

News story

Plans for Heathrow expansion accelerate as Transport Secretary unveils next steps

Enabling Heathrow expansion will drive economic growth and create jobs across the country.

From: **Department for Transport** (</government/organisations/department-for-transport>), **The Rt Hon Heidi Alexander MP** (</government/people/heidi-alexander>) and **The Rt Hon Rachel Reeves MP** (</government/people/rachel-reeves>)

Published 22 October 2025



- Transport Secretary launches swift and robust review to deliver Heathrow expansion
- process will be 3 years faster than production of previous policy statement
- Heathrow expansion will support economic growth and enable international investment, boost connectivity and strengthen the UK's

competitiveness, delivering on the Plan for Change

A third runway at Heathrow is one step closer to take-off after the Transport Secretary today (22 October 2025) launched the promised review of the Airports National Policy Statement (ANPS), which will provide the framework within which any future expansion will be considered.

Previous work to launch the ANPS in 2018 took 5 years, but the government is committed to going further and faster and today confirmed the reviewed draft ANPS will be published for consultation by summer 2026 in the latest move to back Britain's builders and get major infrastructure projects off the ground, showing our commitment to delivering progress swiftly but robustly.

[Launching the review in Parliament](#)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/realising-the-benefits-of-expansion-at-heathrow-airport>), the Transport Secretary set out that since 2018, new environmental and climate obligations mean an updated ANPS is necessary to allow a decision to be taken on expansion planning applications. The review of the ANPS will include considering 4 key tests that any proposed scheme for Heathrow expansion will have to meet, including on climate change, noise, air quality and contributing to economic growth across the country.

This will ensure planning applications to build a third runway progress fast enough for a final planning decision to be made within this Parliament. The government will seek formal advice from the Climate Change Committee on any relevant amendments proposed to the ANPS to ensure consistency with our net zero commitments.

Today's milestone on the road to deciding plans for Heathrow expansion follows the approval of Luton expansion earlier this year and Gatwick expansion last month – as the government continues to back aviation projects that will grow the economy, provide highly skilled jobs and help deliver the [Plan for Change](https://www.gov.uk/missions) <https://www.gov.uk/missions>).

The government has acted swiftly to launch the review of the ANPS so that a decision can be made on a third runway by the end of this parliament to realise the government's ambition of seeing flights take off from a new runway by 2035.

Following an invitation for potential promoters to submit proposals to deliver a third runway earlier this year to inform the ANPS review, the [Transport Secretary also confirmed 2 schemes remain under active consideration](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/heathrow-expansion-next-steps-for-promoters) <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/heathrow-expansion-next-steps-for-promoters>). Promoters Heathrow Airport Limited and the Arora Group now need to provide additional details on their plans to clarify associated impacts for investors, affected communities and businesses.

After consideration of this information, the government will announce the single scheme being taken forward to inform the remainder of the ANPS review by the end of November. Any updates deemed necessary to the ANPS would then be consulted on next summer, where communities and stakeholders will be able to have their say.

Transport Secretary, Heidi Alexander said:

“When we say this government is one that backs the builders, not blockers we mean it. Today is a critical building block which will advance plans for the delivery of a third runway at Heathrow, meaning people can start to experience the full benefits sooner.

“As our only hub airport, Heathrow is critical to the UK’s economy, connecting millions of people every year and exporting British businesses across the globe. Enabling Heathrow expansion will drive economic growth and create jobs across the country, delivering on our Plan for Change.”

Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rachel Reeves, said:

“After decades of false starts, we are backing the builders to get Heathrow’s third runway built, creating thousands of jobs, boosting growth across the UK, and making Britain the world’s best connected place to do business.

“This government is getting Britain building to kickstart growth and deliver an economy that works for, and rewards, working people.”

The government is clear expansion at Heathrow must be financed entirely by the private sector and bring no cost to taxpayers, whilst also meeting rigorous and effective cost controls to deliver this significant infrastructure project as quickly as possible. Financing will come from promoters who submit formal expansion schemes and will include covering any related costs to improvements to transport to and from the airport.

Given the importance of Heathrow to trade and the economy, the government will also assess whether expansion at the airport should be designated as critical national priority infrastructure, meaning that it must meet enhanced security and resilience requirements.

The government’s Sustainable Aviation Fuel Bill will support greener flights, which are essential to ensuring an expanded Heathrow contributes to the UK meeting its climate targets.

The bill will encourage the production of green aviation fuel in the UK by providing economic security for the market to thrive.

This includes ensuring that domestic producers receive a set amount for each unit of fuel they produce. To set the course for net zero aviation by 2050, the government has also invested £63 million to fast track the construction of UK SAF production plants.

A new UK Airspace Design Service will also be established to modernise UK's airspace, alongside airspace slot reforms to ensure future allocations maximise benefits for passengers, local communities and businesses at expanded London airports, including Heathrow, Gatwick and Luton.

Karen Dee, Chief Executive of AirportsUK, said:

“Delivering critical national infrastructure, including airport capacity, is vital if the UK is to increase economic growth. Setting a clear policy framework and providing a predictable, cost-effective and timely approvals process will help bring forward investment, create more connectivity, and drive productivity.

“We look forward to working with Ministers to deliver these elements to ensure the UK can remain a world leader in aviation.”

Tim Alderslade, Chief Executive of Airlines UK, said:

“We welcome the strong recognition from government of aviation's unique role enabling economic growth and activity in all parts of the UK. Airlines support airport expansion, but any scheme at Heathrow must be affordable, deliverable and aligned with the industry's net zero commitments, principally through the scale-up of advanced SAF and a modernised UK airspace.

“We want a growing aviation sector and hub airport to deliver for passengers and businesses everywhere, but not at any cost, and we look forward to working with Ministers to deliver on these objectives.”

Jane Gratton, Deputy Director of Public Policy at the British Chambers of Commerce, said:

“This is great news. After many years in the planning, fast-tracking the process to support a decision on Heathrow's expansion will be welcomed by businesses across the UK.

“A third runway at Heathrow is vital to accelerating economic growth – as the UK's hub airport and its largest air cargo port, its development will be a huge boost to British business.

“Construction projects on this scale are crucial to the future development of supply chains across the UK. Around 60% of the economic benefit from Heathrow expansion will be felt by communities outside London and the South-East.

“Chambers believe a third runway at Heathrow, with facilities fit for the 21st Century, will boost trade, attract international investment, improve connectivity, and deliver wide-ranging benefits for the economy.”

To deliver an expanded Heathrow on time, the government is also pressing ahead with wider reforms to the UK’s planning systems, including the Planning and Infrastructure Bill, which will streamline the delivery of major infrastructure projects through faster consenting routes and more balanced consultations.

Work is also underway with the judiciary to cut the time it takes for reviews to move through the court system for nationally significant infrastructure projects and national policy statements to ensure projects can be realised more swiftly.

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Published 22 October 2025



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