

Statement to Parliament: Update on the Airports NPS and a decision on night flights

In October 2016, the government [selected a new north-west runway at Heathrow](#) as its preferred scheme for delivering new airport capacity in the south-east.

In February a [consultation on a draft Airports National Policy Statement \(NPS\)](#) was launched, which set out the reasons for this preference, along with the mitigation and compensation measures the government expects the promoter to put in place if planning permission is to be granted.

The consultation closed on 25 May and the work to analyse the over 70,000 responses is progressing well. I would like to thank all of those who contributed their views.

This government is fully committed to realising the benefits that a new north-west runway at Heathrow would bring, in terms of economic growth, boosting jobs and skills, strengthening domestic links and – critically – increasing and developing our international connectivity as we prepare to leave the European Union.

The timing of the election, in particular the need to re-start a [Select Committee inquiry into the draft Airports NPS](#) means we now expect to lay any final NPS in Parliament in the first half of 2018, for a vote in the House of Commons.

I will provide a further update to the House after the summer recess on our next steps following analysis of the consultation responses.

Today (13 July 2017) I am also publishing a [response to the consultation held earlier this year on a new night flight regime for Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted](#). I am fully aware that noise is a major concern for those living near these airports, and that night noise is widely regarded as the most disturbing impact of aviation. While advances in new technology mean that aircraft are generally getting quieter, the limits governing night noise at these airports has not kept pace with these developments.

The new rules we are publishing today will encourage the use of quieter aircraft at all 3 airports by reducing the amount of noise these airports are legally allowed to make, and will give local residents a 5 year guarantee about the level of noise that they will be exposed to. This decision strikes a balance between managing the impacts on local communities by locking in the benefits offered by recent technological developments, with the economic benefits of night flights.

This decision should be seen as a signal that this government takes this

issue very seriously, which is why we expect a ban on scheduled night flights of 6.5 hours at an expanded Heathrow. We will also explore whether there is more we can do – including considering further legislation – to incentivise the industry more generally to invest in the quietest aircraft and operate them in the quietest way.

Strong international links are critical to the future prosperity of our country, with a world-class hub airport and thriving aviation sector central to this. We are committed to realising the economic and social benefits aviation has to offer, while taking seriously the need to balance this with managing the local and environmental impacts of aviation.