**PRESS RELEASE**

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For immediate use

**Grayling makes key admissions at Transport Committee appearance**

Chris Grayling, Secretary of State for Transport, made several assertions when appearing appeared before the inquiry on the Airports National Policy Statement, held by the Transport Select Committee (TSC), on Wednesday afternoon (7 February).

When questioned about Heathrow’s regional connectivity, he confirmed that many of the domestic routes, promised by Heathrow, would not be commercially viable and would require taxpayer funded Public Service Obligation (PSO) subsidy orders, if they were to ever materialise (1); adding that he was unable to comment on any specific routes, as it would be up to the market to determine which might become economic, and then for the Treasury to determine whether financial assistance should be offered (2).

The Secretary of State also confirmed that, although up to 121,000 residents around the airport would be expected to suffer the impact of the further air pollution concentrations, likely to flow from the extra flights required to meet the DfT’s own recently updated passenger demand forecasts (3), the government was yet to undertake any work to assess those impacts.

Mr Grayling also confirmed that there would be a ‘real risk’ of non-compliance on air quality, were Heathrow to expand, and that the Government’s own analysis expects that risk to be heightened in the years 2026 – 2030.

While acknowledging that the proposed Western Rail Access, into Heathrow, remains unfunded, the Secretary of State sought to re-assure the TSC that it would eventually happen (4).

When it was suggested that respite for overflown residents would fall from half a day, to just one third of a day, were Heathrow to operate a Third Runway, the Secretary of State confirmed that a reduction in respite from noise, for adversely impacted residents, could be expected (5).

The Secretary of State appeared before the committee, two days after Heathrow CEO, John Holland-Kaye (5 February). On that occasion, the Heathrow boss appeared dismayed when TSC member, Huw Merriman MP, revealed that he had already observed the case for a Third Runway “unravelling” in previous sessions of the committee’s enquiry.

John Holland-Kaye was then confronted with information presented by Committee Chair Lilian Greenwood MP which showed – despite the Heathow boss’s claim that the number of polluting vehicular journeys to the airport had been in decline – that the percentage mode-share of vehicles using Heathrow had virtually flat lined over the past 10 years, from 62% in 2007/8 to 61% now (6).

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

“*Developing arguments to justify a third runway for Heathrow was always going to be about pushing squares through round holes. Heathrow, which lies bang slap in the middle of the most densely populated residential region in the country, is already highly disruptive, and the extra noise and pollution that will inevitably flow from its expansion will adversely impact hundreds of thousands of people. To proceed on the basis of evidence that unravels, on scrutiny, would simply be unacceptable*”

The Transport Committee has been tasked with examining the draft Airports National Policy Statement and will produce a report to Government before the end of March. Parliament is expected to vote on a final Airports NPS by the summer.

The No 3rd Runway Coalition appeared as a witness to the Transport Committee on 15 January 2018 (7).

*Ends.*

Notes:

1. Transport Committee, 7 Feb 18, 1714. [http://www.parliamentlive.tv/Event/Index/3a3a9566-614e-4ce3-9b27-3a10e33f5907](http://www.parliamentlive.tv/Event/Index/3a3a9566-614e-4ce3-9b27-3a10e33f5907%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)
2. Transport Committee, 7 Feb 18, 1724. [http://www.parliamentlive.tv/Event/Index/3a3a9566-614e-4ce3-9b27-3a10e33f5907](http://www.parliamentlive.tv/Event/Index/3a3a9566-614e-4ce3-9b27-3a10e33f5907%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)
3. Transport Committee, 7 Feb 18, 1733. [http://www.parliamentlive.tv/Event/Index/3a3a9566-614e-4ce3-9b27-3a10e33f5907](http://www.parliamentlive.tv/Event/Index/3a3a9566-614e-4ce3-9b27-3a10e33f5907%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)
4. Transport Committee, 7 Feb 18, 1815. [http://www.parliamentlive.tv/Event/Index/3a3a9566-614e-4ce3-9b27-3a10e33f5907](http://www.parliamentlive.tv/Event/Index/3a3a9566-614e-4ce3-9b27-3a10e33f5907%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)
5. Transport Committee, 7 Feb 18, 1840. [http://www.parliamentlive.tv/Event/Index/3a3a9566-614e-4ce3-9b27-3a10e33f5907](http://www.parliamentlive.tv/Event/Index/3a3a9566-614e-4ce3-9b27-3a10e33f5907%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)
6. Transcript of Transport Committee Oral Evidence Session, 5 Feb 2018. [http://data.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/committeeevidence.svc/evidencedocument/transport-committee/airports-national-policy-statement/oral/77959.pdf](http://data.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/committeeevidence.svc/evidencedocument/transport-committee/airports-national-policy-statement/oral/77959.pdf%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)
7. Transcript of Transport Committee Oral Evidence Session, 15 Jan 2018 [http://data.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/committeeevidence.svc/evidencedocument/transport-committee/airports-national-policy-statement/written/77628.html](http://data.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/committeeevidence.svc/evidencedocument/transport-committee/airports-national-policy-statement/written/77628.html%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)

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