

Dear Sir / Madam,

As a resident in Barnes, Borough of Richmond-Upon-Thames, I wanted to write to you regarding the topic of westerly preference. I have also been in correspondence with my local MP – Zac Goldsmith, NATS and Heathrow Airport about this issue too.

Colin Matthews, CEO of Heathrow Airport replied saying modern technology means aircraft have got quieter and climb more quickly nowadays and says I'm right to question if westerly preference is still relevant today. Furthermore, Mr. Matthews tells me that in their submission to the Airports Commission in May 2013 on making the best use of existing capacity in the short and medium terms, Heathrow Airport supported the ending of the westerly preference subject to NATS carrying out a study to understand the noise and operational impacts of ending it. I understand the study is now complete and has been submitted to the Airports Commission and that the report recommends that the runways are operated with no preference.

Whilst I understand and appreciate that it is safer for arriving aircraft to land into the wind, and given the prevailing wind in the London area is westerly resulting in c. 70% of arriving flight into Heathrow arrive from the East, it does not seem fair that even on those days when we're experiencing Easterly winds of 5 knots or less, that aircraft continue to land from the East. Furthermore, it does not seem at all fair that on those days when we're experiencing a northerly or southerly wind that the default position is still to operate westerly operations, when in fact it would be equally as feasible to run Easterly operations in those conditions. Why does there have to be a preference in place?

I'm realistic enough to realise that by replacing the westerly preference policy wouldn't result in an equal 50/50 split on aircraft landings, due to the prevailing westerly wind. However, I strongly believe it would more evenly balance the 70/30 split we currently experience. The current policy is simply outdated and unfair on many hundreds of thousands of residents of West London who are expected to tolerate the noise for no better reason than outdated policies. Having spoken to several Community Relations Officers at Heathrow Airport, they have all implied that the vast majority of noise complaints they now receive are associated with aircraft that is landing not taking off, yet another reason why westerly preference needs to be abolished.

If when the Davies Commission Report is produced later this year, the policy isn't changed based on NATS and Heathrow Airport's suggestion, one will be left wondering if there is some sort of cover-up surrounding this issue and protecting the self-interests of a few...

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours Sincerely