

Plane Hell Action SE: response to Consultation document CAP 1887

Proposed Criteria for Assessing and Accepting the Airspace Change Masterplan CAP 1887

- 1. Responding on behalf of an organisation:** Plane Hell Action SE
- 2. What is your name:** Bridget Bell & Dr Maureen Korda
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- 4. Answering as:** **Community Action Group**

Name: Plane Hell Action SE

- 5. Organisation based:** SE

- 6. Is there is anything you would like us to know about your response:**

Plane Hell Action SE is a South and South East and increasingly South West London-wide community group campaigning against the concentration of flight paths and arrivals flight paths to two London-based airports, Heathrow and London City, and against expansion of any sort at either airport. Our communities are particularly affected by low-altitude cruising of arrivals flights along unconsulted and increasingly-concentrated routes with the resulting increase in noise and fuel emissions. Our communities do not benefit from Heathrow runway alternation at this distance from landing; with the result that residents are impacted for 19 unbroken hours by noise and emissions; many are affected by overflight to both airports at the same time, whatever the wind direction; many are affected by Heathrow on westerly operations and by London City on easterly operations i.e. 365 days of the year.

- 7. Consent to response being published:**

Yes, with personal identifying information (name, organisation, respondent category, location, additional information – please note your email address will NOT be published if you choose this option)

While CAP 1886 is not a replacement for the CAP 1616 airspace change process it is important to note the document comments that ‘Stage 3 of the CAP 1616 process is too late for public views to be taken into account as solutions to conflicts have already been decided’. (pg 29 #97). Stage 3 of CAP 1616 will therefore need to be amended if CAP 1887 is expected to be worked with CAP 1616 i.e. enable feedback to be taken into account before change is implemented.

Overview:

Modernisation of airspace is an opportunity to implement good practice in the light of a revised SoNA and the findings of independent research on the health impacts brought about by noise levels, sleep deprivation, length of time exposed to unbroken noise and polluted air.

The focus of CAP1887 is to facilitate the existing airspace for the planned increased capacity in the South East brought about by a 3rd runway at Heathrow and/or lifting the number of flights (ATMs). In the light of the Court of Appeal judgement citing the Paris Agreement it is clear that before any airspace modernisation takes place the Government will now need to consider undertaking a review of the ANPS and take the Paris Agreement into account.

It is a failing of CAP1887 that only once and then only in the executive summary are noise and air quality prioritised over the other Government policy objectives set out.

CAP1887 fails to seriously consider the impacts of noise. This should be its primary goal in airspace modernisation. No one community should benefit to the disadvantage of another in airspace around airports and where planes fly at low altitude (below 7000 ft).

The document neither covers sufficiently nor defines with certainty how noise will be addressed to ensure that the needs of those affected are considered before making changes which benefit those using the airspace.

The 'impartial' team ACOG, membership unspecified, does not make clear who is representing the communities affected by low-altitude (below 7000 ft) overflight.

Use of language is too nebulous e.g. 'more environmentally friendly'; 'minimising negative impacts of noise'. No set standards are offered, such as WHO guidelines on day and night time dB max levels. No mention is made of managing the impacts, on the health of overflown stakeholder communities, of noise, sleep deprivation and compromised air quality.

This is the opportunity to return to phased flight paths now that 'modernisation' required by an increase in ATMs will not take place in the foreseeable future. This is the opportunity to implement 'minimise' impact by sharing the impact. It is absolutely clear that minimising impact should not be synonymous with concentrating and thereby increasing the impact over the same communities.

This is the opportunity to ensure that Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) used by pilots are dictated by airports with noise levels capped at maximum levels for night / shoulder / day in line with WHO guidelines. The current system where each airline sets this guidance for its pilots, irrespective of the airport being used, results in pilots having no care for their plane's impact on the communities over which they are flying. The current system enables, as an example, Heathrow to escape taking responsibility for the impact of their user airlines on overflown communities and state that they (lamely) 'encourage' airlines or pilots to fly sensitively over communities.

Airspace use by drones and spacecraft: Guidelines on acceptable silent-mode and hours and place of operation must first be established to avoid infringement of the UK population's human right to the enjoyment of private spaces including their own home.

Ch1

8. CAP 1887 details the proposed criteria to be used to inform whether to accept the Airspace Change Masterplan, which is being created by the Airspace Change Organising Group (ACOG), an impartial team in NERL. Do you have any general comments you would like to share on the proposed criteria for assessing and accepting the Airspace Change Masterplan?

The word 'impartial' is an abuse of the idea of objective representation when only one body, AEF, represents those stakeholder communities who do not benefit from the aviation industries' financially-driven behaviours.

After national security, health and quality of life are the second priorities in line with Air Navigation Guidance (ANG) 2017. In this context Performance Based Navigation is not suitable for low-altitude (below 7000 ft) airspace use due the negative impacts it enforces on overflown communities. Put simply, flight path concentration concentrates

the polluting effects of noise and emissions over the same communities in contravention to Air Navigation Guidance (ANG) 2017 which states:

' the CAA, in considering airspace changes, should interpret the noise objective to mean total adverse impacts on people should be limited and where possible reduced, rather than the absolute number of people in any particular noise contour'

Thus:

- ANG confirms adverse impacts are considered to be those related to health and quality of life
- ANG also acknowledges significant adverse impacts can be expected to grow as noise increases above LOEL; 51dBLAeq(day); 45 dBLAeq(night)]. This must mean higher noise levels over communities should be avoided as far as possible

Ch2

9. Are the proposed criteria detailed in CAP 1887 the right criteria to enable acceptance?

For the South East there will undoubtedly be many conflicts including operations connected with more than one airport using the limited airspace available.

Assessment can only be made using an updated SoNA with noise metrics based on WHO guidelines for acceptable day and night noise levels.

Laeq does not reflect the lived experience of those affected by the cumulative effect of 'noise + number of noise events'. The numbers of individual noise events, their forward/overhead/trailing sound merging into the following plane's forward/overhead/trailing sound is not accounted for in Laeq and therefore cannot reflect the true and full negative impact on those affected. It is not enough to give a dB level; the number of ATMs experienced, usually every 90 seconds for communities affected by Heathrow arrivals, needs to be given.

From the **first iteration** it should be ensured that no community be flown over at low altitude (below 7000 ft) within the same airspace volume by ATMs to more than one airport. There is no room for trade-offs in this scenario such as moving routes laterally but still within earshot of those on the ground.

Ch3

10. Chapter 3 of CAP 1887 details the policy considerations that are relevant to the Airspace Change Masterplan. Are there examples of where further policy may be required to guide trade-off decisions?

With ref to #82, pg 26: Priorities of ACOG's terms of reference are wrongly ordered.

In the light of the Court of Appeal judgement citing the Paris Agreement it is now paramount that reducing CO2 emissions is the priority, this also impacting quality of life.

This must be followed by prioritising health and quality of life as stated in ANG17, above, using an updated SoNA, with noise metrics based on WHO guidelines for acceptable day and night noise levels.

i.e. the Paris Agreement, WHO noise guidelines and a health impact assessment need to be adopted into Government policy in order to inform the Masterplan, creating a balanced approach for overflowed communities and fulfilling ANG17.

It is not enough to 'consider' noise impacts: benefits must be implemented in the light of those considerations i.e. dispersal of flight paths to mitigate the negative aspects of noise and emissions at low altitude (below 7000 ft). Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) need to be set by each airport and not, as currently, by the airlines. Until this happens noise impacts on communities can never be adequately addressed.

It is wrong to claim that communication regarding change has, historically, been clear.

Clarification is needed on who represents overflowed communities as required by the Terms of Reference for the ACOG Steering Committee.

The omission of health impact studies and noise metric data analyses ensures overflowed stakeholder communities cannot be regarded as properly represented.

Clarification on the meaning of phrases listed in #82 such as 'reduce controlled airspace' and 'release lower airspace' is required to enable an informed response.

CAA's priorities are UKplc i.e. finance over safety.

An example where further policy may be required to guide trade-off decisions:

Heathrow and London City and their impacts on SE London. Wind-direction changes, from which follows simultaneous or alternating use of the same airspace volume over SE London communities at very low altitudes, results in: double overflight when simultaneous arrivals to both Heathrow and London City take place. This results in overhead / intrusively audible noise in the vicinity for communities at 15 miles from Heathrow and 8 miles from London City. These communities are affected by plane noise (and emissions) 365 days of the year when Heathrow is on westerly operations and London City on easterlies, and thanks to Heathrow arrivals schedules expected to exist on only 5-hour nights since runway alternation does not take place from start of join point.

Ch4

11. Chapter 4 of CAP 1887 details the engagement expectations for the Airspace Change Organising Group (ACOG) to undertake. Do you have any comments on the engagement we are asking ACOG to undertake?

Engagement with representative groups: who are the 'representative groups'? How will ACOG ensure that groups such as Plane Hell Action SE and Dulwich & Herne Hill Quiet Skies, both impacted by simultaneous or alternating ATMs to Heathrow and London City, are invited to take part, and how do they ensure that they are not represented, unless agreed by them, by another campaign group or groups?

CAP 1616 is flawed in that it may explain potential cumulative impacts but does not explain what mitigation will be offered. The short-term gains for UKplc and its

shareholders are not acceptable if/when they compromise the long-term health and quality of life for overflowed stakeholder communities. These affected communities are not sacrificial lambs on the altar of UKplc and CAA needs to take serious note of this.

Wider public engagement: Airspace Changes listed in the Masterplan should not be set in stone but must be described as either 'possible' or 'potential' changes. This will enable communities to comment and influence positive change on what might otherwise be negative impacts, unintended or otherwise. The Masterplan needs to take account of the Paris Agreement, a revised SoNA and up-to-date-research on health impacts. Only then, and once the ANPS has been reviewed, can such a Masterplan be drawn up.

#95 pg 29 requires clarification unless the proposal is that ACOG will set its own parameters for who will be invited to give views? If this is the case it is not acceptable as it does not allow the views of a diversity of stakeholders to be fairly taken into account.

As has been noted in the Overview, consultation by individual sponsors at Stage 3 of the CAP 1616 process is too late for public views to be taken into account as solutions to conflicts have already been decided. This is important and relevant to keep in mind: no *fait accompli* decisions must be included if an opportunity for communities to contribute to change is to be truly objective.

Clarification is required on how are community groups chosen for consultation purposes.

It must be a requirement, not an 'encouragement' that coordination between sponsors and their stakeholders takes place to avoid cumulative impacts on communities.

Airspace use by drones and spacecraft: Guidelines on acceptable silent-mode and hours and place of operation must first be established to avoid infringement of the human right to the enjoyment of private spaces including one's own home. (Included in the Overview.)

Submitted 30.4.27