



Press Release

Independent safety review reveals “significant flaws” of third runway at Heathrow

An independent review by a leading aviation safety consultancy has identified serious issues with Heathrow Airport Ltd’s North-West Runway (NWR) scheme, “the third runway”, relating to safety, capacity, operating efficiency, impact on residents living under the new approach and departure routes and the environment.

The review, by Ebeni UK, examined how the new runway could be operated safely.

The review has resulted in the following key findings:

- In order to operate safely the NWR scheme will not be able to deliver the 740,000 air traffic movements (ATMs) per year claimed by Heathrow Airport Ltd.
- This is because the middle runway will only be able to operate at 2/3 of the capacity of the other two runways due to safety constraints, resulting in less than 700,000 total movements.
- The noise impact of the NWR brings around 20% more people into the noise footprint than the alternative proposal submitted by Heathrow Hub to extend the northern runway (ENR). Heathrow Hub contends that this is significantly worse than foreseen by both the Airports Commission and Heathrow Airport Ltd.
- The NWR will expand overflights across London to a significantly higher number of people, at least 60,000 in West London alone. It will also reduce currently available noise abatement procedures.
- The NWR proposal adds significant operational costs to operators compared to the ENR scheme, as a result of aircraft having much longer taxiing distances as well as less efficient approach and departure routes.
- Overall, the NWR scheme requires such complex airspace that it will not be able to deliver on its claimed capacity, noise and respite figures.



The review was commissioned by Heathrow Hub, the independent proposal to extend the existing northern runway, in order to make up for the failure of either Heathrow Airport Ltd, the Airports Commission or the Department of Transport to conduct a safety review.

By contrast, Heathrow Hub's proposal to extend the northern runway, has produced and published an independently validated safety review, prepared in consultation with the Civil Aviation Authority, confirming the safety of the proposal and the ability of the scheme to deliver over 740,000 air traffic movements per year.

Jock Lowe, Director of Heathrow Hub, commented:

"The Ebeni review highlights the flaws in the NWR scheme that make it impossible for it to deliver on its capacity, noise and respite targets.

"Failing to ensure a proper safety review has been conducted is, I am afraid, a massive omission by Heathrow Airport and the Department for Transport.

"The sooner the Government realises it has made a significant mistake in recommending Heathrow Airport's expensive, complex scheme the better.

"Our proposal to extend the northern runway is a superior scheme. It can deliver the increased capacity required in a cheaper, quicker and simpler way. Furthermore, our proposal has passed the necessary safety review and offers more respite from noise."

A full version of the review will be submitted both to the Department for Transport and the Commons Transport Select Committee which is examining airport expansion.

Contacts

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Notes to editors

Heathrow Hub is an independent proposal for expansion at Heathrow, by extending the existing northern runway westwards away from London, negating the need to build a third runway. Planes would land at one end and take off at the other. The scheme is cheaper, quicker and simpler. It also destroys fewer houses. For more information and images, please visit: www.heathrowhub.com