

The Case against Heathrow Expansion



**Outlining the social, environmental, economic and
political arguments against a 3rd runway**

28% of all people disturbed
by aircraft noise across
Europe are under the
Heathrow flight paths



725,000*
people are
impacted by noise
from Heathrow



Airport	Designated by the DfT for noise purposes	Population Impact	Population as a percentage of the total number of people affected across the European Union
Heathrow	*	725,500	28.5%
Manchester		94,000	3.7%
Glasgow		63,600	2.5%
Birmingham		47,900	1.9%
Aberdeen		16,300	0.6%
Edinburgh		15,000	0.5%
London City		12,200	0.5%
Southampton		12,100	0.5%
Gatwick	*	11,900	0.5%
East Midlands		10,500	0.4%
Stansted	*	9,400	0.4%
Luton		8,600	0.3%
Leeds Bradford		8,400	0.3%
Newcastle		5,900	0.2%
Liverpool John Lennon		5,700	0.2%
	Totals	1,044,300	41.0%

Source: European Commission, CAA. Figures based on the populations affected by noise using the standard measure of 55 LD_{den}-2006 figures

Airport	Population within the 55L _{den} contour
London Heathrow	725,500
Frankfurt	238,700
Paris Charles de Gaulle	170,000
Paris Orly	110,000
Brussels	49,700
Amsterdam	43,700
Madrid	43,300

No airport in Europe comes close to matching the noise footprint of Heathrow. The figures are based on noise maps published by the European Commission, detailed in a report from the Civil Aviation Authority (1). The World Health Organisation argues that even these figures are an underestimate. An additional 150,000 people would be under the new flight path to a 3rd runway (2).

***The EU now puts that figure at 766,000**

But aren't planes becoming less noisy?



The actual planes that flew over this Hounslow tower block in one hour. It is the sheer number of aircraft in the sky, not the noise of each one, which is the real problem for residents.

Over the past 30 years aircraft have become less noisy but this has been off-set by the huge increase in the number of planes in the sky. The aviation industry is striving to make planes even quieter but admits it does not have a 'silver bullet' solution (3).

Heathrow Airport's repeated claim that a third runway will result in an improved noise climate is not credible.

- Flights numbers will rise by around **240,000** a year with a 3rd runway
- **Many remain unconvinced** planes will become so quiet that the overall noise climate will improve
- And it ignores the **consistent message** from residents: it is the sheer number of planes which is the problem
- **Respite** and **improved operation practices** will help but residents remain concerned about the impact of these extra planes

Equity Concerns

Windsor Castle and Kew Gardens are famously under the Heathrow flight path but many areas under the flight path are amongst the 20% most deprived in the country.

Windsor: not typical of the places under the Heathrow flight paths





Heathrow expansion could result in the EU legal limits on **air pollution** being breached.



Over 700 homes would be destroyed.
Over 3000 could become uninhabitable due to the noise.

A 3rd Runway:

essential to the economy?

There is no doubt that London's airports will need improved connections to the emerging economies of the world. And it is foolish to deny a 3rd runway would bring economic benefits. But there is no evidence to suggest that the health of London's economy is *dependent* on a new runway at Heathrow. Here's why.....

The main reason the London economy doesn't depend on Heathrow expanding is this: more passengers (business people and tourists) terminate in London than in any other world city (5). On the whole, they do not mind which London airport they use.

Heathrow must be looked at in the context of all London's airports

London has six airports and seven runways

London has more runways than any of its European rivals, except Paris: Paris is served by 3 airports and 8 runways; Amsterdam by 1 airport and 6 runways; Frankfurt by 2 airports and 5 runways; and Madrid by 1 airport and 4 runways.

London is the hub. The vitality of London is what draws business people and tourists in world-beating numbers. Because London is the magnet, Heathrow does not need to expand as a hub in order to enable more transfer passengers to provide sufficient numbers of people to fill flights to destinations across the world that would not otherwise be commercially viable. If airport capacity is provided – at whatever airport – people will flock to the capital in even larger numbers, drawn by the magnetic pull of London.

For Heathrow, it is not expand or die. The evidence shows that even the booming South-East could not support two mega-hubs. This is why a four runway Estuary Airport would require the closure of Heathrow. But, one new runway elsewhere in the South East would not affect Heathrow. Indeed a recent report commissioned by three local authorities found that one new runway at somewhere like Gatwick would have a broadly 'neutral' impact on employment at Heathrow (6). It is simply scaremongering to suggest that, if Heathrow does not expand, it will die.



DO WE NEED ANY NEW RUNWAYS?

IF aviation fuel was taxed and **if** there was VAT paid on tickets and **if** train fares were slashed, then demand for air travel, and particularly for short-haul flights, would be cut as people switched to rail or didn't make the journey. **If** development was less focused on the South East, then there would be more demand to fly in other regions.

But, as things stand, there will be demand for more airport capacity in London and the South East by 2030; maybe a little earlier. **However**, what is equally clear is that the demand does not need to be met at Heathrow.

What leading figures say about Heathrow expansion

Steven Norris, the former Conservative Transport Minister, now a successful businessman:

"the [Labour] Government is pushing ahead with plans for a third runway without really understanding what that means for the economy" Speech 14/2/08

Bob Ayling, the former chief executive of British Airways:

"a costly mistake.....against Britain's economic interests" Sunday Times 4/5/08

Simon Jenkins, columnist:

"Business may like good air links, and having London as a European hub may have beneficial side effects (for some), but the atrocious state of Heathrow does not appear to have impeded London's advance over the past decade. The claim that Heathrow expansion is 'vital' for British business is palpable rubbish."

Sunday Times 2/3/08

Anatole Kalesky, then economics editor of the Times

"Expanding Heathrow would be environmental, economic and political madness." The Times (28/2/08)

Andrew Gilligan, journalist:

"If achieving the business crown of Europe was about having a world-class hub airport, Frankfurt and Paris would have won it decades ago. Instead, even as they have streaked ahead of London in runway capacity, both cities have fallen further behind in their share of world commerce." Daily Telegraph (9/1/11)

The Political Reality

Whatever the Airports Commission decides, the next Government will need to face the stark reality that a 3rd runway at **Heathrow may be politically undeliverable**. The last Labour Government tried and failed. And the opposition to expansion remains huge.



Residents
occupy
terminal in
Frankfurt

Thousands
take to the
streets in
Berlin

Protesters
in Nantes
go on 28
day hunger
strike

Across Europe too, there are constant protests against airport expansion. Wherever a new runway or new airport is planned it is meeting with well-organised and well-informed opposition. In 2012 a 3rd runway in Munich and new airports in Siena and at Viterbo were dropped. Given the opposition, the safest assumption is that airport capacity in Western Europe will remain much as it is now over the coming decades. Expansion is too difficult.

Some of Heathrow's 'rival' airports may have more capacity but they are unlikely to add to it, given the opposition to airport expansion across Western Europe.

References:

1. http://www.caa.co.uk/docs/589/CAA_InsightNote2_Aviation_Policy_For_The_Environment.pdf
2. The Department for Transport estimated that around 150,000 would be affected (i.e. would live within the 54L_{Aeq} contour) by the 3rd runway when proposed by the last Labour Government. The flight paths are very similar this time.
3. 'Computer model highlights the various noise reduction', *IACO Journal*, vol 5, no 4, pp18-19, 32-33, Ollerhead and Sharpe
4. *Indices of Deprivation Report* (2010)
5. *International Air Connectivity for Business*, WWF and AirportWatch, 2011
6. Heathrow Employment Impact Study, Parsons Brinckerhoff and Berkeley Hanover Consulting

And finally.....



A typical week of planes landing over London. More flights anyone?

This pamphlet was written and designed by HACAN Chair John Stewart. It is intended as a summary of the economic, environmental and social arguments against the further expansion of Heathrow. For further information: johnstewart2@btconnect.com Revised version January 2015