

MAYOR OF LONDON

Rt Hon Chris Grayling MP
Secretary of State for Transport
Department for Transport
33 Horseferry Road
London SW1P 4DR

Date: 20 JUN 2019

Dear Chris,

I am writing in response to the Department for Transport's (DfT) aviation strategy green paper, "Aviation 2050: The future of UK aviation".

Now more than ever, it is essential that the environmental impacts of aviation are not ignored or merely mitigated in securing the economic benefits. In response to the initial call for evidence, published in July 2017, I expressed my concern that the draft strategy did not include a specific strategic objective relating to the environmental impacts of aviation. This has not been rectified and it is disappointing that environmental impacts are still framed as an obstacle to supporting growth. The result is that the opportunity to deal with the environmental impacts of aviation effectively, in a strategic way, has been missed. The sustainability of aviation cannot be an afterthought, treated as an inconvenience to be overcome in pursuit of economic growth.

In December 2018, I declared a climate emergency and I welcomed the decision by Parliament to follow suit on 1 May 2019. A week later, the DfT wrote to Plan B (in a letter from Caroline Low, Director of Heathrow Expansion) to acknowledge that there may need to be a review of the Government's flawed decision to allow expansion at Heathrow. This kind of rethink is essential, but it also highlights why there must be a broader and fundamental review of UK aviation policy. The Committee on Climate Change has outlined that further efforts will be required from the aviation sector if the UK is to meet its climate change obligations under the Paris Agreement and that it must do so without relying on international offset credits.

The noise impacts of aviation also remain a pressing concern for hundreds of thousands of local residents and the policy should be encouraging every effort to reduce noise, not just manage it. It is unacceptable that my and others' calls for an effective independent noise regulator with monitoring and enforcement powers have been ignored.

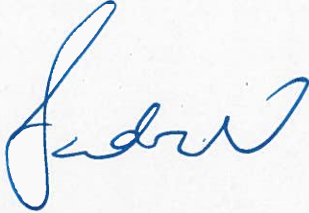
Tangible steps must also be taken to reduce air pollution associated with aviation, as the UK seeks to meet its legal obligations – and this includes transforming airport surface access towards sustainable modes for both passengers and staff. While the green paper notes, correctly, that surface access leads to some of the most significant impacts on air quality, there are no proposals to ensure that airport surface access strategies consider this vital issue. This is a deeply concerning oversight.

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I fully support the important role that London's six airports play in enabling trade, inward investment and tourism; directly and indirectly supporting hundreds of thousands of jobs. With the persistent economic uncertainty of Brexit, aviation can help ensure London is open. At the same time, in the event of Brexit, steps must be taken to absolutely minimise the impacts on aviation and UK connectivity in particular. It remains the case that this can be best achieved by seeking continued participation in the European Common Aviation Area and continued alignment with EU regulations.

If the Government is serious about addressing the challenges that UK aviation must confront over the coming decades, then you must ensure it faces up to its environmental responsibilities. As well as the UK's citizens and businesses, this is in the interests of the aviation sector itself. It will require a fundamental rethink on aviation policy – and halting Heathrow expansion is only the first step in that. Future generations will not thank you if you allow aviation to continue to pay little more than lip service to addressing its noise, air quality and climate change impacts. A sustainable future for aviation requires concerted and accelerated action now.

Yours sincerely,



Sadiq Khan
Mayor of London

Att. A detailed paper by Transport for London going into depth on some of the key matters arising from the consultation