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Department
for Transport

Department for Transport
Great Minster House
33 Horseferry Road
London
SW1P 4DR
Tel: 0300 330 3000

Web Site: www.gov.uk/dft

Our Ref: 103249
Your Ref:

13 May 2014

Margaret Majumdar
By e-mail:
mmajumdar@btinternet.com

Dear Ms Majumdar,

Westerly Preference at Heathrow

Thank you for your further e-mail of 8 April 2014 about westerly preference at Heathrow Airport. I have been asked to reply as an official in the Department for Transport's Aviation Policy & Delivery Division. Please accept my apologies for the delay in responding.

The westerly preference at Heathrow means that, generally, aircraft continue to arrive and depart in a westerly direction until the wind from the east exceeds 5 knots. Historically, the purpose of the preference has been to reduce the number of departing aircraft (in the past, noisier than arrivals) which would otherwise need to take-off over the more densely populated areas to the east of the airport.

The independent Airports Commission, in its Interim Report, recommended that, given the developments in aircraft technology over time, the Government should review the need for the westerly preference.

The Government will carefully consider the report and publish a response to the short term options as soon as possible in 2014.

Thank you for taking the time to write to the Department on this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Rupesh Mehta
South East Airports Policy Manager