



SSE GUIDANCE FOR NATS DEPARTURE ROUTES CHANGE AT STANSTED POST IMPLEMENTATION REVIEW

INTRODUCTION

In February 2016, NATS implemented the transfer of Stansted daytime flights from the south-east departure routes (Detling) to the east departure routes (Clacton). This followed earlier approval by the CAA for the NATS airspace change. This has had the effect of more than doubling the traffic on the Clacton routes. More people have suffered an increase in daytime over flights compared with the number of people where daytime over flights have been removed.

While there are winners and losers as a result of this change, SSE opposed the transfer of flights and published information via link <http://stopstanstedexpansion.com/nats.html>.

SSE said that NATS had ignored local residents' objections – see press release via link <http://stopstanstedexpansion.com/press482.html>

The CAA's airspace change process requires that a Post Implementation Review (PIR) is carried out to establish whether the impacts and benefits of the change have been as anticipated in the original NATS airspace change proposal and, if not, to ascertain why and to determine the most appropriate course of action. A PIR is normally carried out 12 months after a full cycle of winter and summer operations.

CAA recently stated that the PIR is not due to start until 4 May 2017 but that it has notified NATS of its requirements for NATS to collate local feedback to the change.

Feedback on the impacts of this departure routes change from local residents and councils must therefore now be addressed to NATS.

ISSUES TO BE CONSIDERED

When NATS proposed the change it set a 2012 baseline and claimed that the benefits were:

- Reduced CO₂
- Reduced delay
- Reduction in the number of people regularly overflowed during the day

In response to the proposal, SSE said that:

- By switching from the Detling to the Clacton route, the annual reduction in CO₂ emissions compared with the total annual CO₂ emissions of about 1.1 million tonnes for all aircraft operating at Stansted in 2012 would result in a saving of less than 1%.
- NATS had previously published figures showing that the delays in 2012 averaged just 1.6 seconds per flight and that 99.8 per cent of UK flights did not suffer any NATS air traffic control delay. The benefit of reduced delay was merely an assertion in the NATS proposal and CAA decision. Nowhere in the NATS proposal or the CAA's decision were any figures given to support this claim.
- Below 4,000ft, while 1,470 fewer people would be overflowed, 2,400 people would be overflowed more intensively. Compared with 2012, there are more than double the number of flights on the Clacton route. This would double again if the number of flights were to expand to the permitted capacity.

SSE maintains that the change clearly offers negligible benefits to the aviation industry and at the same time harms the local communities with considerable environmental dis-benefits through intensified overflying and adverse noise impacts. Long term stability has been a key principle for the design of departure routes from airports. The more than doubling of flights on the Clacton routes is a major change. Additionally, aircraft are now implementing performance based navigation and this has led to the concentration of flights on departure routes which has exacerbated the noise nuisance for communities under these routes.

The table below lists the numbers of separate noise complaint forms submitted to Stansted Airport via the SSE noise complaints website over the last six years. It clearly shows a large increase in complaints in 2016 from villages under the Clacton departure routes that were previously not affected by aircraft noise nuisance, particularly those villages further away from the airport. Many of the complaint forms complained about multiple numbers of aircraft.

	2016	2015	2014	2014	2012	2011
CLACTON 04 ROUTE						
<i>Tilty</i>	22	1	3	3	0	0
<i>Great Dunmow</i>	32	1	8	9	3	2
<i>Stebbing + Stebbing</i>	155	0	2	1	1	3
<i>Felsted</i>	123	0	0	0	0	1
<i>Rayne</i>	20	0	0	0	3	1
<i>Braintree</i>	8	0	1	0	0	0
<i>Great Notley + Black</i>	19	0	2	2	1	2
CLACTON 22 ROUTE						
<i>Hatfield Heath</i>	71	6	22	14	43	20
<i>Hatfield Broad Oak</i>	78	7	2	11	5	4
<i>The Rodings</i>	14	0	7	0	1	1
<i>Good Easter</i>	21	0	0	0	0	0
<i>High Easter</i>	388	1	2	0	1	2
<i>Pleshey</i>	12	0	0	2	0	0

Note: This is not the total number of complaints since the airport also receives complaints through its own noise line by email, telephone and letter; however it is a reasonably representative sample.

Additionally, and significantly, the Government's recent January 2017 proposed revised UK Airspace Policy includes *"to deliver sustainable growth of the aviation sector by ensuring environmental considerations are at the heart of how the sector operates"*.

This proposed UK Airspace Policy is currently being consulted upon and closes on 25 May 2017. In addition the CAA has launched a consultation, closing on 30 June 2017, to seek views on new guidance that it has drafted to support the new airspace change decision-making process. The results of both of these public consultations will have a material bearing on how airspace change decisions are made, particularly on the noise impacts.

In this situation, where the whole policy and change procedure is under review, SSE is calling upon NATS and CAA to reverse the February 2016 change and restore the status quo of the Detling and Clacton departure routes until the outcomes of the current consultations are known, particularly in view of the vast increase in noise complaints and community annoyance. As a minimum, earlier vectoring or alternative/multiple departure routes should be introduced as mitigation where the noise nuisance burden on communities is particularly bad as a result of the change.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

- If you have been adversely affected by the February 2016 change, write to Martin Rolfe, Chief Executive Officer of NATS at the address below setting out the particular impacts in your locality:

NATS
4000 Parkway
Whiteley
Fareham
Hants
PO15 7FL

Email: martin.rolfe@nats.co.uk.

- Additionally SSE recommends that you copy your letter to Andrew Haines, Chief Executive of the CAA at:

Civil Aviation Authority
CAA House
45-59 Kingsway
London WC2B 6TE

Email: andrew.haines@caa.co.uk

- And you may also wish to copy your letter to

The Rt. Hon. Sir Alan Haselhurst M.P.
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Email: alan.haselhurst.mp@parliament.uk

SSE stresses the importance of local residents and councils making their views known to NATS about the airspace change. SSE will publish further information if and when it becomes available. If further information is needed please contact the SSE office via:
info@stopstanstedexpansion.com or telephone 01279 870558.