

Report finds fault with the Airports Commission's recommendations on Heathrow third runway



Hillingdon, Richmond, Wandsworth, and Windsor and Maidenhead councils have called on MPs to oppose the recommendation from the Airports Commission for a new third runway at Heathrow.

The councils, members of the 2M Group of local authorities opposed to Heathrow expansion, have asked MPs to consider their findings following an in depth assessment of the commission's claims.

A report put together by the councils challenges the recommendation on environmental, health, and community impact grounds, and says the commission has put together an inflated and distorted case for expanding Heathrow. The report highlights the factors that make the third runway undeliverable. These barriers include environmental, transport, political and social factors as well as potential legal challenges that are at the centre of the debate.

The councils also point out that the commission's own aviation growth forecasts predict a third runway will only offer the UK an additional five long haul routes.

The evidence suggests too that claims regarding EU air quality legislation have been misunderstood by the commission and that it has deliberately recommended placing a large source of pollution in an area that is already under severe strain.

Ray Puddifoot, Leader of Hillingdon Council, said: "The critical factors which present the biggest challenge to a potential third runway have been either avoided, or worse, misinterpreted by the commission.

"There is a distinct lack of information on air quality and flight paths and instead there are inflated claims about a colossal economic windfall that the commission says will come from a handful of new trade routes. It's clear to me that the case for expansion at Heathrow doesn't add up and a third runway will never happen, no ifs or buts."



Lord True, Leader of Richmond Council, said: “As the evidence in this report points out, there is no way to mitigate the impacts of the Heathrow expansion and this third runway proposal is no different from those which went before it. As with previous schemes, it is wide open to legal challenge and the environmental costs do not justify the economic benefits, in addition, the expansion could cost UK taxpayers £20bn.”

Ravi Govindia, Leader of Wandsworth Council said: “The Airports Commission’s recommendation points the way to more wasted years and another failed runway scheme. Heathrow is simply in the wrong place and there is no realistic prospect of overcoming the complex physical, legal and environmental factors that will always constrain its growth.”

David Burbage, Leader of the Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead said: “We are asking MPs to consider carefully whether a scheme that is forecast to deliver a net reduction in direct routes between Heathrow and domestic airports is really in the interest of regional economies and local people. The third runway is the wrong choice for London and the South East and would greatly reduce regional connectivity and economic competitiveness. For the millions of people who are neighbours to the airport, this would be very damaging.”