

Heathrow Letter

London skyline at evening

Key information

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The London Assembly has urged Heathrow Airport to provide an update on their proposed expansion plans and to ensure they go further with their work to mitigate noise pollution emitted from the airport.

If undertaken, the original expansion proposals would have meant up to 1.6 million people living along the proposed flight paths closest to the airport would have likely been overflowed with noise levels above 65 decibels with 11 million in total affected by potential expansion-related flightpaths.

The expansion was also projected to add an additional 3 to 4 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent into the atmosphere each year.

Concerns have also been raised regarding Heathrow's current noise mitigation measures, with a seven per cent increase in 2023's quarter one complaints compared to 2022. [3]

The **London Assembly Environment Committee** has written to Heathrow Airport with three recommendations regarding their proposed expansion, urging them to provide an update on their expansion plans following their internal review, and also to go further in their work to mitigate noise pollution from the airport.

The recommendations are:

- Heathrow should provide an update to the Committee on both the timeline for its internal review on expansion options and how environmental and health factors are being considered.
- Heathrow Airport's solutions and mitigations for reducing the impact of noise are not ambitious enough. Solutions should include an accelerated process for new noise insulation schemes with broader eligibility criteria, and greater compliance with the Quiet Night Charter to reduce late-running flights.
- Heathrow should provide greater clarity over its airspace modernisation plans by regularly publishing accessible summaries alongside its technical updates. Where these plans relate to potential concentration

of flight paths, it should work to minimise noise levels and the cumulative impacts of flights related to all airports that affect those in and around London.

Environmental noise has been recognised by the World Health Organization (WHO) as the second largest environmental health risk in Western Europe, behind air quality. Prolonged exposure to environmental noise has been shown to have harmful effects on mental and physical health, including impaired cognitive development in children, tinnitus, sleep disturbance, and even heart disease.

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