

Alok Sharma, MP for Reading West

2nd July 2018

Dear Constituents,

Thank you for contacting me about Heathrow expansion.

As you may be aware, I have been a vocal supporter of Heathrow's proposed expansion, and have spoken in Parliament on a number of occasions to argue against diminishing the role of Heathrow in favour of another hub airport. In July 2014, I was pleased to chair a business forum in Westminster for Thames Valley businesses to have their say on the future of airport capacity in the UK – the attendees unanimously rejected proposals for a new airport in the Thames Estuary.

Heathrow is the country's only hub airport and is operating at almost full capacity. Figures from the International Air Transport Association show that due to the lack of capacity at Heathrow, between 2005 and 2011 there was a 49% growth in the number of passengers flying from UK regional airports to transfer at overseas hubs such as Schiphol and Charles de Gaulle. That represents a loss of business and jobs to the UK. Expanding Heathrow will generate £100 billion in UK economic benefits and 100,000 new UK jobs. I believe that such an expansion would be especially good for the people of Reading, cementing our image as an economic powerhouse and a destination of choice for international business investment.

I understand that not everyone supports the expansion of Heathrow. However, considering the evidence, I believe it is the best option we have available. Heathrow enjoys excellent road network and public transport links, is already a globally recognised transport hub, and it would cost significantly less to expand Heathrow than to build a completely new hub airport.

With all London airports currently projected to be full by 2030, I believe there will be plenty of scope for expansion at other airports too, but it is vital we get spades in the ground at Heathrow at the earliest opportunity to secure our future as a trading nation and one of the best connected countries in the world.

It is for these reasons that I, along with 414 other MPs, voted on Monday 25 June, to support the expansion of Heathrow.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Yours sincerely,



Alok Sharma MP