

NO 3RD RUNWAY COALITION

PRESS RELEASE

10 February 2022

For immediate use

HEATHROW ENVIRONMENT PLAN HUGELY UNDERWHELMING

Heathrow Airport's updated environmental Sustainability Strategy released today (10 February) is "patently underwhelming", according to campaigners (1).

The airport, which is calling for the government to mandate a 10% use of so-called Sustainable Aviation Fuels (SAF) by 2030, is committing no money to play a role in ensuring that this happens (2).

There is an acknowledgement that the UK government has set this target, but no analysis of which delivery mechanisms will be required to achieve it. Neither is there any analysis of prospective dates when new aircraft, which could help achieve the SAF target, might be introduced to the fleet. Turnover of the aircraft fleet is, of course, wholly outside of Heathrow's control.

Furthermore, any of the targets requiring financial commitments are contingent on what the industry regulator (Civil Aviation Authority) permits Heathrow to raise by way of increases to Heathrow passenger charges (already the world's highest). The CAA recently disallowed an increase requested by Heathrow (3). So, even the minimal targets that Heathrow might be able to affect are outside the airport's control.

The Airport propose to increase the number of passengers accessing the airport on public transport by 4% by 2026, by increasing the number of people within 1.5 and 3 hours of Heathrow who use public transport. This can only, effectively, be delivered by the introduction of Crossrail; so, for target to be reached, Heathrow are again dependent upon the decisions, work and funding of other organisations.

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

"These goals to reduce emissions are piffingly small in the limited areas where the airport could make a difference, and only ambitious in respect of technological developments over which they have no control.

"There's a section on Sustainable Aviation Fuels, but these can only be delivered - if at all - when the uptake improves. It is currently at less than 1%. Huge questions are yet to be answered about financial viability and even the degree to which they are genuinely sustainable. The target to increase environmentally friendly access to the airport, which depends on others delivering Crossrail, only envisages a 4% advance - paltry to some, but doubtlessly reflecting the airport's abject failure to increase it by more than 1% over the last decade.

“Heathrow are trying to make the right noises but it’s little more than a ticking box exercise. And what else can it be when virtually all the unsustainable emissions come from the planes?”

ENDS.

Notes:

1. <https://www.heathrow.com/content/dam/heathrow/web/common/documents/company/heathrow-2-0-sustainability/further-reading/Heathrow%202.0%20Connecting%20People%20and%20Planet%20FINAL.pdf>
2. <https://www.heathrow.com/latest-news/heathrow-presses-world-leaders-to-agree-global-sustainable-fuels-mandate-at-G7>
3. <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2021/dec/16/passengers-face-fare-rises-after-37-hike-in-heathrow-landing-fees>

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