on the borough.

- 18. Please tell us what you think about our approach to addressing effects on the historic environment, including any particular proposals you would like us to consider.**

Our Response:

Merton has 77 schools and a number of important open spaces that we wish to ensure are protected. We also host the Wimbledon Tennis Tournament and Heathrow must consider this as a sensitive area.

Environmentally Managed Growth

- 19. Please tell us what you think of our proposed approach to manage the future growth of the airport within environmental limits. Is there anything else we should consider as we develop the framework and its potential limits?**

No comment

Community Fund

- 20. Please tell us what you think about our proposals for the Fund, including what it is spent on, where it is spent, and how it should be funded and delivered.**

No Comment

Property and Compensation

- 21. Please tell us what you think about our interim Property Policies, including our general approach to buying properties and land and our approach to compensation, including our discretionary compensation offers.**

Our Response:

It is difficult to comment as properties in Merton will likely fall outside the scope of this scheme, but clearly residents may notice an impact in terms of increased noise.

Development Consent Order

22. **Do you have any comments on what we think will need to be contained in our DCO and do you have any views on anything else the DCO should contain?**

No comment

General Comments

23. **Do you have any other comments in response to this consultation?**

Given the limited time and volume of materials to cover, we cannot hope to have commented on everything or picked up every issue affecting us. We are broadly supportive of the comments of the other local authorities consulted in this response and TfL.

24. **Please give us your feedback on this consultation (such as the quality of the documents, website and events).**

In summary, we have found the consultation to be complex, difficult to navigate and overwhelming in terms of the numbers of documents disclosed.

Many of the mitigation measures are based upon future assumptions, which form a difficult foundation from which to undertake a valid consultation, that is specific to our borough.

Merton, as a borough that may or may not be impacted by future changes to either the Flight Paths or expansion find that the consultation did not help in determining local impact upon our residents, schools parks and open spaces.

Ends

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