**PRESS RELEASE**

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**TRANSPORT COMMITTEE DEMANDS SERIOUS CHANGES TO GOVERNMENT’S HEATHROW CASE BEFORE ANY VOTE IN PARLIAMENT**

Serious questions about whether Heathrow expansion can ever actually happen emerged following the publication of the House of Commons’ Transport Committee’s report on its inquiry into the Government’s draft Airports National Policy Statement (1).

The report highlights the absence of a large amount of material from the Government’s draft NPS and demands that evidence be presented that the scheme is both affordable and deliverable before any vote is put to MPs.

The report produced a scathing assessment of the cost to the taxpayers, passengers and airlines of expansion and has demanded to see evidence that these concerns will also be met before any vote is put to Parliament.

There was also expression of major concerns about the lack of clarity on surface access proposals and costs on the rerouting of the M25, the methodology of calculating air pollution impacts and a considerably more radical approach on noise impacts.

A final National Policy Statement was expected to be put to Parliament before the summer recess in July. Yet many of the demands and other recommendations in the report would yield that timetable extremely difficult to adhere to.

The No 3rd Runway Coalition assert that the draft NPS underestimates the true noise impact of Heathrow's proposals and that the actual numbers of people exposed to noise pollution would be revealed if Government implement the Committee's recommendations in full. Indeed, the TSC report highlights severe discrepancies between the NPS and the Department for Transport’s own guidance on noise that raises doubts about the number of people impacted in the NPS.

The report also questions the methodology applied to the monetising of air pollution costs and suggests that the assessment of the impact on the local populations was ‘overly rigid’ and potentially underplays the consequent increase in pollution that expansion would create.

In a further blow, the Committee also recommended that the Government’s preferred scheme be tested by the Civil Aviation Authority to ensure it is both affordable and financeable” and that such a test “should offer an opportunity to halt the planning process if it is evident that the proposed scheme has no realistic prospect of being built.”

The Committee also identified that in its current form, the NPS would be a high risk of losing any legal challenges.

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

*"Despite suggesting that planning should proceed for Heathrow expansion, the TSC has emphasised that the process remains at the early stage and recommended a raft of safeguards and conditions that sound the death knell for Heathrow expansion.*

*“The Committee demand a re-assessment of the noise and environmental impacts, scold the government for not using its own guidelines for noise assessment and point out that it's evaluation of the scheme is based on the unrealistic assumption that it could be at full capacity within two years – something that even Heathrow refutes.*

*“If the Government implements all these recommendations then a parliamentary vote on the final national policy statement is unlikely to happen in 2018.”*

ENDS.

Notes

1. House of Commons Transport Committee, Airports National Policy Statement, HC548, published 23 March 2018

For more information

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