

For immediate release

Climate change charity begins legal action against Heathrow expansion

Climate change charity Plan B, has started legal action against Transport Minister Chris Grayling over his plans for Heathrow expansion.

Plan B say the proposal breaches legal obligations in the Planning Act to alleviate the impact of climate change.

Plan B join a number of others, including Greenpeace and a number of councils, who are challenging the development.

Tim Crosland, Director of Plan B, said: 'The Government has an express obligation under the Planning Act to promote sustainable development, with specific reference to the impacts of climate change. That means safeguarding the interests of current and future generations of UK citizens.

'The National Policy Statement designated by Chris Grayling in June does not even consider the Government's obligations under the Paris Agreement on Climate Change or the fact that in April this year, the Government committed to a review of its climate targets in light of the Paris Agreement.

'We consider that to be an obvious and serious breach of the Act, which renders the plans to expand Heathrow airport unlawful. Indeed Lord Deben, the Chair of the Government's advisory body on climate change, the CCC, wrote to Chris Grayling in June to express his surprise at the Government's failure to consider its climate change obligations in this context. That's why we've today (6 August 2018) submitted a claim for judicial review to the High Court.'

Plan B's legal action is distinct from that being brought by other organisations, and focuses exclusively on climate change impact rather than of noise or air pollution.

Ends

Notes to editors:

- On 26 June 2018, Chris Grayling, the Transport Minister, designated plans to expand Heathrow Airport as a National Policy Statement under the Planning Act 2008.
- The Planning Act 2008, s. 10 requires the Secretary of State to exercise his functions under the Act "*with the objective of contributing to the achievement of sustainable development*", with specific reference to Climate Change.
- Plan B's legal challenge to UK Government's failure to amend its climate change targets to align to science and international law is currently before the Court of Appeal.

- On 14 June 2018, Lord Deben and Baroness Brown, the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Committee on Climate Change (the CCC), wrote to Chris Grayling in the following terms to say: *“Dear Secretary of State, The UK has a legally binding commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions under the Climate Change Act. The Government has also committed, through the Paris Agreement, to limit the rise in global temperature to well below 2°C and to pursue efforts to limit it to 1.5°C. We were surprised that your statement to the House of Commons on the National Policy Statement on 5 June 2018¹ made no mention of either of these commitments. It is essential that aviation’s place in the overall strategy for UK emissions reduction is considered and planned fully by your Department ...”*. The letter in full is published here: <https://www.theccc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/CCC-letter-to-DfT-on-Airports-National-Policy-Statement.pdf>

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