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30th May 2018

Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management
For the Attention: Her Excellence Mrs. Cora van Nieuwenhuizen-Wijbenga
Postbus 20901
2500 EX DEN HAAG

Dear Mrs. Cora van Nieuwenhuizen-Wijbenga,

British Airways would like to submit the following paper to the internet consultation regarding the proposed changes to the “Besluit Slotallocatie”, the Dutch regulation for the determination of the accountability and powers to determine the capacity at Schiphol Airport.

British Airways fully supports IATA’s submission to this consultation but would also like to provide an overview of the way the capacity declaration process works at London Heathrow which is referenced in the main IATA document.

Yours sincerely,



Tracey Buckmaster
Slot Planning Manager – Heathrow
British Airways

Heathrow Airport Capacity Declaration Process

Background

Where airport capacity is in high demand, it is imperative a fair, thorough and robust process is in place to review and amend the declared capacity. Key stakeholders should contribute to these decisions to allow for a rounded view from all perspectives. Essentially, this should take place every season to allow various inputs such as airspace, fleet and operational impacts to be taken into consideration.

The Heathrow capacity declaration process is a good example of engaging key stakeholders to review the analysis of the previous equivalent season to define capacity in the upcoming season. This gives visibility on factors affecting the schedule and most importantly allows for structured debate around changes to capacity. Where Heathrow is essentially full against the ATM cap, the opportunity to 'flex' hourly runway constraints means the capacity may still be adjusted to best meet the demand whilst improving resilience in the planned schedule.

Process

Each season, airline members of the Runway Scheduling Limits Committee (RSL) are asked to provide their 'flex requests' to the Heathrow slot coordinator. This allows airlines the opportunity to review their planned schedules and confidentially put forward desired changes to the hourly runway capacity by requesting moves from one hour to another. This takes place pre-submission for each season. The slot coordinator assesses the moves to review the impact on sub constraints and will then discuss, (without identifying who has requested them), with the airport. The air traffic provider is then asked to review these moves against the delay experienced in the previous season (also with a view to previous season's trends)

Members of the RSL will meet and discuss the flex requests with a view to agreeing on the output. The airport will also present an overview of the previous season's main issues along with known problems which may affect the upcoming season to ensure there is clarity and understanding amongst the group. They will provide thorough analysis to outline major issues such as early arrivals which will raise the profile of these topics for airlines to take away and focus on. According to set criteria such as no additional movements in hours with peak delay or where the delay is increasing, agreement is generally reached on the outcome of the declared capacity.

In the past, airlines have also suggested a review of constraints to improve schedule deliverability and robustness as a consequence of feedback from the operation.

Terminal and stand declarations are presented in separate meetings, again with detailed analysis and reasoning from the airport to ensure understanding from all stakeholders which allows the opportunity for debate and input.

Conclusion

All stakeholders take away an understanding of the Heathrow capacity process with a clear view on the upcoming season's declaration. This is a critical part of the scheduling process for airlines to be able to plan realistic schedules against known capacity parameters, with a view to managing the risk and ultimately declaring a firm schedule in a timely way to facilitate airport planning.

Allowing one side of this three way, (airport, airline and air traffic management) relationship to make decisions in isolation is not conducive to utilising scarce capacity in the most efficient way.