

THE FACTS ABOUT AIRPORT EXPANSION THE AVIATION INDUSTRY DOESN'T WANT YOU TO KNOW



June 2012

Recent intense recent lobbying from the aviation industry in favour of significant airport expansion has blurred the actual facts and figures. The forthcoming Government consultation on its draft aviation policy will ask supporters of expansion to prove their case with evidence-based submissions. All the main political parties, with environmentalists and local residents, are united in opposing Heathrow expansion.

The UK's global connectivity remains the best in Europe – our economy is NOT losing out

Fact: London remains the top city in the world in which to do business. A principle reason for this is its excellent connectivity. That's according to global property consultants Cushman & Wakefield.

See: <http://bit.ly/yVDXNk>

Fact: Heathrow has more flights each week to key business centres of the world than its two closest European rivals, Paris & Frankfurt, put together.

See: <http://bit.ly/zmkjAd>

Fact: A big majority of the top companies expect to reduce their flying over the next few decades and use video conferencing more.

See: <http://bit.ly/zvrQ2r>

Aviation and the economy – the Forgotten Facts

Aviation does contribute to the UK economy but far less than is advertised – the picture is more complex than the industry admits. Previous Government policy, the 2003 Air Transport White Paper, was based on a report, largely paid for by the aviation industry. The Contribution of Aviation to the UK Economy was carried out by consultants Oxford Economic Forecasting in 1999 with an update in 2006.

What's missing:

- Tax-breaks the industry receives through tax-free fuel and being zero-rated for VAT. Revenue lost = about £11 billion a year. Only around £2.5 billion is brought in from Air Passenger Duty, less than a quarter of that brought in by motorists.
See: <http://bit.ly/Mg4rk9>
- Huge cost of aviation on society and the environment. Estimated at £ billions a year, due to noise, health etc.
See: <http://bit.ly/Kk7XWg>
- Over-estimation of the number of jobs aviation expansion would create according to independent experts.
See: <http://bit.ly/ckwYb>
- Tourist deficit -UK air passengers take more money of the UK in spending abroad than foreign visitors bring in on their visits. £14 billion in 2010. Most of this deficit is accounted for by air travel and closely parallels the rise in low-cost flights.
See: <http://bit.ly/LjUCS6>

Noise

- Dealing with noise is a huge challenge for the aviation industry. New technology will be of limited help in tackling noise as small reductions in decibels cannot be detected by the human ear. There are no planes quiet enough to avoid the problem.
- The noise problem for those living under flight paths is unlikely to be improved without reduction in numbers of flights.
- The aviation industry's call for expansion is incompatible with an effective plan to tackle noise. More flights overhead disturb people more.

Climate Change

- Aviation accounts for at least 13% of the UK's emissions (if radiative forcing* is included – about 6.5% of CO₂) and the proportion is growing. See: <http://bit.ly/4Fumni>
- The Committee on Climate Change, recommends emissions from aviation return to 2005 levels by 2050. This is challenging but is much less demanding than for other sectors of the economy. See: <http://bit.ly/NOXU1k>
- New technology and the European Emissions Trading system (ETS) will not sort out the problem. See: <http://bit.ly/GXjFWA>

Visit <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk> for more information

AirportWatch is an umbrella group for all the NGOs, local community groups, and individuals opposed to the unsustainable, environmentally damaging, growth of aviation in the UK

*Radiative forcing from jet emissions high in the atmosphere causes more effect on climate due to non-CO₂ effects (NO_x and water vapour) - probably about doubling the CO₂ alone.