



Department
for Transport

A Strategic Vision for Transport to an Expanded Heathrow Airport

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Department for Transport
Great Minster House
33 Horseferry Road
London
SW1P 4DR



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Executive summary

The 'Strategic Vision for Transport to an Expanded Heathrow Airport' sets out three guiding principles for surface access to an expanded Heathrow, which promoters should consider when developing their own surface access strategies. This document discusses some mitigations which promoters could implement to meet the requirements in the draft Heathrow Expansion NPS.

The Department has identified three guiding principles which should be considered by promoters when developing their own Surface Access strategies:

1. **Make public transport the first choice:** provide a credible, accessible, and integrated public transport offer so that it becomes the preferred mode for the majority of passengers and staff.
2. **Minimise impact on the road network:** minimise congestion and disruption on local and strategic roads by promoting mode shift and managing traffic effectively.
3. **Prioritise environmental sustainability:** minimise emissions and air quality impacts from surface access through sustainable modes and zero emission vehicles and demonstrate alignment with Net Zero commitments.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Connectivity to airports is a key part of the UK's economic infrastructure, with airports connecting regions to global markets and opportunities. The expansion of Heathrow airport will impact local and national transport networks, both during construction and once operational. Without action, expansion will likely increase congestion on existing route and have negative environmental impacts such as increased noise and emissions.
- 1.2 Reliable, affordable, accessible, and sustainable surface transport access to Heathrow Airport is a key component of the Government's support for a Northwest runway and expanded Heathrow.
- 1.3 This document gives additional context on why the surface access targets in the draft Heathrow Expansion NPS have been proposed, and explores how they might be achieved.
- 1.4 Improving surface access is essential for facilitating passenger growth at Heathrow and in ensuring that the resulting increased demand for surface transport does not place undue pressure on surrounding communities or infrastructure. Surface access interventions will play a central role in enabling expansion while supporting Government's wider objectives on decarbonisation, air quality and ensuring smooth journeys for all passengers.
- 1.5 This document sets out potential interventions that promoters may implement to mitigate any negative impacts arising from the expansion of Heathrow Airport and to support promoters to meet the public transport mode share targets set out in the draft Heathrow Expansion NPS. Failure by the promoter to meet the mode share targets and the wider draft NPS requirements could have significant adverse consequences for airport users and the wider transport network, causing disruption and undermining the delivery of surface access objectives, which are crucial to delivery of a Northwest runway in line with the draft Heathrow Expansion NPS.
- 1.6 This document reflects the approach set out in the Department for Transport's *Better Connected: A Strategy for Integrated Transport*¹, which is committed to a more joined-up, user-focused transport system.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/better-connected-a-strategy-for-integrated-transport>

- 1.7 Public transport should be the natural choice for passengers and staff, and should be supported by high-quality, reliable, and accessible services that make journeys simple, seamless, and sustainable.
- 1.8 Surface access interventions should be designed with all users of the transport network in mind, and not only airport users. Resilience, capacity, and overall efficiency of the transport system for all users should be key considerations as well as alignment with wider planned growth, development, and transport schemes across local areas. Interventions will need to be adaptable to account for emerging technologies such as autonomous vehicles, the transition to zero emission vehicles, and any further changes as the transport network adapts to deliver net zero.
- 1.9 Accessibility should be central to surface access strategies. Interventions should support disabled people and promote inclusive travel, avoiding disproportionate impacts on groups with protected characteristics.

Scope and purpose

- 1.10 The document establishes a set of guiding principles to inform decision-making and support delivery and provides some illustrative examples of surface access options promoters may want to consider. These principles are designed to provide clarity on Government expectations while allowing flexibility for scheme promoters to develop and bring forward proposals. This document does not introduce new policy requirements beyond those set out in the draft Heathrow Expansion NPS, nor does it set detailed engineering or design requirements for specific infrastructure schemes.
- 1.11 This document draws on analysis and engagement with stakeholders, including evidence from transport modelling, air quality analysis, and scheme design assumptions. DfT has also sought views from key partners including Transport for London (TfL), Network Rail, National Highways, and the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA), as well as recommendations from the former Airports Commission. It also aligns with wider Department for Transport policies. The approach is:
 - **Promoter-agnostic:** this document does not commit the Government to a specific promoter at this stage, but would apply to any scheme brought forward.
 - **Non-binding:** it does not commit promoters to particular interventions, nor does it commit Government to funding or delivering any specific schemes;
 - **Conceptual:** it does not provide detailed technical design.

2. Heathrow Expansion requirements and guiding principles

Draft Heathrow Expansion NPS

2.1 Paragraphs 5.115 – 5.118 of the draft Heathrow Expansion NPS set out the following requirements for promoters:

- *Any application for development consent and accompanying airport surface access strategy must include details of how the applicant will achieve a passenger public transport mode share of:*
 - *i. At least 50% when annual terminal passenger capacity is 116m or more;*
 - *ii. At least 55% when annual terminal passenger capacity is 130m or more.*
 - *iii. For any further capacity increases, the promoter should agree with the Airport Transport Forum and the Secretary of State for Transport on ongoing monitoring and subsequent targets.*
- *To provide certainty to local communities, a backstop date for achieving mode share targets for passengers should be applied to defined capacity increases. The applicant should propose a backstop date to be defined during the development consent order process, and take into account any changes to scheme delivery as required*
- *Progress against these targets should be measured using data from the CAA's Departing Passenger Survey. The surface access strategy should include arrangements for regular monitoring and review of the mode share target.*
- *The application and surface access strategy must also include a staff travel plan, which must include mode share targets, including for a reduction in single occupancy private car travel (and in line with proposed capacity increases). The travel plan should set out both how the promoter will achieve the target and how the delivery will be monitored, including the role of the Airport Transport Forum. Any target is expected to become a condition of any Development Consent Order.*

- In addition, the applicant should detail how it will minimise landside airport-related traffic throughout construction and operation and should set out plans to manage any additional traffic created, from passengers, staff, freight and ancillary functions, including any enhancements necessary to the local or strategic road network (SRN) around the airport.

Guiding principles

- 2.2 To achieve these targets, promoters are required to develop surface access strategies. There is a pressing need for an ambitious approach, given the increased demand for transport to Heathrow that expansion will bring on an already busy part of the network. The following guiding principles should be considered as part of the development of these strategies: **prioritising public transport mode shift, effectively managing road network capacity and mitigating the environmental impacts**. Collectively, the principles reflect the overarching ambition to enable accessible and sustainable surface access to Heathrow while maintaining the resilience, safety, and efficiency of the wider transport network for all users. Expansion should be delivered in a way that does not lead to unacceptable impacts for the surrounding transport system.

Make public transport the first choice

- 2.3 In order to make public transport the first choice, promoters should work with transport bodies, local authorities, and other key stakeholders to identify the different options for funding / financing and delivering significant enhancements to public transport services across different modes. This will enable a transport network that supports and incentivises travel by public transport to Heathrow, reducing the environmental impact of travel to the airport and congestion on the roads. This will also consider the impact of travel to the airport on the local community and ensure that airport journeys and other local travel run smoothly. This could be achieved through enhancement to the bus and coach network, infrastructure to support active travel and improvements to the rail network, with accessibility embedded across all modes. Promoters could ensure that plans for upgrades to on-site infrastructure and wider networks are designed with public transport users in mind, while plans are future proofed for developments in transport networks over the coming decades.

Minimise impact on the road network

- 2.4 In minimising the impact on the road network, promoters should firstly focus on promoting mode shift from car trips to public transport and active travel journeys, as this is the optimal way to reduce stress on the road network. This will benefit both those who need to make trips to the airport and general users making trips via the same roads, including busy motorways like the M25 and M4. Where car or heavy goods vehicle (HGV) journeys are necessary, promoters could consider reviewing the design and capacity of the road network, and demand management measures to disincentivise road trips, while ensuring that users with accessibility requirements are not impacted. Promoters should adopt a vision-led approach which sets a community-led outcome and creates transport solutions to meet this, including working with local and transport stakeholders to assess potential highways impacts in the future.

Prioritise environmental sustainability

- 2.5 To prioritise environmental sustainability, public transport and active travel should be promoted, given they provide the most sustainable options for connectivity to the airport. Driving mode shift will help to limit the environmental impact of surface access to Heathrow, including greenhouse gas emissions and air quality. Promoters should consider measures to ensure that charging infrastructure and provision of alternative fuels is future proofed for developments in transport networks. This provision can help to incentivise the transition to zero emission vehicles from road users.

Timeline and stakeholder engagement

- 2.6 The full scope of Heathrow expansion, including terminal capacity increases, will take place over a significant timeline, meaning technological changes and new infrastructure could shift the transport landscape. As a result, the promoter should demonstrate how their actions are future proofed accordingly and regularly reviewed to reflect wider changes, in line with the guiding principles outlined.
- 2.7 Targets will apply once new terminal capacity is added, as this is when significant passenger and staff increases will occur. It is estimated that Heathrow expansion will increase passengers to 150 million passengers per annum (mppa) by the mid-2050s with phased capacity increases. We anticipate improved public transport including enhancements to existing services and new infrastructure will be required to meet the mode share targets, which will benefit local communities by strengthening connectivity.
- 2.8 As the increase in passenger numbers associated with Heathrow expansion will take place over multiple decades, the Government considers that upgrades to public transport can be made in an appropriately phased manner. Promoters should consider when increases in passenger volumes at the airport are planned and ensure that sufficient surface access infrastructure is in place for these increases, in line with the passenger mode share target. Promoters should take measures to incentivise passengers and staff to travel to and from the airport by public transport and active travel during the construction period both for the Northwest runway and associated infrastructure.
- 2.9 The Department for Transport's *Better Connected* strategy reflects the importance of partnerships with local leaders and experts to create the best approach; this is particularly true in the context of Heathrow Expansion, given the number of interested parties. It is important that stakeholders are involved in decisions related to surface access given the impact it has on their assets and local communities. Section 5.109 – 5.111 of the draft Heathrow Expansion NPS sets out how the promoter should work with transport stakeholders, local authorities and the Airport Transport Forum throughout the design and delivery of their surface access strategy.
- 2.10 The transport network around the site needs to take into account the needs both of airport users and the wider community. Transport infrastructure capacity should not be absorbed by airport users solely and should take future community requirements into account to support this growth.

2.11 The promoter is expected to work with the regulator (CAA) and with the following organisations as a minimum: National Highways, Network Rail, in future Great British Railways (GBR), Transport for London, local authorities, highway planning authorities and the Airport Transport Forum. The promoter should be as transparent and constructive as possible with these organisations to aid decision making and collaboration. The Government would expect promoters to work closely with local authorities, transport bodies and service operators to ensure that bus, coach and active travel interventions complement wider transport plans including Bus Service Improvement Plans and Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans where relevant. The Government would also expect promoters to work with local authorities to consider alignment with national and local transport planning. Where relevant, airlines should also be engaged on surface access interventions, either directly or through the Airport Transport Forum.

3. Current connections to Heathrow

Existing connections to Heathrow

- 3.1 To realise the benefits of expansion, passengers and users must have good access to the airport. Heathrow Airport already has good surface transport links to the rest of the UK. The Department for Transport's *Better Connected* strategy reflects the role of transport in creating even better-connected places. Heathrow has strong rail links to London via the London Underground Piccadilly Line, Elizabeth Line, and Heathrow Express. The Piccadilly Line offers approximately 12 trains per hour between the airport and central and north east London, while the Elizabeth Line provides connections to central and east London with 6 trains per hour. The Heathrow Express provides the fastest option to and from London Paddington, with departures every 15 minutes.
- 3.2 Heathrow is served by more than 30 bus routes primarily serving Heathrow's surrounding areas offering connections both inside and outside London. Coach services provide connections with areas around the UK, from operators including National Express, Flixbus and RailAir. Many bus and coach routes call at Heathrow's Central Bus Station, although some services also stop at Terminals 4 and 5.
- 3.3 The M25 and the M4 provide strong road links to Heathrow. Vehicles can access Terminal 5 via M25 Junction 14a, while drivers can use the M4 Spur Road to reach Terminals 2&3. There are parking options including long-stay, short-stay, and meet-and-greet across the airport site at a range of price points, along with options for drop-off or pick-up, with a £7 charge applying for terminal drop-off.
- 3.4 Once operational, Old Oak Common will become the easiest rail route to Heathrow for many people traveling to the airport from outside of London. When HS2 and the Elizabeth line intersect here, passengers arriving from cities such as Birmingham, Manchester, Liverpool and Glasgow will be able to change trains at Old Oak Common onto services to Heathrow. This would mean that instead of relying more complicated rail journeys into London, passengers will be able to reach Heathrow by a high-speed rail connection and a single interchange, strengthening Heathrow's role as the UK's primary hub airport.

Where people travel from to reach Heathrow today

- 3.5 Over 61 million passengers used surface access modes to reach Heathrow from across the UK in 2024. As shown in Figure 1, demand is concentrated in the south, with London accounting for more than 50% of passenger trips, and significant numbers in the South East, South West and East of England. While the proportion of demand from other areas is smaller, this still equates to millions of annual passengers from the West Midlands, the East Midlands and Wales who use surface modes to travel to Heathrow.
- 3.6 The majority of demand in the South East is concentrated in London, as shown in Figure 2. There are also significant numbers of passengers from areas to the West and South of Heathrow who use surface access modes to travel to the Airport. This includes more than 2 million annual passenger trips from each of Berkshire, Hampshire, and Surrey, respectively.
- 3.7 A promoter's Surface Access Strategy should consider where current and future airport users will be travelling from, and design suitable transport interventions which address these needs. This will have particular impact when assessing ways to maximise the use of public transport where possible.

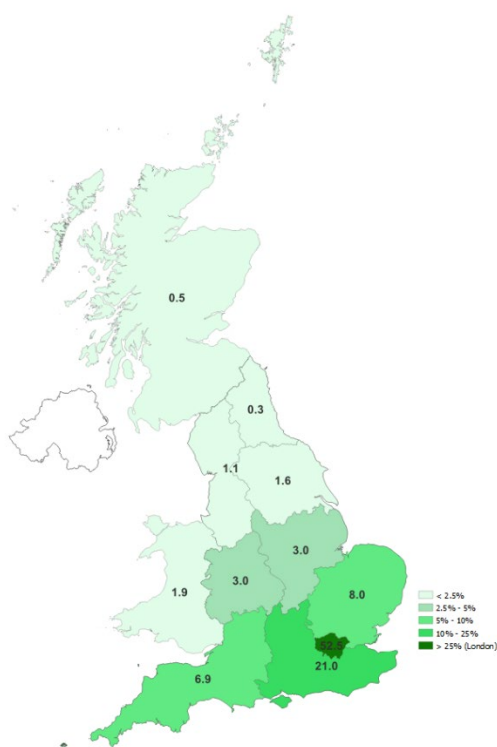


Figure 1: Origin of UK-wide passenger travel to Heathrow via surface modes (Data from CAA's 2024 Departing Passenger Survey². Note: A small number of passengers travelled via surface modes but originated from the Republic of Ireland, Northern Ireland, Isle of Man and the Channel Islands. This was less than 0.1% of passengers so these aren't displayed on the map.

² https://www.caa.co.uk/media/l1thy513/t04_2024.pdf

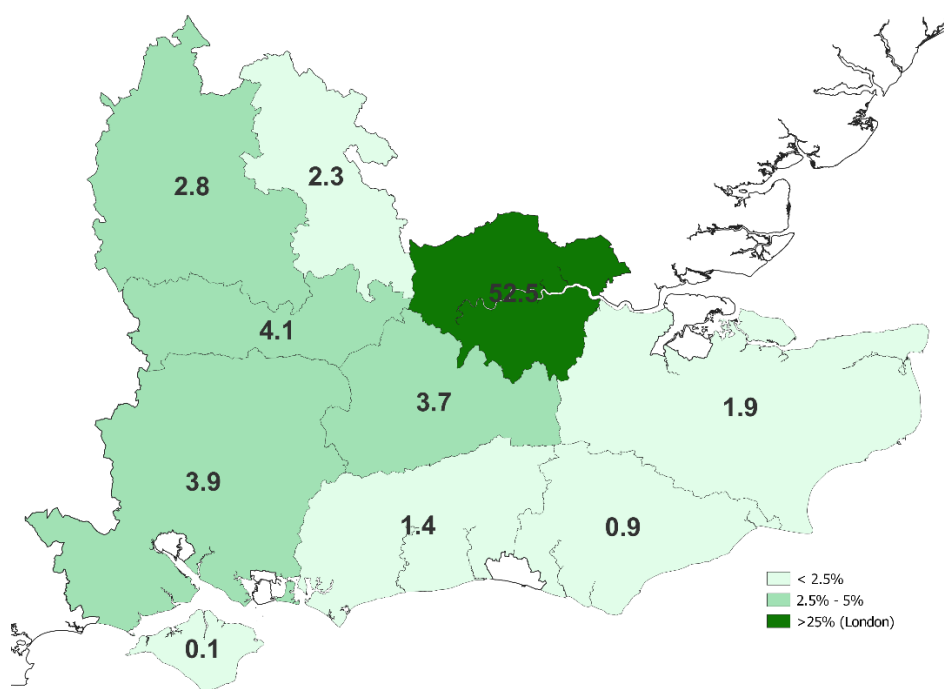


Figure 2: Origin of South East passenger travel to Heathrow via surface modes (Data from CAA's 2024 Departing Passenger Survey³)

³ https://www.caa.co.uk/media/uexl3ulk/t05_2024.pdf

4. Applying the Guiding Principles

Guiding principles

- 4.1 The following section explains the three ‘guiding principles’, outlining both their intended impact and suggested mitigations to deliver them. Across all areas, the people who use the transport system should be central to decision making. These principles should be considered by promoters when developing their Surface Access strategies.

Make public transport the first choice

- 4.2 Making public transport the first choice for journeys to a newly expanded Heathrow Airport is essential if the promoter is going to achieve the mode share targets set out in the draft Heathrow Expansion NPS. Meeting the mode share targets is also essential if the benefits of expansion are going to be achieved, as they will enable users to access the airport efficiently. This will help to maximise the attractiveness of Heathrow as a destination while minimising the impact on the economic growth and development of surrounding communities. In addition, it will manage operational pressures, help to protect local communities, by minimising the impact on the road network, and will help meet and prioritise environmental targets.
- 4.3 Without a strong shift toward public transport, expansion risks congestion, higher emissions, and a failure to comply with policy requirements. Heathrow currently achieves one of the UK’s highest public transport mode shares for airports (42% of passengers^[3]), yet ambitions for expansion will result in an extra 65 million more passenger journeys per year, which is why the draft Heathrow Expansion NPS sets out new mode share targets to mitigate this impact.

Rail and Underground

- 4.4 Rail and Underground services will play a central role in achieving the public transport mode share targets set out in the draft Heathrow Expansion NPS. A credible surface access strategy must, demonstrate how rail provision will support a

step-change in the way passengers and staff access the airport, reducing reliance on car travel and minimising pressure on the surrounding road network.

- 4.5 The Government considers that expansion should enable direct, convenient and reliable journeys from a wide range of origins, rather than requiring passengers and staff, having to travel to and from central London as the default option. It is considered that to achieve the mode share targets associated with expansion enhanced connectivity from the west and/or south of the airport, enabling through-running services via Heathrow, is likely to be required.
- 4.6 Therefore, at a high level, we would expect a surface access strategy to set out how rail services would:
- Enable through-running via Heathrow, reducing the need for interchange in central London;
 - Improve coverage for passenger and staff catchments currently poorly served by direct rail links; and
 - Provide sufficient capacity and resilience to accommodate phased growth.
- 4.7 Our approach provides flexibility to allow promoters to identify and bring forward strategies that demonstrate credible promoter-led or promoter-financed rail enhancements capable of delivering these outcomes. It does not tie the hands of promoters by prescribing specific schemes.
- 4.8 These proposals should support direct and through-running services from the west and/or south where appropriate. Importantly, as stated in the draft Heathrow Expansion NPS, we are not requiring surface access schemes to be brought forward as part of the expansion DCO itself; rather, it requires there to be a credible plan for new rail links to be delivered ahead of airport capacity reaching 130 million or more passengers per annum.
- 4.9 As a guide, there are two options that have been previously discussed. There is a proposed link, westward from Terminal 5, via a tunnel to a junction east of Langley Station allowing trains to run to and from destinations in the West: Slough, Reading and beyond. There is also a Southern scheme building new rail infrastructure, linking Heathrow Terminal 5 with Chertsey or Virginia Water, enabling direct trains to run from Basingstoke, Woking and Guildford to Heathrow Airport Stations. This would also create a new link to the airport from London Waterloo via Clapham Junction. These options are not the only ones that could be brought forward. For example, there are different configurations for a southern link that could be feasible.
- 4.10 The network around Heathrow is already highly constrained, and any new services, if not correctly managed, will have a detrimental impact on non-airport passengers and freight. The introduction of Great British Railways (GBR), with its emphasis and focus on integration of track and train, passengers, reliability and efficiency and economic growth will have an important role to play in integrating any new services.
- 4.11 By choosing to take a non-prescriptive approach to rail schemes, we are ensuring that promoters have the flexibility and space to consider a range of different

schemes. No matter what proposals are brought forward, close and sustained partnership working is essential. This is because it is crucial that any proposals are designed to support the delivery of the public transport mode share targets without detrimentally impacting the existing rail network. Promoters should demonstrate early and ongoing engagement with Network Rail and, as appropriate, DfT Operator (DFTO), Great British Railways, Transport for London (in relation to potential underground improvements) and other relevant bodies, and show how stakeholder input, such as that provided by the Airport Transport Forum, has informed the development of rail proposals over time.

- 4.12 This collaborative approach should not only consider the deliverability and feasibility of any rail schemes, it should also ensure that any proposals are proportionate and do not end up having significant societal costs that outweigh the benefits of expansion.

Bus and coach

- 4.13 The bus network plays a critical role in local journeys in and around the airport, particularly for Heathrow staff, whereas the coach network is essential for passenger travel both in and out of London and further afield. Mode shift to bus and coach journeys can help to minimise the impact on the road network through reduced car trips. Now and in future, bus and coach will deliver stronger benefits in reducing the impact on greenhouse gas emissions and air quality as operators^[4] adopt zero emission technology. The Department for Transport established the UK bus manufacturing expert panel to help establish a long-term order pipeline to give planning certainty to manufacturers^[5].
- 4.14 Paragraph 5.131 of the draft Heathrow Expansion NPS set out requirements for applicants to fund and develop plans to improve bus and coach connectivity to Heathrow, with consideration for the user experience.
- 4.15 Plans from promoters could consider:
- Working with stakeholders to **enhance bus and coach services** to and from Heathrow. This could include identifying improvements to the frequency, capacity, service timetables, luggage space, station facilities, and accessibility needs of existing services, while assessing whether new services and express routes could be beneficial.
 - Providing funding for **bus and coach priority lanes** in congested areas, helping to improve bus and coach journey times on Heathrow routes.
 - Encouraging **mixed mode and multi-route journeys** through consideration of station design and integrated ticketing initiatives.
 - **Optimising cross-airport campus transport** for users who require onward travel to their end destination, with due regard for accessibility requirements.

- **Phasing infrastructure improvements** on the airport site for the likely demands of expansion, with appropriate capacity in the Central Terminal Area and the Western Campus.
- **Future-proofing infrastructure on the airport site**, including charging capacity for zero emission buses and coaches, and the required space in stations and parking areas for vehicles. Designs should utilise input from the coach sector, given the increasing size of coaches, which is already putting pressure on existing layouts.

Incentives to shift to public transport

- 4.16 Making public transport the first choice when it comes to travelling to Heathrow is not all about new infrastructure. It is also important that the selected promoter considers a range of incentives in its surface access designed to persuade travelers to shift from their car to rail, bus, or coach transport.
- 4.17 The applicant could consider and set out in their surface access strategy what incentives they think are feasible and which could help to achieve the shift to public transport, in conjunction with the relevant organisations (such as TfL, Network Rail, airlines).

Minimise the impact on the road network

- 4.18 The second principle focuses on minimising the impact of expansion on the road network. While car travel will continue to play a role in access to the airport, expansion must not result in unacceptable impacts on the strategic or local road networks throughout construction and operation.
- 4.19 The Northwest runway scheme involves significant works to the SRN and local roads including the moving and tunnelling of a section of the M25 near Heathrow Airport, and the realignment of the A4 and A3044, making it imperative to mitigate construction impacts. In addition, there is already significant congestion on the road network around Heathrow and, even without expansion, this could worsen in future due to wider development in the area. If achieved, the passenger public transport mode share target defined in section 5.115 of the draft Heathrow Expansion NPS will significantly mitigate the impacts of expansion on the road network. This is critical to ensuring expansion can deliver economic growth, nationally and locally, while ensuring local communities are not disproportionately or unduly affected. If they are not met there is a substantial risk of additional congestion from the expanded airport, making it essential for the promoters to meet the targets.
- 4.20 To enable this, the promoter should adopt a vision-led approach which moves away from 'predict and provide' to planning that sets a community-led outcome and creates transport solutions to deliver them. The promoter should work with local planning authorities and relevant bodies to define reasonable future scenarios for assessing potential highways impacts, which can be used to assess possible impacts and determine the optimum transport infrastructure required to mitigate any adverse impacts.

- 4.21 The promoter should show how car demand will be managed over time, in line with the mode share targets. Interventions to achieve this could include changes to the design and capacity of the roads network, and effective demand management mitigations. In addition, the promoter should demonstrate how freight movements and servicing/ancillary functions will be managed to avoid adverse impacts on local communities. They should also consider how to minimise the impacts of construction, and how their surface access strategy also considers improvements to public transport and active travel infrastructure, to create a cohesive, integrated surface access network.
- 4.22 Paragraphs 5.121 – 5.127 in the draft Heathrow Expansion NPS refer to the requirements around roads and parking.

Design and capacity of the road network

- 4.23 To minimise the impact on the road network, the promoter could consider the design and capacity of roads surrounding the airport, to improve efficiency and reduce unnecessary journeys on both the strategic and local road network. The promoter would be expected to consider and fund necessary improvements from this, while ensuring changes do not impact the integration, safety and accessibility of public transport and active travel trips. Mitigations could include:
- **The use of a Southern Road Tunnel**, linking the Southern Perimeter Road to the Central Terminal Area. Promoters should consider providing priority access to bus, coach and active travel, and its role in managing traffic flows across the airport through allowing access for private vehicles, freight operators, and ancillary functions, ultimately reducing journeys on the SRN.
 - **Managing the impacts on local roads:** Heathrow Airport's location means the surrounding roads are owned by five local authorities. In addressing effects on local roads, the promoter should consider proportionate mitigation measures that reflect the differing levels of pressure experienced across the network, ensuring one area is not unduly impacted over another. Where changes to roads are made, promoters could consider wider planning for active travel routes and bus lanes to ensure that any such journeys can be made in a cohesive manner.
 - **Construction impacts:** Construction can have a number of significant impacts including air quality, carbon emissions and surface access disruption, all of which are reflected in the draft Heathrow Expansion NPS. In particular, the works on the M25 and other elements of the strategic road network could have significant impact if not managed effectively. Promoters should work closely with National Highways to ensure that proposals are feasible and deliverable, and that impacts on road users during and after construction are appropriately assessed and mitigated. This should include maximising the use of offline construction, adopting innovative construction techniques and planning and phasing works so that they do not affect the safe and efficient operation of the SRN. Promoters should ensure construction is as efficient as possible, including maximising the use of rail freight and consolidation, and a comprehensive traffic management plan designed with the relevant transport stakeholders and local authorities.

Demand management

- 4.24 Some car journeys to the airport are unavoidable however, a proportion of car trips are preventable where passengers and staff have a suitable alternative via public transport. Effective demand management measures are essential to manage increases in passenger, staff, and freight movements and to mitigate impacts on the surrounding road network during the construction and operation of the expanded airport. The promoter should consider measures to encourage modal shift by disincentivising private car use and reducing non-essential journeys where possible. This approach would ultimately reduce the number of single-occupancy private vehicles accessing the airport, thereby minimising congestion on the road network.
- 4.25 Despite the need for mitigations, trips made by taxis and private-hire vehicles will continue to provide an important means of access to the airport, especially for users with accessibility requirements. Promoters should ensure that any measures appropriately factor in accessibility needs, including exemptions from charges, in line with paragraphs 4.105 – 4.109 of the draft Heathrow Expansion NPS.
- 4.26 Demand management mitigations the promoter could consider include:
- **A car parking strategy** which considers the appropriate size, location, electric charging facilities, accessible parking facilities and fees. These could include passenger and staff parking charges, emissions-based access charges and carbon-based parking charges. This should be done to support, rather than undermine public transport usage, and the promoter should consider how it supports local communities to address anti-social parking. Charging facilities should be available to airport users only rather than becoming a charging destination for wider EV users.
 - **Traffic management to maximise efficiency**, such as increasing the number of backfilled taxis/PHVs to prevent 'empty' journeys and maximising the use of technology to improve traffic flows around the airport.
 - **Changes to disincentivize driving**, such as increased Terminal Drop off Charges or a fee to access Heathrow-owned roads.
 - **Design and promotion of airport concourse** to incentivise public transport and active travel.
 - **Specific consideration for the reduction of single-occupancy car trips**, including increases in parking fees, reductions in staff parking, employee incentive programmes and car-sharing schemes.

Freight

- 4.27 The road network plays a critical role in freight connectivity to and from Heathrow, enabling the benefits of expansion to be realised across the UK. In 2024, Heathrow handled 1.6 million tonnes of cargo, representing 60% of all freight handled at UK airports in terms of tonnage, and four times more than any other UK airport.

Minimising the impact of Heathrow expansion on the road network will support the efficiency of supply chains by facilitating the timely transport of cargo. At the same time, road freight movements can add to congestion, putting a strain on the strategic and local road networks, and producing negative environmental impacts. A balanced approach is essential, ensuring the benefits of freight growth can be realised while optimising HGV movements to mitigate the residual impact.

4.28 Paragraphs 5.132 – 5.134 of the draft Heathrow Expansion NPS set out requirements for promoters to increase cargo capacity to address limitations at the existing site, while effectively mitigating against any negative impacts that could arise from increased freight operations.

4.29 Promoters could work with the freight sector to identify and test potential solutions including:

- Measures to **minimise the number of trips generated**; this may include freight consolidation while avoiding unnecessarily creating additional trips on the road network.
- **Implementation of vehicle booking systems** to increase the efficiency of HGV movements and reduce waiting times, assist with retiming travel outside of known peak times and spreading peak traffic within the working day to reduce peak congestion.
- **Arrangements to reroute trips** to parts of the network that are less busy.
- **Interventions on haulier parking**, including developing a site on or near the airport campus to provide additional HGV parking, charging / refuelling, and driver facilities, mitigating nearby congestion and unpermitted parking on local roads. Developments should be designed with sufficient road capacity and parking provision to avoid the need for prolonged queuing on approach roads. Planning for such facilities should consider guidance from National Highways to mitigate any associated impacts, particularly any additional traffic flows on the SRN. Promoters could also consider the impact on local communities, avoiding overspill onto public roads and providing charging for zero emission HGVs.
- **Synchronising planning on freight and active travel** to ensure that freight, walking and cycling routes are sufficiently separated to avoid deterring active travel.

Prioritise environmental sustainability

4.30 A number of measures set out in the document emphasise a transition towards more sustainable modes of travel and a reduction in car trips. Where journeys cannot be undertaken by public transport or active travel they should be delivered in the most sustainable way possible to minimise the adverse impacts to surrounding communities, and meet wider commitments around air quality, carbon and noise. This approach applies to all users of the airport including staff, freight and operations journeys made across the site. Potential mitigation measures include the use of

electric vehicles and promotion of active travel; paragraphs 5.84 and 5.105 in the draft Heathrow Expansion NPS refer respectively.

4.31 Possible mitigations to prioritise environmental sustainability include:

- Support for zero emission vehicles including cars, buses, coaches and HGVs and the required charging and / or refuelling infrastructure. The promoter could also consider giving priority access to zero emission vehicles and should work closely with power suppliers, and the Government where necessary, to ensure a resilient and efficient network is available to support this.
- Traffic restrictions and relocations to mitigate air quality impacts such as, such as Clean Air Zones, traffic relocations around sensitive areas and changes to the layout of surface access arrangements, could be implemented in local communities and supported by the promoter.

Active travel

- 4.32 Active travel can deliver health, wellbeing, and economic benefits for local populations, while providing sustainable travel options that minimise the impact on the environment and reduce the strain on existing transport networks. People who live within 1km of high-quality active travel infrastructure undertake 40-140 more minutes of walking and cycling per week. Improved active travel infrastructure to Heathrow will benefit local residents and airport staff, particularly those who live near the airport, due to the nature of regular commuting trips. This will help to make public transport and active travel the first choice for transport to Heathrow and take car trips off the road network, while representing an inherently environmentally sustainable form of transport.
- 4.33 Paragraphs 5.105 – 5.106 in the draft Heathrow Expansion NPS cover requirements for applicants to fund and develop plans to improve active travel to Heathrow and consideration for the user experience at transport interchanges and for travel across the airport site.
- 4.34 To deliver this, promoters will need to consider measures which improve active travel infrastructure on routes to and from the airport as well as the surrounding network. Interventions could include providing separated cycle facilities, upgrading crossings at junctions, and enhancing the accessibility and safety of existing routes.
- 4.35 Alongside the delivery of infrastructure improvements, promoters will need to consider providing enhancements and targeted support to tackle barriers to the uptake of active travel for staff and local residents. This could include providing cycle training and appropriate storage and changing facilities at airport sites.
- 4.36 Promoters should work with Active Travel England (ATE) to ensure best practice and national design guidance such as LTN 1/20 are embedded in the planning and delivery of proposals.

5. Conclusion

- 5.1 The document provides guiding principles which promoters should consider in their development of their surface access strategy, and puts people, place, and partnerships at the heart of its approach, in line with the Department for Transport's *Better Connected: a strategy for integrated transport*.
- 5.2 Meeting the public transport mode share targets set out in the draft Heathrow Expansion NPS should ensure that growth in passenger and freight demand is matched by improvements in the quality, capacity, resilience, and sustainability of surface access. Failure to meet the requirements in the draft NPS could result in unacceptable levels of road congestion, negatively affecting airport users, staff and local communities, alongside adverse environmental impacts.
- 5.3 This will require a substantial shift away from private car use. This should be supported by enhancements to rail, underground, bus and coach networks, alongside improved integration, accessibility, and passenger experience across all modes.
- 5.4 Rail will be central to enabling the shift away from private car use, with increased capacity and resilience across the wider network. Regardless of the scheme(s) brought forward, close partnership working is essential, and promoters should demonstrate ongoing engagement with Network Rail, DFTO, GBR, TfL, and show how this stakeholder input has informed their approach to rail proposals.
- 5.5 Bus and coach services will continue to play a vital role in local and regional connectivity, with improvements to the frequency, capacity and accessibility supporting more journeys.
- 5.6 Active travel can deliver health and connectivity benefits, particularly for airport staff and nearby communities. Measures implemented should be complemented by a strong focus on inclusivity, ensuring that all interventions are designed to support disabled people and those with protected characteristics.
- 5.7 Recognising the constraints on the surrounding road network, a comprehensive approach to managing road demand will be needed. Infrastructure interventions may also play a role in improving network efficiency and resilience.
- 5.8 Freight and servicing movements will require careful coordination to balance economic efficiency with environmental and congestion impacts, supported by

consolidation, smarter logistics planning, and improved infrastructure for heavy goods vehicles.

- 5.9 Across all modes, there is a clear expectation that expansion will be supported by a transition to zero emission vehicles, strengthened charging infrastructure, and wider alignment with national net zero and air quality objectives.
- 5.10 The successful delivery of this Vision will depend on close partnership working between the promoter, HMG, transport operators, and key stakeholders including local authorities, National Highways, Network Rail, in future Great British Railways, Transport for London, and the Airport Transport Forum. This collaborative approach will be essential to ensuring that surface access interventions are properly integrated, phased appropriately with airport growth, and responsive to evolving transport technologies and user needs over time.