



Department  
for Transport

# Consultation on revised draft Airports National Policy Statement Response Form

On 25th October 2016, the Government announced that its preferred scheme for adding new runway capacity in the South East of England was through a Northwest Runway at Heathrow Airport and this would be subject to consultation through a draft Airports National Policy Statement (“draft Airports NPS”). The draft Airports NPS was published on 2nd February 2017, launching a 16 week period of public consultation (the “February Consultation”).

In the consultation document for the February Consultation, the Government explained it would continue to update the evidence base which was considered when it selected a Northwest Runway at Heathrow as its preferred scheme. The intention had been to publish this during the February Consultation but there was no suitable time to do so. The aviation model has been developed to incorporate the latest market data and to produce an updated set of demand forecasts. In July 2017 the Government also published the UK Air Quality Plan which sets out a range of measures to bring nitrogen dioxide air pollution within legal limits in the shortest possible time. The Government has revised the draft airports NPS to take account of this updated evidence base, and made other amendments as a result of either consideration of consultation responses or a change in the Government’s policy. The Government is therefore undertaking a short period of further consultation.

## How to respond:

Online: [www.gov.uk/dft/heathrow-airport-expansion](http://www.gov.uk/dft/heathrow-airport-expansion)

Email: [RunwayConsultation@dft.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:RunwayConsultation@dft.gsi.gov.uk)

Post: **Freepost RUNWAY CONSULTATION**  
(no stamp or further address required)

## Respond by:

19 December 2017

October 2017

Before answering any of the questions please read the consultation document for the further consultation which can be found at:

<http://www.gov.uk/dft/heathrow-airport-expansion>

For the reasons explained in the further consultation document, the Government proposes to make changes to the draft Airports NPS and some of the documents which were published alongside it. The changes have been published along with the supporting documents set out in the table on pages 7 and 8 of the further consultation document.

Have your say: Do you have any comments on the revised draft Airports NPS or any of the documents set out in the table on pages 7 and 8 of the further consultation document?

## ABOUT YOU

First name Keith .....Surname Taylor.....

Postcode...N1 6AH.....Email...keithtaylor@greenmeps.org.uk.....

Are you responding on behalf of an organisation or group? Yes  No

If yes, please state the name of your organisation or group\*

Office of the Green MEPs.....

\*Please note: if you are providing a response on behalf of an organisation or group the name and details of the organisation or group may be subject to publication or appear in the final report

## FOR ORGANISATIONS: What category is your organisation?

Please tick  the relevant box

- Statutory body
- Local authority
- Community group
- Environment group
- Airport
- Airline
- Air Navigation Service Provider
- Other Transport Provider (e.g. bus, train)
- Small Business
- Medium Business
- Large Business
- Business umbrella body
- Air freight business
- Other, please state

## HOW DID YOU HEAR ABOUT THIS CONSULTATION?

Please tick  the relevant box

**Contact from Department for Transport**

- Press advert  Local newspaper story
- Local authority engagement  Social media (Twitter, Facebook etc)
- National news story (national newspaper, BBC News, Sky News, ITV News etc)
- Informed through stakeholder group (business group, campaign group etc)

## CONFIDENTIALITY AND DATA PROTECTION

Information provided in response to this consultation, including personal information, may be subject to publication or disclosure in accordance with the access to information regimes (these are primarily the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA), the Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA), and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004).

If you want information that you provide to be treated as confidential please tick  the box below.

Please be aware that, under the FOIA, there is a statutory Code of Practice with which public authorities must comply and which deals with, amongst other things, obligations of confidence.

In view of this, it would be helpful if you could explain to us why you regard the information you have provided as confidential. If we receive a request for disclosure of the information we will take full account of your explanation, but we cannot give an assurance that confidentiality can be maintained in all circumstances.

The Department for Transport will process your personal data in accordance with the DPA, and in the majority of circumstances, this will mean that your personal data will not be disclosed to third parties.

I wish my response to be treated as confidential

Please write your reasons below. Please attach additional pages as required

## CONSULTATION QUESTION

Question: For the reasons explained in the further consultation document, the Government proposes to make changes to the draft Airports NPS and some of the documents which were published alongside it. We published these changes on 24 October 2017, along with the supporting documents set out in the table on pages 7 and 8 of the further consultation document.

Do you have any comments on the revised draft Airports NPS or any of the documents set out in the table at pages 7 and 8 of the further consultation document?

Please provide as much detail as possible in the box below. Please attach additional pages as required.

Advisory Note: If you responded to the February Consultation, you do not need to repeat points made previously, as we are considering these in full. Please note that when we consider responses to this further consultation, we may not be able to cross-refer to earlier responses because of the large numbers involved.

### **Lack of clarity around the needs case**

There remain a number of examples throughout the updated Airports National Policy Statement (NPS) and supporting documents where reference to the 'South East' in the context of the requirement for additional airport capacity has been added, where it was missing before (for example the Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) section 2.2.2; the Appraisal of Sustainability (AoS) section 7.3.1). These additions lend support to the idea that the initial needs case was framed in the UK context and that this update was an opportunity to ensure that all traces of this notion – that additional capacity need not be focused solely in the South East – could be removed.

Moreover, language updates from 'securing' UK hub status to 'maintaining' UK hub status (Revised draft Airports NPS section 3.14) demonstrate that the needs case is not a clear concept. With so many of the fundamental assumptions for ignoring the social and environmental harms that will be left in the wake of the preferred London Heathrow North West Runway (LHR-NWR) plan based on the imperative of meeting this needs case, it is extremely damaging that there is so much evidence throughout the plan that this needs case itself is not clear.

There also needs to be much more detail on how the justification that imperative reasons exist for overriding the public interest (IROPI) for LHR-NWR in this needs case, given the significant ecological, health, quality of life and environmental impacts to the local area that have been noted throughout the updated version of all of the documents and are predominantly worse at this site than the alternatives.

The updated HRA states that it must be fundamentally held to account that the objectives of 'increasing airport capacity in the South East and maintaining the UK's hub status' is considered to be IROPI. The process in section 2.3.3 of the HRA quotes the European Commission guidance on implementing Articles 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive from 2001.

It does not take into consideration a later document, which includes a discussion on what constitutes IROPI. (Guidance document on Article 6(4) of the 'Habitats Directive' 92/43/EEC CLARIFICATION OF THE CONCEPTS OF: ALTERNATIVE SOLUTIONS, IMPERATIVE REASONS OF OVERRIDING PUBLIC INTEREST, COMPENSATORY MEASURES, OVERALL COHERENCE, OPINION OF THE COMMISSION. January 2007, [http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/management/docs/art6/guidance\\_art6\\_4\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/management/docs/art6/guidance_art6_4_en.pdf) ).

It is staggering that given the weight placed on this fundamental concept, that totally inadequate levels of research have been done to support the case, including updated source information.

So there are two clear issues here. 1) The needs case is unclear and 2) the justification that this needs case can only be met by LHR-NRW has been inadequately assessed and explained in the updated documents. How does this very unclear needs case really override public interest? – This must be better explained.

#### **Removed information**

There are a number of examples across the updated documents where information has been removed between the February 2017 and October 2017 versions and in numerous cases there is simply no explanation about why these have been removed.

Some examples include the removal of the Mole Gap to Reigate Escarpment Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and the removal of consideration of 'other waterbirds' from the assessment of the Southwest London Waterbodies Special Protection Area (SPA)/Ramsar, both from the HRA. In section 12.1.6 of the HRA, the word 'reasonable' is removed in the context of discussing alternatives.

From the Health Impact Analysis (HIA), there are lots of examples that aren't adequately explained. The removal of disability weighting information for each public health outcome (5.7.1), the reference to sleep disturbance and Acute Myocardial Infarction (AMI) effects (5.7.137) and some of the reported impacts (5.7.146). The 'high scenario' data from tables (e.g. Table 5.13) and in 5.7.29, the detail about the 'no airport expansion scenario' has been removed. In section 5.7.47 information on the major adverse airspace noise is removed, and in 5.7.51, reference to the sensitivity case and how benefits are greatly reduced is removed.

In the AoS, Table 6.1 has strategic words such as 'greenfield' and 'construction and operation' removed. In section 6.5.13 reference to journey times has been removed, in section 6.6.2 the removal of carbon policy in noise impact assessment and in section 6.6.5 the range of noise levels is taken out. In 6.10.7, the mention of a net increase in population exposure to air pollution is taken out – is this no longer the case?

Section 6.11.7 removes focus on reducing carbon emissions from the construction and operation of the airport itself and 6.11.10 takes out language about the impacts of freight operations at the airport being significant – according to the Airports Commission (AC) it was likely to be considered significant. In section 7.4.8 mention of increased anxiety and hypertension have been removed.

Also in the AoS there are some important language changes to note, from section 7.4.8 language has been changed from ‘Potentially large reductions in population suffering from loss of sleep’ to ‘Potential future reductions in population suffering from loss of sleep as a result of exposure to night-time aircraft noise’ – which is correct? This needs to be clarified. And in the revised Airports NPS itself, in section 5.46 and 5.54 removal of the word ‘economic’ relating to the positive impacts of flights has been removed.

Whilst some of the changes made in the documents have been clearly explained, there are numerous other examples where changes (to statistics, baselines, text) have been made across the suite of papers that are not explained at all.

There may have been good reason for removing or altering these pieces of information in the revision process; there might have been strategic reasons for removing them. But in the interests of transparency, information about why such changes have been made is imperative.

### **Updated scenarios, methodologies and impacts**

Some of the assumptions and methodologies used in the draft documents by the AC have been changed in the revised versions. Some of these changes are adequately explained in the updated documents, but there are a number of significant issues with certain changes. The rationale for and implications of developing new forecast scenarios within the DfT is not adequately explained. Similarly in a couple of cases where the baseline has been updated, it is not clear if the data has been updated using the new baseline, or if the years in the text have simply been changed – such information is crucial to supporting and understanding the needs case.

Similarly in using updated information and data, some of the previously reported impacts have changed significantly, often making them more negative or profound. There is little evidence that these updated figures have been taken into consideration and reanalysed. In certain cases, changes may have fundamental consequences, but the updated documents do not offer any new insight. Some examples are outlined below:

- In Table 6.2 of the AoS, there needs to be more discussion of the changes outlined in the updated version as the economic benefits are a lot less than previously estimated and could call into question the business case.
- Using 54dB LAeq in the updated HIA instead of 57dB LAeq more than doubles the amount of people currently affected by noise – from 266,100 to 585,000 (AoS Non-tech summary). This is a significant change in the baseline data and assumptions made on the original basis need to be reconsidered.

- South East airport demand is expected to outstrip capacity by 13-15% in the draft Airports NPS and by 34% in the updated version – there is no explanation about the change in these figures but again with more than a doubling on previous estimates this warrants further attention – how were these figures arrived at?
- At the same time, capacity at Gatwick has increased by 10,000 between the first and second versions of the report – where did this extra capacity come from?
- Similarly Heathrow's freight handling was previously stated as 200 times Gatwick's now this is 170 – perhaps overstating the case for Heathrow.
- The DfT's estimate that air traffic movements (ATM) are 9% higher than reported in February – the implications of this should be remodelled since this is a significant increase.
- Carbon emissions are now reported as being an extra 5MT CO<sub>2</sub> every year – this is not insignificant and assumptions made about keeping within the UK's climate commitments need to be revisited.

### **Carbon mitigation**

Section 6.11.16 of the AoS makes an assumption about increasing electrification of the rail network contributing to reduced carbon emissions. Perhaps this should be rethought given that the same department that ran the analysis has scrapped electrification plans. Especially considering that section 3.31 speaks of lots of additional travel from across the UK to use Heathrow as an airport. Such additional demand and increase in travel should be factored into emissions scenarios.

Section 2.9 of the Revised Airports NPS is interesting as it now includes reference to long haul flights primarily. Whilst actual flight emissions have not been considered in the carbon impact calculations of the NPS, climate change is a global issue and by encouraging more long haul flights to, from and including the UK, total global emissions will go up. Whilst through the Paris agreement, no aviation emissions are designated to a particular nation; there is still a moral obligation not to actively seek to increase global emissions from this sector in such a manner.

The revised Airports NPS and the AoS state that they will not pursue a 'carbon capped' scenario but rather follow the 'carbon traded' approach, which is reliant upon an international emissions trading scheme. Given that the development of a sectoral approach in the aviation industry is in the very early stages, nothing has been agreed upon and will take years to implement, this approach is dangerous as it relies solely on a scheme which is not yet certain and may not come to fruition at all.

Inclusion of emissions-based access charge as potential mitigation measure is positive.

### **Air quality**

In Tables 7.2 and 7.3 in the HRA, only annual data is considered with regard to air pollution levels. By not considering 24hr mean data, significant exceedances may be occurring in the areas, but are not picked up or considered, this is an important issue to rectify.

The AoS talks of risks of cumulative effects (6.10.8) and of inherent uncertainties associated with modelling (6.10.15) on air quality – this information needs to be expanded on with indications of how serious these effects might be and how much uncertainty is being factored in to understanding the impacts.

It goes on to state that the level of risk is primarily dependent on the timing and effectiveness of the Government's 2017 plan. The plan has been widely criticised for being inadequate, so it can be assumed that the level of risk is likely to be high.

### **Agglomeration**

The DfT's decision to leave out agglomeration estimates from the wider economic impact assessment (AoS section 6.5.4) is extremely questionable. In the AC analysis the negative impacts of congestion on agglomeration were not accounted for, although the positive impacts in terms of creating business hubs etc. were. Instead of providing analysis on what the negative impacts of agglomeration relating to increased congestion are in the revised version (as these are very important figures to consider when making the needs case and assuming the IROPI of Heathrow), the DfT removed this element of the wider economic impacts altogether.

### **Hub status and quickly**

Emphasis has clearly changed in the revised documents – Hub status was emphasised several times more in the revised Airports NPS as an IROPI. This element of the needs case is being pushed more prominently than in the previous version but the reasons for this are not explicit. The HRA states that there aren't enough long haul flights and transfer passengers to make Gatwick a viable option – and seemingly for this reason alone this option was dismissed.

Pushing timelines forward at LHR-NWR would likely see worsened exceedances of air quality limits (HIA, 5.7.39/45), yet despite this the language has changed in a number of instances in the updated documents to demonstrate that the government is now thinking not about how to do this project right or in the least impactful way to realistic time schedules, but how to do it quickly (Revised Airports NPS – section 5.249).

### **Equalities impact assessment**

Sections 2.8.7 and 2.8.8 of the revised Equalities impact Assessment, drew attention to the fact that the first round of consultation was perceived to be inaccessible to the following groups of society: children, elderly, people with disabilities and those that do not speak English as a first language. It also saw that loss of housing can have particular effects on the elderly and those living with disabilities and that air quality and noise can have particularly negative impacts on children. In light of these findings, it would be useful to know what has been done in the second round of consultation to address this marginalisation of involvement of the groups least able to respond to issues that they stand to be affected by most?