



Inception Meeting note

Project name	Expansion of Heathrow Airport (Third Runway)
Case reference	TR020003
Status	Final
Author	The Planning Inspectorate
Date of meeting	28 April 2025
Meeting with	Meeting with Heathrow Airport Limited
Venue	Microsoft Teams
Circulation	All attendees

Summary of key points discussed, and advice given

The Planning Inspectorate (the Inspectorate) advised that a note of the meeting would be taken and published on its website in accordance with section 51 of the Planning Act 2008 (PA2008). Any advice given under section 51 would not constitute legal advice upon which applicants (or others) could rely.

1. The proposed development

- **Detailed description of the proposed development**

The applicant gave a summary of the background to the Heathrow expansion, including previous work carried out within the nationally significant infrastructure planning (NSIP) regime, including consultations, and the designation of the airports national policy statement (A-NPS). This work was paused in 2020.

The applicant emphasised that this is a continuation of the same scheme and that it wishes to resume the pre-application process with the inspectorate, with an application for a development consent order currently anticipated in 2028.

The inspectorate asked the applicant to confirm if the M25 elements have always been part of the scheme, to deliver the 3.5km runway length in the northwest location as set out in the 2018 A-NPS.

The applicant confirmed that it had always been part of the scheme and that several elements within the proposals would meet the thresholds to be considered NSIP's.

The development comprises of a new runway of 3500 metres and related taxiways and runway infrastructure; a new terminal and satellite infrastructure; an expanded terminal 5 campus, improvements to public transport infrastructure and parking infrastructure; diversions to rivers; safeguarding land; construction phase works and changes to the local road network, including a realigned M25 motorway and associated junctions.

- **Consenting programme and introduction to the pre-application programme document**

The Inspectorate noted that the applicant's programme document provided a high-level of detail of both past events and future anticipated events. The Inspectorate advised that any updated programme document should include any Project Update Meetings, so these can be resourced effectively. Presently the Applicant has proposed to remain within the 'Basic Tier' service which affords a total of 3 meetings per year.

- **EIA scoping**

The inspectorate asked if there had been changes likely to affect EIA scoping?

The applicant explained that as the design evolves, there had been changes to the order limits to facilitate off-site mitigation and define property boundaries. These are not considered to be major changes but that, whilst the proposals are broadly the same, it would be seeking a further scoping opinion, and it is currently in the process of producing the scoping report and request and confirmed it is in dialogue with statutory consultees to this end.

The applicant is eager to engage with the inspectorate early and would seek a meeting to this effect.

The inspectorate advised that any meeting would depend on the service tier in effect at the time and that it would be beneficial for the applicant to provide an agenda and information for discussion in advance of any such meeting, to enable the inspectorate to provide meaningful advice.

The inspectorate asked if changes to the proposals since the original scoping, affected underlying assumptions or, if they have changed, what are the impacts?

The applicant explained that some assumptions, such as the 2019 forecast for passenger numbers had changed, but that many baseline assumptions largely remained the same.

- **Land and rights: Scope of compulsory acquisition etc powers sought and potential constraints and issues**

The applicant explained that as the design evolves, there are changes to the order limits to facilitate off-site mitigation and define property boundaries.

- **Consultation (statutory and non-statutory)**

The applicant is aware of the forthcoming amendments to the Planning and Infrastructure Bill, which seeks to remove the requirement to undertake statutory consultation at the pre-application stage.

The inspectorate is currently uncertain of how the changes to consultation may impact the process and advises to keep this matter open for discussion as information becomes available.

The applicant confirms that it is still committed to implement statutory consultation as part of its pre-application programme, but could seek a more focused, tailored consultation depending on the outcome of the amendments to the bill.

The applicant is building on the key themes identified during previous consultations, prior to 2020.

The applicant explained that the government is currently undergoing a process to review/modernise its airspace policy, which could influence the proposals.

The applicant has been asked to provide proposals to the government by summer 2025, which shall then provide the applicant with a confirmational review on these proposals.

The applicant explained that elements of the scheme could change before the application is made to the inspectorate, due to the potential for changes to government policy and to the A-NPS.

The inspectorate acknowledges the potential changes that may need to be made to the proposals and asked what form the proposals to the government this summer will take and if these shall be made public.

The applicant advised that these proposals will be made to the Government and does not, at this stage, know if the Government will make this information available to the public, but understands the need to provide transparency, were this is appropriate.

- **Submission date**

The applicant currently proposes to resume its pre-application phase in 2025 with an application for a development consent order currently anticipated in 2028.

2. The pre-application service offer

- **The service tier requested by the applicant, including justification**

The inspectorate enquired if the applicant had considered which pre-application service tier would be most suitable. It advised that the basic tier would only provide for three project update meetings per year and there would be no provision of an evidence plan meeting. With this in mind, the inspectorate recommends the standard tier and advised the applicant to consider the enhanced tier, based upon its involvement with the project during the pre-application stage prior to 2020.

The applicant wishes to continue with the basic tier at this time and is considering which tier would be most appropriate. It intends to confirm this decision within the next few months, following making the proposal known to government in summer 2025.

The inspectorate advised that full information on the three service tiers was available in the pre-application prospectus.