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## **Gatwick opposition groups and MPs hand in letter to Downing Street, asking PM to recognise devastating impact of Gatwick runway**



Six local groups and four MPs opposing a 2nd Gatwick runway, and the increased noise nuisance caused by Gatwick airport, handed in a letter to 10 Downing Street on 23<sup>rd</sup> March. They are asking the Prime Minister to recognise the devastating impact of a 2nd runway, and the lack of local political support.

The letter urged the government to acknowledge the strength of local opposition to changes to flight paths already in and out of Gatwick- as well as to a 2<sup>nd</sup> runway.

The delegation handed in the letter, signed by the chairs of the groups representing residents

in Sussex, Kent and Surrey, that surround Gatwick and are affected by it. Together, the groups represent tens of thousands of people.

Sally Pavey, Chair of local group CAGNE commented: "Throughout this process, we've been hugely disappointed with Gatwick's lack of consultation with the local area. CEO Stewart Wingate continues to portray the airport as an 'easy option' for expansion, while ignoring the concerns of thousands of local residents. Also that it will cost the taxpayer billions in infrastructure bills and the devaluation of vast areas of the south-east with aircraft noise." CAGNE have also submitted an official complaint to the Airports Commission, on the actions of Gatwick airport in lobbying Heathrow councils to back a Gatwick runway. 23.3.2015 <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=25654>

## **Heathrow opposition rally shows united cross-party rejection of 3rd runway**

Simply "NO"- that was the message of a cross-party rally staged by HACAN in central London on March 3rd. MPs from across the political spectrum lined up with environmental NGOs, local authority leaders, businessmen and trade union leaders to pledge opposition to a 3rd runway at Heathrow. Hundreds of people from London and the South East, including many whose homes are threatened by a new runway, showed their determination that the runway will not be built.



As a reminder of the determined and successful campaign against the runway, last time around, people at the rally held up pictures of the huge "NO" spelt out on the ground in Sipson, at the May 2008 protest.

Twickenham MP Vince Cable made it clear that Liberal Democrat policy remained one of total opposition to a third runway. He said there was no sound economic reason why Heathrow needed to expand.

John McDonnell, the Labour MP for Hayes and Harlington, thousands of whose constituents are facing

the loss of their homes, predicted that any decision to go-ahead with a new runway would result in the biggest direct action environmental protest in Europe. HACAN chair John Stewart said: "The rally sent a loud and clear message to the next Government: build a new runway at your peril. The coalition which saw it off last time round is still alive, well and fighting."

4.3.2015 <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/2015/03/25402/>

## **Boris turns down London City Airport expansion plans on noise grounds**

Boris Johnson, the Mayor of London, has refused London City Airport's plan to expand on noise grounds.



In a letter he has instructed Newham Council, who had approved the application, to refuse it. The Mayor says the application does not "adequately mitigate and manage its adverse noise impacts."

Newham's decision was always dependent on the Mayor's approval. London City Airport wanted permission to build new taxiways to permit larger planes to use the airport. It also wanted more car parking spaces.

The decision will be a blow to the airport as it will now no longer be able to bring in the larger planes it wanted to serve new

destinations. John Stewart, chair of HACAN East, which campaigned against the expansion plans, said "The airport is paying the price for being so cavalier about noise. Quite simply, Boris did not believe its claims that it was dealing adequately with noise. We salute his decision". The decision appears to be final, and it is unclear whether London City Airport can appeal to the Secretary of State. They may do so.

There are interesting speculations, on the issue of appeal, about the connection with Gatwick airport, also owned by GIP. 27.3.2015 <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=25720>

## **Committee on Climate Change writes to Sir Howard to say aviation CO2 emissions must not be over 2005 level by 2050**

The Committee on Climate Change (CCC) has written to the Airports Commission (AC) in response to its consultation. The letter reiterates the Committee's earlier recommendation that the Airports Commission's economic analysis of the expansion options should reflect the need to restrain aviation growth in order to manage emissions from the sector.

This in effect means that the costs of limiting emissions – which may be transferred to passengers or industry – are included in the cost-benefit analysis for each of the 3 runway schemes. The AC has yet to complete this assessment. The CCC is clear that the Government's airports policy should reflect the need for aviation emissions to be no higher in 2050 than in 2005, this being the maximum level of emissions that would be compatible with the Climate Change Act.

However, the 'uncapped' forecasts for national aviation emissions produced by the AC exceed the 2005 emissions levels under all three possible expansion options. In the absence of some unspecified policy that would limit emissions, therefore, a new runway would result in the UK failing in its legal climate commitments. The CCC letter says "Higher aviation emissions than 2005 levels in 2050 should not be planned for, since this would imply greater than 85% cuts in other sectors; there is limited confidence about the scope for this."

2.3.2015 <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=25335>

## **Heathrow says it did not know flight path changes were continuing – blames NATS for not telling them**

Heathrow and NATS had flight path trials during summer 2014, which ended on 12th November, due to intense opposition. (Details <http://tinyurl.com/early-end-trials>) But complaints have continued and people have been adamant that the trials have not ended. Heathrow has given assurance after assurance that the trials have ceased, implying people are imagining the noise - or have become over-sensitive to it.

Now Heathrow and NATS have had to apologise. Heathrow says it did not know the trial affecting the "Compton" route to the south west and west of Heathrow had not ended, as NATS had not informed them. As NATS and Heathrow work closely together, that is somewhat hard to believe. Even if it could be credible, it reveals a markedly dismissive attitude to the thousands of upset residents, who have complained week after week. The airport had made no apparent effort to establish the facts, for many months. The areas particularly affected by this change are Virginia Water, Ascot, Binfield and some parts of Bracknell, which are experiencing a concentrated flight path.

John Holland-Kaye said: "Because of the assurances we received [from NATS], we in turn told residents in good faith that no changes had occurred. That is unacceptable and I unequivocally apologise to local residents." However, NATS say they changed the route to improve the safe and efficient management of traffic departing from Heathrow and they are not planning to revert to previous procedures. 18.3.2015 <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=25576>

## **Windsor MP, Adam Afriye, says on NATS/flightpath fiasco, Heathrow has either been wilfully misleading or incompetent**

Heathrow finally admitted changes to flight paths that have inflicted more flights and greater noise on residents in Ascot, Binfield, Bracknell Forest, Cheapside, Sunninghill, Warfield and other nearby areas. John Holland-Kaye, CEO of Heathrow, wrote in a letter to Mr Afriye: "I recognise that as an airport community we have let you down in this instance. We need to do better to be a good neighbour and I would like to unequivocally apologise to you and your constituents."

Commenting on the letter, Mr Afriye said: "I am deeply concerned on behalf of the residents who have suffered from extra aircraft noise without so much as a warning... What beggars belief is Heathrow's insulting accusation that residents were imagining the extra noise! ... Heathrow must take the blame for misleading residents and being dismissive of their concerns. And I now call on Heathrow and NATS to release all flightpath data on arrivals, which Heathrow is yet to disclose to me.... Heathrow has either been wilfully misleading or rather incompetent. Heathrow and NATS have serious questions to answer and must be held to account in Parliament. 21.3.2015 <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=25614>

## **Heathrow would spend £10 million to increase some domestic flights (only with a 3rd runway) to get backing from regions**

Heathrow has increasingly cut the number of flights to UK regional airports, as it has become less economic for the airlines to run them - and long haul international routes are more profitable. But Heathrow is aware that it needs to get the backing of regional airports, in order to lobby to be allowed a 3rd runway. Heathrow therefore suggested the setting up of a National Connectivity Task Force, which it funds. (See below). In order to boost flights to the regions, Heathrow now says that - only IF it gets a new runway - it will spend £10 million on the development of 5 new domestic routes, for 3 years. These would include Newquay, Humberside and Liverpool.

That would be in addition to the 4 extra routes that easyJet has said it wants to operate IF there is a Heathrow runway, to Inverness, Belfast International, the Isle of Man and Jersey. There are currently 6 domestic routes from Heathrow (Leeds Bradford, Belfast City, Manchester, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Aberdeen and Newcastle). Heathrow also said it would launch a review of its airport charges in the coming

weeks to focus on making domestic flights more commercially attractive (cheaper) to airlines. The results of this consultation, which is not dependent upon getting a new runway, will be effective from January 2016.25.3.2015 <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=25690>

### **Heathrow funded report suggests using RAF Northolt as an interim 3rd runway for domestic flights**

Heathrow set up and funds a body called the "National Connectivity Task Force" (NCTF). This produced a report in March, looking at regional connectivity – and putting arguments that suit Heathrow. (Gatwick airport, unsurprisingly strongly disagrees with it). As well as saying how important links to regional airports are from Heathrow, though these have progressively been cut as long haul flights are more profitable, the NCTF report says RAF Northolt airport, just a few miles north of Heathrow, should be used as an extension to Heathrow, for smaller planes for flights to regional airports.

As this news broke about the same time as the Germanwings plane tragedy, it did not get press attention. What Heathrow wants is to have Northolt brought into service, as an interim measure, before it can get a new runway. Or if Gatwick was chosen for a runway, Heathrow could use Northolt for domestic flights it

has been promising regional airports, in order to get their backing for its runway plans.

Heathrow says the Northolt runway could not be used at the same time as a new Heathrow north-west runway – and that would not be needed.

RAF Northolt does not comply with the safety standards required for a civilian airport. Its runway ends just short of the busy A40. 30.3.2015

<http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=25731>



The image shows just how close the end of the runway is to the busy A40. There was an accident (one person badly injured) in August 1996 when a Learjet overshot the end of the runway. <http://tinyurl.com/Northolt-crash>

### **Access to expanded Heathrow would cost £20 billion, TfL warns – maybe £15 billion more from the taxpayer than Commission estimate**

Transport for London (TfL) has raised "serious concerns" about congestion and the costs of expansion at Heathrow just weeks before the Airports Commission's final recommendation is due (end of June?). **TfL Response to APPG on Surface Access Feb 2015**<http://tinyurl.com/TfL-response>

In response to questions by Zac Goldsmith, TfL said both Heathrow and Commission had "significantly underestimated" the challenge of improving transport access to the site, with the Airports Commission estimating £5 billion would be enough to make the improvements. TfL believes to provide an optimal level of service, the figure would be nearer to £20 billion, raising questions about who would pay the additional costs. TfL said population growth of 37% by 2050 has also not been taken into account, with regards to the increased pressure on London's roads and public transport infrastructure.

Zac said: "TfL is better placed than any other organisation to understand the effects Heathrow expansion will have on London's transport network, and it is extraordinary therefore that the Commission never bothered to ask for its assessment. **This raises serious questions about the thoroughness and reliability of the Commission's work.** If TfL is right, the taxpayer may end up having to cough up an additional £15 billion to help Heathrow secure its monopoly, in addition to all the associated problems of gridlock, noise and air pollution."

Daniel Moylan said "The Airports Commission's assessment of the surface access impacts for an expanded Heathrow does not extend beyond 2030 and assumes a 3rd runway to be barely a quarter full, which is not credible for an airport currently operating at over 98% capacity." It has not looked at the transport needs by 2040–2050. 1.4.2015 <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=25775>

### **“Gatwick Obviously NOT” serves Judicial Review upon the CAA, on airspace change, with Gatwick Airport as an “Interested Party”**

The relatively new campaign, "Gatwick Obviously NOT", (GON) which was set up in response to changes to flight paths to the east of Gatwick airport during summer 2014, has served a Judicial Review upon the CAA, with Gatwick Airport Limited and the Secretary of State for Transport listed under the CAA as an 'Interested Party'.

The claim is being brought by Martin Baraud, the Chair of GON. The "Ground of Claim" is that there has indeed been a change in the use of airspace and that the CAA should first have consulted on such change before it was put into effect by GAL and NATS. To date no consultation has taken place on the newly concentrated flight paths, and this whole procedure has been bypassed. GON wants proper consultation, and that a full airspace change process is carried out. They also want there to be no airspace changes by the CAA without approval by the Secretary of State.

GON has already succeeded in raising over £100,000 and they will be fundraising further, for more legal costs. 11.3.2015 <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=25508>

### **Gatwick's Tom Denton says controversial new flight navigation system is here to stay at Gatwick**

Tom Denton, Head of Corporate Responsibility at Gatwick, has admitted that the airport will not rush to making changes to the use of PRNAV despite public opposition. He said: "There was an acceptance that SHOULD there be detrimental impact we would seek to revert to previous methods." However, there have been perceived detrimental impacts, and Gatwick does not intend to revert.

Residents in many areas - to the north and north west of the airport in particular - have been complaining about the use of more concentrated flight paths, which is what PRNAV (also called PBN - Performance Based Navigation) creates. This has meant that more planes fly in these new narrow corridors - though fewer planes fly in some other areas. The Chairman of GATCOM (Gatwick Consultative Committee) wrote to Stewart Wingate to ask Gatwick to honour a previous agreement to stop using PRNAV. Gatwick is one of the first UK airports to introduce the system, because Mr Denton said the quieter airspace around Gatwick meant PRNAV was easier to implement there. Tom Denton said the matter would be assessed "on a factual basis" and not emotional responses. 13.3.2015 <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=25513>

### **Gatwick claims support for 2nd runway – but does not reveal necessary methodological detail about its polls**

Gatwick Airport has had two surveys done, to try to show there is support for their runway. One is of councils in London. Gatwick knows almost every council, except East Sussex, in its area has voted to oppose a 2nd runway. So Gatwick has been asking London councils instead, in the hope of better results.

Many London councils know the highly negative impacts Heathrow, and its flight noise, cause for their residents, and therefore are opposed to any more. Some have said they back a Gatwick runway (believing, questionably, that there must be a new runway somewhere) in order to save their residents more problems. Some London councils hope Gatwick could provide jobs for their workers.

The second survey is of residents in Kent and in West Sussex, and again, Gatwick claims significant support for their runway, compared to Heathrow. However, Gatwick does not publicise any of the actual

data of their surveys. That is very significant, because without knowing the questions asked, the script leading up to the questions, and the options given, the results are almost meaningless. Their earlier consultation, in spring 2014, contained (till forced to add another option) no means of saying "No" to either options, but just various shades of "Yes."

Who knows whether these surveys contained the appropriate alternative response options?

21.3.2015 <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=25618>

### **GACC says Gatwick's rash promise to cap landing charge at £15 puts its runway plan in doubt**

Gatwick airport have made a very rash promise not to raise their landing charges above £15 (plus inflation) for 30 years, but ONLY if they get a 30 contract from the government. [The contract does not exist, and may not even be possible – Gatwick need it to require successive governments to prevent any other new runways for 30 years.]

Brendon Sewill, Chairman of GACC (the Gatwick Area Conservation Campaign) said: "The whole runway project is in doubt.... Gatwick's rash promise not to raise airport charges above £15 per head .... seriously puts in question whether building a new runway at Gatwick is a viable business proposal – either for the present owners or for the new owners if Gatwick is sold." The Airports Commission calculate that Gatwick charges would need to rise to "between £15 and £18, with peak charges of up to £23." These higher levels were due to lower estimated levels of air passenger demand than Gatwick's optimistic figures, and higher infrastructure costs. [Airports Commission's consultation document Page 47].

GACC points out that Gatwick's promises are meaningless unless they are put into a legal agreement binding on the present airport owners - and future owners. If so, the £15 would become a legal maximum - rather than the current £9. Even at £15 some airlines and passengers might well decide instead to use much cheaper airports such as Stansted or Luton. GACC has pointed out to the Airports Commission the risk that Gatwick may have fewer passengers than forecast, in which case the cap of £15 may not be sufficient to cover the costs of a new runway and new terminal. Brendon Sewill asks: "What would happen if the money runs out when the new runway is only half built?"

16.3.2015 <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=25558>

### **Gatwick "promises" to cap landing charges to £15 + inflation for 30 years (if it gets an unspecified 30 year "contract" from Government)**

Gatwick airport, in frenetic publicity in the months before the Airports Commission runway recommendation (expected in June) has made various pledges - in the hope of currying favour.



Sir Roy McNulty, chairman of Gatwick, has written to Sir Howard Davies saying - among other things - that the landing charge will be kept at £15 (plus inflation) for 30 years "in return for Government agreeing a 30 year contract."

Gatwick said of this contract:

*"The exact nature of the thirty year contract has yet to be finalised – its purpose would be to clarify the commercial and regulatory environment in which we would be operating, including the anticipated timing of any new runways beyond that granted to Gatwick. Whilst we understand that one government cannot bind a future government irreversibly, if there was a legal contract in place and the future proved different from that which had been committed to, the contract could also govern what might happen in those circumstances."*

Gatwick also says it will "bear all the main risks of the expansion programme . . . including long-term risks related to traffic levels, market pricing, construction and operating costs". How? Gatwick's main airline, EasyJet, isn't happy with charges even rising to £15. 14.3.2015 <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=25540>

## **Crispin Blunt MP: Too many unanswered questions make Gatwick obviously NOT the right choice**

Crispin Blunt is the MP for Reigate and Chair of the group of MPs against a new Gatwick runway, the Gatwick Coordination Group. He has set out why there must not be a 2nd Gatwick runway. He writes that Gatwick wrongly puts about the view that one runway will solve our (alleged) "aviation crisis" and that it doesn't matter where it's put.

He says the local impacts of a Gatwick runway cannot be justified and would not provide the sort of airport capacity needed. "Gatwick talk about the importance of trust. Yet, they have eroded trust by refusing countless times to speak to the local public about the impact of expansion on surrounding communities, while this week senior representatives found time to attend political events organised by local politicians around Heathrow."

Some of the many reasons not to allow Gatwick a runway are insufficient workforce, severe housing and infrastructure pressures, lack of transport resilience, and doubts about Gatwick's business calculations - which are kept secret. Unfortunately, Crispin Blunt is now advocating a runway at Heathrow - apparently oblivious of the equally horrendous consequences for the areas to be badly affected there.

20.3.2015 <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=25596>

## **To conceal the real number of aircraft noise complaints, Gatwick now just records one per person per day**

Gatwick Airport's figures on noise complaints are no longer of much use, as they do not publicly report the full numbers. The airport changed the system to only record one complaint per person per day, no matter how many complaints about separate flights they may make. Gatwick says they have introduced this system because people can use phone Apps to make multiple complaints. Gatwick is being urged to record three things separately:

- (1). The number of people making complaints;
- (2). The number of total complaints when only one-a-day is counted; and
- (3). The total number of complaints (including number of planes complained about).



At the recent noise seminar held by Gatwick airport on 4th March, Tom Denton (Gatwick's Head of Corporate Responsibility) said, when questioned about the decision by GAL to only record one complaint, per person, per day that this has been the case for the last "2 - 3 years". The wording on the GAL website was changed, to show one complaint only per day, in August 2014. Tom Denton says - incorrectly - that this is the practice at other airports like Heathrow. Heathrow records "enquiries" (number of planes complained about), and "contacts" (number of complaint contacts/forms submitted), and "caller" (number of people).

Every complaint, unless there are many on one form/email, is counted by Heathrow, even if several per day. But not by Gatwick - meaning complaint figures are not comparable. Gatwick's are now artificially low. 9.3.2015 <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=25459>

## **Launch of the Global Anti-Aerotropolis Movement (GAAM) as the number of planned Aerotropolis developments is rising fast**

An aerotropolis is a sort of "airport city" with the urban development centred around an airport, and with the airport at its core. Aerotropolis developments are the focus of rapid growth in aviation-dependent tourism and trade, and can vary greatly in scale and sectoral focus. Increasingly, aerotropolis developments not only deal with logistics, warehousing, manufacture, assembly and business, but also funnel inbound tourists - arriving by air - through shopping malls, hotels, entertainment complexes and cultural venues.

The associated rapid and intense urbanisation requires large, preferably greenfield, sites. Some of these sites are literally 100 square kilometres in area. This means building over huge areas, likely loss of good agricultural land, and often the eviction of rural communities. The briefing "What is an Aerotropolis, and why must these developments be stopped" <http://tinyurl.com/What-is-an-Aerotropolis> sets out many of the negative impacts of these developments.

Environmental and climate justice campaigners, aviation and tourism critics, human rights activists, and other concerned citizens and groups have now formed the Global Anti-Aerotropolis Movement (GAAM) to raise awareness of this new sort of socially and ecologically harmful mega-airport development.

23.3.2015 <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=25650>



The GAAM Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/GAAMovement>

### **Ryanair announce to Stock Exchange it has “not considered or approved any transatlantic project and does not intend to do so.”**

In September Ryanair announced it was buying 100 Boeing 737-MAX planes, and has also secured options on another 100 of the slightly larger, 737 200 (200 seats). These planes, in the plans of Ryanair, are to thrash the low cost opposition in Europe. Their range is not long enough for transatlantic flights as they could barely reach New York.

Ryanair needs to buy a large number of longer haul planes, to make a transatlantic service viable, and Mr O'Leary has said he cannot get those planes for 4 - 5 years, at least. But in February, Michael O'Leary told a conference he was planning £8 transatlantic flights after perhaps 5 years. This got Gatwick airport very excited, putting out a blog on their website that states: "The announcement this week that Ryanair's Board has approved plans to launch new low-cost long-haul services is significant news but really should come as no surprise to many of us in the aviation industry as this is a development that has been signposted for some time."

Ryanair has now had to put out an announcement to the Stock Exchange, to avoid confusion caused by press speculation that: "In the light of recent press coverage, the Board of Ryanair Holdings Plc wishes to clarify that it has not considered or approved any transatlantic project and does not intend to do so."

20.3.2015 <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=25602>

### **Manchester Airport says it is the main airport for the north – Heathrow expansion is not needed for the regions**

Charlie Cornish, the CEO of Manchester airport and MAG (and owner of Stansted) says "it is just plain wrong to say that only Heathrow can connect the UK to global growth." His comments were in response to a report by a body called the National Connectivity Task Force (NCTF) set up by Heathrow. The NCTF is pushing for a 3rd Heathrow runway, saying it would be the best option for regional airports like Newcastle and Durham Tees Valley, if they get more Heathrow slots for their flights.

Mr Cornish said Manchester Airport, the only UK airport other than Heathrow to have 2 runways, was thriving as an international hub in its own right.

He said: "It is just plain wrong to say that only Heathrow can connect the UK to global growth, or that businesses in the UK's regions need to fly through Heathrow to reach these markets....Manchester Airport is truly the international gateway for the North, demonstrated by the fact that it serves over 4 million long haul passengers a year, up by 20% over the last 5 years.....The biggest economic benefit will come from new services direct from the regions, with passengers not having to fly through a London airport to reach their final destination."

19.3.2015 <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=25469>

## **Firm behind report calling for a 50% cut in APD – York Aviation – linked to airlines. Hence bias.**

A report claiming a reduction in Air Passenger Duty (APD) could boost the Scottish economy by £1 billion was based on research by a firm that has worked for major aviation companies. This is York Aviation - which has done numerous reports for the industry over the years, each biased in favour of aviation, with very partial and incomplete analysis. A spokeswoman for York Aviation said: "We do relatively little work for airlines."

The York Aviation study, commissioned by Edinburgh Airport, says that cutting APD by 50% in Scotland could boost Scotland's economy by £1 billion by 2020 and create almost 4,000 new jobs. Powers over APD are to be devolved to Holyrood following recommendations by the Smith Commission. However, a specific date has yet to be set as the move requires UK legislation to be passed. York Aviation say they believe Scottish airports could get 700,000 more passengers coming through Scotland's airports in the first year, if APD was cut by at least 50%. These would be passengers either coming from England, or not using English airports. The number might rise to about 900,000 passengers, after five years. As with all York Aviation reports, it makes no mention whatsoever of downsides - or of money taken out of the Scottish economy by cheaper holiday flights by Scottish people, which would increase if APD was cut. They only ever consider inbound tourism and business flights. Links to many other York Aviation reports are given here. If Scotland lost the tax revenue from APD it would need to make up the shortfall from elsewhere. And the "Enduring Settlement" document <http://tinyurl.com/enduring-settlement> makes it clear the UK would need to be reimbursed if APD is cut 17.3.2015 <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=25470>

## **In USA the FAA's new air traffic control system NextGen is causing major noise pollution**

The American Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)'s new air traffic control system NextGen is causing considerable upset in parts of the USA, in the same way that precision navigation (P-RNAV), promoted by the CAA, is in the UK. The overhaul of airspace and flight paths in the USA is intended to save airlines fuel and time. But the new routes are causing misery to the people who now find themselves, unexpectedly and with no warning, under them. One resident, in Phoenix, said: "If you can imagine yourself at an air show, that's what it would sound like." Planes sometimes every 30 seconds for hours at a time. "Am I angry? Absolutely. I'm furious."



In Phoenix planes now fly low over heavily populated neighbourhoods. The Mayor said the FAA did not hold a single public hearing notifying neighbours of the change, nor did the agency ever bother to meet or brief him. The Mayor commented: "I think that the choice that was made to have such a disproportionate impact over such a small number of people is really fundamentally unfair and unacceptable." A 2012 Congressional FAA authorization bill fast-tracked the roll out of NextGen by exempting it from normal environmental impact reviews and public hearings. NextGen is also causing problems for people at JFK and LaGuardia airports. 3.3.2015 <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=25390>

## **Stobart have applied for share in £56 million government funding for 3 domestic routes from Carlisle**

Stobart Air, the aviation subsidiary of Stobart Group, has applied for start-up aid from the Government's **Regional Air Connectivity Fund**, which was set up in June 2013. The fund is for airports with less than 5 million passengers per year. It is already supporting strategic routes to London from Newquay and Dundee.

Stobart has asked for funding support for daily services from Carlisle to Southend, Belfast and Dublin to begin in April 2016. In January the Government announced that small airports, that handle fewer than 5

million passengers a year, were encouraged to bid for £56 million over 3 years to subsidise new routes. The three routes from Carlisle are among 19 under consideration for the latest tranche of state aid. Others wanting the start-up aid include daily Flybe route between Norwich & Paris Charles de Gaulle; twice daily Flybe route between Norwich & Dublin; daily weekday Bmi Regional route between Doncaster Sheffield & Frankfurt; Flybe route between Southampton & Lyon; Links Air route between Oxford & Edinburgh.

The Regional Air Connectivity Fund has a total of £56 million available to cover 3 years of financial support for start-up aid. Airports and airlines are being urged to bid for government funding of up to £17.5 million for bids this year 2015/16 and around £20 million per year for the next two years. The final short-list of airports that have met the criteria will be made in early May. The successful routes will then move forward to the “strategic and economic appraisal stage”, with successful bids being announced in July 2015.

The redevelopment of Carlisle Airport is under way and should be complete by September. Stobart is building a freight distribution centre and resurfacing the runway. Previous attempts over many decades to launch scheduled flights from Carlisle have ended in failure. Aviation Minister Robert Goodwill said: “The range and ambition of the bids shows how smaller airports can transform their local areas with new connections and trade links.” 31.3.2015 <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=25757>

### **Troubled Berlin Brandenburg airport, due to open in June 2012, could be shut down in late summer unless €1.1 billion is raised**

Berlin Brandenburg (BER) airport was intended to be a huge new airport for Berlin, so Berlin-Schönefeld and Tegel airports could close. The BER was initially due to open in June 2012. It had a catalogue of problems with fire safety, smoke extraction system, and fresh air supply in the event of fire. The launch has been delayed and delayed .... last year it was hoped it might open this year. Now the airport's CEO has announced that it is possible the construction of the airport may need to be shut down this summer, if a further €1.1 billion cannot be raised. Some €4.3 billion has already been spent, but that only lasts till this summer. Extra costs have been incurred due to the late opening, as well as the extra construction costs.

A decision on how €1.1 billion can be raised is needed urgently, perhaps through bank loans, government grants or from an investor. The money has to not only be agreed by Berlin, Brandenburg and the federal government, but also needs approval from the EU Commission. Current total costs amount to €5.4 billion. Additional plans suggest additional costs amounting to an extra €2.19 billion. Although the airport has yet to open, officials are planning a possible third runway for approximately €1 billion and other new projects such as an additional terminal, expanded baggage system and another freight facility. The total additional spending would amount to €3.2 billion. 12.3.2015 <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=25522>

### **HS2 Heathrow spur plans dropped by transport minister, before Airports Commission report**

Plans for a new rail spur to Heathrow as part of the HS2 high-speed network have been ruled out by the transport minister Patrick McLoughlin. He was responding to a question by MP Dominic Grieve (MP for Beaconsfield) about the Heathrow spur. Mr McLoughlin said: "I would now like to make clear that we do not intend to build the spur as part of Phase 1 or 2 of the HS2 scheme". Previously the government had said any decision about the Heathrow spur would be delayed until the Airports Commission's report with its runway recommendation. Mr McLoughlin cited the Commission's findings - published as part of its consultation in November 2014 - which said: "This review ... supports the view that an HS2 spur to Heathrow airport (whether to the airport site or a hub station) is not necessary to support expansion of the airport." Nick Hurd, Conservative MP for Ruislip, Northwood and Pinner was “delighted” that the spur had been dropped, and believed the best way of connecting passengers to Heathrow was via Old Oak Common. 11.3.2015 <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/2015/03/25499/>

## **Heathrow tells Commission its devastating impact on local villages will have a “neutral” effect on community cohesion**

Heathrow's submission to the Airports Commission attempts to say that the impact on local communities, the Heathrow Villages in particular, would be "neutral". The Commission has considered it, rightly, to be "adverse" - which is a fairly staggering understatement anyway. The local paper, Colnbrook Views, is understandably stunned by this. They say "Heathrow has actually suggested to Sir Howard that he is wrong to say that losing large tracts of the village to tarmac while subjecting an untold number to as yet unquantified noise and air pollution is actually, on balance, going to be a good thing. ....

Far from being an “adverse” effect on the village, Sir Howard Davies has been told to rethink his conclusion and find instead that mitigations proposed by the airport will “set remaining communities on a new footing underpinned by facility provision and other community support mechanisms”. The Heathrow logic's glaring inadequacy is shown in their statement: “We do acknowledge that the effect of the airport expansion on Harmondsworth and Sipson would be considerable and that Longford would be removed completely. However, we do believe that, even for these communities, although the local dynamic may change, there will still be community cohesion for those that wish to continue living in these villages. (sic .... Longford would be removed .... but Heathrow says it will be good for people still living there ??) 26.2.2015 <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=25318>

The issue was illustrated in an April Fools story by SHE (Stop Heathrow Expansion). <http://www.stopheathrowexpansion.co.uk/secret-plan-to-compulsory-purchase-sunbury-golf-course-for-housing-2/>

## **Polar bear flashmob at Heathrow Terminal 2 draws attention to aviation threat to UK CO2 target**

Over 30 polar bears invaded Heathrow’s recently opened Terminal Two in a protest against plans for a 3rd runway. In a lively flash-mob, the polar bears hung up banners, played in the terminal and danced to music



from sound systems. They were watched by somewhat bemused travellers ... The action lasted about 30 minutes. No arrests were made, as the protesters left of their own accord. The Plane Stupid protest was timed to coincide with the big "Time to Act" climate change march that took place in central London from lunchtime. The building of a new south east runway, whether at Heathrow or at Gatwick, would mean that UK aviation carbon targets would be breached (the Airports Commission is aware of this) and UK

carbon targets would also be at risk. To permit expansion of aviation CO2 emissions, all other sectors have to make cuts of over 85% - even 90% - in their carbon emissions. Otherwise the UK would not meet its legally binding carbon target for 2050. A Plane Stupid spokesperson said: “If the Government is serious about tackling climate change, it should not even be thinking about a third runway at Heathrow.”

8.3.2015 <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=25434>

## **Strong “No New Runways” bloc at the London Climate March**

The huge "Time To Act" on Climate Change march was held in London on Saturday 7th March. There was a good turnout, described by some as "over 5,000" and by others as nearer 20,000 (numbers are always hard to be accurate on). The "No New Runways" bloc had a large attendance, from Gatwick and from Heathrow opposition groups, as well as many individuals. Many people who stand to lose their homes, to be bulldozed for a new Heathrow runway, took part. During the speeches John McDonnell (the MP for

Hayes and Harlington) spoke of the need for climate action, not least to oppose a new runway –requiring the digging up the villages of Harmondsworth and Longford.

He described the level of protest and direct action that would happen, if the north west runway was recommended, as unprecedented and that it would be the "mother of" all environmental battles. The aim of the march was to put pressure on political parties before the general election, and raise the profile of climate change ahead of crucial climate talks in Paris in December. 7.3.2015  
<http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=25425>



### **Noise demonstration blasts 80 dB recorded plane noise outside home of Frankfurt airport CEO for 2 hours**

As a protest against the level of aircraft noise that people living near Frankfurt airport are exposed to - especially since the opening of the 4th runway in October 2011 - people have bombarded the home of the airport Chief Executive, Stefan Schulte, with noise. Citizens in a convoy of about 40 cars parked outside his house, in a small town north of Frankfurt. They set up loudspeakers and ghetto blasters in their cars,



and rolled down the car windows in order to blast out noise, at about 80 decibels. That is loudest the police allowed them to use. The noise went on for two hours, with two breaks. The protest was by people living in areas across Rhein-Main who are badly affected by noise from flight paths. The noise they used was of planes, recorded at Niederrad Sachsenhausen, which is an area about 3 km to the north east of the airport.

After enduring the noise bombardment for a while, the CEO's automatic garage door opened, and he set off in his car for work at the airport. A protesters commented they did not understand how Herr can say society must just endure such levels of noise. 1.3.2015 <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/2015/03/25346/>

### **DfT hires Heathrow PR director Simon Baugh – to start briefing ministers etc on runways after 30th September**

Simon Baugh, who is currently director of PR at Heathrow Airport, is moving to the DfT to take up the role of group director of comms. He worked on the launch in late 2013 of “Back Heathrow,” a 'grassroots' (astoturfing - deeply controversial) campaign. On 20th February Zac Goldsmith put a written question in Parliament: "To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recruitment process was used when hiring Simon Baugh, Group Director of Communications for his Department; and what role Mr Baugh will have in his Department after the Airports Commission has made its recommendation on airport expansion in the South East." Reply by DfT spokesperson: “As Mr Baugh was previously employed by Heathrow Airport Ltd, he will not be involved in advising Ministers on issues relating to the work of the Airports Commission for the 6 months following his appointment, which starts on 30 March 2015." ie. the Commission may report at the end of June, and Simon Baugh can start briefing etc by 30th September. 10.3.2015 <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/2015/03/25475/>

### **This is the last bulletin before the Election. Where do the parties stand on runways?**

**Green Party.** Opposed to any new runways and favour removal of the tax-breaks aviation enjoys in order to curb demand.

**UKIP.** Opposed to expansion at both Heathrow and Gatwick and favours reopening Manston to turn its huge former RAF runway into an international airport, with much improved links to London.

**The Liberal Democrats** remain opposed to building a new runway unless the equivalent capacity is removed elsewhere. However, at the last Party Conference the leadership tried – and failed – to push through a motion softening its stance on opposition to a Gatwick runway. The Liberal Democrats have traditionally been keen on using the regional airports outside the South East. Any proposal from a new Government – unless it had an overall majority – might need the backing of the Lib Dems. They are expected to still say they will consider the Airports Commission’s final report in their manifesto.

**Labour** has said it will make a “swift” decision after it has seen the Davies Report but will not necessarily endorse Davies. Some key Labour figures like Ed Balls support a Heathrow 3<sup>rd</sup> runway. As does UNITE, the union which sponsors many Labour candidates and backs the party with money. The key may be Ed Miliband himself. He has been a strong opponent of a Heathrow runway. Has he changed his mind? Will he be strong enough to stand up to Balls and co?

**The Conservative** position is similar to Labour, but they have not talked about necessarily taking a swift decision about runways. Conservative ‘big beasts’ appear divided over Heathrow and Gatwick. The Chancellor is thought to back Heathrow, but a number of cabinet ministers are opposed, including Philip Hammond, Theresa May, Justine Greening and Theresa Villiers. Also Boris Johnson, who is likely to become the MP for Uxbridge. There are signals from the Mayor’s office and from MPs like Justine Greening that they would like to see Stansted reconsidered, maybe for a 4 runway airport in the future.

**SNP** are most interested in the key Scottish airports having good links to the rest of the world including London. They feel Gatwick is on the wrong side of London for them. They might back Heathrow, but only if it included the best possible deal for residents - as they are very aware that no residents in England voted for them to agree to knock down their homes or impose new flight paths over them.

**DUP** which had 8 MPs elected at the 2010 election, have come out in support of Heathrow expansion.

**Plaid Cymru** 2015 manifesto says “We will not support the creation of a major new UK airport to the east of London”

## **Key question on runways & climate, for MPs & prospective parliamentary candidates**

All 3 of the main parties recently restated their commitment to the Climate Change Act [which ensures the UK makes a fair contribution to tackling climate change]. But CO2 emissions from aviation are set to overshoot the maximum level possible under the Climate Change Act even without any new runways. They will overshoot by an ever larger margin if there is either a Heathrow or Gatwick runway. So if you get the chance, the key question to ask those seeking to be returned as MPs is this:

*“The Committee on Climate Change has recommended that UK aviation emissions should be no higher than their 2005 level by 2050, but current forecasts suggest they will overshoot this level even without new runways. Can you promise that you will only support a new runway if it can be demonstrated how this could be compatible with the Climate Change Act?”*

### **Useful Links**

- For large amounts of up-to-date news on airports and aviation, see AirportWatch's news pages [www.airportwatch.org.uk/?page\\_id=148](http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?page_id=148)
- For daily transport news in the UK - Transportinfo at [transportinfo.org.uk](http://transportinfo.org.uk)
- European Transport & Environment (T&E) <http://www.transportenvironment.org> **Twitter @transenv**
- News and expert analysis on the AEF website at [www.aef.org.uk](http://www.aef.org.uk) and **on Twitter @The\_AEF**
- HACAN [www.hacan.org.uk](http://www.hacan.org.uk) **Twitter @HACAN1** and GACC [www.gacc.org.uk/latest-news](http://www.gacc.org.uk/latest-news)
- Gatwick Obviously NOT (GON) <http://www.gatwickobviouslynot.org>
- Stop Heathrow Expansion (SHE) <http://www.stopheathrowexpansion.co.uk>
- Taming Aviation petition to European Parliament. <http://www.tamingaviation.eu>
- AirportWatch Europe <http://www.airportwatcheurope.com> **Twitter @AirportWatchEU**
- Follow **AirportWatch** on Twitter **@AirportWatch** and Facebook [on.fb.me/UoSkEx](https://on.fb.me/UoSkEx)

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