

# Airspace Change

We believe that there should be suitable levels of scrutiny and engagement for the different types of changes which can occur in airspace use.

To help set suitable policies in these areas, we have described three tiers of airspace changes and the processes we would expect to be associated with them. In all cases we want to see effective local engagement with communities.

- **Tier 1: Changes to the permanent structure of UK airspace** – these changes are already covered by the CAA's formal airspace change process which would be further strengthened by the proposals in this consultation.
- **Tier 2: Planned and permanent changes to Air Traffic Control's day-to-day operational procedures** – we agree with recent feedback that these should be subject to a change process. Our objective is for there to be a suitable and proportionate process in place for these changes.
- **Tier 3: Changes to operations** – for example significant shifts in the distribution of flights on particular routes. Recognising both the need for the public to be informed and the need to avoid excessive bureaucracy, we would expect airport and air navigation service providers to engage and act transparently.

To ensure airspace decisions are made transparently and that communities understand why a particular option has been chosen:

- We propose providing guidance on how sponsors should assess noise impacts, including those on health and quality of life, and how this should be used to inform airspace decisions.
- We propose that decisions on how aircraft noise is best distributed should be informed by local circumstances and consideration of different options.
- We propose that sponsors of an airspace change should be required to carry out an options analysis as part of the airspace change process.



# ICCAN: A New Independent Noise Body

It is in the interests of industry to have a positive relationship with local communities.

Many airports have stable and productive relationships with their neighbours. However, it is clear that tensions are likely to arise when airport operations change in a way which affects how local communities experience noise impacts. We want to ensure that there is not a breakdown of trust between airports and their communities.

There is a case for a new body to help build trust and improve how noise is taken into account.

- **We will establish an Independent Commission on Civil Aviation Noise ('ICCAN')**

This will give communities assurance that noise impacts are being considered and that noise management procedures are being taken forward in the best way possible by industry. We expect ICCAN to:

- Advise on the best noise management techniques.
- Advise on accessibility of noise information, to facilitate community engagement on proposals.
- Influence proposals through best practice guidance.
- Review recent research and undertake/commission independent research.
- **It is proposed that the Independent Commission on Civil Aviation Noise (ICCAN) would have a role in the Tier 1 & 2 airspace change processes.**

## Structure

The Government recognises that independence and credibility will be key to the foundation of ICCAN. We wish to see its influence taking effect to support Heathrow Northwest Runway airspace decisions and therefore would like to see it established as soon as possible.

As ICCAN would be a relatively small organisation, we believe the most efficient option is to use the support functions of an existing body, though the governance structure will ensure it operates fully independently.

- **In order to achieve the intended benefits of ICCAN when they are most needed, the Government's lead option is to establish it as an independent body within the CAA.**



# Noise Control at Heathrow

## Heathrow as a designated airport

Heathrow is a designated airport, and so the Government currently sets certain controls, such as:

- Night flight restrictions.
- Noise preferential routes (NPRs).
- Operational procedures (certain ways planes must be flown).

The Government believes that it is most effective for noise to be managed at the local level. This allows airports to respond to noise problems in their area and to the concerns of their local communities, who they know best.

We think that the Government should only make these kinds of decisions where they are nationally significant – for instance any noise-related operating restrictions associated with a new Northwest Runway.

We therefore propose that:

- **Operating restrictions, such as those on night flights, should be agreed through the planning process where possible.**
- **Responsibility for setting NPRs and other types of noise controls is transferred to the airport.**

