

Our response:

Having considered your request in line with the provisions of the Environmental Information Regulations 2004, we are able to provide the information below.

We can confirm from records we hold that Heathrow airport did change runway direction at 1500 on the 28th May. We do not hold meteorological records.

Your questions, thereafter, relate to the policy on Westerly preference, which is set by government and the application of it by Heathrow Airport Limited. Having studied and reported on the westerly preference (see Chapter 5 of [ERCD Report 0705](#)) we can offer the following comments:

1. Based on published statements, the government continues to support a westerly preference that is applied by Heathrow Airport Limited.
2. A change of runway direction is made on a tactical basis by NATS (the air traffic services provider for Heathrow), and may be ahead of anticipated easterly winds, at the time the threshold is exceeded or at some time thereafter.
3. Changing landing runway and/or runway direction both cause disruption to the airport and can lead to delays and thus where it can be facilitated, the changes will be coordinated - this is long standing practice.
4. Whilst the definition is based around surface winds, a decision to change runway direction will also often be informed by information on winds aloft. Wind speed increases significantly with increasing altitude and there is also a direction change. For example the wind at 2,000ft may be twice that at the surface and may be 30 degrees different to that at the surface. In some situations, e.g. landing aircraft, the wind aloft may be considered more critical than the surface wind speed/direction and form the basis for a runway direction change.

If you are not satisfied with how we have dealt with your request in the first instance you should approach the CAA in writing at:-

Caroline Chalk
Head of External Information Services
Civil Aviation Authority
Aviation House
Gatwick Airport South
Gatwick
RH6 0YR

caroline.chalk@caa.co.uk

The CAA has a formal internal review process for dealing with appeals or complaints in connection with requests under the Environmental Information Regulations. The key steps in this process are set in the attachment.

Should you remain dissatisfied with the outcome you have a right to appeal against the decision by contacting the Information Commissioner at:-

Information Commissioner's Office
FOI/EIR Complaints Resolution
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
SK9 5AF
<https://ico.org.uk/concerns/>

If you wish to request further information from the CAA, please use the form on the CAA website at <http://publicapps.caa.co.uk/modalapplication.aspx?appid=24>.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rihanne Stephen". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'R'.

Rihanne Stephen
Information Rights Officer

CAA INTERNAL REVIEW & COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

- The original case to which the appeal or complaint relates is identified and the case file is made available;
- The appeal or complaint is allocated to an Appeal Manager, the appeal is acknowledged and the details of the Appeal Manager are provided to the applicant;
- The Appeal Manager reviews the case to understand the nature of the appeal or complaint, reviews the actions and decisions taken in connection with the original case and takes account of any new information that may have been received. This will typically require contact with those persons involved in the original case and consultation with the CAA Legal Department;
- The Appeal Manager concludes the review and, after consultation with those involved with the case, and with the CAA Legal Department, agrees on the course of action to be taken;
- The Appeal Manager prepares the necessary response and collates any information to be provided to the applicant;
- The response and any necessary information is sent to the applicant, together with information about further rights of appeal to the Information Commissioners Office, including full contact details.