

MAYOR OF LONDON

Mr Colin Matthews
Chief Executive Officer
Heathrow Airport Holdings Limited
The Compass Centre
Nelson Road
Hounslow
Middlesex TW6 2GW

Our ref: MGLA131213-4231

Your ref: 3096/CM/TT/L

Date: 12 FEB 2014

Dear Colin

Thank you for your letter of 6 December 2013 in reply to my letter of 27 November 2013 about complaints from residents of Barnet about the noise of Heathrow-bound aircraft overhead.

I would like to thank you and NATS for taking the time to look into this problem. While it is on one level comforting to know that there have not been any significant changes to flight paths into and out of Heathrow without prior notification or consultation with myself and Londoners who would be affected, on another level this is of some concern.

The fact that residents of Barnet have seen fit to contact me and other elected representatives to complain about their experiences of intrusive noise from aircraft overhead serves to illustrate the point that I have been making for some time: that Heathrow's negative effects on Londoners stretch far beyond the airport's immediate vicinity in west London and that the metric currently used for measuring the onset of serious noise disturbance (57dB) is not fit for purpose. If residents in Barnet, far outside the 57dB countour, are being disturbed by Heathrow's activities then it is clear that a new, more accurate method of measuring noise disturbance must be adopted in the UK. An immediate improvement could be achieved by switching to the EU-accepted standard 55dB Lden metric, but beyond this we should be looking for alternative, even better noise metrics that could be employed.

Regardless of our difference in opinion on the long-term future of Heathrow, it will continue to act as the UK's principal airport for some years yet. The number of people exposed to unacceptable levels of noise is extremely high and the Government's own figures show that it is increasing. I want to work with you and your colleagues at the airport, and other relevant agencies, to ensure that we can take full advantage of the wide range of opportunities we have which could not just stop this increase in its tracks, but allow Londoners the quality of life which they deserve. I note the recommendations made by the Airports Commission with regards to short- to medium-term interventions and I plan to take a keen interest in how these changes are brought forward to ensure that Londoners are not subjected to a worsening of noise impacts.

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I was particularly pleased to see the wide range of data that you ultimately made available in light of the recent operational freedoms trial and I hope that any forthcoming changes you look to make are assessed and examined in a similarly clear and transparent manner.

Thank you again for writing to me.

Yours ever,



Boris Johnson
Mayor of London

Cc: Rt Hon Patrick McLoughlin MP, Secretary of State for Transport
Richard Deakin, Chief Executive, NATS
Andrew Haines, Chief Executive, CAA