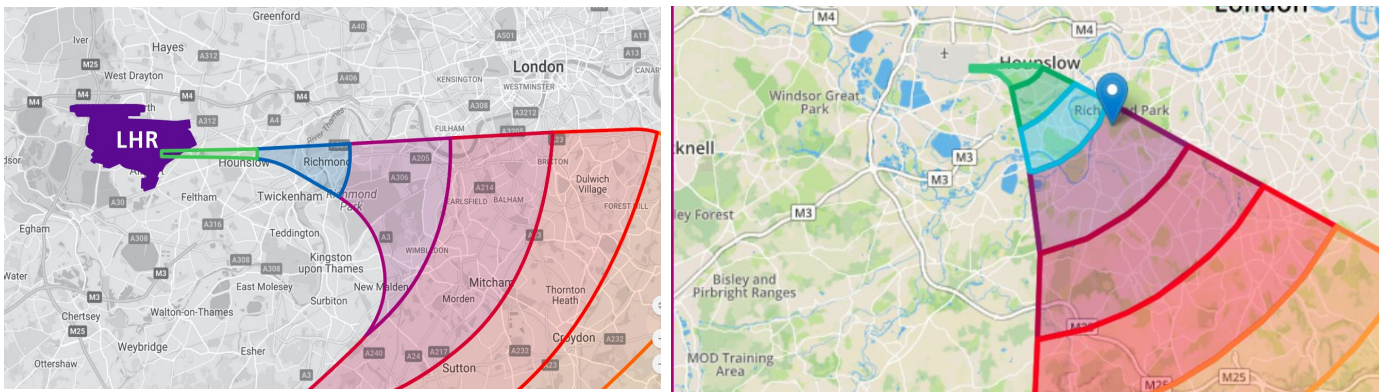


Press release

Proposed Heathrow flight paths “will shatter peace and tranquility” in London's quietest open space – Richmond Park

As London's largest National Nature Reserve and its quietest and darkest open space the 400 year old Richmond Park could, for the first time, see hundreds of flights flying directly overhead.

The Heathrow Airspace and Future Operations Consultation, which closes for feedback at midnight on Monday 4th March, (<https://feedback.heathrowconsultation.com>) indicates that up to 47 arrivals or departures per hour below 3,000 ft could fly over the centre of the Park with some starting in 2021. There are different “envelopes” proposed below) with varying arrival and departure frequencies and altitudes.



The proposed new flight paths as indicated on the Airspace and Future Operations Consultation website. Richmond Park's peace and tranquility will be devastated by hundreds of low-flying flights.

As the largest green space in London and its quietest, Richmond Park is a haven for Londoners. Some 5.5 million visitors each year come to enjoy the biodiverse ecology and peace and tranquility but this will be shattered by potentially hundreds of flights per day flying as low as 1,000 ft creating high noise and air pollution as well as artificial light disrupting nocturnal wildlife.

Ron Crompton, Chairman of conservation charity Friends of Richmond Park says: “It is shocking to see the potential impact the proposed flight paths could have on Richmond Park and its wonderful wildlife and environment so treasured by millions of Londoners. Increasingly, medical experts – and even government bodies – recognise the important value of green, quiet open spaces to the nation's physical and mental health.

“The proposed flight paths will shatter the peace and tranquility of Richmond Park and we call on all the millions of visitors who treasure the Park to protest against these proposals.”

Please email your concerns to feedback@heathrowconsultation.com by Monday 4th March when the consultation closes”

Mental health and wellbeing

It is widely accepted by health organisations, mental health experts and government bodies that tranquil green space is strongly linked to both good physical and mental health and wellbeing.

- A gov.uk blog on public health matters states: “We know people who live in the areas within our cities and towns that have more green or blue space have better mental health.” It states: “This has been summarised in the recent evidence submitted by Public health England to the Inquiry into Public Parks undertaken by the Select Committee on Communities and Local Government.” (See: <https://publichealthmatters.blog.gov.uk/2016/11/09/green-space-mental-wellbeing-and-sustainable-communities/>).
- A news item in The Times yesterday (Tuesday, 26.02.19) reported the latest Adult Psychiatric Morbidity Survey* stating “Children who grow up in greener surroundings have a greatly reduced risk of developing mental illnesses in later life..” and “..greenery also tends to decrease noise and air pollution which have been linked to stress and impaired cognitive development”. * *Survey carried out for NHS Digital by NatCen Social Research and the Department of Health Sciences, University of Leicester.*
- Mental health charity Mind increasingly recognises that spending time in nature has been found to help with mental health problems including anxiety and depression. Ecotherapy and green care interventions are increasingly used and recommended by mental health experts, see <https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/tips-for-everyday-living/nature-and-mental-health/>.
- Natural England, the government’s adviser for the natural environment in England, commissioned a review of nature-based interventions for mental health care. The comprehensive study states: “There is currently a convincing evidence base to show that exposure to the natural environment positively affects physical health and mental wellbeing. The value of natural, open spaces to our psychological health has long been recognised”. For the full report, see: <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/4513819616346112>

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Friends of Richmond Park is a registered charity No. 1133201