

Briefing Note

Prepared For :	Cllr Bathurst, Chairman - Aviation Forum		
Contact Officer:	Chris Nash	Extension:	3645
Unit:	Public Protection	Date:	19 th May 2013
Subject:	Ascot Flight Trials 2014/15		

1.0 **Background**

- 1.1 Members of the AF will be aware that Heathrow Airport scheduled a westerly departure trial the between 25th August 2014 and 26th January 2015. This trial was a part of the Civil Aviation Authority's (CAA) Future Airspace Strategy (FAS).
- 1.2 Owing to the prevalent climatic conditions in the UK, westerly departures occur around 70% of the time, with up to 650 flights per day departing over the Borough.
- 1.3 The FAS is a mechanism derived following a Transport Select Committee enquiry into UK airspace in 2008. The committee specified that the FAS should review the ways in which current airspace around existing airports could be modernised (<http://www.caa.co.uk/default.aspx?catid=2408&pagetype=90>).
- 1.4 Such reviews at Heathrow Airport (<http://www.heathrowairport.com/noise/future-plans/modernising-uk-airspace/heathrow%E2%80%99s-airspace-trials>) have focussed upon:
 - The use of performance based navigation (PBN) – PBN moves aviation away from the traditional use of aircraft navigating by ground based beacons to a system more reliant on airborne technologies utilising Area Navigation and global navigation satellite systems. Aircraft using PBN can follow routes far more precisely and therefore it requires less intervention by air traffic controllers.
 - Resilience – shifting routes enables NATS to test different route designs with the ultimate aim of reducing separation on departures. This has the potential to reduce holding times on the ground and reduce delays on departures. The new routes closely mirror the original routes.
 - Noise respite – the concept of providing predictable respite on departures using runway alternation.

1.5 Out of the three 'noise preferential routes' (NPR) being trialled, the two trial routes of concern for the Borough are:

'Midhurst NPR' (MID) - typically involving aircraft banking over Old Windsor and then vectoring onwards over Sunningdale & Virginia Water to a height of 4,000m (as determined by NATS / CAA).

'Southampton NPR' (SAM) - typically involving aircraft banking over Old Windsor and then vectoring onwards over Winkfield & Warfield to a height of 4,000m.

1.6 During the westerly departure trial aircraft were vectored away from both the current NPRs (via GPS) over Ascot, North Ascot & Sunninghill.

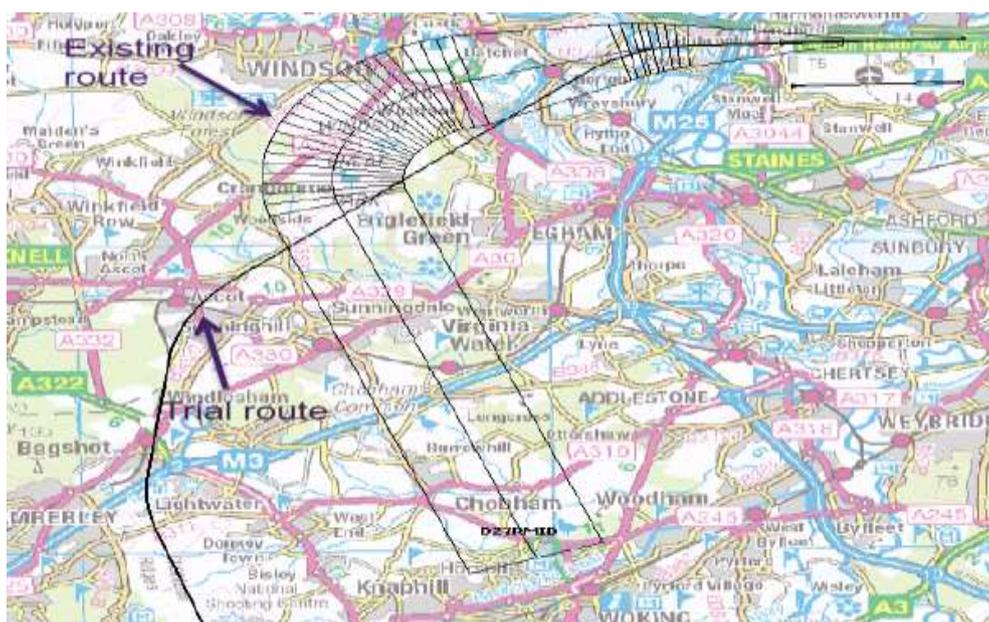
1.7 Following the commencement of the trials, residents in Ascot, Sunninghill and Sunningdale responded by registering complaints concerning excessive noise and frequency of air traffic movements to the airport's Flight Complaint Unit.

1.8 Furthermore, a petition with over 6,000 signatories was delivered to the airport together residents in neighbouring areas such as Bracknell & Englefield Green.

1.9 A public meeting, attended by over 1,000 residents was also held on Monday 13th October. It was during this meeting that the airport confirmed that the trial would be brought to an early conclusion on 12th November 2014 (2 months early).

2.0 Current Situation

2.1 Following the caseation of the trials in November 2014, complaints have continued to be received by the airport from Borough residents; highlighting that noise from aircraft movements are still excessive and that flights are still directly overhead in towns such as Ascot (at 300ft), that were not directly overflown before the trial.



- 2.2 In addition to raising the concerns of these affected communities to the Airports Commission in its response on 3rd February 2015. The Borough has also communicated our concerns to Nigel Milton, Director of Policy & Political Relations at Heathrow Airport directly.
- 2.3 A principal Borough request within communications to the airport has been for Heathrow to release the Webtrak (<http://webtrak5.bksv.com/lhr4>) analysis of aircraft movements. This information should be made available for the period before, during and after the westerly trial. This will allow for a direct comparison of ATM frequency, height and NPR compliance.
- 2.4 It is also worth noting that within the airport's London Airspace Management Programme (LAMP) consultation an indicative trial timescale was set out (http://www.heathrowairport.com/static/Heathrow_Noise/Downloads/PDF/indicative_trial_timeline.pdf). This timescale indicates that a further westerly departure trial is scheduled for March – September 2015, although the Borough has yet to receive confirmation of this from Heathrow or the CAA.

3.0 Further Actions

- 3.1 The Borough will continue to communicate to the airport the pressing need for any operations (that did not occur prior to the trials) to cease immediately.
- 3.2 The Borough will continue to push for a comprehensive report on the trials, including the aforementioned Webtrak information, to be made available so that both Council officers & residents can fully understand the prior and current impact of flights over Ascot, Sunninghill & Sunningdale communities.