

PRESS RELEASE

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Arora Group has further advanced alternative, phased proposal for Heathrow Airport expansion

- Heathrow West (HWL) is the most credible and pragmatic path to Heathrow expansion
- Developing the runway with a two phase approach has today been welcomed by IAG, Virgin Atlantic, IATA and Heathrow AOC as well as ground handler Swissport
- The proposed alternative scheme would increase capacity sooner and at better value to airlines and passengers
- HWL intends to submit a Development Consent Order (DCO) application in November 2027
- Arora is calling for a competitive framework to best assess rival schemes

Heathrow West Limited's Proposed Scheme

The HWL proposed scheme, developed with a team of industry experts including technical advisor Bechtel, includes a new western terminal as well as a phased third runway. The first phase can be operational by 2035, meeting the Government's timeline for Heathrow expansion.

Phasing the runway addresses many of the risks associated with an all or nothing approach to airport expansion. An initial 2400m runway avoids moving the M25 and other high-risk infrastructure work needed to build a 3500m runway. This means the 2400m runway can be delivered significantly earlier and meet demand forecasts sooner.

The initial phase will be future-proofed to allow for expansion as demand warrants. Importantly, during any future expansion, the 2400m runway would continue to operate with minimal impacts.

HWL's proposed scheme also includes a new Terminal 6, located to the west of Terminal 5. The terminal which is designed to minimise land take and preserve Green Belt land, will be capable of accommodating 40 million passengers annually.

Industry stakeholders are increasingly aligned and positive in their view that the HWL scheme is credible and accelerates delivery of a third runway – in line with the Government's ambitions – and also retains a disciplined focus on affordability, operational realism, and constructive engagement with airline customers.

The HWL scheme builds on the runway plan submitted by Arora to Government in 2025. The Government at that stage rejected relocating the third runway further East and this proposed scheme has been amended to comply with Government's position.

HWL intends to submit a Development Consent Order (DCO) application in November 2027. As part of the DCO pre-application process, HWL will consult with residents, businesses and other stakeholders. HWL will provide opportunities for meaningful input, reflecting a commitment to transparency and collaboration, as well as the Arora Group's longstanding support for the Heathrow community.

The HWL plans are a significant step towards getting Heathrow expansion capital spending under control. However, comprehensive regulatory reform as proposed by the Heathrow Reimagined campaign is still needed to ensure that capex efficiency, opex efficiency and

commercial revenues are maximised across the airport to prevent avoidable rises to airline and passenger charges.

Call for Formal Framework to Govern Competitive Process

With the emergence of a credible and industry-backed alternative for a third runway in the HWL proposal, Heathrow expansion has now firmly entered a competitive phase requiring immediate structure and oversight.

The Government and Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) should now establish a formal, rules based framework to govern how competing/ rival schemes will be assessed. Without such a framework, differences in transparency, methodology, and engagement risk distorting outcomes and undermining confidence in the process.

The proposed framework should include:

- A centralised data room ensuring equal and timely access to key technical, operational, and financial information
- Common planning, design, and demand assumptions applied consistently across all proposals
- Independent cost scrutiny and benchmarking, using agreed methodologies
- Standardised evaluation criteria, including affordability, financeability, and deliverability
- Structured and ongoing airline engagement embedded throughout
- Clear governance and regulatory oversight led by the CAA

Surinder Arora, Founder and Chairman of the Arora Group, said:

“We have committed significant time and resource to producing our latest plans to ensure that they are highly credible, in line with the Government’s objectives and offering better value to airlines and passengers. We will continue to engage fully with airlines and other stakeholders as we prepare to submit for planning.”

Luis Gallego, CEO of IAG, said:

“The two-phase approach proposed by Heathrow West is a credible option, with the potential to cap costs for passengers and deliver the benefits of expansion as soon as possible for the UK. We think it is worth further development and should be carefully considered by the UK Government.”

Corneel Koster, CEO, Virgin Atlantic said:

“At Virgin Atlantic, we have always championed competition and choice. The Heathrow West third runway scheme is credible and should be considered by UK Government as a viable option in the ANPS. Any approach that delivers affordable expansion, to the benefit of consumers, the UK aviation sector and UK economy, is welcomed.”

Willie Walsh, Director General of the International Air Transport Association (IATA), said:

“The industry has been clear: Heathrow expansion must be deliverable, financeable, and affordable. Arora is the only party to engage seriously with those constraints in a practical way. This is not theoretical planning; it is a scheme being built with real-world delivery in mind”.

“With competing proposals now in play, this is unequivocally a competitive process. It is essential that Government and the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) move swiftly to establish a formal, rules-based framework to govern how these schemes are developed and assessed.”

Warwick Brady, President & CEO of Swissport International AG, said:

“We are proud to operate at over 300 airports in 49 countries, and this two-phase plan delivers for both passengers and UK plc. These also break up the monopoly and challenges the status quo, which has led to Heathrow becoming the world’s most expensive airport, today.”

Nigel Wicking, CEO of Heathrow’s Airline Operators’ Committee, said:

“What we are seeing from HWL is a pragmatic, solutions-driven approach. There is a clear recognition of the commercial realities facing airlines, and a willingness to adapt accordingly. That is fundamental to building a scheme that can actually be delivered.”

“The strength of the HWL proposal demonstrates what can be achieved through transparency and pragmatism – whilst minimising risk to on time delivery and cost overruns. The next step is to ensure that all proposals are subject to the same level of scrutiny and discipline. A level playing field is essential. Airlines must have full confidence that decisions will be based on comparable data, consistent assumptions, and rigorous independent assessment.”

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