

News story: Five point pledge on Heathrow ahead of historic vote

The Transport Secretary today (25 June 2018) described Heathrow expansion as the biggest transport decision in a generation, as he made a 5-point pledge to the country.

Ahead of the Commons vote, Chris Grayling urged MPs to seize the opportunity of targeting vital new overseas markets for British business and creating thousands of jobs.

And he promised any possible expansion would be governed by 5 key pledges:

- no cost to taxpayers – the new runway scheme will be privately funded and the government will work with industry to keep airport charges down
- a massive economic boost to the country – new international routes, more than 100,000 new jobs, doubled freight capacity and benefits of up to £74 billion to passengers and the wider economy
- guaranteed benefits for the whole of the UK – commitment to about 15% of new slots for domestic routes, new rail links, and new global opportunities for regional business
- environmental protection built-in – expansion to be delivered within existing climate change and air quality obligations and a new ban on scheduled night flights
- cast iron legal protection on commitments – Heathrow's pledges to be legally enforceable, with punishment of unlimited fines or grounded planes if promises are broken

Transport Secretary Chris Grayling said:

This is a momentous vote that has been 50 years in the making and represents the biggest transport decision in a generation.

Successive governments have wrestled with the issue of Heathrow expansion but never before has Parliament held a vote on this project.

At stake are thousands of new jobs and the country's ability to compete on an international stage and win new global trade.

We can be absolutely clear that this project will be privately financed and there will be no cost to taxpayers. And there will be cast iron legal protection to ensure the vital community and environmental measures are delivered.

I hope colleagues from across the House will now put aside party and political differences to take a decision in the long-term

national interest.

Today's vote follows a [government decision](#) on June 5 to officially support the expansion of Heathrow through a new north-west runway – put forward in a proposed [Airports National Policy Statement](#) (NPS).

If approved, it will see the construction of the first full-length runway in the south-east since the Second World War.

The NPS sets out how Heathrow expansion would provide an extra 16 million long-haul seats by 2040 – opening up new markets for British business and in-bound tourism.

And it takes into account [public and industry feedback](#) and [recommendations made by the Transport Committee](#) to ensure that airport expansion in the south-east will be delivered in a way that is cost-efficient, sustainable and in passengers' best interests.

This includes a world-class package of [compensation and mitigation measures](#) to support those affected by the expansion, with up to £2.6 billion for compensation, noise insulation and community amenities, which could include improvements to parks and leisure facilities.

These are reinforced by plans for a 6.5 hour scheduled night flight ban and [noise restrictions](#) which will be legally enforceable.

To make sure the whole of the UK benefits, the government has committed to about 15% of slots for [domestic routes](#). While many of these will be delivered commercially, government has for the first time set out that it would use [public service obligations to ensure existing and new routes are safeguarded](#). This includes the potential for slots to be ring-fenced and exempt from air passenger duty, which can save passengers £26 on the cost of a return domestic ticket.

The government is confident that the scheme can be delivered within our obligations under the [Climate Change Act](#), and [development consent](#) would only be granted on the basis that the new runway is delivered within existing [air quality obligations](#).