

Update from Heathrow – Airspace plans and aircraft noise

February 2020

Dear Sir John,

Following your recent meeting with one of my colleagues, I wanted to follow up with you regarding our airspace plans. You have always been clear with us that Heathrow needs to focus on operational improvements today, as well as with expansion, to improve our airspace operations.

I thought it might be helpful to outline initiatives that we have already implemented; recent announcements; and our plans with both expansion and airspace modernisation.

Heathrow was the first UK airport to introduce a pioneering 'Fly Quiet and Green' league table which ranks airlines according to their noise performance, encouraging them to bring their most advanced fleet to the airport. The league table also takes into account operational performance which includes how well airlines keep within the flight tracks and to their scheduled arrival and departure times. In tandem with the league table we also use our landing charges to reward airlines who bring their cleanest and quietest aircraft to the airport.

We are determined to continue to reduce the number of movements during the night period and have changed the way we charge for flights during the Night Quota Period (2330-0600).

Previously noise charges were only applied to arriving, undispensed, aircraft within this period and at a charge of 2.5 times the day noise charge. From January 2020 we have implemented charges on both arriving and departing aircraft, regardless of whether they have been dispensed, and this will be charged at 5 times the day noise charge.

I know that keeping planes higher for longer is also important for your constituents. Following some successful trials of steeper approaches at the airport, which increases the angle at which the planes come in to land, we plan to launch a consultation later this year in order to implement this operational change. I'm also aware that changing the Compton route is something you have particularly pushed for and we are pleased to be progressing with these changes, looking to have a consultation on flight paths next year.

Finally, you will be aware that with expansion we have made a number of commitments including a 6.5 hour night flight ban and periods of predictable respite for all our local communities. We are also looking at how we can use operational procedures such as displaced thresholds to see planes staying higher for longer by landing further down the runway. Airspace modernisation

also gives us the opportunity in the future to use airspace alternation as another way to provide respite for our communities, as well as bringing an end to routine stacking.

We appreciate that you have continued to highlight changes to airspace as a priority issue for your constituents and hope that we can continue to work closely on these issues.

Best regards,

Nigel Milton

Director of Communications