



## Heathrow Expansion (NPS): Factsheet

# NOISE

**The Mayor is strongly opposed to Heathrow expansion, recognising the unacceptable noise, air quality and surface access impacts, with serious consequences for public health and quality of life.**

**Whether or not you accept the case for Heathrow expansion, the National Policy Statement (NPS) presented by Government fails to credibly and comprehensively address its impacts. Moreover, it has substantively ignored almost every recommendation of the Transport Select Committee (TSC).**

**The result is a final NPS for Heathrow expansion which is not fit for purpose.**

### Why is noise important?

Heathrow today exposes around 750,000 people to significant aviation noise – that's more than its five main European rivals combined. It is around 7 times as many people as Manchester airport (the UK's second noisiest) and around 60 times as many as Gatwick airport.

Studies show that prolonged exposure to aviation noise can increase the risk of high blood pressure, coronary heart disease, stroke and dementia, as well as significantly reduced reading comprehension and memory recall in school-aged children.

## Night noise

### What the NPS says

*"This will include a highly valued scheduled night flight ban of six and a half hours between 11pm and 7am."*

### What the TSC report says

It called on affected communities to be provided with a minimum average period of 7 hours of respite a night. This would likely ensure no worsening compared to today.

### The Government response to the TSC

It has clarified that the night noise ban in the NPS is not a condition of expansion:

*"This is expected to include a highly valued scheduled night flight ban of six and a half hours between 11pm and 7am." [emphasis added]*

It has not adopted the TSC recommendation but instead states that *"the Airport NPS does not preclude consideration of different options."*

## There is no requirement in the NPS for any restrictions on night noise.

Even if the suggested ban were introduced, it could result in an increase in night flights of up to 140 per cent – because under the Heathrow Airport Limited (HAL) proposals, the restricted period would end at 5.30am and all three runways would be able to operate at full tilt after that.

# Noise modelling

## What the NPS says

The Government analysis was relatively limited in scope. It relied on the flightpath scenarios developed by Heathrow Airport Limited (HAL).

## What the TSC report says

The TSC found that the Government's approach "*resulted in an analysis that tends towards the lower end of the range of possible noise impacts.*"

As such, the TSC called for a comprehensive update to the noise modelling, to reflect a range of flightpath scenarios and using a range of metrics and thresholds.

## The Government response to the TSC

It has declined to follow the TSC's advice, stating that "*the purpose of this assessment is to draw out key strategic considerations relevant to noise.*" It says its approach is consistent with the Airports Commission assessment of shortlisted schemes and that further modelling would be undertaken by HAL as part of its Development Consent Order (DCO) and the Airspace Change Process (ACP).

**By ignoring the TSC request for more comprehensive noise modelling, the NPS fails to capture the true extent of the likely noise impacts.**

**There will be 2.2 million people who are exposed to a significant increase in aircraft noise as a result of Heathrow expansion, according to Government analysis.**

## HAL's flightpath modelling

HAL's flightpaths are the result of an iterative optimisation process – redrawing the flightpaths until the lowest number is achieved, underpinned by new navigation technology.

Its approach has raised several concerns:

- Expansion was compared against a future non-expansion scenario which was not optimised – this implies banking the benefits of new technology to justify a third runway – which would otherwise have reduced the noise impacts for local communities.
- The nature of the flightpaths allows them in part to circumvent the standard average noise metrics (LAeq, Lden) and so understate the numbers affected;
- NATS found some of the flightpaths to be unfeasible;
- These indicative flightpaths bear no relation to the actual flightpaths to be flown, options for which are only to be published by HAL in 2021, after any DCO decision.