

News Release from the Department for Transport

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Hoon outlines air, road and rail improvements to boost economy and jobs

Britain will benefit from major air, rail and road improvements as Transport Secretary Geoff Hoon today outlined radical new plans for the UK's transport infrastructure, designed to support the economy and secure jobs in the long term.

Mr Hoon confirmed Government support for a third runway at Heathrow airport but not for "mixed mode" which would have seen the two existing runways used more intensively. Alongside this, he outlined measures to help protect jobs and put Britain on a footing to recover from the global economic downturn, including:

- Details of where up to £6bn to increase capacity on some of the nation's busiest roads will be spent - providing an extra 520 lane miles of road by widening and opening up the hard shoulder - as well as new plans to roll-out hard shoulder running across the core motorway network.
- The creation of a new company - High Speed 2 - to help consider the case for new high speed rail services between London and Scotland and tasked initially with developing a proposal for an entirely new line between London and the West Midlands which could link to Heathrow and Crossrail through a new international interchange station.
- Further work to consider the case for electrifying two of Britain's busiest railway lines - Great Western and Midland Mainline - with decisions to be announced later in the year.

Alongside this the Transport Secretary announced new measures to protect the environment and help ensure that Britain meets its climate change commitments, including:

- Bringing international pressure for international aviation to be part of global deal on climate change, building on aviation's inclusion in the European Emissions Trading Scheme.
- New work to promote international agreement on progressively stricter limits on carbon dioxide emissions from aircraft, similar to those already in place for new cars within the EU.

- The intention to set a new target of reducing UK aviation emissions below 2005 levels by 2050.
- A limit on initial use of the third runway so that the total increase in flights does not exceed 125,000 a year - almost half the additional capacity which the Government originally proposed.
- Only allowing capacity increases beyond that to be approved by the Government after a review in 2020 by the Climate Change Committee.
- Allowing new capacity to only be released only once strict air quality and noise conditions are shown to be met and on the basis of independent assessment.
- The intention to bring in incentives for new capacity to be given to cleaner, quieter aircraft.
- £250m to get more ultra low-carbon vehicles on Britain's roads, helping motorists to go green by stimulating consumer uptake and helping to reduce emissions from road transport and improve local air quality.

Transport Secretary Geoff Hoon said:

"Transport is the lifeblood of Britain's economy. In spite of record levels of investment over the last decade, increasing demand means that in many places our transport infrastructure is operating at, or very near, capacity. It is essential we take the right decisions now: for the economy, to drive down greenhouse gas emissions by 2050; and to support British jobs.

"Heathrow is vital to our economy. It connects us to the growth markets of the future - essential for every great trading nation. But for too long it has operated at full capacity, losing ground to international hub airports in other countries and with relatively minor problems causing severe delays to passengers.

"This third runway will help secure jobs now and in the future and ensure that Britain remains a place where the world can come to do business."

Geoff Hoon added:

"However, we need to do more than just improve Heathrow to ensure that Britain's economy can cope with the transport demands of the 21st century.

"A new rail line between London and the West Midlands approaching London via a Heathrow International interchange would enable faster journeys to the North and

Scotland and could link the airport with rail destinations throughout the UK. This would unlock Heathrow for the rest of the country, making it a truly national asset. I expect to receive advice from High Speed 2 by the end of the year on a credible plan for a new line with financing proposals.

"We also need to look at ways of making the railway more efficient and greener. The case for electrification on the Great Western and the Midland Mainline routes appears strong as electric trains are quicker, quieter and they emit less CO2.

"It is clear that many of our major roads also need more capacity and we are committing up to £6bn to improve the national road network - including extending hard shoulder running to some of the busiest parts of M1, M25, M6, M62, M3 and M4, providing much-needed relief from congestion."

Mr Hoon confirmed the Government's support for a third runway and additional terminal facilities at Heathrow after confirming that the strict environmental criteria it had placed as a condition to expansion would be met.

He also announced that as he had rejected mixed mode - he would expect the airport operator to bring forward a planning application for the third runway so that it could be built as soon as possible in the period 2015 - 2020 so as to reduce delays to for existing passengers and improve resilience.

In order to give further assurance that environmental limits will be met, Mr Hoon also announced that new capacity at Heathrow would be released only once strict air quality and noise conditions are shown to be met and on the basis of independent assessment and enforcement. He also confirmed the intention to introduce incentives for new capacity to be given to cleaner, quieter aircraft and that the first call on new capacity should ensure that journeys are more reliable for existing passengers.

Geoff Hoon said:

"Things have improved greatly for those living near the airport over the past 30 years. Improved aircraft technology means that, while in 1974 some 2 million people around Heathrow were affected by average levels of noise at or above 57 decibels, by 2002 that number had dropped to 258,000 people.

"People who live around the airport clearly value runway alternation and that is why I have rejected more intensive use of the existing runways through mixed mode.

"But we need to do more. The additional measures I am putting in place - on slot priority for cleaner, quieter aircraft and the release of new capacity only once environmental conditions are shown to be met - also demonstrate my determination to mitigate the effects of the airport on those who live nearby."

Today's announcements follow the 'Adding Capacity at Heathrow Airport' consultation which began in November 2007 and attracted over 70,000 responses.

When the Government gave support to further development at Heathrow in its 2003 Air Transport White Paper in 2003 it made this support conditional on strict local noise and air quality limits and on an improvement in public transport access to the airport.

The 'Adding Capacity at Heathrow Airport' consultation set out the grounds on which the Government believed those conditions could be met.

Notes to Editors

Heathrow

1. The 2003 White Paper 'The Future of Air Transport' made clear that given the economic benefits to the UK, the Government supports the further development of Heathrow by adding a third runway and exploring the scope for making greater use of the existing runways, subject to meeting strict local conditions on air quality and noise and improving public transport access.

2. In full, the local conditions which must be met to permit expansion of Heathrow are:

- There should be no net increase in the total area of the 57dBA noise contour. This would be measured at 127sq.km which was the size of the contour in the summer of 2002.

- Government would need to be confident that levels of nitrogen dioxide (the critical pollutant) would be contained within EU limits, which will apply from 2010 or 2015 where the European Commission agrees the case for extension.

- There must be improvements to public transport access to the airport.

3. In November 2007, the Department published a consultation on the future expansion of Heathrow airport which invited views on:

- A proposal for a third runway and associated passenger terminal facilities, and the Government's assessment of how the strict local environmental conditions mentioned above could be met;

- A proposal to introduce 'mixed mode' on Heathrow's existing two runways as an interim measure and the Government's assessment of how the same strict local environmental conditions could be met. In considering the 'mixed mode' options the consultation looked at the position with or without additional air traffic movements;

- The results of a review of operational procedures on the existing runways - 'westerly preference' (the preferred direction of operation) and the 'Cranford agreement' (which generally prohibits easterly departures off the northern runway) - irrespective of any further changes; and

- An assessment of the effects of night-time rotation between westerly and easterly preference, and of the current trial of runway alternation in the 0600 to 0700 period.

4. Today's announcement confirms support for a third runway and associated passenger terminal facilities, while rejecting the case for mixed mode. Westerly preference is retained, but the Cranford agreement is ended. Night time rotation and early morning runway alternation are both confirmed.

5. Allowing 'mixed mode' to go ahead on the two existing runways would have seen them used simultaneously for both arrivals and take-offs. This would have ended the current system of runway alternation which gives local residents respite from overhead aircraft noise for at least 8 hours each day.

6. Ending the Cranford agreement, which generally prohibits easterly take-offs from the northern runway, will spread noise more fairly around affected communities and extends the benefits of runway alternation to the residents of Windsor and others to the west of the airport, and Hatton and North Feltham to the east.

7. These decisions are set out in Adding Capacity at Heathrow Airport - Decisions Following Consultation which is published today with a number of other documents including:

- Adding Capacity at Heathrow Airport: Report on Consultation Responses
- Adding Capacity at Heathrow Airport - Impact Assessment
- Adding Capacity at Heathrow Airport - Equalities Impact Assessment
- UK Air Passenger Demand and CO2 Forecasts 2009

8. All these documents and other supporting material will be available from the DfT website at:

<http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/aviation/heathrowconsultations/heathrowdecision/>

High-speed rail and electrification

1. The formation of High Speed Two will build on Network Rail's study of options for new lines and the formation last October of the National Networks Strategy Group chaired by Andrew Adonis. Network Rail's work has pointed to a strong case for a new line from London at least to the West Midlands. This would both improve connectivity and increase capacity on the existing West Coast Main Line, which is forecast to become overcrowded by about 2025.

2. High Speed Two will be chaired on an interim basis by Sir David Rowlands. Sir David was until 2007 Permanent Secretary at the DfT. Earlier in his career at the Department he led the team which advised Ministers on the preferred route for the Channel Tunnel Rail Link and subsequently oversaw delivery of the Link on time and on budget.

3. Network Rail and DfT have been jointly examining the case for further rail electrification. This can have advantages on busy parts of the network, given the lower

carbon emissions and better performance of electric trains. A decision on electrification of the most heavily used parts of the Great Western mainline from Paddington and the Midland mainline north of Bedford will be announced later this year, alongside decisions on the deployment of the new inter city express trains.

4. Further details are set out in Britain's transport infrastructure: High Speed Two which is published today. The relevant documents will be found on the DfT website: <http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/rail/pi/highspeedtwo/>

Roads

1. The document supporting today's announcement, Britain's Transport Infrastructure: Motorways and Major Trunk Roads, details the locations where capacity will be added to the motorway and major trunk road network, including through hard shoulder running.

2. This builds on our command paper, Roads - Delivering Choice and Reliability' published in July 2008, which set out the challenge that we face in sustaining the key role of the national road network in supporting economic growth and productivity, in the face of current congestion at peak times and traffic growth. It announced that up to £6 billion had been made available to fund improvements to national strategic roads in England, and set out the national schemes which were being considered for this funding.

3. This funding is in addition to the £3 billion allocated to strategic regional roads before 2015/16 through the Regional Funding Allocation process. Regions are currently reviewing their priorities for the period up to 2018/19.

4. The document also explains the way in which we will apply the 'managed motorways' concept progressively across key parts of the network in England, and the schemes that will be taken forward. It also sets out our programme of other capacity enhancements on the national network.

5. The relevant documents will be found on the DfT website: <http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/roads/network/policy/motorways/>

Ultra - low emission cars

1. £250m has been committed for consumer incentives and infrastructure development, supplementing an existing £100m programme for research, development and demonstration, to help the Government aim of bringing ultra low carbon vehicles to mass market more quickly.

2. The funds will help stimulate consumer uptake of ultra-low emission cars and support provision of infrastructure that may be required. Further details will be made available later this year.

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