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Web site: [www.gov.uk/dft](http://www.gov.uk/dft)

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Dear John

Thank you for your letter following our meeting of 28 November, about the impact of aircraft noise.

On the issue of the change to the Compton Gate, I am due to visit NATS in January and will be happy to raise this at that meeting. I understand however that Heathrow are currently working with communities and other interested parties to identify how the Compton route could be improved. As you know airspace arrangements are very complex so I would not wish changes to be made without consideration of all the effects, but I hope that the process Heathrow is currently undertaking will help find a solution that is acceptable to your constituents as well as other individuals who may be impacted by any change. I understand Heathrow expects to begin consultation on this during 2017.

Many of the other issues you raise will of course be covered in the upcoming UK airspace policy consultation to support airspace modernisation. This will allow the UK to make the most of modern navigational technology. This can achieve improvement in noise through the better design of routes to avoid populated areas as a result of more accurate track-keeping, allow aircraft to climb more quickly due to a less congested airspace, and lead to a reduction in airborne holding. This consultation will also include proposals for the role of an independent aviation noise body to drive up standards in airports' noise management and promote best practice. We hope to publish this consultation early in the New Year.

I should add that Heathrow is also taking forward measures to promote quieter flying through operational procedures, such as delaying deployment of landing gear. This work is reported through the Community Noise Forum

which my officials attend, as well representatives from communities around the airport.

Regarding a further meeting, I would be happy to meet during the consultation period to discuss our proposals if you would find this helpful.

Yours sincerely,

Tariq

**LORD (TARIQ) AHMAD OF WIMBLEDON**