

Response to my representations on aircraft noise from the Chief Executive of Heathrow Airport

Dear John,

Thank you for getting in touch regarding the vote on Heathrow expansion.

I am very aware of the problems caused to your constituents by changes NATS made to the way in which the Compton Gate was used. I was not made aware of these changes until after they had been implemented and asked for them to be reversed, which NATS did not do. Since then we have fundamentally changed the way we communicate with NATS and our local communities, including setting up the Community Noise Forum, which has been working to address some of the issues you have raised, and increased the level of transparency and consultation on changes in operating procedures.

With expansion your constituency will benefit from the abolition of the Compton Gate Route. In the mean time, we will carry out a public consultation on potential redesign of this Route later this year – I will ensure you are kept updated with the details of this.

Thank you for the suggestions you have made about reducing noise levels over your constituency – I have gone into a bit more detail about these in the note. However, in summary:

- Continuous Descent Approach – through our Fly Quiet and Green programme we incentivise aircraft to fly higher for longer over your constituency before making their final descent into Heathrow. We have 88% compliance with this operating procedure and continue to work with airlines on improving this.
- Steeper Ascent Trial – as you have pointed out, a steeper take off can get planes higher, quicker and could reduce noise in some areas, though it may also increase noise in others. We are undertaking a trial of this which is due to finish in December 2018, at which point we will assess the impacts and decide whether to make this a permanent change.
- Noise Action Plan Consultation – we are undertaking a consultation to review Heathrow's Noise Action plan including on how we use charges to incentivise airlines to be quieter and more environmentally friendly.

I know that late running flights is also a concern for your constituents, I have agreed with our major airlines that we will aim to reduce late running flights by 50% over 5 years, and was very pleased that last year we were able to reduce the number by 30%, as a result of close working with airlines.

I know you have raised stacking as a particular concern for your constituents and unfortunately this is designed in to the current airspace management system. With a third runway, we could eliminate the need for routine aircraft stacking, and have started consulting on the airspace changes that will be

necessary to achieve this.

I am grateful for your engagement on these issues, and I hope that you can see we are working hard to reduce noise in your constituency.

If you would like to follow up on any of the issues, I would be very happy to meet with you.

With best wishes

John