



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Airports National Policy Statement Review Team
Department for Transport
Great Minster House
London SW1P 4DR

7 August 2026

Good afternoon,

I am writing to table my opposition to the Draft Heathrow Expansion National Policy Statement.

I have been an outspoken opponent of a third runway at Heathrow throughout my time in Parliament, and my Parliamentary career began after the incumbent Member of Parliament for Richmond Park resigned over his party's position on support for a third runway.

While I will detail why this is a disastrous national policy, the impact that a third runway will have on local residents, including in my constituency, cannot be understated.

This consultation encapsulates my frustration with how the government has signalled their support for expansion at Heathrow. Local people who will have to bear the consequences of nearly 300,000 additional flights in our skies seem to be a secondary consideration to this white elephant growth project.

The government have not set out a clear, public-facing community engagement plan for this consultation. I understand that the reasoning for this is that it is taking place over the summer holidays, but if anything, this only reinforces the fact that local residents are not being properly consulted on this proposal.

In 2017 when consulting on the Draft Airport National Policy Statement (ANPS), the Department for Transport distributed 1.5million letters to impacted residents, advertised the consultation on the radio and in newspapers, while holding 20 public local events in affected areas. This is in stark contrast to the current consultation process, which continues the theme of attempting to push through an ill-conceived expansion plan with as little scrutiny or public engagement as possible.

The Draft Heathrow Expansion National Policy Statement (HENPS) itself sets out why a third runway at Heathrow should not move forward, and I oppose this project on grounds of noise pollution levels, climate change impact, increasing air pollution levels, and a failure to show that expansion would result in national growth.

Noise:

The Department for Transport's commissioned study 'Aviation Night Noise Effect' identifies that residents exposed to higher levels of aircraft noise are twice as likely to experience severe sleep disturbance. This indicator is widely accepted to be correlated with increased risks of hypertension and cardiovascular disease, as well as poor mental well-being.

In a recent local engagement session I held alongside other local MPs and Richmond Council, one member of the audience stated that the constant aircraft noise causes them an almost unbearable amount of distress, which is heightened as a result of their ADHD and autism.

Adding 276,000 planes to our skies will only amplify this noise, while the flight paths taken to and from the third runway remain unclear, as new airspace designs are yet to be published. This also speaks to the nonsensical timing for a third runway to be introduced.

Climate Change:

A third runway would add an extra 6million tonnes of carbon emissions into our skies each year, which would cause a direct conflict with our climate change obligations, while also resulting in aviation emissions double the recommended amount advised on by the Committee on Climate Change by 2050.

The Draft HENPS has done nothing to reassure me that the UK can meet our climate change obligations while introducing a third runway at Heathrow.

When I have raised this matter in the Chamber, the government has dismissed concerns by stating that Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) will be widely used by 2035, which will cut emissions.

However, the challenges to the UK's ability to produce and import SAF was underscored by the Climate Change Committee's recent report, which estimated that only 17% of the UK's aviation industry will be using SAF by 2040. This is 5% lower than the government's own mandated targets, and 8% below the EU's target.

Air Pollution:

As Labour's test for air pollution states that expansion must not cause new breaches of air quality legislation or the worsening of existing breaches, the Draft HENPS outlines a failure of one of Labour's 4 tests.

The additional 276,000 aircraft will result in a 55% increase in NOX and 60% increase in PM2.5, whilst UFPs remain unassessed. All 22 of the monitors around Heathrow would currently fail the EU's lower limit values on NOX.

As a city, London has worked hard and made sacrifices to reduce our air pollution levels. To undo this work for such a white elephant proposal would be a failure of the highest degree.

Economic

I come last to the economic argument, which the former Chancellor made clear was the driving factor for expansion.

Not only has the economic argument been backed by an unquantifiable amount of political weight, this has been translated into a biased weighting in the decision to approve expansion, as a third runway has received designation as a 'Critical National Growth Infrastructure.'

The DfT has stated that this means that any residual impacts won't be considered as blocks to expansion if the 'mitigation hierarchy' has been applied.

This concerns me, as it leaves a wide berth for dismissing key matters relating to noise, climate change and air pollution – as long as these factors fall within government centred calculations regarding Labour's 4 tests.

However, the Draft HENPS fails to show the growth which the government has insisted a third runway will bring. The negative impact on the economy is estimated to the cost of £62bn and at best just 0.05% growth in GDP by 2056. This is 90% less than the previous estimate of 0.43%.

The figures for expansion at Heathrow have never added up, but this is no more so than now.

Most unforgivably, the government are marketing expansion as a project which will not be paid for by the taxpayer. But this will not be the case.

Expansion will not only cost the £49bn to build the runway and to improve the airport's facilities, it will also cost an estimated £100bn in carbon abatement costs and around £20bn in surface access upgrade costs. Without the access upgrade, the number of passengers required to absorb the additional capacity will not be able to travel to the airport. Making predictions of growth numbers without including these costs makes no sense. The HENPS also outlines that a congestion charge may be necessary, all while the airlines will pass the cost of travelling from Heathrow onto passengers.

This is not even to mention the chaos that will be brought to people's lives by the M25 being dug-up, by 750 homes being demolished, and the additional traffic around railway crossings in London as their barriers will have to be down for longer.

In summary, the new administration has the opportunity to put an end to this disastrous proposal, and it is absolutely vital for our communities and our environment that action is taken to scrap a third runway.

Yours sincerely



Sarah Olney
Member of Parliament for Richmond Park