

Press Release

17 December 2018

For immediate use**AVIATION STRATEGY UNDERMINES GOVERNMENT CREDIBILITY ON ENVIRONMENT**

The Aviation Strategy Green Paper published today is seeking to deliver sustainable growth of the aviation sector to 2050. Yet the paper fails to set out how continued aviation growth is compatible with existing environmental commitments, with the Government appearing content to let action be delivered at an international level, thereby missing an opportunity for the UK to lead the world in delivering a low carbon economy.

This attitude is in stark contrast to the advice from the Committee on Climate Change, who warned as recently as June 2018 that that higher levels of aviation emissions in 2050 “must not be planned for” and raised a series of concerns about how one additional runway would be compatible with efforts to reduce emissions, let alone two (1). They also warned that expansion of Heathrow will require significant operational restrictions on all other UK airports. The Government appear to have completely ignored that advice.

The Government commits to new guidance on surface access to airports that will aim to deliver sustainable journeys rather than just focusing on mode share to meet environmental targets.

The paper will also consult on the decision-making process for delivering a further runway in the UK by 2050. The DfT claims that the need for exploring another runway comes as a result of higher growth than was predicted in the 2015 forecasts.

The DfT also admitted that this is only based on demand forecasts (which have historically proven unreliable) and that they have not modelled the environmental case for another runway nor considered the impact on climate targets.

Yet it sets out no plans on how Government seek to address increased road traffic associated with airport expansion, who should pay for improvements to public transport networks, nor any commitment to new aviation taxes with revenues hypothecated for public transport projects.

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

“It comes as no surprise that the Government appears, not only determined to push ahead with the unsustainable expansion of Heathrow, but to now dangle the carrot of growth in front of the rest the UK’s airports, with no robust plan to address the environmental damage this would cause. It makes a laughing stock of the UKs commitment to the environment.”

“The Green Paper simply contains no strategy, either for delivering on existing environmental commitments or for addressing the significant negative impacts of airport operations on local communities.”

ENDS.

Notes:

1. Committee on Climate Change letter to Chris Grayling, 14 June 2018
<https://www.theccc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/CCC-letter-to-DfT-on-Airports-National-Policy-Statement.pdf>
2. Interviews available with the No 3rd Runway Coalition on request
3. Briefing from the No 3rd Runway Coalition attached to this email

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