

NOTES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY MEETING TO DISCUSS THE DRAFT HEATHROW EXPANSION NATIONAL POLICY STATEMENT

Date: Wednesday: 8 July 2026

Time: 10:00 – 12:00 hrs

Venue: Online (via Teams)

Attendees:

Keith Artus	Chairman & Honorary President, SASIG
Chris Cain	Policy Director, SASIG
Lesley Smith	Policy Executive, SASIG
Surinderpal Suri	SASIG Specialist
Michael Thornton	Lead Advisor, HSPG Secretariat
Sophia Norfolk	Slough Borough Council
Jason Newman	Slough Borough Council
Jason Traves	Slough Borough Council
Dr. A. Asandei	Slough Borough Council
Jake Hamilton	Rushmoor Borough Council
Emily Shovlar	Ealing Council
Margret Haggerty	Elmbridge Borough Council
Ann Zhang	Surrey Heath Borough Council
Francis Soper	Surrey Heath Borough Council
Navil Rahman	Surrey Heath Borough Council
Stuart Jeffries	Bracknell Forest Council
Guido Liguori	UKACC Secretariat Officer
Tracey Waltho	Chair, Heathrow ACC
Tony Wong	Director, HEICEB

Apologies Received:

Paul Baker	London Borough Hammersmith & Fulham
Daniel Gigg	Buckinghamshire Council
Shamal Ratnayaka	Transport for London
Kay Mead	East Herts District Council
Suzanne Parkes	Elmbridge Borough Council

Introductions:

SASIG Chairman, Keith Artus welcomed attendees and provided a brief outline of SASIG and the Group's aims and work followed by an introduction of SASIG Policy Director Chris Cain, co-host Michael Thornton from HSPG and SASIG Secretariat's Lesley Smith.

The aim of today's meeting was to review and discuss the [draft Heathrow Expansion National Policy Statement](#) issued on 18 June by the Government and identify how it would affect local authorities in particular. The Chairman gave the floor over to co-host

Michael Thornton, Lead Advisor, HSPG Secretariat who gave a brief outline of HSPG, their work relating to the airport and their perspective on the HENPS draft document. They felt that there are some positive points within the document and are cautiously supportive of it. However, they felt that the HENPS package was not as complete as they had hoped it would be and there remains some key issues which HSPG would like to see addressed before the final document is published. These areas include (but are not limited to):

- The role of local authorities within the process
- A need for improvements to design and placemaking
- An absence of environmentally managed growth framework
- Weakened surface access requirements
- Ambiguity around night flight restrictions
- Incomplete ANNE and ANAS findings and adjustment to UK noise policy
- Lack of LHR cargo facilities and no clear forecasts available
- AAM penetration
- Energy supply issues
- Long haul travel

(To note: post meeting this perspective was circulated to all those invited to attend).

The floor was then given over to Chris Cain, SASIG Policy Director who gave an extensive slide presentation outlining the key issues for discussion. These included:

The Policy Process

An outline was provided on how the Government has arrived at this point – basically from the 2013 Aviation Forecasts, through the 2018 ANPS, the Aviation 2050 document (which, due to COVID was never consulted on) and now up to date.

There is concern that the Government is rushing to get this policy out without fuller consideration of some of the issues it would either bring about or not address. SASIG is keen to get an idea of how West London authorities felt about HENPS and how they believe it would impact them. The document appears to be generally too Heathrow-oriented and regional airports have not been given much consideration. However, it is important that they are considered as the Government has previously stated that all UK regions should benefit economically from airport expansion.

A Heathrow-only ANPS would also leave the rest of aviation policy fragmented. For example, with other London airports such as Stansted, Gatwick and Luton having their own expansion plans approved – how would this dovetail into the Heathrow plan? Similarly, how would the Heathrow plan link into other bigger regional airports outside London, such as Birmingham, Manchester and Edinburgh?

The Need Case

The 'need case' for the Heathrow Northwest Runway scheme was outlined with a focus on forecast demand and system capacity. DfT have rebuilt their forecasting model - those recently issued this year have forecast a much higher baseline than the previous set issued in 2017 and which were used for the 2018 ANPS.

GDP was an important factor - there is usually a high level of correlation between GDP and demand growth. The 3rd runway was scheduled to be opened in 2035 but true levels of capacity would likely not be realised until the 2040s - 2050s. A London airport 'system-based' perspective is also required.

Omissions

Cargo/freight capacity remains a major concern – if trade growth is not allowed to improve, the UK will undoubtedly suffer in the long run. A question hangs over the displacement which has moved within the M25 – was that something that was really wanted and was a third runway really the answer to all future capacity requirements?

Another concern is the *lack of interaction between the DCO process and the airspace change process* which was currently undergoing modernization. Also, *financial viability* should not be solely an issue for the regulatory process.

There is an absence of acknowledgement of *secondary effects* which include:

- how ultra-fine particles impact health;
- noise issues – something SASIG has raised concerns on for a long time;
- impacts on building rates, local service provision;
- administrative burden for LAs.

Concerns about planning issues were also raised – *some of these were going out of the hands of local authorities so how would these be managed going forward?* Questions also remain about issues such as a DCO framework, impacts and mitigations and also handling two DCOs in parallel.

Alternatives

There was some discussion about the alternative runway plan that had been provided by Arora. They were looking to run a separate airport operator which would make the overall situation more complex. Additionally, they were in favour of a smaller runway length.

All agreed that a UK hub was important and should operate close to 80% capacity although with Heathrow, this was currently nearer 99% which was astonishing. Another question raised was whether the airport could continue to operate as a hub on just two runways.

Conclusions

SASIG agreed with HSPG that the draft document was not as comprehensive as had been hoped. There was a danger of far too much additional burden on local authorities but there was nothing in the document to provide clarity about who would be financially responsible. Some of the questions within the consultation were badly-framed therefore it is important that local authorities should make sure their thoughts on critical issues are included within their own submissions to the consultation. It was generally agreed that a co-ordinated effort on everyone's part would also be most helpful.

Actions

- The SASIG presentation given by the Policy Director along with the perspective from HSPG and also the Summary of the [House of Commons Heathrow debate held on 14 May](#), would all be circulated post-meeting. (*Note: this has been actioned*).
- With the September deadline for response to the consultation, not so far away, SASIG would, in the near future, provide a timetable of any technical papers produced or future meetings arranged (See Appendix A).
- If those attending, or those unable to, felt there would be value in a further meeting closer to the submission deadline, SASIG would be willing to organize this.

The Chairman thanked all in attendance and closed the meeting.

Appendix A: Technical Papers Reviewing the HENPS and Supporting Documentation

1. Passenger Forecasts
2. Freight Requirements
3. London System and Regional Interaction Analysis
4. Need Case
5. Economic Case
6. Climate Change Analysis
7. Noise Evaluation
8. Affordability – Phasing and Financing
9. Omitted Issues Requiring Additional Analysis
10. Understanding the Proposals in Terms Scenarios, Shocks, Resilience

Timetable

The timetable for producing these will be Drafts by 5 August. They will be circulated for comments/amendments/proposed additions by 17 August and finalised so that they can support Local Authority and SASIG responses as required, by 24 August.

Appendix B: List of invited authorities/organisations:

London Borough of Hounslow
London Borough of Hillingdon
Reigate and Banstead Borough Council
Slough Borough Council
East Herts District Council
Richmond and Wandsworth Councils
Spelthorne Borough Council
Crawley Borough Council
Rushmoor Borough Council
Fareham Borough Council
Wokingham Borough Council
Ealing Council
London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham
Buckinghamshire Council
Elmbridge Borough Council
Runnymede Borough Council
Surrey Heath Borough Council
Woking Borough Council
Bracknell Forest Council
Local Government Association
Transport for London
Heathrow Strategic Planning Authority (HSPG)
UK Airport Consultative Committees (UKACCs)