

RESPONSE TO AVIATION NOISE DISCUSSION

The report focuses on the usual lamp-post approach to statistics and does seem to presume that the simple answer to the impact of aviation noise on a large tranche of the populous in West/North West London is to provide a monetising scenario i.e. compensation. This is unacceptable and does not take into account the most important facts:-

IMMEDIATE IMPACT ON HEALTH OF RESIDENTS UNDER FLIGHT PATH

- The level of aviation noise currently experienced by residents under the Heathrow flight path already has a highly detrimental impact of their health. Noise health effects can ultimately cause hearing impairment, hypertension, ischemic heart disease/cardiovascular effects, annoyance, and sleep disturbance. Changes in the immune system and birth defects have been attributed to noise exposure.
- Beyond these effects, elevated noise levels from aircraft and especially when they are at night and early morning and interrupt sleep, can create stress, increase workplace accident rates, as well as stimulating aggression and other anti-social behaviours.
- The Harry Flindell report within your Discussion Document highlighted these issues.
- Not only does the noise have a negative impact on health but the air pollution associated with aircraft is another factor to be taken into account.

RECURRENT AND INCONSISTENT NOISE FROM AIRCRAFT LANDING

- The regularity of the arrivals i.e. circa 3 minutes between each landing provides recurrent extreme noise
- The differing types of aircraft landing – from the long haul Emirates to short haul BA flights means that the noise they produce is inconsistent sound which is even more difficult for residents to assimilate during the daily/night lives
- Increasing the frequency of aircraft landing slots would raise a much higher safety risk as there is little margin for error.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- To appoint an Independent Noise Regulator whose membership includes residents from the densely populated areas under the Heathrow flight path
- Take on your referred Land Use Planning and direct new aircraft developments away from noise sensitive, heavily populated areas
- Exploit existing links in under-utilised airports, such as Stansted and Manston which do not affect such densely populated areas
- Provide regulated operating restrictions to the airport operator and the aircraft maintenance groups
- Incentivise aircraft operators to invest in new lighter-build aircraft which have proven lower noise levels.