

LONDON CITY AIRPORT APPLICATION

Ref: 22/03045/VAR



1. Response from HACAN East to Invitation to Consult Issued by LB Newham

This response should be recorded as an **objection** to the **S73 Application 22/03045/VAR to Vary Conditions** made in reply to published Notices advising of the LPA's request to respond to LB Newham's Consultation on that application.

We **object** to and oppose the extension of Saturday operating hours.

We **object** to and oppose any additional flights between 6.30am and 6.59am

We **object** to and oppose an increase in the number of passengers able to use the airport each year, from 6.5 million currently permitted to 9 million per year.

We **object** to and oppose the paradigm shift proposed by the airport to enhance business growth by expansion into the leisure travel business. This was never intended to be the purpose of the airport.

2. Preamble to the Response

HACAN East is the well-established campaign organisation which gives a voice to residents impacted by ground and flight operations of London City Airport (LCY). We have numerous supporters across all the boroughs impacted by City Airport flights, including many amenity societies and tenants and residents associations. We work closely with many of them. We sit on the London City Consultative Committee.

In the sections that follow, we articulate our views in support of the objections in greater detail:

- what determines the level of noise permitted from London City and its operations;
- extension of operating hours to permit Saturday flying after 12.30pm;
- extension of operating hours to permit extra planes during the first hour in the morning;
- does the proposed introduction of new generation aircraft really mean the new-gens are noticeably quieter;
- the unbreakable link between an expansion plan and airspace redesign;
- impact on air quality and climate emissions'
- the impact of 2.5m extra passengers
- the consultation exercise conducted by London City Airport in advance of this application
- the consultation process used by LB Newham;
- two appendices follow the main section of the submission

3. Our Response

3a. Newham, as the planning authority, determines the level of noise permitted from London City and its operations.

This is made clear by the CAA

'In the United Kingdom, government policy on the control of aircraft noise is the responsibility of the Department for Transport (DfT). However, apart from at three airports - Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted, where DfT retains direct responsibility for regulating aviation noise - the overall policy is that noise issues are best handled at a local level by the airport and the relevant local authority, engaging with people who are affected by noise. That means decisions about whether aircraft can operate at night, and how many aircraft are allowed to fly on any given day, etc are generally made by local authorities when they give permission for an airport to be built or expanded'.

[Noise - Overview | Civil Aviation Authority \(caa.co.uk\)](https://www.caa.co.uk/Noise-Overview)

In the light of that Newham needs to consider whether:

- **It will permit Saturday flying after 12.30pm.** The weekend break is much valued. From being flight-free, Saturday afternoon could potentially become the busiest period of the week. London City has said it will only fly up to 12 planes an hour between 6.30pm and 7.30pm. But, under current regulations, it could fly up to 45 planes an hour during the rest of Saturday.
- **It will permit extra planes during the first hour in the morning.** This, of course, is one of the most sensitive periods for local communities. This is particularly the case for people living close to the airport who hear ground noise and the related noises of an airport coming to life. The noise from the airport can be especially noticeable because early morning background noise levels are usually lower.
- **It will permit the introduction of the new generation of aircraft.** They are bigger (wider and longer) than the current aircraft and are not quiet. The airport's noise consultants are clear: the new planes will only be 2-3 decibels less noisy over most residents. The CAA has stated that that difference is inaudible to the human ear. Only in areas close to the airport, and only on departure, will they be around 5 decibels quieter. This information has not been explained clearly to residents.
- **It considers some of the information provided by the airport to be misleading.** N65 information is provided. This tells people the number of planes, over 65 decibels, which fly over a particular area. But the fact that it averages out the noise to include the periods when there are no planes (usually due to wind direction) over a community underestimates the actual impact of the noise on residents.
- **It is acceptable London City relies on data from the manufacturer concerning the new planes.** LCY includes no direct information about aircraft noise provided by the airframe or engine manufacturers and instead refer to estimated differences in noise levels. Moreover, London City has few actual noise monitors. It relies on modelled data. Included in the S73 Application are four separate documents consisting of several pages of air noise diagrams. These diagrams rely on modelled data produced from and contain no measured evidence apart from the monitoring points immediately adjacent to the runway environs. The entirety of the rest of the areas impacted by LCY flights having only noise "projections" presented.

- Citizens, coordinated by the Forest Hill Society, took their own measurements for HACAN East. Their report makes for instructive reading (**link below and attached as Appendix A**): <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/56507de4e4b018da2a5ce870/t/63fcac1559437859e8c2a925/1677503524360/London+City+Airport+Noise+Citizen+Research+Study+Ver+5+Feb+2023.pdf>. HACAN East discussed the findings with London City's noise consultants who did not disagree with the thrust of the findings.

The lack of clarity about the 'quieter' planes and the actual noise levels runs counter to the CAA advice.

Paragraph 3.12 of the document: *'Airports and ANSPs are expected to inform and engage overflowed communities about aircraft operational change and change to aircraft movements when changes could have a noise impact on communities. As these changes may impact noise on the ground, airports should ensure that their local communities have sufficient information to understand the nature and causes of the change.'*

Since Newham has the power to determine what noise levels should be permitted, it can turn down this application if it decides the noise impacts will be unacceptably high.

3b. The application is premature.

London City is required to reassess its flight paths along with all other airports to prepare for the introduction of PBN (Performance Based Navigation). This provides London City with the opportunity to get rid of its concentrated flight paths, introduced in 2016. Tangible noise benefits from this would include the chance to fly authentic Continuous Descent Approaches on all arrivals routes (so higher for longer), alternating both arrival and departure routes to give some respite, and ending the crossing of flight paths with Heathrow that currently mean City planes fly a lot lower than they need to across large swathes of London. It also would ease the situation for those impacted by both London City and Biggin Hill. These flight paths are unlikely to be in place until 2027 at the earliest. Newham should refuse this application as, prior to any flight path changes, the same communities will get all the planes during the extended hours. A refusal would also allow Newham and residents to assess how the new planes actually perform in practice.

It is worth spelling out just how low City aircraft must fly to avoid conflict with Heathrow planes

When planes land over SE London, they must fly below 2,000ft all the way from Sidcup to Vauxhall

On departure, over large areas of East and North East they could be at least 1,000ft higher over many areas

This cannot be rectified until there is separation from the Heathrow flight paths; 2027 at the earliest

The human impact of this low flying is considerable: few of the homes impacted get insulation or noise mitigation measures; parks, gardens, schools, hospitals, residential and nursing homes are all impacted

There is anecdotal evidence that increased working from home since the pandemic has exacerbated the situation

3c. Impact on CO2 emissions

The application is clear. Emissions will rise because of the projected growth in the number of planes. Newham has signed up to a climate emergency. In light of this, would it not be contradictory for Newham to approve this application? It should be a material consideration for the Strategic Development Committee in assessing the application.

3d. Impact on air quality

Newham needs to assess whether the overall impact of this expansion has an unacceptable impact on air quality, and thus on the health and well-being of residents. Newham currently has the highest death rate attributable to air pollution in England. Local Authorities have delegated Public Health authority and legal responsibility to safeguard their residents from further exposure

3e. Impact of 2.5 million extra passengers

This signals a change in the function of the airport (**see Appendix B**). The airport was given permission to open and then grow on the basis that it was a business airport, largely serving Docklands and The City, and bringing some benefits to Newham in terms of jobs and money circulating in the local economy. This application is about something fundamentally different. It is about the desire of London City to turn itself into yet another leisure-dominated airport. The Strategic Development Committee will need to decide whether this different type of airport should be given permission.

4. The Consultation Process used by London City

The non-statutory consultation carried out by Cratus on behalf of London City Airport was flawed.

- The design of the pro-forma response was not an open or transparent format.
- There was no option for the consultee to simply object either in part or in whole to the proposal.

.Cratus asserted that there had been widespread advertisements in local newspapers across East London. In reality de-minimis advertising in selected publications which often had small circulation numbers for the geographic area concerned resulted in a low public awareness for the consultation with few attendees visiting presentations as a direct result. Lewisham for example did not reach double numbers of local residents and business attending the one meeting set for that area.

Along with the closed form of response being offered to consultees and attendees at presentations, these points are evident candidates for a basis to question the efficacy of the entire consultation exercise.

It is noteworthy and of concern that LCY staff have freely and regularly described new generation aircraft as 'quieter', often without any qualification. This is misleading. On the arrivals flight path over SE London a recent study indicates that over large swathes of London, these aircraft are marginally quieter by measurement by 2-3dB but cannot be detected to be noticeably quieter than old generation types to the human ear. Thus, there is no tangible noise benefit to many communities overflowed. Currently no London City planes fly Saturday afternoons or evenings. No aircraft of any type will ever be quieter than that.

5. The Consultation Process used by LB Newham

5a. The distribution of the consultation letters did not accord with current Government policy.

Newham's rationale for just sending the letters to households within the 57 decibel contour was based on the practice it adopted in 2016. That is now outdated. The latest guidance from the Department for Transport (DfT) is that plans should assess the impact down to the 51 decibel contour. Indeed, London City has done that in its application.

The Civil Aviation Authority makes the current policy clear:

'Where some noise calculation is required by the CAA, then the minimum level of sophistication of the modelling process should depend on the size of the current or proposed noise effect of an airport on its local community. In line with current Government policies for noise, daytime noise annoyance is assumed to start at 51 dB LAeq,16h and night time noise at 45 dB LAeq,8h. These are called the Lowest Observed Adverse Effect Levels (LOAELs). The minimum assessment required by a sponsor is to see whether the options for change will make a difference to the numbers of residents affected at these levels and the distribution of residents affected by higher levels²⁴.'

Section 4.4 of [CAA Policy on Minimum Standards for Noise Modelling](#)

5b. The efforts to inform the wider impacted population impacted was minimal.

Figures published by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) in 2019 showed that, pre-Covid, 747,300 people were impacted by City planes flying below 4,000ft:

[http://publicapps.caa.co.uk/docs/33/CAP1692C_ModuleC_FinalV3\(P_LINKS\).pdf](http://publicapps.caa.co.uk/docs/33/CAP1692C_ModuleC_FinalV3(P_LINKS).pdf)

More could have been done than sending out letters to those close to the airport and notifying most, but not all, of the impacted boroughs.

5c. No attempt was made to explain the complex letter sent round to residents within the 57 decibel contour.

We appreciate that the Planning Authority would not wish to interpret the application, but we would contend that what Newham sent round would leave many people who received the letter none the wiser as to what was being proposed. As far as we are aware, no letters in languages other than English were sent.

The CAA is clear in paragraph 3.12 of the document that *'Airports and ANSPs are expected to inform and engage overflown communities about aircraft operational change and change to aircraft movements when changes could have a noise impact on communities. As these changes may impact noise on the ground, airports should ensure that their local communities have sufficient information to understand the nature and causes of the change.'*

We would argue that Newham has not provided that information. Nor did London City in the consultation it carried out last autumn due to its minimal consultation.

John Stewart, chair HACAN East, agreed by the HACAN East Management Committee

Appendices

Appendix A

Comparison of maximum noise levels of New Generation and Old Generation aircraft in use at London City Airport - a Citizen Research Study.

Co-ordinated by the Forest Hill Society. First published 2022, updated Feb 2023

Summary

London City Airport (LCA) plans to expand its operating hours into Saturday afternoons and evenings. These periods are currently banned under its Planning Permissions in order to protect Londoners from City Airport's airplane noise at weekends. The airport persists in freely describing the 'new generation' planes it proposes to use more extensively as 'quieter and cleaner'. We set out to discover by measurement and analysis if they really are noticeably quieter in flight over our area.

We took 265 different maximum noise readings of London City-bound planes at several points under its concentrated arrivals flight path over SE London. This included both new and old generation planes. Our readings indicate that the new generation planes are not consistently quieter than old generation planes under this flight path, and that London City's claim is misleading and inaccurate.

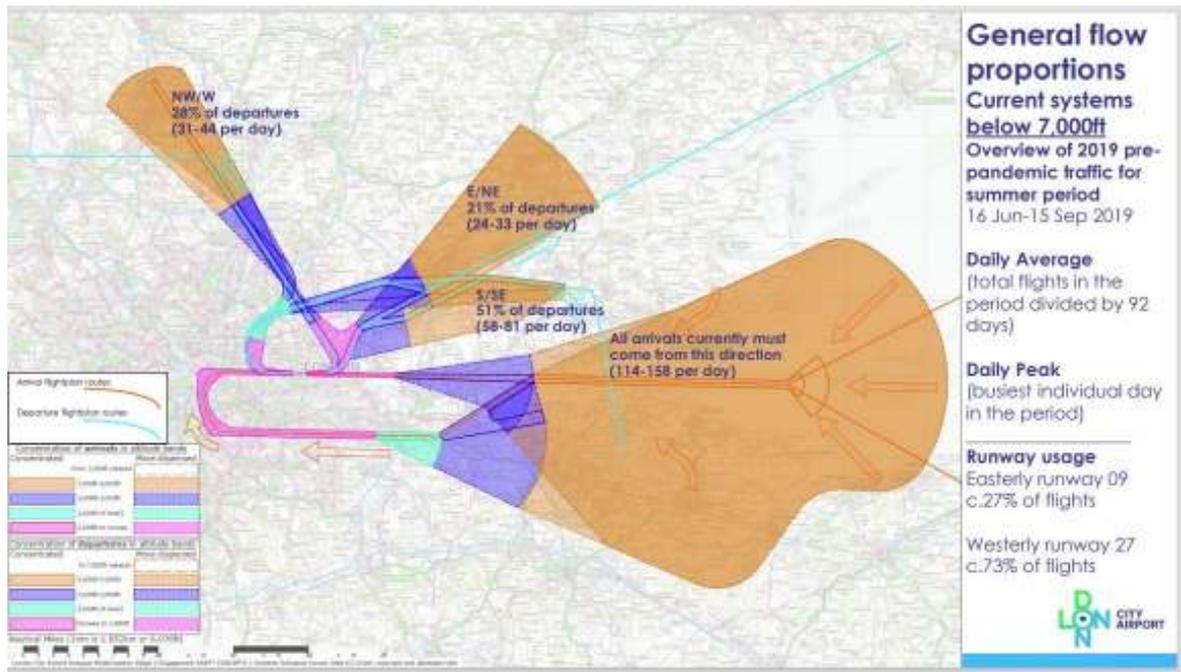
The implication of our findings is that certainly for SE London and perhaps for any London community overflowed by London City aircraft at 1800-2500ft (550- 760m) above Mean Sea Level, increasing the number of overflights will increase the noise disturbance in direct proportion; it makes no noticeable difference whether the type of plane used is new or old generation.

A great deal of London City Airport's justification for its expansion plan relies on its claim that new generation planes will be quieter for the overflowed, as old generation planes are replaced by new generation ones over time. This study provides evidence that LCA claims in this area are unreliable. As a result we believe that the airport must provide significant new measured and evidence-based noise data before policymakers give any consideration to expansion of flight volumes or changes of operating hours. This new evidence should cover areas across London under each of their flight paths. LCA currently focuses nearly all of its noise analysis on a narrowly defined 'noise contour' area close to the runway and relies largely on aircraft manufacturers for its data rather than real world measurement.

In the light of this study, even with additional data no consideration should be given to the change of London City Airport's operating hours or permitted plane movements. First, they should deliver tangible noise relief to overflowed Londoners by implementing new flight paths that stay higher for longer and provide alternating relief routes. This, they say, is due by 2027/28.

Flight Path

The LCA flight paths are set out by the airport below. In easterly wind conditions the airport uses a low (at or around 2000ft) concentrated single arrivals route over SE London then turning north towards the airport, shown by the pink east-west line.



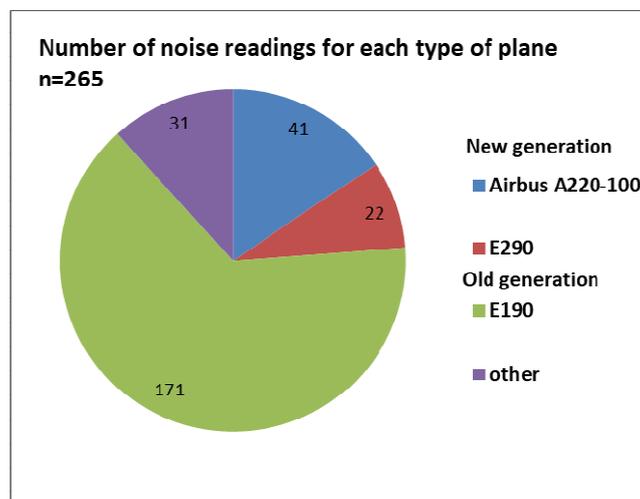
The observed aircraft for this study vary in altitude above Mean Sea Level (MSL) from around 2400ft/740m in Mottingham in the east to 2000ft/610m at Horniman museum in the west. However London City aircraft have been recorded on the airport's tracking system as low as 1600ft/488m above MSL along this flight path.

With a hilly terrain in SE London, the height of observed planes above ground level varied from around 690m in Mottingham to only 540m at Horniman Gardens.

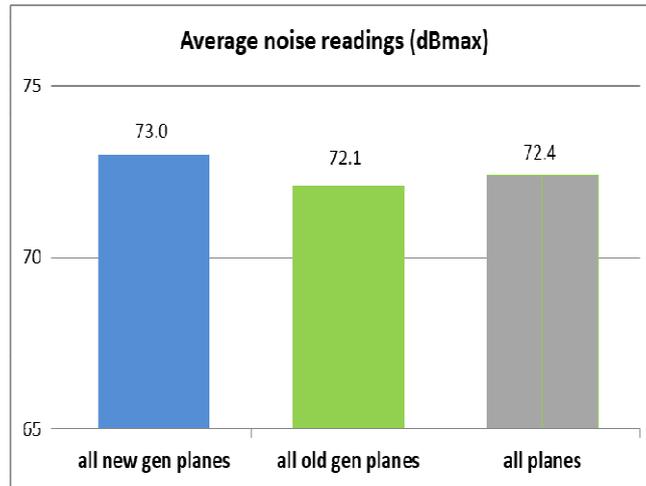
On westerly wind days aircraft approach and land directly from the east, low over the Thames Estuary and Thamesmead.

Results

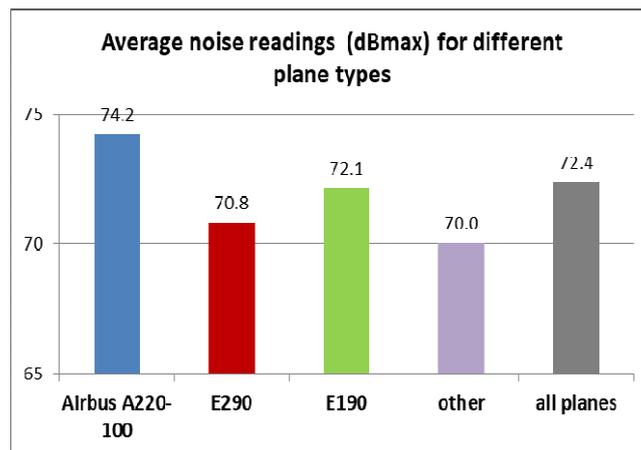
We took 265 noise readings for the different aircraft types as set out on below and on the following pages.



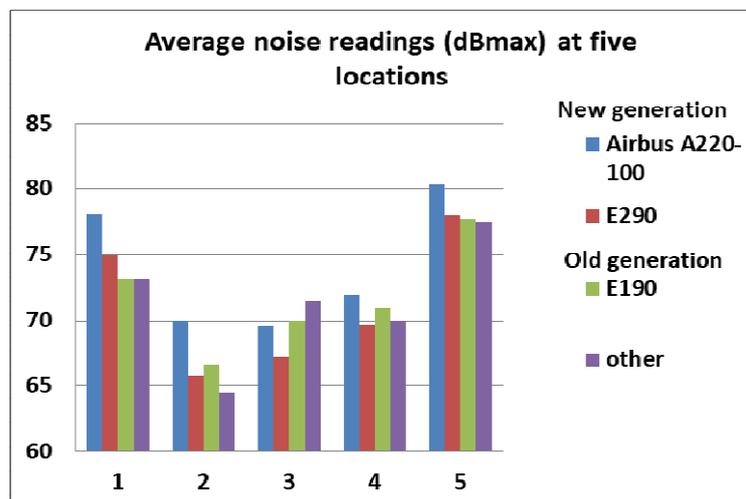
Across all locations and observations, there was only a very small average difference between new generation and old generation planes. These differences would not be noticeable to the human ear.



The noisiest plane, on average, was the new generation Airbus A220-100 – claimed by London City Airport to be a ‘quieter’ plane. The new generation Embraer E290 also known as the E190-E2 was on average 1.3 dBmax quieter than its predecessor, the Embraer E190. However this difference would not be noticeable to the human ear.



The noisiest was location 5 in the table below, the Horniman Museum and Gardens, one of SE London’s most treasured public park spaces, on a hill directly under the low flight path but still 22km flying distance from the airport. Readings here from all plane types were very high, most readings around 77-80 dBmax. Perhaps this is the noisiest place under London City’s flight path, excluding in the immediate vicinity of the airport runway.



Analysis and Conclusions

At consultation events LCA has consistently claimed that under the SE London arrivals flight path we should expect new generation aircraft to be 2-3 decibels quieter than old generation aircraft. We did not find this to be the case. If new generation aircraft are at all quieter then it is by a very small margin, perhaps as little as 1 dBmax. A change of 3 decibels is 'just noticeable to the human ear' according to the Civil Aviation Authority (see **Appendix 1**). So any new generation plane overflying densely populated SE London will make the same noise impact on the ground as an older generation plane. There is no benefit to these overflowed areas from the airport's promise that only new generation planes will fly in any extended operating hours. If the airport is permitted to change its operating hours to include Saturday afternoons and evenings, the overflow of SE London will be condemned to a new weekend intrusion and an ever increasing frequency of noise and disturbance incidents. The airport plans to expand from the current level (autumn 2022) of around 50,000 movements per year (source, LCA) to 110,000. Doubling plane numbers means doubling the frequency and level of disturbance, whether London City Airport's airlines fly new or old generation aircraft.

It is very questionable whether the new generation Airbus A220-100 can be viewed as 'quieter' at all. All observers noted an intermittent but loud 'whale noise' from this aircraft, and this will be reflected in its average dBmax levels. Looking for why this might be, it is easy to discover pilot groups and citizen groups, in Switzerland for example, who ever since its introduction have noted the strange and loud noises from this plane as observed from the ground.

The airport is currently planning introduction of an even bigger Embraer plane, the E195-E2 to fly this arrivals route. Given the alarming noise measurements shown here and the apparently exaggerated claims the airport has made about noise from new generation aircraft, we should be very concerned about this new threat. The airport should provide policymakers and all overflowed communities with significant new measured data and impact assessments to justify their claims about quieter planes.

London City Airport makes frequent claims in its consultation documents that new generation planes are cleaner and quieter. It says that they will be "*sharing the benefit of quieter aircraft with the local community.*" Additionally, that "*the benefit of quieter aircraft will be felt by local residents throughout the week*". This study indicates that these claims are misleading if read at face value. It shows that there is no noise benefit to be shared under the two arrivals flight paths over densely populated parts of London.

In their consultation documents is a carefully worded explanation. What they actually mean is that new generation aircraft give a "*reduced departure noise footprint*"- that is in a small departure area at either end of the runway. This study demonstrates that even if they do have a smaller departure noise footprint, new generation aircraft are not noticeably quieter than old in other stages of flight, such as under the two narrow arrivals flight paths low over densely populated parts of Greenwich, Lewisham, Southwark, Lambeth and Bexley. We should also note the cumulative noise impacts of the crossing of LCA flight paths with Heathrow; most of the above communities under London City Airport's arrivals or departure flight paths are also overflowed by Heathrow, sometimes simultaneously at different heights.

Our citizen research study concludes that there is no noticeable reduction in noise for the overflowed communities of SE London from new generation planes. London City Airport should therefore withhold any expansive plans or change in operating hours until the situation for the overflow is improved by the introduction of new flight paths. New flight path priorities should include the introduction of Continuous Descent Approaches (see **Appendix A1**) and alternative flight paths so that overflowed communities receive genuine noise reduction, planned quiet times and noise respite.

Tim Walker, John Doherty for HACAN East, August 2022, with additional material Feb 2023

Appendix A1. Continuous Descent Approaches, aka Continuous Descent Operations (CDO)

London City arrivals in east winds use a Conventional Approach to reach Sidcup, about 20 miles from landing, at around 2300 feet. Flying level or in small steps over all of SE London requires additional thrust, creating more noise, as illustrated by the Civil Aviation Authority below.

A



change of 3 decibels is 'just noticeable to the human ear' according to the CAA. Yet new generation planes are not measured at even 3 decibels quieter over Lewisham. But flight paths using a Continuous Descent Approach could give up to 5 decibels of noise benefit.

What are the benefits of CDA?

→ Higher for longer

Because the aircraft flying a CDA is higher above the ground for a longer period of time, the noise impact on the ground is reduced in certain areas under the approach path.

→ Less engine thrust

Noise on the ground is reduced further because a CDA eliminates the period of level flight when additional engine thrust would have been used.

→ Noise reductions up to 5 decibels

Depending on the location and aircraft type, the noise benefit from a CDA compared to a conventional approach could be up to about 5 decibels (a change of 3 decibels is just noticeable to the human ear).

→ Fuel savings and reduced emissions

There can be significant fuel savings (for the final arrival phase of flight) with a CDA because less engine power is required - this also means that aircraft emissions will be reduced.

What are the limitations of CDA?

→ Aircraft can still be heard

When an aircraft flies a CDA, it does not mean that its noise levels will be so low that it cannot be heard. A CDA simply provides a noise benefit compared to the conventional approach procedure, in certain regions under the approach path.

→ Noise benefits only in certain locations

The noise benefits that a CDA offers are restricted to locations typically around 10 to 25 miles from the runway. There is no difference between a CDA and a conventional approach once the aircraft using the latter joins the final 3 degree glidepath.

→ Little effect on airport noise contours

Because the benefits of CDA are only experienced relatively far away from the airport, consistent use of the CDA procedure will not usually have a significant effect on the size and shape of standard airport noise contours.

→ Cannot always be flown

It may sometimes not be possible to fly a CDA due to airspace constraints or overriding safety requirements. Also, when flying a CDA an aircraft may still require a short segment of level flight in order to reduce speed or to reconfigure.

Appendix A2

A new generation aircraft is defined by London City Airport as an Embraer 290 or an Airbus A220-100. There are a very small number of these aircraft using the airport regularly, flying from Geneva and Zurich. An equivalent old generation aircraft used at the airport very frequently is the Embraer 190.

We asked volunteers at five separate locations along or just off the flight path to take sets of decibel max (dBmax) readings including new generation and old generation planes. The locations were along a five mile section of the flight path, including Mottingham (SE9) 29km from landing to Catford (SE6) 26km from landing and the gardens of the Horniman Museum (SE23) in the west, 22km from landing. Monitoring sites were mostly directly under the path, with one offset to the side by a kilometre.

To make the measurements we used a noise measurement app, Explane, devised and calibrated for this purpose in the Netherlands. Over July and August 2022, we compiled 265 individual measurements. Batches of readings were taken by each observer over short periods with similar wind and weather conditions. A variety of readings were taken including at different times of day and across variable wind and weather conditions. Plane types were checked against LCA's tracking system, and the recorded dBmax for different plane types recorded for each day and location when measurements were made.

Once we had sufficient observations of each plane type, we took average dBmax levels for each to assess each aircraft type against the others.

Appendix A3. Noise measurements by London City Airport

The airport carries out almost no measurement of aircraft noise away from its immediate runway area. We have seen just two South London studies, one between Dulwich and Forest Hill in Dec 2018, and one in Mottingham SE9 3LU in December 2019.

Neither study identified measurement of any 'new generation aircraft'. They did however identify many of the current generation Embraer E190 overflights.

The results from Bickerdyke Allen, and published by the airport for the Dulwich study are below. Aircraft are at only 2000ft above MSL, 21.3km/13.2 miles from landing.

During the measurement period there were 110 arrivals at LCA using runway 09. Of these, 104 (95%) were correlated with a noise event. This is considered to be sufficient to give broadly representative noise levels for the most common aircraft operations. The correlated aircraft noise events are summarised in Table 1.

Aircraft	No. Correlated	Average L _{ASmax} (dB)
De Havilland Dash 8-400	15	64
Embraer E170	16	68
Embraer E190	59	69
Others	14	66
Total	104	68

Table 1: Summary of Noise Results – LCA Aircraft

The results published by the airport for the Mottingham study, at a site next door to our Citizen Research study measurement point are shown below. Aircraft here were at 2000-2500 ft and still 29.2km/18.1 miles from landing

Aircraft Type	No. Correlated	Average [†] L _{A5max} (dB)
Airbus A220	39	68
Avro RJ85	33	66
De Havilland Dash 8 Q400	118	66
Embraer E170	76	67
Embraer E190	482	68
Other**	92	66
Total	840	67

[†] Arithmetic average.

** Aircraft types with less than 25 correlated movements have been categorised as 'Other'.

Table 1: Summary of correlated noise measurements, LCA aircraft Runway 09 arrivals.

These aircraft are by no stretch of the imagination quiet. We should note that a 68-69 decibel aircraft event represents a significant disturbance of the peace to the homes and gardens of those overflown. London City may fly as many as 22 aircraft over these homes in a one hour period. In both these studies, the authors noted that the overflown sites were also overflown by Heathrow planes during their measurement period.

The 'new generation' E195-E2.

London City wants to fly the large Embraer E195-E2 low over London along these same narrow, low flight paths. It is 5m longer and with 5m bigger wingspan than its predecessor E190 models. It is also noisier, as shown by this table in the Airport's Planning Application documents of Feb 2023.

5.1 below compares new generation aircraft noise levels to the Embraer E190 which is the most common type of aircraft currently flying at the airport. Based on noise certification data it shows how the more modern versions can be 3.2 dB quieter on arrival and 5.4 dB on departure.

Table 5.1 New Generation Noise Levels Compared to current Embraer E190

Aircraft Type	Change in Noise Level (SEL) compared to Embraer E190, dB (A)	
	Arrival	Departure
Airbus A220-100	-2.8	-5.1
Airbus A220-300	-2.0	-4.0
Embraer E190-E2	-3.2	-5.4
Embraer E195-E2	-2.9	-4.6

Arrivals over London communities represent 50% of LCY movements. The table above, taken from the Airport's planning application, shows that on Arrivals, even the Airport only claims up to 3dB difference close to the Airport for these larger 'new generation' aircraft. According to the Civil Aviation Authority this small difference would not be noticeable to the human ear. Effectively, when the Airport doubles the number of any aircraft type it also doubles the noise intrusion of its arriving aircraft over Londoners, often many miles from the airport.

Appendix B – History of Operational Growth

Year	Number of passengers	Number of movements		Year	Number of Passengers	Number of Movements
1997	1,161,116	34,605		2010	2,793,813	68,640
1998	1,360,187	39,078		2011	3,009,783	68,792
1999	1,385,965	44,376		2012	3,030,005	70,781
2000	1,583,843	52,643		2013	3,390,264	74,006
2001	1,618,833	57,361		2014	3,702,032	76,260
2002	1,602,335	56,291		2015	4,319,749	84,753
2003	1,470,576	52,856		2016	4,526,059	85,169
2004	1,674,807	61,029		2017	4,511,107	80,490
2005	1,996,397	71,105		2018	4,820,292	78,036
2006	2,358,184	79,436		2019	5,100,025	80,751
2007	2,912,123	91,177		2020	908,105	18,850
2008	3,271,716	94,516		2021	720,580	14,463
2009	2,802,296	76,861				

London City was always envisaged as primarily as business airport and was initially given permission in 1987 on that basis. There were also very tight conditions attached, on the grounds of its location. **Below is a short summary:**

The words of the Inspector at the initial Public Inquiry where permission was given:

“Summarising my views on noise control, aircraft types should be restricted.....and flights should be-limited to the equivalent of 30,160 DASH-7 movements per year, 120 per day from Monday to Friday and 40 per day on Saturdays or Sundays.”

The Inspector made it clear that, for the sake of the local community, those were the only conditions on which he was recommending permission be given. [emphasis added]

- *A strict condition of 30,000 flights a year when it opened.*
- *Bit by bit it was allowed to expand over the years.*
- *It now has permission for 111,000 flights a year.*

1988, the first full year of operation saw the airport handle 133,000 passengers. The earliest scheduled flights were all short-haul. The runway was 1,080 m (3,543 ft) in length, and a slope of the glidepath set at 7.5° for noise abatement reasons. The airport was used by a very limited number of aircraft types such as the Dash 7 and the smaller Dornier 228.

How the growth happened - milestones

May 1985: *The outline planning consent granted from the Secretary of State on the basis of the Inspector’s recommendations and first commercial services commenced on 26 October 1987.*

1989: *The airport submitted a planning application to Newham Council seeking permission to extend the runway to allow the use of a larger number of aircraft types.*

1992: The application was approved by Newham. The former 7 degrees glideslope set so as to reduce the number of people disturbed by noise pollution was reduced to 5.5 degrees to allow a greater range of aircraft to serve the airport and sufficient to allow the BAe 146 regional jet liner and Airbus A318, to serve the airport.

1998: Approval was granted to increase the number of passenger flights.

2002: The jet centre catering for business jets was opened within the airfield.

2008: Flight path changes introduced

2009: The airport was granted permission by LB Newham to increase flights from a maximum of 80,000 to 110,000 a year. This was challenged in a Judicial Review. The High Court ruled in favour of the airport.

2016: In an airspace redesign, all flight paths were concentrated, leading to five-fold increase in complaints. No meaningful consultation was undertaken.

2016: Permission granted for a taxiway to cater for bigger planes –after a Public Inquiry was held*.

2018: Consultation commenced to extend operating hours at weekends and raise annual cap to 151,000 (overtaken by Covid).

2022: Consultation on proposals to examine an increase in annual passenger number from 6.5 million to 9 million, to operate all day Saturday and more early morning and late evening flights.

***The 2016 PINS Inquiry fixed Aircraft Movement Levels thus:**

“23. Maximum Permitted Actual Aircraft Movements (days/year)

The number of Actual Aircraft Movements at the Airport shall not exceed:

- a) 100 per day on Saturdays;*
- b) 200 per day on Sundays but not exceeding 280 on any consecutive Saturday and Sunday;*
- c) subject to (d) to (j) below 592 per day on weekdays; and*
- d) 132 on 1 January;*
- e) 164 on Good Friday;*
- f) 198 on Easter Monday;*
- g) 248 on the May Day Holiday;*
- h) 230 on the late May Bank Holiday;*
- i) 230 on the late August Bank Holiday;*
- j) 100 on 26 December; and*
- k) 111,000 per calendar year.*

Reason: *In the interests of limiting the number of aircraft movements in order to protect the amenity of current and future occupants and neighbours and with regard to saved policy EQ47 of the London Borough of Newham Unitary Development Plan (adopted June 2001 and saved from 27 September 2007 by direction from the Secretary of State and not deleted on adoption of the Core Strategy on 26 January 2012), policy 7.15 of the London Plan (consolidated with alterations since 2011 and published March 2015), and policies SP2 and SP3 of the Newham Core Strategy (adopted 26 January 2012).*