

Economic Development Committee



6 July 2023

Title	Heathrow Noise Action Plan consultation response
Purpose of the report	To make a decision
Report Author	Louise McVey, Environmental Health Regulatory Officer
Ward(s) Affected	All Wards
Exempt	No
Exemption Reason	N/A
Corporate Priority	Community Environment
Recommendations	Committee is asked to: Consider and agree the Spelthorne Council response to Heathrow's draft Noise Action Plan, including any further comments or changes agreed by the Committee, with the final sign-off to be delegated to the Chair and Vice Chair of the Committee.
Reason for Recommendation	The Council has been asked to respond to this consultation, which is important to Spelthorne in terms of how noise impacts from Heathrow will be managed during the lifespan of the Noise Action Plan. Inviting the Committee to review the response and make amendments/additions as necessary ensures our communities are being represented.

1. Summary of the report

- 1.1 Heathrow Airport Ltd (HAL) are consulting on its draft Noise Action Plan (NAP) and Council has produced a response. The consultation runs from 5 June to 17 July 2023. The Committee is asked to consider the response and whether any additions or amendments are required before it is issued.
- 1.2 It should be noted that matters relating to Heathrow Airport fall to be considered across both Economic Development and Environment & Sustainability Committees. As such, the latter committee met on 27 June 2023 to receive a briefing on the consultation ahead of the main response to

be considered at this meeting, in order for both committees to be brought up to speed with the draft ahead of the deadline for responses to be submitted.

2. Key issues

- 2.1 The draft NAP sets out how HAL are planning to manage and reduce the impacts of aircraft noise over the next 5 years. It includes draft actions that Heathrow proposes to carry out to mitigate noise. This is now the fourth plan of its kind and is part of the requirements of the Environmental Noise (England) Regulations 2006/2038.
- 2.2 Members will be aware that aircraft noise is a significant concern for many residents across the Borough. The NAP sits outside of HAL's expansion plans, which are expected to progress but in a scaled down manner based on two-runways at first and over a longer timeframe. However, many Members will recall from the third runway expansion the extent to which Spelthorne raised concerns with HAL over the resulting airspace changes and the impact on residents in the Borough from additional flights and new routes. More information can be found in the Council's response that consultation: <https://www.spelthorne.gov.uk/finalconsultation>.
- 2.3 The NAP only includes actions relating to developments for which the airport has been granted planning permission, or for which there are active project plans to take forward for planning consent at the time the action plan is published. The NAP therefore does not include mitigation strategy or specific actions to deal with airport expansions. This means that the NAP only applies to the operations within the current 480,000 annual movement limit using the existing two runways.
- 2.4 The NAP also aligns with Heathrow 2.0, their sustainability strategy which was updated in 2022 and sets out their sustainability vision and goals that Heathrow aim to achieve by 2030. Objective 4 is called "Quieter nights, quieter flights" and contains a headline goal to "limit, and where possible reduce, the number of highly sleep-disturbed and highly annoyed people compared to 2019". There then follows a series of targets HAL aim to meet in order to achieve these objectives. Further information can be found within the consultation response document accompanying this report, plus the [briefing](#) provided to Environment & Sustainability Committee on 27 June 2023.
- 2.5 The draft response to the NAP sets out particular areas of comments and concern for Spelthorne. In summary, these include:
 - Impact of full runway alternation on Stanwell Moor if, as expected, planning permission is sought by HAL for the physical airfield changes to facilitate this and therefore increasing 'easterly' take-offs. The consenting authority would be London Borough of Hillingdon, which means Spelthorne is only a consultee to the application.
 - Night-time flights and the Council's established position to promote a compulsory scheduled night flight ban for a minimum period between 23.30 and 06.00 and we would like to see implementable and meaningful penalties on any infringements during this time.

- Whether the Noise Insulation Plan is beneficial to our residents or can more be done by HAL to reduce impacts, particularly in respect of World Health Organisation guidance for undisturbed sleep.
- Does the NAP strike a reasonable balance between the economic benefit of night-time flights against the impact on residents in order to provide a balanced approach towards growth with clear justification.

2.6 The following link contains the full NAP draft 2024-2029 and all accompanying documents: <https://www.heathrow.com/company/about-heathrow/consultation/heathrow-noise-action-plan-consultation/About-the-Noise-Action-Plan-2023-2028>

2.7 It should be noted that the NAP is separate from the airspace modernisation process being carried out by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA). This is a nationwide airspace modernisation programme, required to accommodate growing demand for air travel in a sustainable way. The aim of the strategy is to make airspace more efficient, to improve punctuality, to reduce CO₂ emissions, to reduce noise and to ensure there is capacity to meet future demand. The strategy will require UK airports to modernise their airspace, as well as the airspace network above them. We are currently in the second stage of the CAA's process where they are beginning to develop and assess potential route options. We are hoping to get more information on the route options in September 2023 and there should be a public consultation open at the beginning of 2024. Airspace modernisation is looking at completion in 2040. More information can be found here: [Airspace modernisation | Heathrow](#)

3. Options analysis and proposal

3.1 As a draft consultation response, to a draft Noise Action Plan, there are limited options available to the Committee as the actions themselves are for HAL to implement should the draft be adopted. The Committee, therefore, can agree the response as drafted or suggest changes or additions it wishes to see included. In the latter event, it is recommended that delegated authority be given to the Chair and Vice Chair of the Economic Development Committee to agree the final version in order to meet the consultation deadline of 17 July 2023.

3.2 The response is still being produced, due to the tight timescales to respond, so it is presented to Committee in draft form rather than as a final version to allow for further input from Members. Any further updates to it following publication of this report will be reported verbally at the meeting.

4. Financial implications

4.1 None.

5. Risk considerations

5.1 None.

6. Procurement considerations

6.1 None.

7. Legal considerations

7.1 None.

8. Other considerations

8.1 None.

9. Equality and Diversity

9.1 Impacts on all residents and communities in Spelthorne have been considered in drafting the consultation response.

10. Sustainability/Climate Change Implications

10.1 Integral to consideration of environmental impacts of the NAP.

11. Timetable for implementation

11.1 Finalised version of consultation response to be issued to HAL before the deadline of 17 July 2023.

12. Contact

12.1 Louise McVey, Environmental Health Regulatory Officer

Background papers: There are none.

Appendices:

Appendix A – Draft Spelthorne consultation response to Heathrow’s draft Noise Action Plan