

Heathrow third runway: template letter to MPs

Dear _____ MP

I'm writing regarding climate change and the government's plans to expand Heathrow airport.

Since Parliament approved the Airports National Policy Statement (NPS) on 25 June 2018, a number of scientific and political developments have further demonstrated the incompatibility of the decision to expand Heathrow with meeting the UK's climate goals:

- On 28 June, the Committee on Climate Change's (CCC) annual progress report to Parliament¹ warned that "the UK is not on course to meet the legally binding **fourth and fifth carbon budgets**" as set out in the Climate Change Act, and that much greater action is required, particularly in the transport sector. The stalled progress of the last five years was described as "now an acute concern".
- On 8 October, the IPCC's special report on 1.5 degrees² laid out in sobering clarity the catastrophic impacts of 2 degrees' warming compared to 1.5 degrees. The report, coordinated between 2,000 climate scientists, reiterated the need for "rapid and far-reaching transitions in energy, land, urban and infrastructure (including transport and buildings), and industrial systems" and made clear the necessity of **halving global emissions within just 12 years**.
- The following week, the UK, Welsh and Scottish governments formally requested updated advice from the CCC regarding **tightening long-term emissions reduction targets** and the transition to a net zero-carbon economy, in light of the Paris Agreement.³
- On 26 November the Met Office's UK Climate Prediction 2018⁴ provided the clearest assessment yet of what the UK will experience from the changing climate: rising sea levels, increased temperatures, and changing patterns of rainfall.
- On 27 November the UN's Emissions Gap Report 2018⁵ set out the gulf between action required to meet Paris goals and that so far pledged by national governments. The report outlined humanity's current trajectory – more than 3 degrees of warming by 2100 – and the scale of action required to get back on track: **a fivefold increase in ambition** compared to current ambition.

The UK policy context for aviation and climate is clearly still evolving. The government is currently consulting on its draft Aviation Strategy⁶, with a view to that strategy being finalised later in the year. In spring, the CCC will inform that strategy by providing advice on the long-term strategy for the UK's aviation emissions.

By the end of March, the CCC will also advise on tightening greenhouse gas emissions targets and the UK's transition to a net zero-carbon economy, referred to above, consistent with the Paris Agreement.

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Since 1990, emissions from UK aviation have more than doubled. Heathrow Airport is by a distance the biggest source of carbon emissions in the UK, responsible for as much carbon dioxide as Croatia's entire economy.

It was clear in June 2018 that expanding Heathrow would be inconsistent with the UK's existing domestic and international climate obligations. The developments outlined above further reinforce that view. It is highly likely that to meet a net-zero target, emissions from aviation will need to be much lower. Given these developments in climate science and policy, and the uncertainty concerning the UK's wider aviation policy, Parliament's decision to approve Heathrow expansion is clearly in need of revisiting.

To this end, please write to transport secretary Chris Grayling requesting the Airports NPS be withdrawn, revised and reissued at an appropriate time.

Yours sincerely,

[local group]

Footnotes

1. [CCC: Reducing UK emissions: 2018 Progress Report to Parliament](#)
2. [IPCC: Special report: Global warming of 1.5°C](#)
3. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/748489/CCC_commission_for_Paris_Advice_-_Scot_UK.pdf
4. [Met Office: UK Climate Projections](#)
5. [United Nations Environment Programme: Emissions Gap Report 2018](#)
6. [HM Government: Aviation 2050: the future of UK aviation](#)

A note on using the template

You can use this template to individually send an email to each of the MPs in your local group's area. Simply copy and paste the above letter into your email client, fill in the MP's name, your local group's name and make any changes that you need to do.

Make sure to keep an eye on the footnotes when copy and pasting or reformatting the email to make sure the hyperlinks aren't lost.

Finally, if you have any questions, need advice on which MPs are covered by your local group or if you receive a response from an MP please get in touch with our infrastructure campaigner, Laura MacKenzie, at: laura.mackenzie@foe.co.uk.