# Heathrow expansion partnership aims to emulate Changi’s passenger experience standards



Hotel tycoon Surinder Arora is advancing his vision to expand Heathrow Airport in partnership with Singapore’s Changi Airport, widely celebrated as the world’s best airport. The collaboration aims to infuse Heathrow’s expansion project with Changi’s renowned passenger experience standards, which include unique amenities such as a swimming pool, cinema, and butterfly garden—features that have earned the Singapore hub top rankings from consultancy Skytrax.

Arora Group’s Heathrow West plan proposes a 2,800-metre third runway, strategically designed to avoid the enormous costs and disruption associated with diverting the M25 motorway, a major concern with longer runway proposals. This contrasts with Heathrow Airport Holdings' plan to build a full-length 3,500-metre runway. While the shorter runway may face operational constraints, Arora Group asserts it can accommodate all aircraft sizes, suggesting a more efficient and less intrusive expansion.

The project, developed alongside infrastructure firm Bechtel, is estimated to cost under £25 billion, excluding the redevelopment of Heathrow’s central airport area. The timeline anticipates a phased terminal rollout beginning in 2036, with full operation expected by 2040. In comparison, Heathrow’s owners claim their plan, estimated at £21 billion and privately funded, would also accommodate a third runway and new facilities. Both proposals have been submitted to the Department for Transport, which is conducting a review ahead of updating the Airports National Policy Statement; this document will guide future decisions on development consent for the airport’s expansion.

Singapore’s Changi Airport, the inspiration behind Arora’s passenger experience ambitions, is noted for pushing architectural and leisure boundaries within an airport environment. Beyond the typical transit experience, Changi integrates lush tropical greenery, futuristic design elements, and entertainment spaces, including the iconic Jewel complex. Jewel Changi features the world’s tallest indoor waterfall, known as the Rain Vortex, alongside retail and nature-themed attractions, blending modern architecture with serene natural motifs. The airport’s Butterfly Garden, the first of its kind in any airport globally, offers travellers a tranquil environment with over 1,000 butterflies and vibrant flora, further exemplifying its commitment to unique passenger experiences.

This partnership and Arora’s Heathrow West proposal arrive amidst a complex debate over the future of London’s airports, balancing economic growth, environmental impact, and infrastructure challenges. Transport Secretary Heidi Alexander is currently overseeing the evaluation process, which will ultimately influence the UK government’s stance on which expansion plan offers better value to airlines, passengers, and the British economy. Mr Arora has expressed openness to public debate regarding the merits of the competing schemes, emphasising his plan’s reduced construction risks and overall cost-effectiveness.

As the discussion progresses, the integration of Changi’s acclaimed passenger service and design philosophy into the Heathrow expansion underscores a shift towards more passenger-focused airport development, potentially setting a new benchmark for airport experiences in the UK and beyond.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.irishnews.com/news/uk/surinder-arora-working-with-changi-airport-on-heathrow-expansion-plan-VXLZZFE2TFLHRPMXGVZUK54HRE/), [[2]](https://www.itv.com/news/2025-09-01/surinder-arora-working-with-changi-airport-on-heathrow-expansion-plan), [[3]](https://www.standard.co.uk/business/business-news/heathrow-department-for-transport-london-m25-heidi-alexander-b1245508.html), [[4]](https://www.businessinsider.com/what-to-do-singapore-changi-airport-10-coolest-things-2023-2)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.irishnews.com/news/uk/surinder-arora-working-with-changi-airport-on-heathrow-expansion-plan-VXLZZFE2TFLHRPMXGVZUK54HRE/), [[2]](https://www.itv.com/news/2025-09-01/surinder-arora-working-with-changi-airport-on-heathrow-expansion-plan), [[3]](https://www.standard.co.uk/business/business-news/heathrow-department-for-transport-london-m25-heidi-alexander-b1245508.html)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.irishnews.com/news/uk/surinder-arora-working-with-changi-airport-on-heathrow-expansion-plan-VXLZZFE2TFLHRPMXGVZUK54HRE/), [[2]](https://www.itv.com/news/2025-09-01/surinder-arora-working-with-changi-airport-on-heathrow-expansion-plan), [[3]](https://www.standard.co.uk/business/business-news/heathrow-department-for-transport-london-m25-heidi-alexander-b1245508.html)
* Paragraph 4 – [[4]](https://www.businessinsider.com/what-to-do-singapore-changi-airport-10-coolest-things-2023-2), [[5]](https://www.ft.com/content/1cab73b3-149b-49af-8ca6-510062c79961), [[6]](https://nowboarding.changiairport.com/discover-changi/40-things-you-love-about-changi-airport--part-1-.html), [[7]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Changi_Airport)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.irishnews.com/news/uk/surinder-arora-working-with-changi-airport-on-heathrow-expansion-plan-VXLZZFE2TFLHRPMXGVZUK54HRE/), [[2]](https://www.itv.com/news/2025-09-01/surinder-arora-working-with-changi-airport-on-heathrow-expansion-plan), [[3]](https://www.standard.co.uk/business/business-news/heathrow-department-for-transport-london-m25-heidi-alexander-b1245508.html)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.irishnews.com/news/uk/surinder-arora-working-with-changi-airport-on-heathrow-expansion-plan-VXLZZFE2TFLHRPMXGVZUK54HRE/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.itv.com/news/2025-09-01/surinder-arora-working-with-changi-airport-on-heathrow-expansion-plan> - Hotel magnate Surinder Arora's Heathrow expansion proposal is collaborating with Singapore's Changi Airport to enhance passenger experience. Changi, acclaimed as the world's best airport by consultancy Skytrax, boasts amenities like a swimming pool, cinema, and butterfly garden. Both Arora Group and Heathrow's owners have submitted plans to the Department for Transport for a third runway at Heathrow. Arora's plan features a 2,800-metre runway, aiming to avoid the costly diversion of the M25 motorway. The project is estimated to cost under £25 billion, with a new terminal opening in phases by 2040.
3. <https://www.standard.co.uk/business/business-news/heathrow-department-for-transport-london-m25-heidi-alexander-b1245508.html> - Surinder Arora's Heathrow expansion plan is in partnership with Singapore's Changi Airport, renowned as the world's best. Changi offers unique features such as a swimming pool, cinema, and butterfly garden. Both Arora Group and Heathrow's owners have submitted plans to the Department for Transport for a third runway at Heathrow. Arora's proposal includes a 2,800-metre runway, aiming to avoid the costly diversion of the M25 motorway. The project is estimated to cost under £25 billion, with a new terminal opening in phases by 2040.
4. <https://www.businessinsider.com/what-to-do-singapore-changi-airport-10-coolest-things-2023-2> - Singapore's Changi Airport, recently named the world's best for 2023, offers unique amenities like a swimming pool, cinema, and butterfly garden. These features contribute to its reputation as a top airport globally. The airport's diverse attractions enhance the passenger experience, making it a standout in the aviation industry.
5. <https://www.ft.com/content/1cab73b3-149b-49af-8ca6-510062c79961> - Singapore's Changi Airport is celebrated for its unique blend of colonial heritage, sleek skyscrapers, and lush tropical greenery. Notable landmarks include Jewel Changi Airport, Marina Bay Sands, and Gardens by the Bay, all featuring futuristic elements like the world's largest indoor waterfall and towering 'Supertrees.' These architectural highlights contribute to Singapore's status as an architectural laboratory pushing the boundaries of design.
6. <https://nowboarding.changiairport.com/discover-changi/40-things-you-love-about-changi-airport--part-1-.html> - Changi Airport's Butterfly Garden, located in Terminal 3's transit area, is the world's first airport butterfly garden. It houses over 1,000 butterflies from 30 to 40 Southeast Asian species, along with blooming flowers, lush greenery, and a 6-metre-tall grotto waterfall. Visitors can witness the butterfly metamorphosis process, offering a unique and tranquil experience within the airport.
7. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Changi_Airport> - Changi Airport, located in Singapore, is renowned for its exceptional facilities and services. It features a nature-themed entertainment and retail complex called Jewel Changi Airport, which includes the world's tallest indoor waterfall, the Rain Vortex. The airport's design incorporates lush greenery and innovative architecture, contributing to its reputation as a leading global hub.