Heathrow

EXPANSION
CONSULTATION 2026

SUMMARY REPORT

Heathrow's Economic Development Framework

A roadmap for how Heathrow expansion would deliver good growth locally and nationwide.



HEATHROW EXPANSION WOULD CREATE MORE JOBS, DRIVE SKILLS, AND HELP BUSINESSES INNOVATE, COMPETE, AND GROW

Heathrow expansion would be the largest privately financed infrastructure project in Europe, delivered at no cost to the taxpayer. It will unlock over 108,000 jobs, including up to 91,000 additional jobs across the UK by 2055 and 17,500 onsite jobs at the peak of construction, driving economic growth in every nation and region of the UK.

OUR AMBITION

To create good growth and good jobs within an environment where businesses have genuine opportunities to innovate and compete, and where every person can see a path into work.

Heathrow expansion would unlock over

108,000 jobs

across every nation and region of the UK

Today, a million young people across the UK are not in education, employment or training. That's one in eight young people with untapped potential. Expansion is an extraordinary chance to help build a better future for the next generation, and for tens of thousands ready to take their next step – from those closest to the airport to communities across the country.

We are working collaboratively with our stakeholders and business communities to maximise the benefits of expansion and deliver good growth across the UK. This includes the Heathrow Local Growth Taskforce, chaired by Lord Blunkett, which brings together local authorities, education providers and businesses. Heathrow has a long track record of working to create an environment where businesses have genuine opportunities to innovate, compete, and grow and where young people have a path into good work, knowing they have something valuable to contribute. Our ambition for businesses and young people has only become stronger, and our Economic Development Framework sets out how we plan to grow those opportunities through expansion.

HEATHROW TODAY: OPPORTUNITY AT SCALE

Work is about far more than earning a living. It builds confidence, gives people purpose and creates a route to a better future. As the UK's only hub airport and its largest single-site employer, Heathrow already opens doors to careers, training and business growth. Expansion would allow us to go further, investing more in creating meaningful opportunities for communities around Heathrow and across the UK.

For more than two decades, Heathrow has built deep, productive relationships with our supply chain, schools, colleges, universities, chambers of commerce, Jobcentres, trade unions and government. Through the Heathrow Academy, those partnerships help local people access real opportunities at the airport.

Through the SME Academy, Lift Off and our Business Summits, we help local businesses build capability, win work and innovate. Together, we have facilitated the following programmes, each of which we plan to grow through our Economic Development Framework:

The Heathrow Academy

The Heathrow Academy is a gateway to extraordinary careers in aviation, retail, hospitality, construction and the many other sectors that keep Heathrow running, day in and day out. Our experienced and passionate team matches the skills and experience of local people to one of the many opportunities across the airport, then supports them all the way to landing the role.

Established in 2004, the Academy has been doing this for more than two decades. 800+ job offers were brokered by the Heathrow Academy in 2025. This included supporting candidates' work-readiness through pre-employment and essential skills workshops and providing advice on what employers look for. Over 1,000 job seekers attended careers and essential skills workshops and over 800 received information and guidance sessions in 2025. Heathrow supports employers to build a diverse and inclusive workplace by connecting them to the untapped talent in our communities. By working together, we help

76,700
people work at Heathrow today

800+
job offers secured with Heathrow Academy support in 2025

62%
of the businesses in Heathrow's direct supply chain are SMEs

28
years of the Heathrow Business Summit

to meet the skills needs of employers while supporting local people to access opportunities. In collaboration with employers at Heathrow, the Heathrow Academy also educates young people about careers at the airport, raising awareness of career pathways, and developing essential skills for the workplace. In 2025, the Academy reached 5,842 young people, delivered 2,800 in-person work experience days, and collaborated with 100 local schools and colleges. This includes delivering thirteen T Level placements in digital, business, construction and engineering, and a three-day Hackathon experience, with our Team Heathrow partners.



Shared Apprenticeship Scheme

Heathrow's Shared Apprenticeship Scheme, the first of its kind at a UK airport, has helped more than 250 young people begin careers in construction and infrastructure within the aviation sector at Heathrow – social value delivered through routes into work that do not depend on a degree. 158 apprentices are currently part of our Shared Apprenticeship Scheme, which supports apprenticeships across multiple host employers and roles. This helps widen access, particularly where individual employers may not have the volume or capacity to offer a full apprenticeship independently. 75% of those participating in the scheme were previously unemployed or in minimum-wage work before joining, and 68% are from ethnic minority backgrounds.

Sector-based Work Academy Programme

The Heathrow Academy is working with the Department for Work and Pensions on a Sector-based Work Academy Programme (SWAP) where unemployed candidates, who have faced barriers to employment, take part in a ten-day programme. Candidates spend two days at Heathrow, where they learn about the airport and the types of roles available, receive 1:1 guidance and benefit from job brokerage. They also spend eight days at Harrow, Richmond and Uxbridge Colleges (HRUC) to learn more about aviation and receive pre-employment training.

The SME Academy (Small and Medium Enterprise Academy)

Heathrow is proud that of 1,280 businesses in our direct supply chain, 62% are small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), supporting 16,000 jobs across the UK. The SME Academy launched in 2025 with 250+ SMEs supported through workshops and other engagement pathways in its first year. The SME Academy is aimed at equipping SMEs with the capability and confidence to work with large organisations, promoting inclusive procurement and supporting local economic growth. It also fosters collaboration among local and regional stakeholders, ensuring fair access to opportunities. Workshops focus on topics including carbon reporting and sustainability practices, health and safety protocols, and cyber security. Ten SMEs have also been mentored through the first cohort of the SME Academy Mentor Support Programme.



Lift Off

Launched in March 2023, 'Lift Off' is Heathrow's 'Dragons' Den' providing a forum through which innovative SMEs can pitch directly to Heathrow and our Tier 1 suppliers. The programme has generated tangible outcomes, including trial opportunities, tendering opportunities and contract awards. So far, 86 SMEs have participated in the Lift Off programme with nine SME proposals progressed to trials. In 2024 Heathrow also launched the Lift Off Learner's Challenge which supports college students, including those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), to work on real-world innovation challenges linked to the airport environment.

Procurement pathways

Heathrow is committed to helping SMEs access opportunities across the airport and wider supply chain. In 2025, our procurement team participated in fourteen SME engagement events through local and regional business networks, connecting around 850 SMEs and raising awareness of opportunities available through Heathrow and its supply chain partners. Heathrow's annual Business Summit brings together SMEs, Tier 1 suppliers and our teams to build connections, increase awareness of opportunities and support business growth. The 27th annual summit in 2025 welcomed around 950 delegates.

Heathrow also provides visibility of upcoming opportunities for businesses through our CompeteFor platform, helping them identify and prepare for potential work. In 2024, opportunities advertised through the platform contributed to £94 million of spend with suppliers.

THE PRIZE OF EXPANSION: CREATING JOBS AND TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Heathrow expansion would provide a chance to invest in the future of the UK and the next generation of talent. It would give Heathrow the ability to build on, and scale up programmes that already work, creating clear entry points into employment, including for young people who face some of the greatest barriers. The thousands of people who would play a part in delivering the third runway would leave a legacy, building something to benefit generations to come.

EXPANSION AND JOB CREATION

Private investment in Heathrow's third runway and associated infrastructure, including new terminal capacity, would unlock over 108,000 jobs. This includes up to 91,000 additional jobs across the UK by 2055, at the airport, in our supply chain and through increased trade and investment, and 17,500 onsite jobs at the peak of construction. During construction, we would need to fill new roles in electrical installation, carpentry and joinery, construction, engineering, digital, logistics and airport operations. Apprenticeships would also play a significant role in building the skills Heathrow and our supply chain need for expansion, with Heathrow delivering 5,000 youth apprenticeships, traineeships, and other pathways for young people.

CREATING ACCESS AND OPPORTUNITY

Expansion would allow us to scale our investment in the wide range of programmes and partnerships that are already making a difference for people today. We would build on our experience and strong foundations, providing even more opportunities for people to fulfil their potential. Our goal now is to prepare the next generation for the opportunities expansion would bring. The next year will see us step up our support for the future skills pipeline through a new programme of activity, including the following:

In-Person Work Experience

Alan Milburn, who is leading the Government's independent review into young people and work, has made clear the challenge: young people are lacking meaningful exposure and access to the workplace and employers who open doors for them. We want to meet this challenge. Within the next year, we will launch an in-person work experience programme for local students. This will be scaled up year on year, with the programme adapted in line with feedback from participants and consistently reassessed to meet new challenges in the job market.

Annual Careers Event

Heathrow will launch a new annual careers event for job seekers in the local community in March 2027, during National Careers Week. The event will bring together Team Heathrow partners to showcase the full breadth of careers linked to the airport. We will work with the Department for Work and Pensions and other local partners to ensure value to participants and remove barriers between job seekers and prospective employers.

Heathrow Infrastructure Skills Council

This year we are launching a new Heathrow Infrastructure Skills Council with Lord Blunkett and former Skills and Apprenticeships Minister Robert Halfon as co-chairs. After a nationwide listening roadshow, bringing together business, trade unions, colleges, and training partners, the Council will report next summer on how infrastructure projects like Heathrow expansion can maximise opportunities for young people.

West London Construction College

Heathrow will play a key role in the new West London Construction Training Excellence Centre (CTEC), delivered locally by HRUC through a sub-regional working group. Ten new CTECs are being established nationally by the Department for Education to build a construction skills base for the country. Government estimates reported by the National Audit Office say the UK could need up to 755,000 additional construction workers by 2030. Via the CTECs, Heathrow will work with other major infrastructure projects to strengthen the national skills pipeline needed for delivery.

CASE STUDY: ENGINEERING INSIGHTS WEEK



Tori
Engineering apprentice

Heathrow's Engineering Insights Week immerses young people in engineering careers they might never have considered.

Over five days they take part in practical activities, career talks, an airside visit and job application guidance. Of the sixteen apprentices who joined Heathrow's engineering scheme in September 2026, seven had already been through Insights Week. Tori, pictured left, came through the same route and is now heading into the final year of her apprenticeship.

Up to

91,000

jobs would be supported at the airport, locally and across the UK through Heathrow's supply chain and trade

17,500

onsite jobs during the peak of construction

Heathrow would deliver

5,000

apprenticeships and training opportunities for young people

"The internship really helped me to build my confidence and feel valued. I've learned how to handle real-life situations, and this has really improved my problem-solving and communication skills. I never thought this would happen for me – getting a job at Heathrow is like a dream come true."

Former intern, now a Team Heathrow colleague.

CASE STUDY: SHAW TRUST SUPPORTED INTERNSHIP

Working with the Shaw Trust and with Team Heathrow partners, the Supported Internship programme supports young people aged 16–24 with special educational needs and disabilities into employment.

Participants are based onsite throughout the academic year, receiving one-to-one information, advice and guidance, essential skills development, and customer service work experience with supply chain partners. The Heathrow Academy then provides job brokerage support. In 2025, seven of the eight participants completed the programme with a job offer and remain in employment one year later.



"That's their first step into the world of work. It's something that will change their lives."

Saimmah Ali
Operations Manager, Shaw Trust.

THE PRIZE OF EXPANSION: HELPING BUSINESSES COMPETE, INNOVATE AND GROW

The scale of Heathrow expansion would create valuable opportunities for businesses close to the airport and in every nation and region of the UK. Through our strong engagement with SMEs, we would provide early visibility of the pipeline of work, practical support and more routes to trial new ideas that can help companies across the UK win work, scale up and build capability. We would grow supplier confidence so businesses can invest in people, skills, and capacity, with British industries such as steel set to see increased opportunities from our multi-billion-pound investment.

PATHWAYS FOR GROWTH

Expansion would create significant opportunities for businesses across the UK, and we are committed to helping SMEs build the capability, confidence and connections to seize them. Heathrow's third runway means that businesses will benefit from an expanded SME Academy, providing access to more training, mentoring, peer learning and targeted support to strengthen skills, improve readiness and compete for larger contracts. Heathrow would also offer tools to help businesses assess their capabilities and identify areas for development. By investing in business capability, we would help build a stronger, more resilient SME community, one ready to grow with the airport.

ACCESS TO OPPORTUNITIES

We would provide early visibility of future expansion opportunities, helping businesses prepare, invest and form partnerships ahead of procurement activity. As well as the annual Business Summit in London, we have expanded into regional business summits, with the first two taking place in Newcastle upon Tyne and Liverpool in 2026. We also plan to deliver targeted sector and industry-focused engagement events to help businesses understand upcoming opportunities and routes to market related to expansion.

We would also work with our delivery partners to ensure SMEs are involved throughout the expansion programme, putting this at the heart of the design and delivery of major contract packages and ensuring businesses of all sizes have opportunities to contribute to and benefit from expansion.

A TESTBED FOR INNOVATION

Heathrow expansion would make Heathrow an invaluable testbed for businesses large and small. Through an enlarged Lift Off programme and external partnerships, firms will be able to trial digital solutions, sustainable construction methods, low-carbon materials and better ways of working as the project is delivered.



CASE STUDY: CHARGEBOX - SME SUPPLY CHAIN

ChargeBox Ltd, based in Chiswick, is a pioneering SME that specialises in passenger charging, designing and manufacturing its smart mobile device charging stations in the UK. After a successful trial in Terminal 2, Heathrow expanded the rollout across all terminals within four months. Having seen it in action at Heathrow, the solution has since attracted interest from airports across Europe and North America.

"ChargeBox has flown the flag for West London innovators, participating in a West London Chambers of Commerce Trade Mission to Atlanta Airport, proving how local SMEs can scale from regional deployment to international adoption when given a platform like Heathrow."

Alan Rides, Chief Executive Officer,
West London Chambers of Commerce.



CASE STUDY: INVENTRITE - LIFT OFF

Inventrite, formerly powerQuad, collaborated with Ferrovial Construction, a delivery partner to Heathrow, to innovate and deliver a bespoke sustainable lighting solution. Glim lamps, the amber warning lamps used to keep temporary works safe at night, rely on non-rechargeable batteries that typically last only a week. Inventrite worked with Ferrovial Construction to design a new rechargeable battery concept, delivering five-year savings of £40,000, a five-year waste reduction of 6.8 tonnes, and a 60kg reduction in CO_2e emissions over a five-year period.

Inventrite's engagement with Heathrow began at the Lift Off event in Q1 2024. Since then, and following the successful trial with Ferrovial Construction, Inventrite has received orders from multiple infrastructure suppliers across the Heathrow supply chain, helping to deliver products that bring about a greener world.

"If it wasn't for the Lift Off programme, this product wouldn't have got off the ground. A product like this is easily a couple of years in development. We did it in twelve months."

Paul Cole, owner of Inventrite.

HAVE YOUR SAY

The Economic Development Framework forms part of the 2026 Public Consultation on Heathrow expansion. This report is a summary – the full Economic Development Framework, which sets out our approach in detail, will be available as part of the consultation. The Framework sets out our vision for turning the opportunities created by expansion into reality. It is important to share your views as part of the consultation. Your views will help to shape our Economic Growth Strategy, which will be submitted as part of our Development Consent Order application.

PLEASE TAKE PART IN THE CONSULTATION

When the consultation launches on 27 October 2026, read the proposals and tell us how Heathrow expansion can create the greatest opportunities for people and businesses. Your views will help us maximise the benefits in the years ahead. Sign up for our expansion mailing list to be notified when the consultation is live at: **www.heathrow.com/expansion/subscribe**

In the meantime, if you would like to speak to our community team about this report or the local opportunities of expansion, please contact: **communityrelations@heathrow.com**

A visualisation of the masterplan



Heathrow

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