

**SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL**

**LOCAL COMMITTEE (RUNNYMEDE)**

**DATE: 13 MARCH 2017**

**LEAD OFFICER: SUE JANOTA  
SPATIAL PLANNING AND POLICY MANAGER**

**SUBJECT: DEPARTMENT FOR TRANSPORT CONSULTATIONS ON  
AIRPORTS AND AIRSPACE – UPDATE**

**DIVISION: ALL**



**SUMMARY OF ISSUE:**

The Department for Transport launched two consultation papers in early February, with a closing date of 24 May 2017:

- Draft Airports National Policy Statement: new runway capacity and infrastructure at airports in the south-east of England;
- UK Airspace Policy: A framework for balanced decisions on the design and use of airspace

Both documents are relevant to Runnymede in the context of nearby Heathrow Airport.

This report is for **information only**.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

**The Local Committee (Runnymede) is asked to note:**

- (i) The summary and content of the two consultations, which will conclude on 24 May 2017;
- (ii) The opportunity to comment, individually or as a Committee, on the content of these consultations and their implications for the borough area, for consideration as part of the Surrey County Council response to the Department for Transport.

## Briefing

The Department for Transport launched two consultations on 2 February 2017:

- Draft Airports National Policy Statement: new runway capacity and infrastructure at airports in the south-east of England  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/draft-airports-national-policy-statement>
- UK Airspace Policy: A framework for balanced decisions on the design and use of airspace  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/reforming-policy-on-the-design-and-use-of-uk-airspace>

The proposals in **both** these important consultations could significantly affect Runnymede residents. The closing date for responses to the consultations is **25 May 2017**.

### Surrey County Council's current position on airport expansion

The County Council's position on airport expansion in the south east was agreed at the meeting of the Full Council on 6 December 2016 and is set out below:

*'Given the decision by the Government to support a new runway at Heathrow, this Council reaffirms its position on airport expansion set out in the resolution agreed in July 2013.*

*The Council recognises the crucial role of the airports at Heathrow and Gatwick in supporting employment for Surrey residents, generating investment in the Surrey economy and in attracting and retaining major businesses to locate in the county.*

*This Council remains strongly of the view that expansion requires the environmental and surface access issues involved to be satisfactorily addressed.*

*This Council wishes to work constructively with the Government, the airport, relevant national agencies, other local authorities and Local Enterprise Partnerships on the expansion plans in order to protect and promote the interests of Surrey residents and businesses.*

*However, this Council considers that the proposals and commitments, including on surface access, that have so far been made by the airport and by the Government associated with the preferred approach to expansion at Heathrow are inadequate. In particular they give neither confidence that the necessary measures will be prioritised nor that adequate funding will be committed.*

*This Council considers that any expansion will only be a success for Surrey residents and businesses and for the wider South East if there is a clear and agreed framework for the necessary infrastructure, including southern rail access, and other measures to be in place before any new runway comes into operation.*

*This Council calls on the Government to take the lead in developing such a framework.'*

### **Next Steps**

The council will be responding to both consultations and the proposals to address environmental impacts, particularly the noise impacts from overflying aircraft, and the surface access proposals to support an expanded Heathrow. We are especially concerned that the consultation on the draft Airports National Policy Statement (NPS) is being undertaken when the final flightpaths associated with a new northwest runway and any possible respite measures are not yet known and so residents that could be affected are not able to know what the impact on them will be. The final flightpaths will be determined as Heathrow Airport develops its planning application in consultation with local communities and in accordance with Government policy, following the current consultation on UK Airspace.

### **Southern Rail Access to Heathrow**

The county council also wants to see the delivery of a Southern Rail Access to Heathrow and has commissioned studies to understand scheme options and the implications for Surrey (<https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/environment-housing-and-planning/development-in-surrey/surrey-future/airports>).

The delivery of these options is likely to impact on Runnymede and Spelthorne.

### **Draft Airports National Policy Statement**

In October 2016 the Government announced that its preferred option to provide for additional airport capacity in the south east is an additional runway at Heathrow – Heathrow Airport Limited’s northwest runway proposal. However, before the runway can be built the Government needs to put in place an Airports NPS that confirms this option as Government policy. This has to follow a statutory process which includes public consultation (the current consultation) followed by a period of Parliamentary scrutiny and a vote in Parliament expected to take place in late **2017/early 2018**.

If the NPS is approved, then Heathrow will be able to submit detailed plans that will be determined through the planning process for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects. However, it is anticipated that Heathrow will start to draw up its planning application and carry out initial consultation before the NPS process is concluded. Heathrow does not expect to get final approval for the new runway until **2020/21**.

#### *What is being asked*

The Government is seeking views on whether there is a need for a new runway in the south east by 2030 and on the Government’s preferred northwest runway option and the requirements Heathrow Airport needs to meet if development consent is to be granted. These requirements relate to specific aspects including surface access, air quality, noise, carbon emissions, green infrastructure, waste management, flood risk, historic environment and community compensation.

Among the requirements are measures to mitigate the impacts of noise including legally binding noise targets, periods of predictable respite and a ban of six and a half hours on scheduled night flights. The airport will also be required to implement measures to deliver on its commitment of no increase in airport related road traffic, with more than half of passengers using public transport.

### **UK Airspace consultation**

The Government is consulting on proposals to update policy on the management of

UK airspace. The aim is to create a modern and effective framework for decisions on the design and use of airspace to support airspace modernisation that will deliver benefits for the UK economy, for passengers and for communities affected by aircraft noise. The consultation covers the principles that should be used when flight paths are introduced or changed and also asks for views on revised metrics to assess noise annoyance and on the setting up of an **Independent Commission on Civil Aviation Noise**.

The proposals will apply nationally. Airspace modernisation around Heathrow, which will involve changes to flightpaths, will need to happen with or without a third runway and the target date for this to be completed is 2024.

The Airspace Policy consultation document is proposing that there should be much more engagement with local communities before new flight paths are introduced and where smaller changes are made to existing flight paths. It identifies three types of changes to flight paths that could occur and sets out how the process should be conducted. The document also proposes compensation for those adversely affected by airspace changes.

The flight path trials conducted by Heathrow in 2014 caused considerable disturbance and annoyance to communities who found themselves more frequently overflown as a result of the concentration of flights. The consultation document proposes that decisions on how aircraft noise is best distributed should be informed by local circumstances and consideration of different options. Consideration should include the pros and cons of concentrating traffic on single routes versus the use of multiple routes which can provide relief or respite from noise. The Government is seeking views on this proposal.

#### *Impact of noise on health and quality of life*

The consultation is also asking for views on revised metrics to be used for assessing the impacts of noise on health and quality of life. These reflect the findings of a **Noise Attitude Study** published alongside the consultation document that noise annoyance occurs at a lower threshold than the current average measure used. A supplementary measure of the number of planes flying over an area at over 60 decibels is proposed. These metrics should more accurately reflect how noise is experienced by people on the ground.

Lastly, views are being sought on the establishment of an **Independent Commission on Civil Aviation Noise**.

This will be a fully independent advisory body with roles that include:

- Responding to all formal airspace consultations to advise that the most appropriate and best available noise mitigations have been considered appropriately
- Giving expert advice when required if an airspace change decision were to be called in under the proposed new system.
- Advising airports and relevant competent authorities on the process to agree operating restrictions
- Providing input to planning inquiries relating to airport infrastructure
- Verifying noise forecasts and noise data
- Publishing and promoting best practice guidance including on noise management, engagement on noise issues, use of enforcement tools, and the role of conciliation in disputes

[www.surreycc.gov.uk/runnymede](http://www.surreycc.gov.uk/runnymede)

- Monitoring and quality assurance of airports' noise measurements and reporting
- Advising on the accessibility of noise information, making communities better placed to engage and comment on proposals.

### **CONCLUSION**

Councillors and the public have an opportunity to review and respond to the two consultations before the deadline of 24 May 2017.

**Contact:** Sue Janota, Spatial Planning and Policy Manager, Surrey County Council

**Annexes:** 0

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