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*Dear Mr Holland-Kaye,*

## **HEATHROW AIRPORT EXPANSION CONSULTATION**

England's Economic Heartland Strategic Transport Forum is the Sub-national Transport Body for the Heartland region. Membership of the Forum covers the area from Swindon, through Oxfordshire, Milton Keynes and across to Cambridgeshire, and from Northamptonshire across to Luton and Hertfordshire.

As a Sub-national Transport Body, England's Economic Heartland is responsible for setting a strategic vision for the transport system, supported by a long term strategy for the region.

In July 2019 England's Economic Heartland published its Outline Transport Strategy. This sets out how the transport system needs to support and enable the region to realise its economic potential, and doing so in a way that brings greater prosperity and improved quality of life for its residents and businesses.

The Outline Transport Strategy's vision is to 'connect people and places with opportunities and services' supported by the ambition that the region's transport system should be zero carbon by 2050.

Heathrow Airport's importance as a global gateway for the United Kingdom has a key role to play in enabling the region to gain access to global markets and opportunities elsewhere. However, in taking forward proposals for the expansion of Heathrow Airport it is essential that investment in surface access prioritises the need to reduce car dependency: and to reduce it significantly.

It is in this context that England's Economic Heartland supports the expansion of Heathrow Airport. However, that support is conditional on delivery of the project being aligned with the implementation of a comprehensive programme of investment

in measures that result in a step change in connectivity to/from the airport by non-car modes.

Given Heathrow Airport's strategic significance to the UK economy, the Government should prioritise the need to complement the investment made by the airport owners in order to achieve this outcome.

The Strategic Transport Forum considers that the information published to date does not give sufficient confidence that the package of measures required to achieve its commitment set out in the Airports National Policy Statement that landside airport-related traffic will be no greater today [than after expansion] has been identified or that there is sufficient confidence the programme of investment required to deliver those measures has been identified.

The Masterplan should set out how the package of measures and associated programme of investment meet the needs of the different users of the airport-employees, passengers and freight (both air freight and services supporting the operation of the airport).

The Masterplan should set out how the airport will use the disruption to the transport system during the construction period as the opportunity to implement measures that encourage fundamental and lasting change in travel behaviour. This is particularly pertinent given the acknowledgement that the current modal split for access to/from Heathrow Airport does not meet the existing targets. Subsequently, the Airport's ambition to achieve a public transport mode share of at least 50% by 2030, and at least 55% by 2040 will again, not be realised. Addressing this deficiency should be a pre-requisite before granting permission for the expansion.

In addition, further information is required on how construction related activities will be managed and their implications on the transport system, including the arrangements associated with the delivery and removal of materials to/from construction sites associated with the expansion of the airport. It is noted that the freight impact of constructing the third runway will not be understood, this is because the majority of HGV journeys will occur outside the airport boundary used to measure vehicle movements.

Permission to expand capacity at Heathrow Airport should not be granted unless or until measures have been identified, funded and delivered that will ensure there is no 'net increase' in car based access to/from the airport as a result of the expansion in airport capacity.

The proposed surcharge on vehicles, in the form of a Ultra Low Emission Zone, will not go far enough in reducing vehicle movements, especially when considering that for many there are no viable public transport alternatives. This is particularly true for areas in England's Economic Heartland that neighbour Heathrow where at present public transport connectivity to the airport is poor. This leaves visitors and employees at the airport who are travelling from the Heartland region with no viable alternatives to car based travel, making them more likely to be disproportionately disadvantaged by the surcharge proposal.



There is therefore an urgent need for the airport to set out in detail the package of measures it proposes to implement in order to ensure that the requirements to improve air quality are met. At the same time there is a need to demonstrate how the proposed measures will contribute to reducing the wider environmental impact of airport operations. The revenue associated with the Ultra Low Emission Zone provides an opportunity to reinvest in improved or new public transport provision. Therefore, England's Economic Heartland feels the Heathrow Expansion proposals should provide a clear commitment as to what transport projects this revenue will be earmarked for.

The Strategic Transport Forum has previously identified the need for expansion of Heathrow Airport to be accompanied by improved surface access connectivity, specifically:

- Delivery of Western Rail access to Heathrow – identified as an enhancement project that is required to support current levels of airport operations
- Delivery of improved rail connectivity to the north (via the strategic rail interchange located at Old Oak Common) – construction of the Chiltern platforms at Old Oak Common, together with the restoration of the direct rail link from Old Oak Common to the Chiltern Main Line and onwards towards High Wycombe, Princes Risborough and Aylesbury. The strategic importance of developing this corridor as part of the strategic rail network has been identified by Network Rail in its Route Strategy and is an agreed strategic priority of the Strategic Transport Forum on the basis that – in combination with the opening of East West Rail – it will provide an attractive and realistic travel choice to/from Heathrow Airport.
- Delivery of improved express coach links serving locations within the Heartland region – with additional routes being designed to complement the improved heavy rail connectivity
- Delivery of improved rail connectivity to the south – although not within the Heartland region, the Forum supports the need for improved connectivity as part of the overall requirement to reduce the impact of surface access
- Complementary Measures on the M25 – delivery of improved public transport connectivity will provide attractive and viable alternatives to the private car. Measures should be identified and implemented that enable the relief to the motorway network – in particular the M25 – to be captured to the benefit of remaining road users
- Car Parking Provision – the approach to car parking provision within the airport complex should be integrated with the investment in improved public transport access, ensuring that the level of provision, and its operating regime actively encourage use of public transport

England's Economic Heartland welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Heathrow Airport Masterplan. As the Sub-national Transport Body for the region we would



welcome the opportunity for a direct conversation with Heathrow Airport as it looks to update and refine its Masterplan proposals.



**Mayor Dave Hodgson**  
**Chair, Strategic Transport Forum**