

Press release from Heathrow Hub, Extended Runway scheme

Heathrow's Third Runway damned with faint praise by Transport Committee

Friday 23rd March, 2018 - The influential Transport Select Committee of the House of Commons has today damned Heathrow's third runway with faint praise by simultaneously endorsing it but imposing conditions on it which cannot be met.

In a report published today, the Committee has given a lukewarm endorsement of the third runway, "provided it can deliver the expected capacity, at the costs outlined....and on the timetable projected." As the scheme cannot deliver on these, it should now be dropped.

The Committee has also recommended additional conditions, in relation to air quality, surface access, airport charges, community impacts, and waste management which it is almost impossible for Heathrow Airport's flawed scheme to fulfil.

The best option for passengers and for business is for Chris Grayling, the Transport Secretary, to admit a mistake has been made and to replace this flawed scheme with our cheaper, simpler, quieter Extended Runway proposal. This would simply require Mr. Grayling to revise the National Policy Statement before it is placed before Parliament for approval.

Jock Lowe, Director of Heathrow Hub, the independent proposal for the Extended Runway, said: *"By putting so many conditions on the third runway and exposing its many flaws, the Transport Select Committee has damned it with faint praise.*

"Our Extended Runway is cheaper, simpler and quieter. And unlike Heathrow Airport's scheme it is a fully worked out design, which does not destroy three villages and does not cause months, if not years, of disruption on the M25.

"Rather than waste any more time, Secretary of State Chris Grayling should tell Heathrow Airport to drop its expensive and complicated plan and adopt ours instead.

"The National Policy Statement can easily be amended to include the option of the Extended Runway before being voted on by Parliament.

"The sole reason the third runway is clinging to life is that it supposedly delivers more capacity. But this is incorrect. Heathrow has failed to do a Safety Case and our modelling has shown, that once operation safeguards are taken into account, the third runway actually has less capacity

than claimed. The Committee has rightly asked why the DfT has ignored this important evidence.”¹

One significant omission by the Transport Select Committee is it failed to investigate fully why our cheaper, simpler, quieter scheme has been vetoed by Heathrow Airport Ltd. Mr Grayling himself noted before the Committee that the main reason our scheme has not been taken forward hitherto is that Heathrow itself has refused to implement it. As it is cheaper, its shareholders would make less money.

Critical issues exposed by the Transport Select Committee include:

The third runway is too expensive

- “Before votes in Parliament to approve a final NPS, we would like to see evidence to demonstrate that the Northwest Runway scheme is both affordable and deliverable and that steps are being taken to address the valid concerns we heard in evidence about the high cost of the scheme and the significant risk that costs will rise.” (P.28, paragraph 54)
- “We recommend a condition be included in the NPS that airport charges be held flat in real terms but with scope for a marginal increase provided the balance of benefits is in favour of the consumer, as assessed by the Civil Aviation Authority. We recommend that the Government consider whether the CAA has the powers necessary to regulate effectively future airport charges at Heathrow.” (P.30, Paragraph 59)

The third runway cannot be financed without raising passenger fees significantly

- “The financing requirements for this scheme are considerable. While the Airports Commission considered these risks to be manageable, it assumed a 50% increase in airport charges, as well as some degree of pre-funding. This is clearly incompatible with delivery the passenger benefits endorsed as part of the business case. With a condition on charges in the NPS, HAL would be incentivised to make an early judgement as to whether it believes its scheme is financeable. Nevertheless, we recommend that, at an appropriate early stage of the DCO planning process, the Government’s preferred scheme be tested by the Civil Aviation Authority to ensure it is both affordable and financeable. Such as test should offer an opportunity to halt the planning process if it is evident that the proposed scheme has no realistic prospect of being built.” (P. 30, Paragraph 60)

The third runway is much noisier than an Extended Runway

- The 3rd Runway will create new and significant noise annoyance for 323,684 people, some 90,000 more than Extended Runway (chart on page 31).

¹ See P.19: “We acknowledge the concerns expressed by the proponents of the ENR scheme that the appraisal has been completed assuming a capacity lower than they believe their scheme can deliver.59 We do not have the technical expertise to make a formal judgement on whether the 740,000 movements for the ENR scheme are viable but we are concerned by what we have heard and the absence of a proper justification from the DfT.”

Difficulties in building the runway over the M25 pose a significant delivery risk

- “While a degree of optimism bias is already included in these estimates, there are still significant cost risks associated with this scheme, particularly with respect to the M25 reconfiguration.” (P.28)

The third runway destroys the most houses

- “The NWR scheme is expected to result in the loss of 783 residential properties and several community facilities [...] 242 residential properties will need to be demolished for the ENR scheme. Within the 100m buffer around transport infrastructure, another 165 residences may also need to be demolished.” (P.103)

Heathrow Airport has failed to say how it will replace the valuable Lakeside Energy From Waste plant

- “We recommend a condition of approval be specified in an updated NPS that provides the Lakeside Energy from Waste plant with equivalent recognition as the Immigration Removal Centres and that the replacement of its facilities be accounted for in the DCO process.” (P. 37, Paragraph 80)

ENDS

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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

Heathrow Hub’s proposal to extend the Northern Runway has been independently costed at £3.9bn for its first phase, or £9.7bn for the full scheme. It can be funded by keeping existing passenger fees flat.