# Sadiq Khan warns Heathrow expansion threatens Britain’s climate commitments and communities



London Mayor Sir Sadiq Khan has once again signaled the growing obstacles facing the government’s push to expand Heathrow Airport with a third runway, blatantly warning that this reckless scheme threatens to undermine Britain’s environmental commitments and burdens local communities with irreversible harm. Khan’s steadfast stance reflects the broader opposition from those who see this project as a throwback to Britain’s failed infrastructure priorities—priorities that prioritize short-term economic gains over the health, safety, and environment of ordinary citizens.

While the government, led by Prime Minister Kier Starker and supported by Transport Secretary Heidi Alexander and Chancellor Rachel Reeves, champions Heathrow’s expansion as a means to boost economic growth and create jobs, the reality is that this scheme is a misguided attempt to prop up a failing system at Britain’s expense. Pushing ahead with the plan disregards the urgent need for sustainable development and risks undoing years of progress in improving air quality across London and beyond.

Khan’s warning is clear: expanding Heathrow not only guarantees more noise pollution and air quality degradation but threatens to reverse the gains made under London’s Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ), designed precisely to combat pollution and protect public health. The scheme ignores the importance of green policies that prioritize residents’ well-being over the profits of airport corporations and their political allies.

Legal challenges loom large, following the Court of Appeal’s recent declaration that the government’s approval of the expansion was “unlawful” due to its neglect of UK climate commitments under the Paris Climate Agreement. This decision exposes the government’s failure to meet environmental standards and questions whether the project can proceed without breaching legal obligations. Such judicial scrutiny underscores the broader failure of this government’s approach, revealing it as short-sighted and out of touch with Britain’s renewable commitments.

Further alarming projections highlight the environmental chaos that would ensue. Estimates suggest that thousands more Londoners—possibly up to 28,000—could suffer increased noise levels, while hundreds of thousands in previously unaffected areas would be subjected to disruptive overflights. The plans for demolition of around 800 homes and diversion of rivers also demonstrate the destructive impact on local communities and the environment, costs that are seemingly dismissed by those obsessed with airport expansion at any cost.

Within Labour, opposition to Heathrow’s third runway is growing, yet the stance remains inconsistent—evidencing a continued inability to stand firm against vested interests. Meanwhile, the government’s supporters dismiss environmental concerns as obstacles to economic recovery, demonstrating their true priorities: profits over people, short-term gains over sustainable growth. This approach risks deepening regional disparities, with critics warning that London’s dominance would be entrenched even further, leaving other regions in the dust.

Khan’s call for the Heathrow expansion to be abandoned in favor of a genuine, sustainable recovery highlights the choices Britain faces. Instead of pandering to the aviation industry’s exploitation, the focus should be on investing in green infrastructure, renewable energy, and fair regional development. The court’s ruling is a wake-up call—continuing down this path would be a betrayal of Britain’s climate responsibilities and its citizens.

As the government contemplates the future of Heathrow, the signs are clear: without a fundamental shift in priorities, this ill-conceived expansion will deepen inequalities, damage the environment, and leave Britain lagging behind in the global fight against climate change. It’s time for policymakers to listen to the evidence, respect the law, and put the interests of the people before the profits of Heathrow’s backers.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/heathrow-third-runway-sadiq-khan-london-b2799803.html> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/transport/third-runway-heathrow-airport-ulez-benefits-sadiq-khan-b1215362.html> - London Mayor Sadiq Khan has warned that constructing a third runway at Heathrow Airport would negate the environmental benefits achieved by the Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ). He highlighted that the expansion could lead to increased noise and air pollution, undermining efforts to improve air quality in London. Khan emphasized the need to protect the progress made in reducing emissions and maintaining cleaner air for residents.
3. <https://www.cityam.com/heathrow-third-runway-stalls-as-challenge-upheld/> - Heathrow Airport's third runway expansion has been halted following a successful legal challenge in the Court of Appeal. The court ruled that the government's policy statement for the runway was 'unlawful' as it failed to consider the UK's commitment to the Paris Climate Agreement. This decision has significant implications for the future of the expansion project, requiring the government to reassess its approach to the development.
4. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/feb/27/heathrow-third-runway-ruled-illegal-over-climate-change> - The Court of Appeal has declared the plans for Heathrow Airport's third runway expansion 'unlawful' due to non-compliance with the UK's climate change commitments under the Paris Agreement. The ruling emphasizes the necessity for the government to align major infrastructure projects with environmental obligations, potentially setting a precedent for future developments.
5. <https://www.newcivilengineer.com/latest/heathrow-expansion-court-rules-third-runway-unlawful-27-02-2020/> - The Court of Appeal has ruled that Heathrow Airport's third runway expansion is 'unlawful' because the government's policy statement did not adequately consider the UK's climate change commitments under the Paris Agreement. This decision has significant implications for the future of the expansion project, requiring the government to reassess its approach to the development.
6. <https://www.london.gov.uk/press-releases/mayoral/statement-from-sadiq-khan-on-heathrow-decision> - Following the Court of Appeal's decision to allow Heathrow Airport's third runway, London Mayor Sadiq Khan expressed disappointment, citing potential negative impacts on air quality, noise levels, and London's ability to achieve net-zero carbon emissions by 2030. He urged Heathrow to abandon expansion plans and focus on supporting a greener recovery from the aviation crisis.
7. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2025/jan/29/third-heathrow-runway-pollution-emissions-noise> - The proposed third runway at Heathrow Airport is expected to significantly increase noise and air pollution. Projections indicate that 12,000 to 28,000 additional people would be exposed to noise levels exceeding 70 decibels, and 300,000 people would experience aircraft overflights for the first time. The expansion would also involve substantial environmental impacts, including the demolition of 800 homes and the diversion of five rivers.