

NO 3RD RUNWAY COALITION

PRESS RELEASE

26 MARCH 2020

For immediate use

FRESH SIGN GOVERNMENT WON'T EXPAND HEATHROW

The Government has given its clearest hint yet that it will not support Heathrow expansion.

In reply to a question put by Slough MP Tan Dhesi, the Government state that *"The Court of Appeal has ruled that the designation of the Airports National Policy Statement has no legal effect unless and until this Government carries out a review"* (1). The fresh use of the word "unless" implies consideration has been given to drop the project altogether.

The Department for Transport also state that they are focussed on responding to Covid-19 at the moment, which presents further evidence that Heathrow expansion has slipped down the agenda since the judgment on 27 February.

The Government say that they "are carefully considering the Court of Appeal's judgment and will set out our next steps in due course". However, it is unclear how long is meant by "due course" (2).

This news comes as the project has been dealt a huge blow, with the airport itself placing it under "deep freeze" and undertaking a review of the most senior roles at the airport, with no role for overseeing expansion (3).

Measures that Heathrow have taken since the Court of Appeal judgment include scrapping the proposal to bring in 25,000 more flights per year before any new runway opened (4). They described this as the "early release" of capacity of the 3rd runway (5). As the Airports National Policy Statement is now unlawful, Heathrow cannot seek permission for the release of the extra flights.

If Heathrow were to bring a fresh application forward for these additional 25,000 flights, it would be decided by the local authority – Hillingdon Council – who was one of the claimants in the legal challenge and are against any expansion of Heathrow.

Other measure include:

- Entire expansion project put on hold, into a "deep freeze"
- No fresh consultation on airport's Masterplan
- Shareholders want costs controlled given new political risk of the project

Paul McGuinness, Chair of the No 3rd Runway Coalition, said:

"In light of all circumstances, it seems right that the Government is unenthusiastic about resuscitating the Airports National Policy Statement. For as well as being ruled unlawful by the courts, it has become increasingly clear that the full facts about the deleterious air quality, noise, carbon and regional consequences of Heathrow expansion had not been presented to MPs, when it was subjected to parliamentary scrutiny. And even Heathrow's investors are now expressing cold feet about the project.

Moreover, it's most welcome that Heathrow has now announced that it won't proceed with its other plan, for an extra 25,000 flights within its current operation - the prospect of which had been causing such alarm in the airport's hinterlands. Because our communities are not only saying "No" to a third runway at Heathrow, but "No" to any expansion of flight volumes from what is, statistically, already the world's most disruptive airport".

ENDS.

Notes:

1. Parliamentary Questions, number 32187, Written Answers, 24 March 2020
<https://members.parliament.uk/member/4638/writtenquestions#expand-1186505>
2. Parliamentary Questions, number 32188, Written Answers, 24 March 2020
<https://members.parliament.uk/member/4638/writtenquestions#expand-1186505>
3. John Holland-Kaye, blog to Heathrow staff, 17 March 2020. For full blog, please get in touch.
4. Email sent to members of Board of Airlines Representatives in the UK, 3 March 2020. For more info, please get in touch.
5. BACKGROUND INFO: Currently, Heathrow can't land two planes on parallel runways at the same time. In order to allow a plane to land on the 'wrong' runway, the gap between planes landing on the other runway has to be extended. The introduction of Independent Parallel Approaches (IPA) is an attempt to get around this. The granting of an additional 25,000 flights would have required planning permission from the Planning Inspectorate in order to lift the 480,000 Air Traffic Movement Cap imposed in the Terminal 5 Inquiry. The introduction of IPA would also have required approval for the airspace changes from the CAA. It is not possible to add the 25,000 extra flights without introducing IPA as there is not the flexibility within current landing procedures to land that many extra planes safely on a 2-runway airport.

For more information, contact:

- Rob Barnstone on 07806947050 or rob@no3rdrunwaycoalition.co.uk