

Dear Commission,

I am writing in relation to your recent paper on aircraft noise and mitigation measures (published on July 4th). As a lifelong resident of London, having lived directly under the Heathrow flight path in Kew, away from it in Tooting and on the edge of it again in Chiswick and now Richmond Hill, I think I can give limited but valuable narrative evidence about my experience and thoughts about the future. I've returned to live near a flight path not because I'm indifferent to the noise but because this area of SW London is where I grew up and where my family and friends live. Now that I have children of my own I want to be close to my wider family network for support. I have however purposefully chosen to live on the edge of the flight path which is more tolerable to me and in addition I specifically moved from Chiswick to Richmond Hill due to the threat of the original 3rd runway plans to the north of the present runways. Having paid £50,000 in stamp duty to make this move the sudden emergence of a possible 3rd or 4th runway to the south is therefore infuriating to say the least! I hope the commission can see that all this to-ing and fro-ing about airport capacity has very real implications for people and no doubt businesses as well.

In relation to noise, night flights and early morning flights are clearly very disturbing, unfortunately with young children, 'night flights' means from 7pm onwards. For my family one of the most disturbing times for planes to roar overhead is at 8pm when my children are trying to get to sleep.

This has tangible and definite effect on their sleep pattern, and they both get to sleep much easier and wake up later on days when the flights path is elsewhere. Whilst adults can wear earplugs to mitigate aircraft noise to facilitate sleep, a child cannot. Staying on the subject of children, the other time that is most noise sensitive for children is when children are at school and there is good evidence that aircraft noise has detrimental effects on learning. My daughter will be starting primary school in September- her school would be right under the new SW runway flight path. Her school is currently expanding to be a large three form entry school such is the demand for primary places on Richmond hill. The school has no specific noise mitigation design measures, such as may be the case in Hounslow schools and a lot of children would have their learning affected. My point here is that our children's needs must also be kept in mind when thinking about noise and there are no times in the day that aircraft noise is acceptable over London. There is also a point about noise insulation- my understanding is that Heathrow only pay for these measure immediately around the airport as if they are not required further afield in Richmond. As I live in a conservation area I cannot double glaze with UPVC, wooden sash double glazing is both expensive and much less effective. Would Heathrow pay the £20k plus to fit these windows to 'mitigate' their noise pollution for every new house they pollute in Richmond hill/ Twickenham/ Wimbledon/ Chiswick etc? The bill for my road alone would be circa £1million. Even if they did, as I say it is a relatively ineffectual measure.

Another point I want to raise is about flying planes over less populated areas to mitigate noise. I think the commission needs to be clear that there are enormous differences between uninhabited areas in London, which are essentially all public parks or areas protected because of their natural beauty (such as Richmond Hill terrace and view), and uninhabited agricultural fields away from urban conurbations. London's parks such as Richmond park, which would be flown over under Heathrow's SW runway proposal, is a hugely valuable leisure resource to the whole of London which is used, especially at the weekends and in the Summer by hundreds of thousands, if not millions of people. So whilst few people may actually own a residence in Richmond park, there are times when it is densely occupied, and further more densely occupied by people who are more sensitive to

noise, as they are outside (without the noise mitigation afforded by a building) and have gone to the park precisely to get some peace and quiet. So for Heathrow to suggest the proposed SW runway over Richmond park and Wimbledon common 'affects fewer people' is patently absurd. This runway would in addition fly over the Turner view at Richmond Hill. This is the only view in the country protected by an act of parliament and tourists visit from all over to marvel at probably London's finest view. Kew Gardens has already been blighted by Heathrow, tourist's crane their necks aghast as planes fly over. We cannot repeat this with any more of our precious national assets.

The noise impact of Heathrow will also hit an increasing population. It is well documented that the centre of London is depopulating, due to the high cost of land and the purchase of residential property by investment funds and rich individuals who don't occupy their 'assets' in the same way as someone who lives and works in London all year. This is resulting in a residential population shift into the suburbs, which combined with a net inflow to Greater London of some 2million forecast over the next 15-20years, means the inner and outer suburbs are becoming increasingly densely populated. This includes all the suburbs affected by Heathrow now and in the bleak future they would present us with. All the issues regarding environmental degradation and noise will only get more acute and political pressure will increase and protests will get louder. Richmond park will become an essential oasis of peace for more and more people.

I am also concerned that the effects of moving new runways a few kilometres to the west are being greatly exaggerated. The residents of Putney make a huge number of complaints about aircraft noise despite being 5 km away from Richmond. The mitigation afforded by moving the runway 2 km to the west would make the altitude of planes over Richmond the same as it currently is over East Sheen. From my subjective experience the flight path over East Sheen is virtually indistinguishable from the flight path over Richmond. There is at present a furore in Brockley (SE London) due to an experimental alteration to the morning flight path which has pushed incoming flights over their heads on their westerly approach to Heathrow. Brockley is nearly 30km from Heathrow! It seems clear to me that a 2km shift in the runways will make no real difference to noise and it would be an expensive and pointless gimmick to try and dig up reservoirs and tunnel the M25 for what is essentially a PR stunt.

I also have serious reservations about the purported benefits of new plane technology on overall noise. I have sat in Richmond park and watched a number of Airbus A380s fly over. Yes, for a plane that size (they are enormous!) they are tangibly quieter than the old Boeing 747s, but I must stress for a plane that size. They are still very noisy and much noisier than the small short haul jets that still make up a huge number of the planes in and out of Heathrow. So if the future is to be a lot more A380s and fewer small jets then I can't see how that is going to make Heathrow quieter than it is presently?

Heathrow are also exploiting the 57dB noise threshold to make it look like there is a reduction in noise with an expanded airport. The reality of course is that noise continues to be hugely disturbing to many people considerably below that threshold, me included. Where I currently live whilst better than Kew (hence I moved here) and just outside the 57dB contour is still disturbing enough to wake my children regularly. Putney and Fulham are also outside this noise contour, but clearly experience substantial noise disturbance. Also the LAeq16h method of averaging out noise also fails to take

account of the massive increase in frequency of flights over the years. Surely you don't need to be an acoustic scientist to know that the frequency of noise events is

an important factor! There has been a huge increase in noise disturbance from Heathrow over my lifetime due to the increased frequency of flights over Richmond but this apparently doesn't register with Heathrow's bogus statistical modelling.

There is also no mention of runway alteration with the new runways. Does this mean that Heathrow believes moving the runways slightly westward means they no longer need to alternate any new runways? The spacing of them would allow for mixed mode operations which supports this assumption. This would be completely unacceptable to residents under a new flight path and I fear their calculations are based on this assumption and are therefore disingenuous and false. If they must continue alternating new runways and not use them for continuous mixed mode operations along with a ban on night flights this would reduce their forecast increase in capacity and the supposed economic benefits of Heathrow expansion. As it stands runway alteration is the most important noise mitigation measure available as nothing can compensate for simply having half the day with no planes overhead.

I also want to stress that I don't consider the present noise pollution from Heathrow at all acceptable! Any noise mitigation measures (quieter planes, steeper approach angles, night flight bans, runway alteration) must be used to improve the current situation and make life more bearable for Londoners, rather than be exploited as a ruse to further expand this appalling planning disaster. None of the proposed new runways at Heathrow are in anyway acceptable. I urge the commission to reach this conclusion swiftly.

Thank you for taking the time to read my submission. I am aware that this and my last submission can be read as a polemic. It is not intended that way, but is rather the truth as I see it. Unfortunately the shameless rhetoric and outrageous lobbying from Heathrow and their business interests, as well as the stirring of people's natural fears about future change invite this style of response to counter the propaganda. I obviously feel very strongly about the future of London and my home town of Richmond, and I hope and pray that the commission does the right thing.

Thanks again for your time and thoughtful consideration,

Yours faithfully,