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airportwatch

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Over 30,000 people formed a 25km human chain surrounding the site of proposed new Nantes airport



On Saturday 11th May afternoon, a huge number of protesters from across France organised themselves into a human chain round the site of the new airport, planned at Notre-Dame des Landes. There are likely to have been over 30,000, (and the number could be as high as 40,000 because accurate counting over a 25km line is difficult) though as usual the authorities give a lower attendance figure. The human chain surrounded the site of the proposed new Nantes airport, with its two planned runways and new passenger terminal, intended as a replacement for the current Nantes airport. Large numbers of people had come long distances from across France to be there, many travelling overnight by bus. They shared their picnics in the sunshine, making this a good natured event with a carnival mood. With underlying intense determination.

The fight against the proposed new Nantes Airport has become a cause-célèbre across France. There are support groups, called “committees”, in 200 towns and cities across the country; each group stages demonstrations in their own towns and lobbies politicians in their own areas in support of the Nantes campaigners. Hardly a week goes by without one of the committees cycling or walking through France to the site of the proposed airport, to show their solidarity.

The airport's opponents say that the new airport is not needed, the economic arguments don't stack up, it will increase CO2 emissions, and destroy valuable farmland and biodiversity. At the moment, the project is considerably delayed, but it is still going ahead. Its opponents want it stopped, and they show no sign of reducing their intense opposition. More detail and photos at <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=15752>

There is also a short video showing the chain, with interviews, aerial shots and a zoom along the chain <http://tinyurl.com/chaine-humaine-nddl> and a blog by John Stewart on his day taking part in the chain. <http://hacan.org.uk/blog/>

From John Stewart, Chair of AirportWatch

We highlight what is happening in Europe in this issue. Partly to counter the impression often given by politicians and businesses in the UK that it is only in this country that there is opposition to airport expansion. It is simply not true. There is widespread opposition across Western Europe. Campaigners will be gathering later this month outside Munich to plan joint campaigns.

Recently I was part of the demonstration against the new Nantes Airport in western France. The opposition is such that the campaigners fully expect that the French Government will have no alternative but to abandon the project. Over the last two years public protest has seen off a third runway in Munich and planned airports in Siena and Viterbo in Italy. The authorities face dogged opposition in their attempts to build a 3rd runway at Vienna. And, of course, massive protests continue each week in Frankfurt 18 months after the 4th runway was opened. The reality is that it is becoming virtually impossible to build new runways or airports anywhere in Europe.

The Airport Commission sets off a flurry of discussion papers

The Airports Commission, set up last year to examine whether more airport capacity is needed (and, if so, where) will come up with a short-list of possible sites in its Interim Report at the end of the year. It will examine these sites in more detail before producing its final report in summer 2015, two months after the next General Election. The "discussion papers" put out so far by the Commission are:

Submitting evidence and proposals to the Airports Commission <http://tinyurl.com/asbdqmt>

How the Airports Commission will take forward its programme of work. (February)

Discussion paper on aviation demand forecasting <http://tinyurl.com/caaqzha>

Seeking views on how to improve aviation demand forecasting. (February. Deadline was 15th March)

Discussion paper on aviation connectivity and the economy <http://tinyurl.com/pgcg5yl>

Discusses the relationship between UK aviation connectivity and the UK economy. (March. Deadline was 19th April).

Discussion paper on aviation and climate change <http://tinyurl.com/pp5v6y3>

Explores the science and policy around aviation and climate change that the Commission will need to consider. (April. Deadline was 17th May). The Commission also wanted submissions on making the best use of existing capacity in the short and medium term, by 17th May.

Sift criteria for long term capacity options at UK airports <http://tinyurl.com/d6vykdb>

The sift criteria which the Airports Commission will apply to long term airport capacity proposals. (May. Deadline for submissions is 19th July).

Discussion paper on airport operational models <http://tinyurl.com/nh3yt9e>

Explores the different airport operating models, trends in global aviation and the potential implications for airport capacity. (May. Deadline for submissions is 11th July).

There is likely to be a discussion paper on noise published by early July. The Commission indicated that all responses to these consultations would be published on their website, but so far none have been.

The Commission's website is <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/airports-commission>

A number of reports have been produced trying to influence the Airports Commission and the Government. Amongst them are:

1. On 10th May, the **Commons Transport Select Committee** – predictably – came out in favour of Heathrow expansion, <http://tinyurl.com/dx6to2l> Its Chairman, Louise Ellman, said: "We conclude that a third runway at Heathrow is necessary, but also suggest that a four-runway proposal may have merit, especially if expanding to locate two new runways westwards from the current site could curb the noise experienced by people affected under the flight path." HACAN commented that: "This is an entirely predictable report from a committee which has always favoured expansion at Heathrow. The only difference this time is it thinks there might even be a case for two new runways" and the final runway decision "...will be much more influenced by voters' distaste for a 3rd runway than a predictable report from this committee."

2. On 9th May the business lobby group, **London First**, produced their report entitled "**Flightpath to Growth**" <http://tinyurl.com/Flightpath-to-Growth> which wants more intense use of Heathrow in the short term, more flights, and an end to runway alternation. They appear to either not understand how aircraft noise impinges on the lives of those under flight paths, or deliberately seek to underplay the problems, and exaggerate the small reductions in noise that aircraft manufacturers

have achieved. They use noise figures from the time of Concorde to give the impression there has been a huge noise reduction. More information is at <http://tinyurl.com/nc4azhc>

3. On 1st May, the **London Assembly** stated its opposition to Heathrow expansion, in its report "**Airport Capacity in London.**" <http://tinyurl.com/Airport-capacity-in-London> This suggests existing airport capacity in London, including at Heathrow and Gatwick, could be used more effectively. Their research shows Stansted (summer 2012) was only 47% full; Gatwick was 88% full; Luton was 49% full. The report questions the alleged "need" for additional hub airport capacity, and says the Commission must examine whether better use of existing airport capacity could be an intelligent cost-effective alternative to building new airports or runways. More information is at <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=1789>

4. On May 29 the "Independent Transport Commission produced a report "**Flying into the Future**" <http://tinyurl.com/ITC-airports-report> which says one major hub airport is needed, in order to compete with European rival airports. Heathrow cannot be left as it is. They say using two London airports to share the load will not do - and that if that hub is not Heathrow, then Heathrow would need to close, in order to give investors confidence that airlines would move their business. Closing Heathrow would have immense implications, with 114,000 people directly and indirectly employed by the airport. Its closure would have impacts on their families and the communities in which they live – but release a huge area of land (some 1,200 acres for profitable re-development..... though a town the size of Peterborough would be needed for the new hub airport.. The ITC's key worry seems to be that "...we are losing that capacity to Charles de Gaulle, Frankfurt [and] Schiphol and the airlines will want to use those airports. <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=3610>

The airports have also submitted responses to the various Airports Commission discussions. Among these responses are the one from **Heathrow** on **short and medium term measures** to maximise use of existing capacity <http://tinyurl.com/Heathrow-short-and-medium>

In it Heathrow says it will not be pushing for mixed mode though it wants to use measures from the recent Operational Freedoms trial "tactically using both runways for arrivals when there are delays; using the southern runway for Terminal 4 arrivals and the departures runway for A380 arrivals" – which in reality means using mixed mode for quite a bit of the time. This before going for a 3rd (or even 4th) runway which it "is ultimately required to deliver long-haul connectivity for the UK" as soon as possible. More information at <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=3616>

Airports Commission: all expansion models on the table but suggests 2 hubs, not only Heathrow, for London

The most recent of the Airports Commission discussion paper (its 4th) for which the consultation is still open (till 11th July), is on "**Airport Operational Models.**" It looks at all options, including developing a single, massive hub airport and building new runways near London to produce two hubs. The paper accepts that Heathrow cannot be expanded in the short term and that politicians must consider the UK regions when they decide which airports to develop. It also indicates the uncertainty that Heathrow would ever get permission to build another runway.

The paper puts the option of a complete airline alliance (Star Alliance or SkyTeam) moving in its entirety from Heathrow to another airport (Gatwick or Stansted) to take pressure off Heathrow. It is likely that the Oneworld alliance, in which BA is key, would want to stay at Heathrow. The paper considers having several airports competing with each other, rather than one key UK hub, would make it easier for new airlines to enter the market. It appreciates that in future, with more use of long distance planes, Britain could be relatively excluded from being a global hub because hub airports in the Gulf area would benefit. <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=3549>

New CE Delft report finds “claims about the economic benefits of connectivity are not founded on solid evidence”



Finding: The link between connectivity and economic growth is unproven. The link is especially tenuous for large cities such as London that are already well connected.

Recommendation: Claims that greater connectivity, through airport expansion, will guarantee UK economic growth should be treated with scepticism.

Finding: The Department for Transport's (DfT) Cost Benefit Analysis (CBA) for airport investment projects often omits key social and environmental costs, resulting in an overestimation of net economic benefits.

Recommendation: A broad Social Cost Benefit Analysis (SCBA) should be the basis of any economic appraisal of airport expansion.

Finding: Some of the most common economic arguments being used by those who favour airport expansion are deeply flawed.

Recommendation: The Airports Commission, DfT and media should evaluate such arguments critically rather than accept them at face value.

In late April an important new report, by CE Delft, "**The Economics of Airport Expansion**" was published. It was commissioned by WWF, RSPB and HACAN, to assess whether it is true – as the aviation industry continually proclaims – that better “connectivity” will create greater economic growth for the UK. The report found that claims about the economic benefits of connectivity are not founded on solid evidence.

The report is a contribution to the Airports Commission discussion document on aviation and connectivity. It found there is a correlation between aviation activity and economic growth, However, there does not appear to be any evidence for a *causal relationship* between connectivity and economic growth. Causation and correlation are not the same thing. They also found that increasing connectivity is more beneficial for developing countries or regions than for developed economies, such as that of the UK. They ascertained that extra connectivity in cities that are already well-connected, like London, does not necessarily deliver measurable or substantial economic benefits.

CE Delft also looked at some of the economic arguments being used by proponents of airport expansion and found them to be miscalculated and exaggerated, distorting the aviation debate.

<http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=2597>

2 page summary of the report <http://tinyurl.com/CEdelft-summary> and the full report is at <http://tinyurl.com/CEdelft-full-report>

Examples of misleading reports cited by CE Delft:

Oxford Economics: The Value of Aviation Connectivity to the UK (2012). The report claims that £8.5 billion would be lost to the UK economy each year if Heathrow were unable to grow.

Amongst many mistakes, the report ignores economic losses from Britons travelling abroad but includes income from foreign tourists. The report also implies that without Heathrow huge amounts of investment, in regions outside the South East, would be lost whereas in reality flying via Schiphol or Heathrow makes little difference to a business in Newcastle.

European Aviation Campaigners' Conference: 22nd June, near Munich

An International Conference for Aviation Campaigners will be held on Saturday 22nd and Sunday 23rd June just outside Munich. It is being organized by the campaigners against the third runway at Munich Airport. But it is not just for German people. Campaigners from all over

Europe are expected to attend. It has an exciting agenda which will be of interest to all campaigners. **Accommodation is free and there is money to assist people with rail fares – for details email johnstewart2@btconnect.com**

For more details about the conference, including the agenda and how to book, at <http://tinyurl.com/Munich-conference>

Travelodge says rising number of UK “Staycations” will boost economy by £12 billion this year

A recent survey by Travelodge (of 3000 people) shows that some 65% of Britons will take a summer holiday in the UK this year – up from 41% in 2012 and 35% in 2011. The UK city break takes top position from a traditional seaside holiday as the nation’s favourite type of Staycation. London steals the top Staycation destination position from Cornwall for the first time in 5 years. The average trip costs Brits about £400 this year, (about £34.19 less than last year) and so this will boost the UK tourism industry by £12 billion (up £3.3bn from last year). The average foreign holiday cost quoted in the report was £1,010. 32% of respondents will use their Staycation break to bring together more than one generation of their family. <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=3690>

Stop Stansted Expansion rebuffs claims that the UK faces an airport capacity crisis in its submission to the Airports Commission

In their submission to the Airports Commission paper on "Aviation Connectivity and the Economy", SSE rebuffed claims that the UK is facing an airport capacity crisis which is damaging the UK economy. Contrary to aviation industry pleading for more runways, SSE says there simply isn't the demand for more business flights or more routes to emerging markets.

SSE's submission demolishes the connectivity arguments in a concise and devastating manner. They make it clear that the corporate interests of the UK aviation lobby - rather than concern for UK plc - that are driving calls for additional runways, highlighting specific examples to back this up. Heathrow, for example, flew more people to Miami last year than to the whole of mainland China, and more people to Nice than to either Beijing or Shanghai. SSE also reminds those caught up in the whirl of aviation industry spin that London continues to be independently ranked as the best city in Europe for doing business and as the city with the best transport links with other cities and internationally. Their submission is well worth reading - a load of common sense and useful analysis.

More at <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=2467>

and the full SSE submission is at <http://tinyurl.com/SSE-connectivity-submission> (11 pages)



Stop Stansted Expansion says majority of night flights are unnecessary and should be phased out

In their submission to the government's night flights consultation, SSE has called for night flights to be progressively phased out at Stansted in order to reduce sleep disturbance for local communities. The consultation on night flights at Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted ended on 22nd April. <http://tinyurl.com/night-flights-consultation> Because of its quiet, rural location, aircraft noise - especially at night - is more intrusive than in noisier, urban areas with higher background noise.



SSE also say the adverse economic impacts of night noise have been consistently underestimated. An independent study by consultants CE Delft last year showed that the cost to business of a ban on night flights at Heathrow would be outweighed by savings made through the reduced costs of sleep disturbance and stress caused by night flight noise. SSE believes this would also be the case at Stansted where the vast majority of night flights are not business related and do not need to operate during the night. Stansted is currently allowed 12,000 flights a year between 11.30pm and 6.00am - on

average, 33 per night. This is more than twice as many as are allowed at Heathrow. The actual number of night flights at Stansted last year was just over 8,000. SSE wants the new cap to be well below that. <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=2096>

“Make” try to sell their £23bn plan for Stansted 4-runway airport by saying it would cut flights over London

In October 2012 "Make" architects put forward outline proposals for a 4 runway Stansted. Now they plan to submit their plans to the Airports Commission, by the 19th July deadline. Stuart Blower from "Make" says: “One of the great advantages of our Stansted proposal is no aircraft need to fly over London” so reducing the aircraft noise, over London. "Make" say there is a low population density around Stansted, compared to that around Heathrow, so far fewer people would be affected. They do at least condescend to acknowledge that a huge Stansted would create enormously more noise for residents living near the airport.

At present the average journey time by rail between Stansted and Liverpool Street is about 47 minutes, and the airport is lobbying to get this journey time cut. "Make" proposes that the new Crossrail line should be extended to Stansted, so it would only take 25 minutes from Canary Wharf to Stansted. However, the extra cost of this Crossrail link would be some £5 billion. The anticipated cost of the "Make" airport scheme would be £18 billion, so the total would be £23 billion. Any plans to expand Stansted, let alone to become a monster mega-airport, will be strenuously opposed locally. <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=3459>



Balanced approach needed on Stansted rail services – not a non-stop line excluding local commuter use

Stansted, has been lobbying for better rail links from London in its submission to the Airports Commission on making better use of airport capacity in the south east. The airport needs to be able to show that a high proportion (40% in its interim master plan) arrive by public transport. It wants these better rail links to be paid for by the public purse.

Stop Stansted Expansion (SSE) say that the faster rail journeys between London and Stansted would be achieved by non-stop trains leaving out intermediate stops (Bishop's Cleeve or Harlow Town). This current stopping trains provides a vitally important service for local commuters. SSE has written to the Secretary of State for Transport saying unless Stansted Airport wants to build a dedicated rail line to serve the airport then all well and good but, if it wants to continue sharing the West Anglia Main Line with local users, there needs to be a balanced approach. In reality the number of passengers travelling by train to/from Stansted Airport has fallen by a third in recent years, from 5.5 million 2007/08 to 3.7 million in 2011/12, despite the introduction of a brand new fleet of trains in 2011.

<http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=3571>

SSE <http://www.stopstanstedexpansion.com/>

GACC reveals indicative flight paths for a 2nd Gatwick runway, showing new areas overflown

Maps illustrating probable flight paths from a new Gatwick runway have been produced by the local community group, GACC (the Gatwick Area Conservation Campaign). The maps have been designed with knowledge of the principles of air space design and aeronautical principles, and have been checked by an air traffic control expert. The maps show the new departure routes as likely to cause disturbance in Horsham, East Grinstead, Dorking, Reigate and many villages which are at present not overflown. The arrival routes are shown as covering most of Sussex.

Brendon Sewill, Chairman of GACC said of the new maps that “If Gatwick Airport Ltd don’t like them it is up to them to produce their own maps.” The problem with a 2nd runway and hence huge increase in the number of flights, is that If flight paths are to be designed to minimise the risk of accidents flight paths will need to go over areas at present peaceful. The maps are based on a so-called ‘wide-spaced’ runway 1,035 m to the south of the existing one. With planes landing and

taking off on each runway, there need to be 2 parallel tracks some 1,035 m apart and flight paths would need to be designed to avoid mid-air collisions.

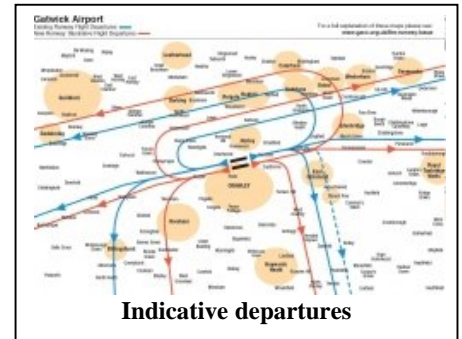


To see larger versions of the maps, click on <http://tinyurl.com/GACC-indicative-arrivals> for arrivals

and on <http://tinyurl.com/GACC-indicative-departures> for departures.

More details at GACC
<http://www.gacc.org.uk>
and

<http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=3553>



GACC point out that there is no robust business case for a 2nd Gatwick runway

In the Select Committee on Transport's report, published on 10th May, they recommend that Gatwick Airport Ltd should 'develop a robust business case to demonstrate the role that a two runway airport could play in increasing airport competition.' GACC (the Gatwick Area Conservation Campaign) commented that they agree with the Committee that no robust business case currently exists, and that the economics of a 2nd Gatwick runway do not stack up. Gatwick Airport has said in their business plan that a new runway and a new terminal would cost £3 -5 billion, but they only paid £1.5 billion for the whole airport in 2009. It is unlikely that the airlines will want to pay the necessary rises in charges. In reality with larger planes increasingly being used, there is no need for any new south east runways. Gatwick campaigners stand shoulder to shoulder with those at Heathrow and Stansted in resisting any new runways in the UK

<http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=1149>



Transport Select Committee

Huge rally held against Heathrow expansion – if allowed it would face opposition on a truly massive scale

Over a thousand people attended a rally in Barnes, against the possible expansion of Heathrow, on 27th April. The rally was organised by Zac Goldsmith, and attended by Mayor of London Boris Johnson - who said he thought the Conservatives "would be utterly nuts to go into the next



election with the possibility of a Heathrow third runway on the table." [However, unfortunately Boris thinks the alternatives offered by Gatwick, Stansted and two sites in the Thames Estuary should be considered. Worryingly, he seems to favour expansion at Stansted, and have little concern about aviation's carbon emissions]. Boris told the rally that a 3rd runway at Heathrow was "just too difficult to deliver – 15 years at least it would take to bring about. "Above all you would be inflicting noise pollution not just on west London but on huge parts of London that don't even know they are going to be affected. That

is not the right way forward for the greatest city on earth." There were speeches from 15 politicians including two cabinet ministers Justine Greening and Ed Davey. Zac said the opponents of a 3rd runway will continue to make clear their opposition to further expansion, and he wants "ministers to be left in no doubt that if they give expansion a green light, they will face a campaign on a truly massive scale <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=1917>

HACAN blog on why expansion would be politically toxic <http://tinyurl.com/Heathrow-blog>

Damaged BA plane on one engine and trailing smoke from the other on fire, flies right across London for emergency landing at Heathrow

On 24th May a British Airways flight (BA 762) from Heathrow to Oslo was forced to turn back immediately after take off, due to either a bird strike or a technical problem. The Airbus A319 was powered by two IAE V2500 engines. The left engine appears to have hit an object at take-off,



which stripped off the engine cowling. The right engine then may have hit something, and there are observer accounts of a bang. The plane did a large loop around London, in order to land again, using only the left engine. Many observers saw, and recorded, the plane – trailing smoke from the right engine, as it flew right across London. The plane made a safe landing, though passengers were evacuated down emergency chutes, and there were 3 minor injuries.

Heathrow airport was disrupted for hours due to the emergency landing. While those in favour of expanding the airport are likely to use this dangerous incident to call for more airport capacity (so Heathrow can cope with incidents without delays) it would be more relevant and more responsible to question how safe it is to have disabled planes flying miles over densely populated London. Luckily this time, there was no crash. With Heathrow airport hoping to get another runway (or two) the safety issue of flying more and more planes over hundreds of thousands of people has to be confronted. <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=3068>

There was a remarkable absence of concern about safety of Londoners in media reports of the BA plane engine fire

The media seem not even to have considered the safety aspects of the story. The Telegraph writes about the large number of passengers getting away for the bank holiday weekend, and flights delayed. Simon Calder writing in the Independent takes the opportunity of heading his article "Emergency landing at Heathrow sparks further controversy over London airport capacity" though he does have the decency to add one comment from a member of the public in his piece to say that "London is one of the very few cities in the world that has its main flight paths over the city. A very serious accident is not a question of if, but when." <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=2960>

Over 100,000 residents of Hounslow, Hillingdon and Richmond voted in local polls - huge majority against a 3rd Heathrow runway or more flights

Three of the local council areas most affected by Heathrow aircraft noise - Richmond, Hillingdon and Hounslow - recently carried out referendums of their residents on the subject of Heathrow growth. All three ended on 16th May. In total, well over 140,000 people responded to the polls. They voted overwhelmingly against expansion of the airport, against a new runway, and against more flights over Londoners.

In the Hounslow poll, 72% of residents said they are against expansion, but 64% said they did not want to see a new hub airport built if it meant losing Heathrow.

83% of Hounslow residents were in favour of a night flight ban (11pm to 7pm) and 94% wanted better noise insulation for schools and residents living under the flight path. In the Richmond poll, 80% were against a 3rd runway, and 82% were against increasing the number of flights. In the Hillingdon poll, 66% were against a 3rd runway, and 66% against more flights. The Standard says the findings of the poll are bound to be exploited by councillors as they go to the voters in next spring's local elections. Heathrow sought vainly to rubbish the polls by saying they were voting on an outdated 3rd runway proposal.

<http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=3548> and at <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=1187>



Update from Luton no sign of progress on planning application

After the flurry of competing expansion plans from Luton's owner (Luton Borough Council) and Luton's operator (London Luton Airport Operations Ltd *), which resulted in the rival plans being combined "to incorporate the best features of both" - "best", of course, from an aviation industry standpoint, with the higher of the two allegedly maximum passenger throughputs and aircraft movement numbers (the preference of the airport owner), things have gone surprisingly quiet.



For what must have been political reasons the operator became the fall-guy to be the applicant and lodged a planning application (12/0140/FUL) with Luton Borough Council on 3rd December 2012. As at end-May 2013 its status remains "pending consideration". Local people have been told that there are questions to be resolved between Luton Borough Council and the applicant, but though they have been asked, the Council will not disclose the nature of those questions. They may be to do with planning issues, or the role of the Council as airport owner, or both. No date has yet been set

for the Council's Planning Committee to consider the application - at which time they may well agree with all those respondents who have declared the plans for the larger airport to a thinly-disguised Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project and refer it to the Planning Inspectorate.....

In addition, the operator Abertis* is "re-evaluating its airports strategy worldwide" - they've already disposed of their interest in Cardiff Airport - so it's possible that on reflection they're a bit less enthused about having been forced into adopting the owner's plan and the cash-flow profile it entails - big spending early with revenues trickling along somewhat later. With the end-date for the operator's concession fixed in time, each month's delay is in effect costing money, albeit in the form of possible future incomes not received, so the lack of progress is surprising. (From Luton campaigners)

* The **legal owner of Luton** is London Luton Airport Limited, which is 99.99% owned by Luton Borough Council; only 6 shares are not Council-owned and it had to be set up that way when the law was changed to enable local authorities to own airports. The **operating company** is London Luton Airport Operations Limited, which is in turn a wholly-owned subsidiary of an alliance between two Spanish-based companies: Abertis, a global infrastructure company being the majority shareholder, and AENA (Spain's equivalent of NATS) the minority. *Mildly confusing....*

Also on Luton: Campaigners estimate that it is the 4th-busiest bizjet airport in Europe, after Paris/Le Bourget, Geneva-Cointrin and Nice. They have been asking for actual passenger figures for bizjet flights - so they can see how few passengers are conveyed at the cost of airspace, runway slots and noise disturbance.

Lydd airport expansion decision to be challenged at the High Court by RSPB and LAAG

Plans for expansion at Lydd were initially proposed in 2010, and were given the go-ahead by the government in April after a public inquiry. Now campaigners opposed to development at Lydd have lodged an appeal against the government decision. The airport wants a runway extension of almost 300m and a new terminal, and development to allow up to 500,000 passengers per year, up from hardly any now. The RSPB and Lydd Airport Action Group (LAAG) have lodged separate appeals. The RSPB says that the area where the airport is situated, Dungeness, is one of the most important wildlife sites in the world - it is protected at global, European and UK levels. "The stakes are too high to risk the future of one of our best and most important places for nature without



testing the basis for this decision which we consider to be flawed." The airport would damage the wildlife and landscape. LAAG argues the expansion plan is unsafe due to the airport being in such close proximity to Dungeness nuclear power station. 28th May.

<http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=3328>

China Eastern Airlines carries out test flight using palm oil – and is considering more

China Eastern Airlines has conducted a first test flight of a biofuel blend sourced and produced in China. The fuel was used cooking oil and palm oil though one source says the fuel for this flight was just palm oil, as its processing is cheaper than processing used cooking oil. The use of palm oil as jet fuel has serious environmental problems, due to the loss of tropical rainforest to produce palm oil plantations, which leads to high CO2 emissions. Rainforest destruction also causes substantial biodiversity loss. The use of palm oil for jet fuel conflicts with food use of the oil.

Palm oil is an inappropriate fuel for aviation, and more responsible airlines have not used it. For any biofuel to be environmentally sustainable they would need to be produced from feedstocks that have no impact on biodiversity, land and water use - as well as having lower lifetime carbon emissions. The airline says, in one report, that it will begin to fly commercial services on 100% biofuels. Until now biofuels have been used in combination with traditional jet fuel from fossil sources. China Eastern has not yet released a timetable of when the commercial services will begin. 24th May. <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=3314>

Norwegian aviation industry hopes for large volumes of biojet fuel from timber and logging residues

A report on possible production of aviation biofuel from Norwegian forests has been published. It concludes that cost-competitive, large-scale production of aviation biofuels might be viable in Norway between 2020 and 2025. There is, of course, an immense resource of timber in Norway, and of logging residues. The report considers two processes - either Fischer-Tropsch + gasification, or the refining of bio-alcohols to Jet A-1 fuel. Norway wants to cut its aviation emissions by 10-15% by 2020-25, which would need some 190-250 million litres of biojet fuel. To produce that amount, there would need to be around 8-10 production plants with an annual output of 50 million litres each. To be profitable the plants would need to have added sales income from biodiesel and bionaphtha byproducts. There are a large number of economic and technological uncertainties about whether this scheme could ever happen, and if it would be financially viable.

<http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=1006>

ONS data shows about 12.3% of trips abroad by Brits in 2012 were on business + about 18% of worldwide visitors to the UK were on business

Data from the ONS (Office for National Statistics), released on 19th April, shows that there were some 56 million visits by UK residents abroad during 2012. There were also some 31 million visits by overseas residents to the UK. Some 44 million Brits went to Europe during 2012, and those European visits made up about 78% of the visits abroad by UK residents. Around 22.8 million Europeans visited the UK during 2012 and Europeans make up about 74% of visitors to the UK.

Around 12.2% of all UK residents travelling to Europe were on business (and about 26% of Europeans visiting the UK were on business). Of total visits abroad worldwide made by UK residents, about 12.3% were on business, (and about 18% of worldwide visitors to the UK were on business). As well as the 12.2% of Brits on business worldwide in 2012, 21% were visiting friends and family, and 64% were on holidays. About 74% UK of business trips to Europe were by plane, and about 69% of European business trip to the UK were by plane. The rest were by sea or via the Channel Tunnel. 76% of holiday trips to Europe were by plane and about 10.5% were by the Channel Tunnel. <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=15841>

High Speed Rail 2 business case ridiculed by National Audit Office

The National Audit Office has raised doubts over the viability of High Speed 2. This comes within months of the High Court ordering the DfT to re-run its consultation over its compensation arrangements for up to 300,000 households which have been blighted by the plans. The report ridicules many of the key economic arguments put forward by supporters of the scheme. Margaret Hodge said: "The Department has produced a business case that is clearly not up to scratch. Some of their assumptions are just ludicrous." The NAO says the HS2 analysis does not estimate how many jobs are additional and how many would have been created without HS2 - and it does not provide good supporting evidence that HS2 would rebalance the economy by supporting regional growth. Another failing is in simplistic assumptions that time spent travelling by train is unproductive. "Research commissioned by the department suggests that business travellers do work on trains for at least part of their journeys, and a proportion of the time saved from faster journeys may be used for leisure purposes." 17th May. <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=3025>

Lack of agreement within ICAO on market based measures (MBM) to reduce global aviation CO2 means effective deal this year unlikely

Officials from 17 countries are working with ICAO to shape an agreement acceptable to its 191 member countries to reduce aviation's global carbon footprint through market measures. ICAO needs to agree on progress by its September Assembly meeting. Progress has been glacially slow over the past decade, and there appears to be no realistic chance of agreement in time.

A high-level group (HGCC) of senior officials and negotiators was set up last November to accelerate discussions and find compromises between states on MBMs, but its process has now ended. It appears that very little progress had been made and there were significant diverging views. Some ICAO representatives remained mildly optimistic that some form of an agreement could be reached by September, with further achieved by 2016. It appears a number of differences between ICAO member states in key areas have not been resolved by the HGCC. <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=3502>

The European transport group, Transport & Environment say that unless things changed, and ICAO makes rapid progress leading to a constructive agreement on both the need for a MBM to address international aviation emissions and for a Framework to govern national/regional schemes such as the EU ETS, then the original aviation Directive would "snap back" automatically next January and the ETS "stopped clock" would re-start. T&E <http://tinyurl.com/TandE-ICAO-MBM>

Letter from Airbus to Chinese aviation official shows how active Airbus was in getting ETS emasculated

In April a deal was agreed between Airbus and China that they would buy 18 long-haul A330s because of the ETS being temporarily stopped. Now Reuters reports on a letter from the Airbus Chief Executive, Fabrice Bregier to China's top aviation official shortly after the EU back-pedalled on its ETS in November, (4 days after the ETS climb down) - which can be summed up as Airbus to China: We support you, please buy our jets. Details. <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=1009>

Useful Info

- For large mounts of up-to-date news on airports and aviation, see **AirportWatch**'s news pages http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?page_id=148
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