

LLA operations Q&A

Please find below some of the Q&A's from the Airspace and Noise Week event held in October 2024.

1. Why was the AD6 consultation held during Covid? And why were the residents given eight weeks to respond?

London Luton Airport and NATS co-sponsored the AD6 airspace change proposal (ACP). It was approved by the UK Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) on 24th November 2021 and was implemented on 24th February 2022.

The CAA have published a formal process called CAP1616, this process must be followed by LLA when making an airspace change. There are 7 stages of CAP1616, and Stage 3 represents the public consultation period. The proposed engagement strategy timeline for responses (19 Oct 2020 – 5 Feb 2021) was accepted as proportionate by the CAA. They also evaluated and accepted how the engagement strategy was delivered and agreed it met what was proposed, thus allowing further progression of the change. Regarding consulting during the pandemic, development of AD6 started in 2018. Whilst this change provided key safety benefits, it would have been disproportionate to delay any progression. Further detail on Stage 3 consultation for AD6, can be found on the CAA Airspace Change Portal by searching for ACP-2018-65.

2. Why was the AD6 PIR released four weeks after a change of Government?

The publication of the AD6 PIR report has been delayed from June due to the pre-election period and was uploaded shortly after the general election concluded on the 11th of July.

3. Do the night-time aircraft movement limits apply to the current 19million permission or the 32million application?

The current 9,650 night-time movement limits would stay the same if the 32million passenger increase application is approved.

4. Have fines reduced track and noise violations?

LLA investigates aircraft tracks and noise limits daily. If an aircraft is found to violate these without a specific reason, the operator will receive a fine of £1,000 during the day and £2,000 during the night. This has a big impact on the airlines, and they are always keen on working with the LLA team to investigate and reduce these violations.

5. Tightly focused tracks are unfair as they fail to share out the impact of Luton Airport. When will you change this?

In summary, improving safety and efficiency has given rise to technologies which concentrate the paths of departing aircraft along a relatively small number of routes.

The current government policy is to concentrate departures on the least densely populated areas. This is to minimise the number of people overflown at low altitudes. Further detail can be found within Civil Aviation Authority CAP1498. Regarding arrivals, there is less operational flexibility in landing an aircraft than there is in taking off. The reason for this is that aircraft must line up with the runway from several miles away in order to carry out a stable approach and not jeopardise aircraft safety.

6. When will you apply a Quota Count on daytime flights?

There are no plans to add a Quota Count limit on daytime operations, however LLA has limits on the type of aircraft that can land with no noisier aircraft than QC 2.0 operating in LTN. LLA also perform checks on noise contours for the day and night-time periods restricting the amount of noise in lines of noise contour limits.

7. How much has been contributed to the Community Trust fund last year?

£150,000 is committed by LLA to the Community Trust Fund each year. 80 aircraft were fined in 2023 for noise and track violations. This generated £111,000, which was added to the Community Trust Fund contribution from LLA.

8. Why have we not followed the council's request for more permanent monitors in South Luton ward?

LLAOL has not received a specific request for a fixed noise monitoring station in South Luton from the council. LLAOL currently has 3 fixed noise monitoring stations. All major airports within the EU have fixed noise monitors placed 6,500 meters from start of roll (where aircraft start their take off) at each end of the runway to capture every departing aircraft noise signature. Their purpose is to ensure that no aircraft exceed defined national noise criteria or in the case of London Luton Airport our more stringent noise thresholds.

9. How does the airport enforce single engine taxiing?

There is currently no monitoring for single-engine taxiing, the statistics are held by each of the operators and they are not obliged to share this data, however we are talking to the base captains for the airlines to encourage this. If there are large delays aircraft will be held in the engine run up bay which is protected by noise barriers and will turn off both engines to reduce noise and fuel/ emissions. Future monitoring of single engine taxiing is an area to explore, and we would look to do this in the future.

10. Could LLA make a commitment to install a mobile noise monitor in Studham, Kensworth or Whipsnade.

As a part of LLAOL community engagement programme, we have the ability to deploy a mobile noise monitor to any community or specific location. The unit will provide real-time information for that area, thus giving the airport and local community a

better understanding of the noise environment. LLAOL has taken the above request of monitoring locations into consideration and will add some of these in the 2025 monitoring schedule.

11. Why does Travis not work in real-time?

Due to security reasons Travis currently has a 20-minute delay.

12. I have noticed, particularly this summer, a continued swapping of easterly / westerly movements throughout the day leading to almost 24 hours of intensive noise. Why is this?

At the airport we have two directions of operation, depending on the wind direction, as aircraft are required to take off and land into the wind. These are known as Easterly operations and Westerly operations and can change the aircraft tracks nearby specific areas depending on the wind direction and runway operation used.

During westerly operations, aircraft will depart towards the west, most of the time Luton's wind comes from the west so this happens on average 70% of the time. Whereas during easterly operations aircraft will depart to the east, which occurs on average 30% of the time.

The split in operating direction varies from year to year and month to month. The amount of time that the runway operates in one direction depends on the weather, it could change daily but it is not uncommon to be operating in one direction for several weeks or months. Unfortunately, LLA has no control over this.

13. Are dispensations published, including reasons?

LLA dispensations are currently published in our Quarterly Flight Operations reports and can be accessed [here](#).

14. Why are contour limit maps not available at street level?

LLA is currently looking into better and more visible ways of showcasing noise contours, including at street level.

15. Given a lot of the traffic is budget airlines, what expectations are there that they will move to quieter aircraft?

There is continuous work for airlines to move towards new generation aircraft. Along with the noise reduction benefits, they also have fuel and emissions benefits, so there is great incentive for the airlines to use these aircraft. The biggest problem is the manufacturing of these aircraft to keep up with the demand. Currently they cannot build them quick enough and therefore it will take time till we see airlines with 100% new generation aircraft.

16. Why have Airbus NEO's not translated into reduced noise of any significance?

This is a report we have received, and it is something we are looking into the data for and will be working alongside relevant parties to ensure alongside our work that every aircraft is performing as expected.

17. Why have flight paths moved over residential areas in South Luton?

We are working with the residents and councilors of South Luton to look into these reports. The data has been collected and we are now looking through it to identify any change in patterns, we will soon be in contact with these parties to discuss.

18. Will the move to satellite (automated) approaches of departures and concentration along set routes affect the noise contour metrics?

The move to use satellite-based routes should help aircraft to be more accurate when it comes to following a route. Future airspace change would come with a change in noise metrics depending on which route is chosen in the future. The route chosen will focus on numerous factors including safety, noise, emissions, aircraft parameters and wider airspace impacts but the goal will be to improve what we currently have.

19. Please clarify the period of night-time operations and the permitted number of aircraft movements allowed. Has the additional allowance of 7,000 movements in the shoulder period been abandoned?

The night period is between 2300-0659. The night-time runway restrictions apply from 2330-0559, between this time the limit of movements (take off or landings) is 9,650 movements, with a Quota Count (QC) noise limit of 3,500 QC. The Early morning shoulder period is between 0600-0659, between this time the limit of movements is 7,000.

20. You say you will explore options to move flights away from communities and get flights higher quicker: what consideration has been given to moving flights over Capability Green + Luton Hoo. Will noise increase on departure for South Luton residents?

Currently, Standard Instrument Departures (SIDs) from Runway 25 are designed to route aircraft over Capability Green. This said, as per the Noise Preferential Routes set by the Department of Transport, aircraft have a margin of error of 1.5km/ 1km either side of the centreline of these SIDS to abide by. LLAO Ltd continue to work with airlines to increase NPR performance and minimise the number of aircraft deviating the NPR's.

Whilst there are designs available to be progressed in line with the CAA's CAP1616 ([CAP1616](#)) Airspace Change process, there is limited scope for SIDs to change for aircraft departing runway 25 around these geographical areas. For aircraft to depart safely, design criteria must be met in line with ICAO Instrument Flight Procedure

regulatory material. This said, more accurate technology can be incorporated within these changes but will take a number of years for them to pass the regulatory checks as part of the airspace change process.

21. Does aircraft getting to a higher level cause more noise and pollution?

Spreading aircraft noise country wide is not fair on people who chose to live in the country.

The aim of airspace change is to get aircraft higher, quicker, due to the benefits it has. The result of this is rather than step climbing, aircraft can perform a continuous ascent and will burn less fuel as well as getting away from residents below quicker and overall less noisy. Government guidance currently specifies we should operate aircraft traffic in a concentrated route rather than over sparsely populated areas, this has been agreed by the CAA. With future airspace change this will be something that will be continuously reviewed to account for all factors including noise, emissions and safety compliance.

22. You mentioned “raising the height” of the airspace. From what to what? For example, over Leighton Buzzard?

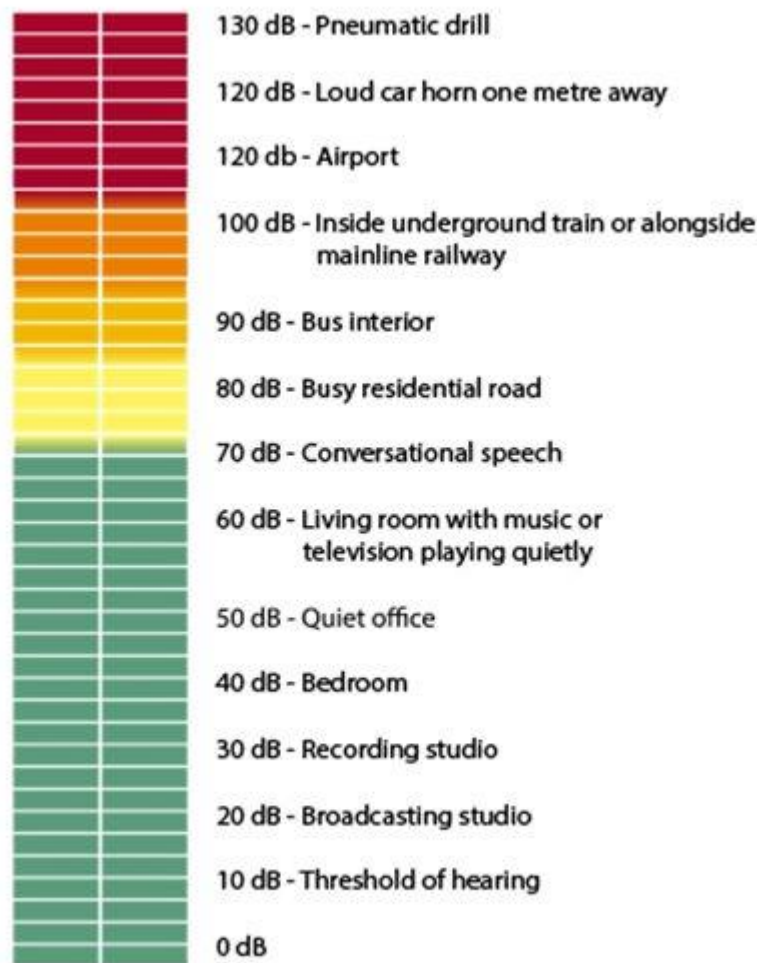
We are currently working with all London airports and NATS to modernise the UK airspace. Whilst this is a highly complex task, our aim is to enable aircraft to climb more efficiently as current designs restrict how quickly aircraft can climb to their required altitude to join the airways because of neighboring airports operations. All designs that are taken forward will require a full quantitative analysis and this will result in a full public consultation in the coming years. To follow the progress of this airspace change, please follow this link to the [CAA Airspace Change Portal](#) and search for ACP-2018-70 .

23. What is Luton Rising and what is the point of its existence other than sign posting? How much does it cost to run?

For information on who Luton Rising is and what they do please click [here](#).

24. How many dB is: the normal human voice, an aircraft flying overhead at 5,000ft departing and ambient noise on a busy street.

Please refer to the below image for better understanding of dB levels:



For more specific noise levels in different areas around the airport, please refer to our Community Noise Reports which can be found [here](#).

[Noise Monitoring | London Luton Airport](#)

25. What work is being done to keep noise down in areas close to the airport?

Luton Airport already has more stringent noise control measures than most major UK airports. This includes a limit on the number of night flights and a ban on the noisiest types and an overall decibel limit. There are a number of other operating procedures in place aimed at reducing noise wherever possible and financial penalties in place for operators who exceed agreed decibel limits or fly off agreed routes. More information on what LLA noise control measures are can be found in our Noise Action Plan: [Noise Action Plan - London Luton Airport](#).

26. Will these airspace changes allow the options to keep the aircraft in the center line of the NPR?

Our long-term proposal that is part of the UK's Airspace Modernisation Strategy may improve NPR performance. Whilst this airspace change is still in its early stages due complexity of London's airspace, if designs enable the use of modern technologies, in

theory this potentially could improve accuracy performance of an aircraft following a Standard Instrument Departure.

27. What will be the impact on 2040 Net Zero in the different airspace change options. Is this being assessed?

Stage Two of the CAP1616 airspace change process requires individual airports to conduct a qualitative assessment of their design Options. LLAO Ltd went one step further and investigated CO2 Emissions, noise and fuel burn in a quantitative approach. Further quantitative assessments will be investigated in more detail in Stage 3 of the CAP 1616 process. The Airspace Modernisation Strategy measures cumulative effects of all ACP's in the 4 regional clusters. We are situated within the London cluster. If another airport's design provides more benefit towards cumulative effect in a greater scale, and there are design interactions, our designs may have to change to enable this benefit. This is an ethically responsible approach to reaching JetZero 2050 across the entirety of the UK. Further information on airspace changes contribution to JetZero 2050 can be found [here](#) .