



**Elly Baker AM**  
**Chair of the Transport Committee**

Sophie Chapman  
Surface Access Director, Heathrow Airport

(Sent by email)

5 September 2025

Dear Sophie,

## **Heathrow Airport expansion proposal**

I would like to thank you and your colleague, Tim Leech, again for attending the London Assembly Transport Committee meeting in March 2025, at which we discussed surface access at Heathrow Airport.<sup>1</sup> In this meeting, you told the Committee there were several points you could not address, as Heathrow's proposal plans for a third runway were still under development. Since Heathrow has now published its expansion plans,<sup>2</sup> I am writing to follow up on these points, specifically Heathrow's mode share targets and proposed investments in infrastructure.

### **Mode share targets**

It is important that if a third runway at Heathrow is built the resulting increase in airport passengers and workers does not have a negative impact on London's public transport system, and supports efforts to encourage modal shifts to sustainable transport.

In 2016, Heathrow Airport pledged to ensure that the number of airport-related vehicles on the road would not increase if a third runway was built.<sup>3</sup> Additionally, Heathrow's 2022 Surface Access

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<sup>1</sup> London Assembly Transport Committee, [Heathrow Airport Surface Access – Panel 1](#), 27 March 2025

<sup>2</sup> Heathrow, [Our Proposal For Expanding Heathrow](#), 1 August 2024

<sup>3</sup> The Secretary of State for Transport and Heathrow Airport Limited, [Statement of Principles relating to Airport Capacity Programme](#), 2016, p. 50

Strategy set a target to increase the number of passengers using public transport when travelling to and from the airport, from 40 per cent in 2019 to 45 per cent in 2026.<sup>4</sup>

In March, you told us that Heathrow achieved the target of 45 per cent of journeys to be made by public transport.<sup>5</sup> When asked whether a third runway would have an effect on mode share targets, or the pledge to not increase road traffic, you stated that you were undertaking modelling to understand the impact of the expansion and using this to reset your targets.<sup>6</sup>

**The Committee requests that you share with us:**

- **The results of the modelling Heathrow undertook to understand the impact of a third runway on surface access.**
- **Heathrow's revised mode-share targets, including confirmation whether the pledge that road traffic will not increase is still in place.**

**Investment in infrastructure**

In March, you told us that Heathrow is “really well served out to the east” with rail links, including the Elizabeth line, Piccadilly line and Heathrow express.<sup>7</sup> You also stated it “is a big challenge that the rest of the clockface to the west and south is not covered by rail” and that these areas are currently subsidised by bus routes.<sup>8</sup> In the past there have been proposals for separate Western and Southern rail links connecting Heathrow.<sup>9</sup>

Heathrow's expansion proposals set out that Heathrow would invest £49 billion to deliver Heathrow expansion, which includes £21 billion for the third runway and £27 billion for new and upgraded terminals and supporting infrastructure.<sup>10</sup> It also states that Heathrow's planned investments include enhanced rail capacity and that “Heathrow is also exploring the option of promoting a new rail scheme that combines the objectives of the Western Rail Link to Heathrow and Southern Rail Access to Heathrow.”<sup>11</sup> The Committee would like to see further details of this combined scheme.

In March, you told us that the amount of money Heathrow can invest in rail is constrained by the Civil Aviation Authority's surface access policy.<sup>12 13</sup> You stated that this means the amount of funding Heathrow provides is proportional to the benefits for airport passengers only.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Heathrow, [Surface Access Strategy](#), August 2022, p. 14

<sup>5</sup> London Assembly Transport Committee, [Heathrow Airport Surface Access – Panel 1](#), 27 March 2025, p. 4

<sup>6</sup> London Assembly Transport Committee, [Heathrow Airport Surface Access – Panel 1](#), 27 March 2025, p. 5 and p. 23

<sup>7</sup> London Assembly Transport Committee, [Heathrow Airport Surface Access – Panel 1](#), 27 March 2025, p. 3

<sup>8</sup> London Assembly Transport Committee, [Heathrow Airport Surface Access – Panel 1](#), 27 March 2025, p. 3

<sup>9</sup> Network Rail, [Western rail link to Heathrow](#), see also Heathrow Southern Railway, [Transforming Rail Access to Heathrow Airport](#)

<sup>10</sup> Heathrow, [Our Proposal For Expanding Heathrow](#), 1 August 2024, p. 9

<sup>11</sup> Heathrow, [Our Proposal For Expanding Heathrow](#), 1 August 2024, p. 24

<sup>12</sup> The Civil Aviation Authority's surface access policy states that surface access costs borne by airport operators should be based on the relative benefits derived by airport users versus non-airport users. Civil Aviation Authority, [Economic regulation of Heathrow Airport Limited: an update on the CAA surface access policy](#), 2019, p. 20

<sup>13</sup> London Assembly Transport Committee, [Heathrow Airport Surface Access – Panel 1](#), 27 March 2025, p. 20

<sup>14</sup> London Assembly Transport Committee, [Heathrow Airport Surface Access – Panel 1](#), 27 March 2025, p. 20

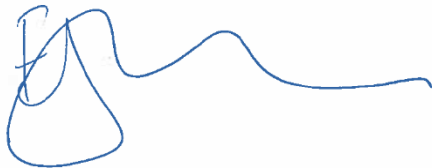
The Committee believes that if a third runway at Heathrow is built, it must be supported by new rail links to the airport and that Heathrow should provide the majority of funding to support this.

**The Committee requests that you share with us:**

- **Details of the rail scheme that Heathrow is exploring, which combines the objectives of the Western Rail Link to Heathrow and Southern Rail Access to Heathrow.**
- **Heathrow's predictions of how many airport passengers and staff would use a new rail link to the west/south of the airport, as a percentage of total rail passengers.**
- **How much of the £27 billion of Heathrow's proposed investment for new and upgraded terminals and supporting infrastructure is allocated to surface access, broken down by bus and coach, active travel and rail.**

I would be grateful if you could respond to this letter by 17 October 2025. Please send your responses to Hannah Barlow, Principal Committee Manager, [hannah.barlow@london.gov.uk](mailto:hannah.barlow@london.gov.uk) and Eleanor Haigh, Senior Policy Adviser, [eleonor.haigh@london.gov.uk](mailto:eleonor.haigh@london.gov.uk).

Yours,



**Elly Baker AM**  
**Chair of the Transport Committee**