

Dear Sir Howard,

As a seasoned campaigner, I find it all somewhat ironic. You will have noticed from the number of pro-forma letters your Commission has been receiving that Heathrow Airport and Back Heathrow have strained every sinew of their advertising budget to try to persuade as many people as possible to email or write to the Commission that they want a third runway at Heathrow.

As you know, that is not the issue the Commission has been seeking to address in its current consultation. It has been asking a series of fairly technical questions on whether it has accurately assessed the pros and cons of the three shortlisted options. What it is not assessing is the level of support for each option.

The irony is that, as a rule, it is campaign groups which use – and indeed sometimes abuse - this sort of consultation as a hook to bombard the authorities with objections. Not this time. The roles have been reversed.

While most of the campaign groups have stuck to making the arguments, Heathrow, together with its sidekick Back Heathrow, have engaged in an orgy of activity.

- Passengers have been invited to pop letters of support into special post boxes which you may have seen dotted around the terminals.
- The airport emailed all its Heathrow rewards members asking them to respond.
- Airport staff have been queuing up to sign the pro-forma letters (having doubtless carefully considered every word of your weighty report in their tea-break).
- Back Heathrow, slick campaigners that they are, have used their website to make it as easy as possible for their supporters to send the Commission emails and letters supporting expansion.

I think the Commission can expect tens of thousands of standard letters and emails supporting Heathrow expansion.

You will get some responses from HACAN members and supporters but we have deliberately not set out to generate a mass of pro-forma letters and emails. We simply think they are a side-show to the serious work your Commission is undertaking.

Thank-you for taking the time to read this letter,

John Stewart  
Chair HACAN