

No new runways is still the only option, reveals new report on Heathrow expansion



23 February 2017

Keith Taylor MEP: "Today's report is an important reminder that campaigners have been right all along; Heathrow expansion is still a climate-wrecking decision that is bad for the British people and the planet."

The Government is still not able to demonstrate that it can mitigate the destructive environmental impacts of a new runway at Heathrow, according to a [report published today](#) by the Environmental Audit Committee.

The report on Heathrow expansion reveals the Government is still failing to take into account major concerns about the air pollution, carbon emissions and noise pollution effects of expansion.

Responding to the findings Keith Taylor, Green MEP for the South East and a member of the European Parliament's Environment Committee, argued that the report was further proof that 'Heathrow expansion is an unnecessary environmental disaster in waiting'.

Mr Taylor, a vocal anti-airport expansion activist who has written about the [legal difficulties](#) a third runway will face, said:

"Today's report is an important reminder that campaigners have been right all along; Heathrow expansion is still a climate-wrecking decision that is bad for the British people and the planet."

"The report reveals that the Government has paid little consideration to the triple threat of unacceptable environmental risks the prospect of a new runway brings with it, from air pollution to carbon emissions and noise pollution."

"A new runway will breach legal air pollution limits and further worsen an air quality crisis that the Government is already [failing to tackle](#). And there is still no answer forthcoming on any plan to reduce current levels of air pollution which are responsible for the unnecessary [deaths of 50,000 people in Britain](#) every year."

"Expansion will bust Britain's carbon budgets and make a mockery of Theresa May's legal-binding commitments under the Paris Agreement. Astonishingly, the Government's response appears to be its willingness to water down already dangerously-lax limits on aviation emissions, despite the recommendations of its own advisors."

"Thousands of local residents will be appalled to read today's report only to

discover that not only will a third runway ensure the air they breathe is about to get more toxic but the Government has no plans to tackle the cacophony of noise pollution that expansion promises.”

“There are no two ways about it; expansion is a disastrous decision for the people of the South East, London, Britain, and the planet. Britain’s ‘airport capacity crisis’ is, and always has been, a dangerous myth driven by corporate greed, not by actual need. Not only is all but one airport in the UK operating under capacity, sponsoring the exponential growth of an aviation industry that is a [top-ten global polluter](#) is wholly incompatible with Britain’s Paris climate agreement commitments.”

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[Greens warn of NHS disaster after EEA doctors say they may leave UK](#)



23 February 2017

The Green Party is urging the Government to reassure EU nationals they are welcome in the UK after a survey revealed 12,000 EEA-trained doctors may leave in light of the Brexit vote [1].

Jonathan Bartley, Green Party co-leader, said:

“The potential for EU nationals to be treated like bargaining chips in Brexit negotiations, is all too apparent in these figures. The Government’s rhetoric and failure to provide assurances have had a clear impact on doctors’ lives.

“The NHS is already under immense pressure and if such a large number of staff leave in such a short space of time it will be a complete disaster. The Government needs to recognise the incredible contributions EU nationals make to our society and give concrete reassurances they can continue the lives they’ve built in the UK.”

Notes:

1. <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2017/feb/23/thousands-eea-doctors-may-leave-uk-after-brexit-survey-bma>

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[Green Party disappointed as Government speeds towards HS2](#)



23 February 2017

***Caroline Russell AM: "The Government must be held to account over its terrible decision to squander our limited resources"**

The Green Party is disappointed the HS2 Bill will receive royal assent today [1] and has pledged to keep standing up for the environment and local communities.

Caroline Russell, Green Party transport spokesperson and London Assembly Member, said:

"Today is a sad day for campaigners who have worked tirelessly to stop this wasteful project going ahead, but we'll keep on fighting to protect the local communities and environment from the damage threatened by HS2.

"The risks far outweigh any potential benefits and it's staggering so much money will be poured into HS2 when better transport projects improving local rail networks desperately need investment. The Government must be held to account over its terrible decision to squander our limited resources on a project that will save only a few minutes on trips between London and Birmingham."

Notes:

1. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-39057772>

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[Green Party calls for investigation following claims of child inmates kept in solitary confinement](#)



22 February 2017

The Green Party has demanded the Government investigate allegations of young offenders being held in solitary confinement in British prisons [1].

Jonathan Bartley, Green Party co-leader, said:

“It was already clear our prison system was reaching crisis point but these stories reveal a new level of callous disregard for the human rights of some of the youngest and most vulnerable offenders.

“Being kept in solitary confinement for even just short periods of time causes severe distress and has lasting impact. I fail to see how the Ministry of Justice can possibly think this treatment will result in positive outcomes. These young offenders need to be rehabilitated, not punished further using one of the most cruel and unhelpful methods possible. We urgently need an investigation into these allegations.”

Notes:

1. <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/uk-prisons-child-inmates-solitary-confinement-un-torture-rules-young-offenders-institutes-break-jail-a7591781.html>

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[Green MEP launches post-Brexit agriculture reports and calls for 'green tape' as Leadsom attacks 'red tape'](#)



21 February 2017

Green MEP Molly Scott Cato, a member of the European Parliament's Agriculture Committee, has launched [two reports](#) on ideas for the future of farming post-Brexit. The launch comes on the day the [National Union of Farmers begin their annual conference](#) in Birmingham, where Defra Secretary, Andrea Leadsom, again [attacked the EU](#) for 'tying farmers up in red tape'. She also called for a system based on simpler, more effective rules, where farmers will be 'free to grow more, sell more and export more.'

However, Ms Leadsom offered farmers [no clear plan on farming post-Brexit](#) and Dr Scott Cato says that [questions to the government](#) reveal they lack ideas on the future of farming after the UK leaves the EU.

The two reports – one by the [Soil Association](#); the other by Simon Fairlie of the [Land Workers' Alliance](#) – foresee a future where policies put soil health and biodiversity first, and where the way we use land helps tackle climate change. They say that to achieve this, farmers will need to receive at least as much money as they currently get through the Common Agriculture Policy (CAP). Molly Scott Cato said:

"Like Ms Leadsom, I don't want farmers tied up in red tape, but we do need to bind ourselves in some green tape. We need to ensure land management protects and improves our soils, encourages biodiversity, and helps tackle climate change. The reports I have launched today contain a wealth of ideas on how we can achieve this.

"They also call for direct payments based on land area to be scrapped; instead future payments would be based on paying farmers for the public benefits they provide and for protecting the environment.

"With the government planning to remove us from the single market where around 65% of total UK agricultural exports are sold, platitudes about growing more, selling more and exporting more will ring hollow for most farmers.

"These reports show how to move UK agriculture away from a dependence on export markets and towards creating thriving rural communities by supporting family farms and relocating food production. Brexit could be a unique opportunity to move towards an ecologically and economically sustainable farming system, but the government seems determined to move us in the wrong direction."

Dr Tom MacMillan, Director of Innovation at the Soil Association, said:

"We're hearing a fair bit of consensus from farming, nature and public interest groups on the big principles for agricultural policy after we leave the CAP – that the public expect high standards on animal welfare, for example, and that public money should pay for public benefits. What's missing are practical and inspiring ideas that seize the chance to make a better fist of it, and face up to monumental challenges like climate change. So we've tried to set out a few game-changing ideas in our report".

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