

Statement to parliament: Heathrow expansion: judgements from the High Court in the judicial review

The government welcomes today's (1 May 2019) judgements from the High Court in the judicial review of the [Airports National Policy Statement](#). Of 26 grounds, all were dismissed with 21 of the 26 not even held to be arguable. The positive outcome confirms my belief that government undertook a robust process in coming to its decision to support a new north-west runway at Heathrow Airport by 2030. This was one of the largest public law challenges of all time and I am pleased that the hard work of the independent Airports Commission and the department has been shown in good light. In designating the Airports National Policy Statement, this government demonstrated its willingness to take difficult decisions, resolving an issue with which successive administrations had grappled for decades.

Heathrow expansion is more important than ever as we plan to exit the EU. Connectivity to our only aviation hub airport is vital to productivity, and expansion is critical if global Britain is to attract inward investment and increase trade with new and fast growing overseas markets. It would better connect the UK to the rest of world with an extra 16 million long-haul seats available by 2040. Heathrow expansion is a decision that benefits communities up and down the country – as well as the tens of thousands of local jobs it would create, expansion is expected to increase the number of domestic routes from our hub airport to 14; we have already seen the arrival of direct flights to Newquay, allowing easy access to the UK's only hub airport from the south-west. In addition to new international and domestic routes, we would expect there to be increased competition on existing routes, giving greater choice to passengers. Heathrow Airport Limited has also made good progress on its logistics hub proposals – these aim to leave a lasting skills legacy across the UK. Today's decisions by the court are another step towards realising these benefits.

This government recognises that airport expansion cannot be at any cost. Expansion at Heathrow would only take place in compliance with air quality legal limits. For those communities impacted by the scheme, a world class package of mitigations would be provided and, despite the third runway, a future Heathrow would be quieter than it was in 2013 as new, quieter, planes come online and robust noise mitigations are rolled out. To get people to and from the expanded airport, Heathrow must ensure more people travel by public transport – supported by the expected development of western and southern rail links.

I want to address climate change where the UK continues to lead internationally. While international aviation emissions currently represent less than 2% of total global emissions, we recognise the challenge that decarbonisation of aviation represents. International aviation emissions are currently excluded from UK carbon budgets – this is consistent with the Paris

Agreement, which looks to the International Civil Aviation Organisation to provide leadership. The UK supports this approach and is continuing to lead negotiations on this issue. In coming to our decision to support expansion at Heathrow, the Airports Commission and the department concluded that expansion is possible within the UK's current climate change obligations and the Committee on Climate Change's recommended limit for aviation emissions. We are clear that expansion would only take place if it would not materially impact the ability of government to meet its carbon reduction targets now and in the future.

The government is currently consulting on its [aviation strategy green paper](#), which creates a plan for sustainable growth that benefits the whole of the UK to 2050 and beyond. In developing the strategy, we will carefully consider the Committee on Climate Change's forthcoming advice on the implications of the Paris Agreement for the UK's long-term emissions reduction targets.

Scarce taxpayers' resources – on all sides – would be better spent elsewhere. If the court grants permission for any appeals, we will seek to have them dealt with as quickly as possible. However, I urge all parties, particularly local authorities and community groups affected by the proposals, to move forward and engage closely with the planning process. As part of this, Heathrow Airport Limited has said it will undertake a consultation on its scheme masterplan in June. This will provide an opportunity for interested parties to give their views on the emerging scheme design. Heathrow would then apply for development consent which would be considered by the Planning Inspectorate, before a recommendation is made to government.

Outside of the planning process, the Civil Aviation Authority will continue to work with industry and Heathrow to ensure expansion can be delivered in a timely, financeable and affordable manner that is in the best interests of the consumer.

This government has taken the right decision, endorsed by a large majority of MPs, which had been ducked by other governments for decades. The expansion of Heathrow is vital to our international connectivity and shows confidence in the future prosperity of global Britain. The court's decision confirms that the right process was followed throughout. We could not be more pleased with the outcome which will benefit people and businesses the length and breadth of the UK for decades to come.