

**Pre-Application Programme Document**  
Expansion of Heathrow Airport (Third Runway)  
March 2025

# CONTENTS

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- 1 Introduction**
- 2 Project Description**
- 3 Pre-Application Timetable**
- 4 Stakeholder Engagement and Consultation**
- 5 Main Issues for Resolution**
- 6 Main Risks to the Pre-Application Stage**

# 1 Introduction

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- 1.1 This Programme Document supports the proposed application for development consent by Heathrow Airport Limited (HAL) (“the Applicant”) for the North West Runway Project (the “Project”) at Heathrow Airport.
- 1.2 The proposed application has been registered with the Planning Inspectorate (“PINS”) and given case reference TR020003<sup>1</sup>. This Programme Document is produced to assist PINS to resume the pre-application process for the Project.
- 1.3 The Project involves the construction of a new runway and terminal infrastructure that will increase the capability of Heathrow Airport to provide air passenger transport services by more than 10 million passengers per annum (mppa). The Project therefore includes airport-related development that is a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) under sections 14(1)(i) and 23 of the Planning Act 2008 (“PA 2008”). The Project also encompasses highway-related development, including proposals to divert the M25 motorway, which is classified as an NSIP under sections 14(1)(h) and 22 of the PA 2008.
- 1.4 Support for the principle of the Project is contained in the Airports National Policy Statement (ANPS), designated on 26 June 2018. The ANPS confirms that there is a national need for additional hub airport capacity in the South East of England and that the Heathrow North West Runway Project is the most effective and appropriate way of meeting the needs case. The policies in the ANPS have effect in relation to the Heathrow North West Runway scheme, having a runway length of at least 3,500m and enabling at least 260,000 air transport movements per annum<sup>2</sup>. It also has effect in relation to terminal infrastructure associated with the Heathrow North West Runway scheme and the reconfiguration of terminal facilities in the area between the two existing runways at Heathrow Airport.
- 1.5 A revised National Networks NPS (NNNPS), the relevant national policy statement for highways infrastructure, was designated on 24 May 2024<sup>3</sup>. The NNNPS is relevant to some highway components of the Project.
- 1.6 The Government has recently confirmed its support for the Project. In January 2025, the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced support for the expansion of Heathrow Airport with the addition of a third runway:

*“I have always been clear that a third runway at Heathrow would unlock further growth, boost investment, increase exports, and make the UK more open and more connected as part of our Plan for Change. And now the case is stronger than ever because our reforms to the economy - like speeding up our planning system, and our strengthened plans to modernise UK airspace - mean the delivery of this project is set up for success. So I can confirm today that this*

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<sup>1</sup> [PINS NSIP project page](#)

<sup>2</sup> [ANPS paragraphs 1.15 and 4.3](#)

<sup>3</sup> [NNNPS](#)

*Government supports a third runway at Heathrow and is inviting proposals to be brought forward by the summer.”<sup>4</sup>*

- 1.7 The Government has stated that the Applicant should submit proposals to them by Summer 2025. The Applicant intends to meet the timescales outlined by Government and plans to submit proposals to the Government in Summer 2025.
- 1.8 This document is intended to brief PINS on the current planning status of the Project and next steps. It is separate from the proposals that will be submitted to the Government in the summer.

### The Programme Document

- 1.9 This Programme Document sets out the proposed approach and programme for the pre-application stage in relation to the Project. This will enable those engaged in the pre-application process to understand the planned activities and timescales so that their contribution can be programmed into the pre-application stage at the most effective point.
- 1.10 The Programme Document has been prepared having regard to the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) guidance ‘Planning Act 2008: Pre-application stage for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects’<sup>5</sup>, as well as relevant advice issued by PINS in the ‘Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects: 2024 Pre-application Prospectus’.
- 1.11 The Programme Document will be updated by the Applicant as necessary until the submission of the application for development consent. It will be published on the Applicant’s project website.

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<sup>4</sup> [Chancellor’s Announcement of support for Heathrow Expansion](#)

<sup>5</sup> [Guidance on the pre-application stage for NSIPs](#)

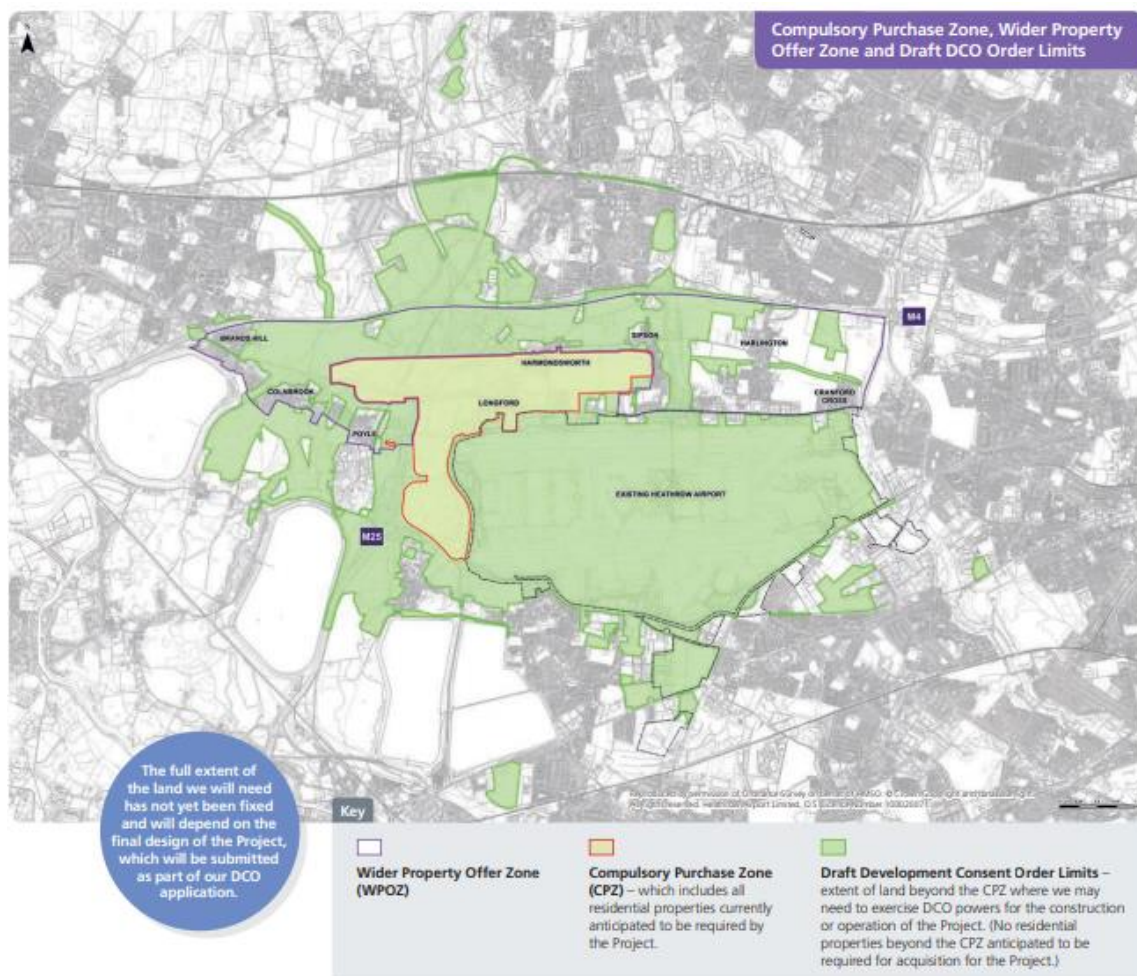
## 2 Project Description

2.1 The description of the Project remains as it was in 2020:

*“Expansion of Heathrow Airport to enable at least 740,000 air traffic movements per annum and including a new runway to the north-west of the existing airport; supporting airfield, terminal and transport infrastructure; works to the M25, local roads and rivers; temporary construction works, mitigation works and other associated development.”*

2.2 The Project draft DCO Order Limits was shown in the statutory consultation carried out by the Applicant from June to September 2019. Figure 1 below is taken from the consultation document<sup>6</sup>, which shows the draft DCO order limits (as well as the compulsory purchase zone and wider property offer zone) as understood at that time. **As with all aspects of the Proposed Development, these may be subject to refinement as the DCO application proceeds through the pre-application process to submission and are described for context.**

Figure 1: Draft DCO Order Limits (June 2019)



<sup>6</sup> [Heathrow Airport Expansion Consultation Document June 2019](#)

2.3 The Project comprises the following main components:

- **A third runway** of 3,500 metres, approximately 1 km north west of the existing northern runway
- **Related runway infrastructure**, including additional taxiways
- **New terminal and satellite infrastructure**
- **An expanded Terminal 5 campus**
- **A realigned M25 Motorway and associated junctions, and changes to the road network**
- **Improvements to active travel and public transport infrastructure, as well as parking infrastructure**
- **Enhancement of airport supporting development**, which includes operational and commercial facilities within and around the airport
- **Diversions to rivers**, including creating opportunities for significant enhancements to the local water environment
- **Safeguarding of land for displaced land uses and community facilities**
- **Construction phase works**

2.4 The Project also includes a range of proposals regarding changes to the operations of the airport, and the management of effects on local communities.

2.5 Heathrow has historically safeguarded land to support the development of rail infrastructure, including proposals for a Western Rail Link and/or a Southern Rail Link to Heathrow. These proposals would further enhance the rail network to the airport and serve the areas to the west and south of Heathrow. Any rail scheme is likely to constitute a NSIP and be consented by way of DCO. The Applicant is reviewing how additional rail links to Heathrow may be best delivered.

### 3 Pre-Application Timetable

- 3.1 Consistent with Ministerial announcements, the Applicant wishes to resume the DCO pre-application process with a view to its application being determined in this Parliament.
- 3.2 It will build on the extensive work already undertaken to define, assess and consult upon the Project. It will review what is proposed in light of any changes in circumstances and the feedback already received in response to pre-application consultation and stakeholder engagement.
- 3.3 The principal milestones and key dates during the pre-application stage are provided in Table 1. These milestones and dates are subject to periodic review.

*Table 1: Key pre-application events and milestones (all dates in the future are indicative)*

Event / Milestone	Date
Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC)	2016 / 2017
Airport Expansion Consultation One and Airspace Principles Consultation (non-statutory)	January to March 2018
EIA Scoping Opinion	Adopted 29 June 2018
Airspace and Future Operations Consultation (non-statutory)	January to March 2019
Section 46 notification	17 June 2019
Airport Expansion Consultation (statutory)	June to September 2019
Issue Programme Document to PINS	March 2025
PINS Inception Meeting	April 2025
Request for Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Addendum Scoping Opinion	Mid 2025
Quarterly PINS Meeting	July 2025
Quarterly PINS Meeting	October 2025
Quarterly PINS Meeting	January 2026
Updated Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC) published	H1 2026
PINS Pre-Consultation Meeting	April 2026
Further Statutory Consultation, including updated Preliminary Environmental Information	End 2026
Quarterly PINS Meeting	October 2026
Quarterly PINS Meeting	January 2027
Quarterly PINS Meeting	April 2027
PINS Adequacy of Consultation Milestone Meeting	2027 / 2028

PINS Draft DCO Application Documents Review	2027 / 2028
DCO Application Submission	2028

- 3.4 The Applicant's preliminary view is that the Project and scope of supporting information will need to be refreshed and refined to take into account the pause since 2020. It will resume engagement with statutory consultees, stakeholders and the community, and undertake a further round of statutory consultation to ensure that the DCO application to be submitted is informed by up-to-date data and feedback. The Applicant intends to request an update to the EIA scoping opinion for the Project which was adopted by PINS on behalf of the Secretary of State on 29 June 2019. This request may take the form of an addendum to the EIA Scoping Report submitted by the Applicant on 21 May 2018.



## 4 Stakeholder Engagement and Consultation

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- 4.1 The Applicant undertook extensive scheme development, consultation, and engagement work over a period of many years in the lead up to 2020.

### Consultation

- 4.2 The consultations undertaken on the Project are:
- Airport Expansion Consultation One and Airspace Principles Consultation (January to March 2018) (non-statutory)
  - Airspace and Future Operations Consultation (January to March 2019) (non-statutory)
  - Airport Expansion Consultation (June to September 2019) (statutory)
- 4.3 These consultations presented consultees with options for scheme development and detailed information on the Project. Feedback was received and taken into account at each stage. For the purposes of the PA 2008, the June to September 2019 Airport Expansion Consultation was formal statutory consultation on the Project.
- 4.4 The Applicant intends to undertake a further round of statutory consultation prior to submitting its DCO application. This will be carried out in accordance with the provisions of Chapter 2 of Part 5 of the PA 2008 having regard to all relevant guidance and advice.
- 4.5 For the purposes of consultation with local communities, the Applicant prepared and published a SoCC earlier in the process in accordance with section 47 of the PA 2008. The Applicant intends to update the SoCC and carry out further consultation activity in accordance with it.
- 4.6 The Applicant will prepare and submit a Consultation Report as part of the DCO application, which will set out how the pre-application consultation requirements of the PA 2008 were complied with, and how consultation feedback was taken into account and informed the development of the Project.

### Engagement

- 4.7 The Applicant undertook extensive engagement with a wide range of statutory and non-statutory stakeholders, including through community engagement forums, over the course of the Project's development in the lead up to 2020. This included significant engagement with stakeholders on the scoping and preparation of the EIA, as well as in relation to the design and development of proposals of relevance to local residents and businesses.
- 4.8 The Applicant will continue to engage with relevant statutory and non-statutory organisations to further develop its proposals for the Project. It will again enter into Planning Performance Agreements (PPAs) and other mechanisms to support the process.

## 5 Main Issues for Resolution

- 5.1 Table 2 below provides the Applicant's current view regarding the potential main issues for resolution during the pre-application period and the activities that will be undertaken to address these.

*Table 2: Applicant's view of main issues for resolution*

Issue	Response
Assumptions and forecasts	The Applicant is currently reviewing and validating its proposals for the Project, in anticipation of submitting proposals to Government in Summer 2025. This work includes confirming scheme assumptions and forecasts that underpin the Project.
Design development and option selection	The Applicant will undertake a review of the Project's design to ensure the proposals take account of changes in circumstances since the programme was paused, as well as feedback from consultation and stakeholder. This includes the masterplan design but also other elements of the scheme including, for example, the mitigation package, jobs and skills requirements, and the proposals for the community fund.
Environmental impacts and mitigation	<p>The Applicant's preliminary view is that some minor aspects of the Project and scope of supporting information will need to be refreshed and refined to take into account changes in circumstances since the pause in 2020.</p> <p>The Applicant intends to request an update to the EIA scoping opinion for the Project which was adopted by PINS on behalf of the Secretary of State on 29 June 2019. This request may take the form of an addendum to the EIA Scoping Report submitted by the Applicant on 21 May 2018.</p>
Land and property acquisition	The Applicant will review any changes to the baseline position and re-engage with landowners and occupiers.
Construction impacts	The Applicant will review and validate the proposed construction approach, taking into account any changes in circumstances and delivery requirements for the Project.

## 6 Main Risks to the Pre-Application Stage

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- 6.1 The Applicant operates a process to identify and monitor risks to the programme in line with best practice for major infrastructure projects. The Applicant recognises the risks associated with updating the Project proposals, which have been developed over a long period, including a period of hiatus.
- 6.2 The Applicant has identified the need to update the Project assumptions to reflect any policy or other baseline changes.
- 6.3 As the Project has an extended period of time to undertake pre-application activity, the Applicant recognises that risks will be identified as the Project progresses through the pre-application stage. This includes the risk of changes to the programme and submission that could arise as a result of matters identified during the pre-application stage.
- 6.4 The Applicant will continue to track any risks to achievement of the pre-application stage and manage them by keeping the programme under review.