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Heathrow makes guarded, carefully worded, offers to meet Airports Commission conditions for 3rd runway

Heathrow knows it has a difficult task in persuading the government that it can actually meet the (unchallenging) conditions put on its runway plans by the Airports Commission. Trying to tell the government what it wants to hear, John Holland-Kaye has written to David Cameron, setting out how Heathrow hopes to meet some conditions – and they claim they will even exceed some of them.

Heathrow
Noise – all sorted ... ?
Night flights – all sorted ... ?
Air pollution – all sorted ... ?
No 4th runway – all sorted ... ?
REALLY?

On night flights, as with the other offers, the text needs to be read very carefully indeed. It is high on aspiration but low on details. Heathrow mentions the introduction of a “legally binding ban on all scheduled night flights for six and a half hours ... from 11pm to 5:30am when the third runway opens.” And they will “support the earlier introduction of this extended ban on night flights by Government as soon as the necessary airspace has been modernised after planning consent for the third runway has been secured.”

They dodge the issue of agreeing not to build a 4th runway, saying if the government makes a commitment in Parliament not to expand Heathrow further, then Heathrow will “Accept a commitment from Government ruling out any fourth runway.” [Words carefully chosen]. On noise and respite, Heathrow say “We will ensure there will be some respite for everyone living under the final flight path by using advances in navigational technology. We will consult and provide options on our proposals to alternate use of the runways.” [ie carefully chosen words, avoiding giving much away]. More detail on the various commitments below. 11.5.2016 <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=30727>

Heathrow’s vague proposal on air pollution – what is Heathrow really saying?

Heathrow has made some guarded offers to government, attempting to persuade them that environmental problems should not be allowed to block their 3rd runway plans. The offer on air pollution, a key issue meaning Heathrow expansion is likely to be very damaging to health, is vague. Heathrow says (as rather improbably required by the Airports Commission) “New capacity at an expanded airport will not be released unless we can do so without delaying UK compliance with EU air quality limits”. That means, if somewhere else has a worse level.

ClientEarth lawyer Alan Andrews says John Holland-Kaye's two offers by Heathrow to try to get NO2 levels down are, in his words, "underwhelming." Alan says the first offer to "create an ultra-low emissions zone [ULEZ] for airport vehicles by 2025" is vague, as we are not told what conditions this zone will have. It is also only airport vehicles, which are a tiny proportion of the total.

Alan says this is also five years behind the tardy ULEZ which is currently slated to come into force in the congestion charging zone in central London.



On Heathrow’s second offer, to "develop plans for an emissions charging scheme for all vehicles accessing the airport...." Alan comments that there is no deadline given for delivery, and it is far from the radical action needed to get air pollution down to legal levels quickly. Heathrow has also talked of extending a low emissions zone to the airport, but there is no detail of when this would happen or what standards would apply.

ClientEarth believes that as the area around the airport breaks legal limits, all these measures should be happening regardless of expansion, in order to satisfy the Supreme Court order and achieve legal limits as soon as possible. ClientEarth said “We need to see detailed analysis on what these proposals would achieve, but air pollution around the airport needs to be cut drastically before we can think about expansion. It’s difficult to see how that would happen without something far more radical than what’s currently on the table.” 16.5.2016 <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=30808>

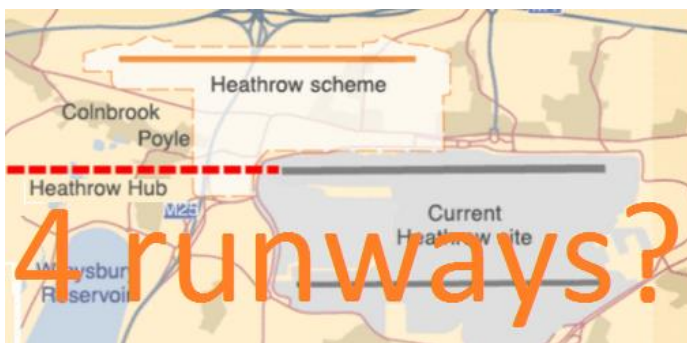
The new Chair of the Environment Audit Cttee, Mary Creagh said the air pollution proposals need “to go much further much faster.” AEF said permission for a new runway should only be given if it can be proven that this is compatible with bringing air pollution in the Heathrow area within legal limits. 14.5.2016 <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=30777>

Heathrow’s commitment on 4th runway – what is Heathrow really saying?

The Airports Commission said, in giving its recommendation for a 3rd Heathrow, that a firm condition was that no 4th runway should ever be built there. The Commission's wording in its Final Report (1.7.2015) was: "A fourth runway should be firmly ruled out. The government should make a commitment in Parliament not

to expand the airport further. There is no sound operational or environmental case for a four runway Heathrow." And: “This may be as part of a National Policy Statement or through legislation.”

Heathrow has now said is that it will: “Accept a commitment from Government ruling out any fourth runway." This does not say this ban on a 4th runway would be in legislation. It merely says there would be a commitment.



But the coalition government made a commitment not to build a 3rd runway, in 2010. That commitment was overturned in the next Parliament. It scarcely encourages trust. A commentator in the Huffington Post says (as well as the long history of Heathrow's broken promises) that allowing the 3rd Heathrow runway would effectively say Heathrow will forever be the UK's hub airport. Hub airports actually "need at least four runways and preferably room to expand further." 12.5.2016 <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=30742>

Heathrow’s vague proposal on no night flights – what is Heathrow really saying?

Heathrow currently, under current DfT controls on night flight that are due to be re-considered in 2017, is allowed 5,800 night flights per year. That's an average of 16 arriving each morning, typically between 4.30am and 6am. The latest flights should leave by 11.30pm but there are many that are later, almost up to



midnight. Heathrow has been very reluctant to agree to a ban between 11.30pm and 6am, which was the condition imposed by the Airports Commission. Heathrow claims the early arrivals are vital for businessmen catching early flights - especially those from the UK regions.

But now, desperate to be allowed a 3rd runway, Heathrow mentions [very careful, rather odd wording]: "The introduction of a legally binding ban on all scheduled night flights for six and a half hours (as recommended by the Airports Commission) from 11pm to 5:30am when the third runway opens." And "We will support the earlier introduction of this extended ban on night flights by Government as soon as the necessary airspace has been modernised after planning consent for the third runway has been secured." [That could take a long time....]

Heathrow only mentions scheduled flights. Not late ones. The times the Airports Commission mentioned for the ban were 11.30pm to 6am. But Heathrow has shifted the times they are prepared to operate a ban to half an hour earlier. This is because there are actually currently no scheduled flights at Heathrow from 11:00pm to 11:30pm - so the extra half hour claimed by JHK is a bit disingenuous, to say the least. The effective new period without flights is therefore half an hour less than Heathrow's offer appears to be.

The change in the night flight regime would be imposed by the DfT - by law - under the night flying Regulations which are made under the Civil Aviation Act 1982 section 78. The ban would therefore have the force of law. Airports have to account monthly to DfT on how the regulations have been implemented. Heathrow would have no option but to accept the law, whether or not it says they will "support" its introduction.

It is widely recognised that for health, people need 7 - 8 hours of sleep per night. Not 6.5 hours. Heathrow makes no mention of the inevitable concentrated landings and take offs that would be put into the "shoulder" periods (the hour before 11pm and the hour after 5.30am), in order to keep 6.5 hours quiet. Apart from insomniacs and shift workers, who else regards the end of the night as 5.30am?

Heathrow do not promise to reduce, or even keep to the same level, their overall numbers of night flights. With a 3rd runway it will be possible to re-time the 8 or so arrivals that currently occur between 4:30am and 5:30am into the 5:30am to 7:00am period. The Heathrow offer on night flights should be viewed with considerable scepticism. 12.5.2016 <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=30745>

Lord True, Richmond Council leader and Conservative peer, describes Heathrow promises as 'worthless' and asks David Cameron to deny expansion immediately

The leader of Richmond Council, Lord True, has called Heathrow's pledge to ban night flights a "feeble attempt to bribe London." He described Heathrow's promises as "worthless" and said on the ending of night flights: "This so-called pledge falls short of what the Davies Commission requests and the Heathrow PR men simply cannot be believed. If they can stop pre-5.30am flights, why don't they do it now? Rather than spending billions of pounds doing it?" [Heathrow said it could introduce this before the runway was built, having always said before it was impossible.].

On Heathrow's claims about air quality improvements, Lord True commented: "They cannot comply with EU air quality limits and their 'jam' promises are worthless....if people's health comes first – big Heathrow is dead in the water." He said Heathrow had just made some token alterations to their original proposals.

Richmond Council, along with Wandsworth, Hillingdon and Windsor & Maidenhead councils, have already made it clear that should the Government give a 3rd Heathrow runway the go-ahead – they would together launch legal action opposing the plans. Lord True: "I say to Mr Cameron – hundreds of thousands of Londoners remember your promise – "no ifs, no buts,"We expect our Prime Minister to keep his promise...." 12.5.2016 <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=30765>

Whitehall logjam of work due to EU vote could push runway decision back to September

It is widely reported that the Government may delay their decision on a runway until perhaps September, rather than July. Patrick McLoughlin had said earlier (8th Feb) that he hoped there would be a decision before the summer recess (mid-July). However, the government has such a "log-jam" of work caused by the EU referendum on 23rd June that, frankly, the runway issue is not top of the agenda. Insiders in government are said to believe the runway problem is only one of many major decisions competing for time in a one-month window between the referendum (23rd June) and the summer parliamentary recess (21st July).

Many Whitehall departments are keen to get their decisions time-tabled to be taken in July. Parliament returns briefly between the 5th and the 15th September, and it is considered possible that the government might make an announcement then. That way, there would be a runway decision (perhaps stating a location?) in time for the Party Conferences. However, it is possible there could be a longer delay.

It is known that the DfT is having to carry out a considerable amount of further work on the runway options, to add to the work of the Airports Commission, and fill in gaps. It is preparing for an NPS (National Policy Statement) on aviation, and this would be written to include a runway location (if one has been agreed by Government). There would then be a consultation of probably 3 months on the NPS. This is a necessary stage in the process of pushing through a runway. 27.4.2016 <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=30545>

Runway location decision to be made BEFORE there is a proper UK aviation policy

It is no coincidence that the runway decision will be made **before** there is a proper UK aviation policy by government, with only the Aviation Policy Framework (APF). That was published in March 2013, after a consultation starting in July 2012. It is a “high-level” document, without detailed policy. Much was left to the Airports Commission.

Democracy and
the Rule of Law

The APF states: “The Aviation Policy Framework, in conjunction with relevant policies and any decisions which Government may take in response to recommendations made by the Airports Commission, will fully replace the 2003 Air Transport White Paper and its associated guidance documents.”

The Commission put responsibility for policy on noise, carbon emissions and air quality on Government. An unsatisfactorily circular process, which has meant the UK has no proper aviation policy. The Aviation Policy Framework is at <http://tinyurl.com/AviationPolicyFramework>

The APF’s only policy (expressed in bold) on **noise** is: “The Government’s overall policy on aviation noise is **to limit and, where possible, reduce the number of people in the UK significantly affected by aircraft noise**, as part of a policy of sharing benefits of noise reduction with industry.”

It’s no use closing
the (policy) stable
door after the (CO2)
horse has bolted

It only says on **carbon emissions**: “Our climate change strategy for aviation. **“The Government’s objective is to ensure that the aviation sector makes a significant and cost-effective contribution towards reducing global emissions.”** The APF does not indicate any national policy measures that might achieve this aim. Instead, hopes are pinned on international talks and the assumption that if these fail, the EU will enforce appropriate regional measures. There is no expectation international talks will succeed.

It is expected that the DfT will hold consultations, by topic (the first on noise) in order to update the APF, ensuring these take place well after a runway location decision. There are currently no known plans by the DfT to consult on policy in relation to aviation and carbon emissions. Horse and stable door come to mind?

Heathrow anti-3rd runway campaigners play aircraft noise in Central London to mark International Noise Awareness Day

Marking International Noise Awareness Day, Heathrow anti-third runway campaigners brought aircraft noise to the streets of Central London to illustrate the fact that London is the most overflowed city in Europe. Campaigners from a range of organisations accompanied a lorry - blaring out loud aircraft noise through loudspeakers - at around the level people experience under the approach flight path - outside Europe House in Smith Square.



This was to highlight the fact that already 28% of the people who are affected by aircraft noise right across Europe live under the Heathrow flight paths. After Smith Square, the lorry headed off back towards Heathrow, blaring its noise, approximately along the course of the arrivals flight path for a the new northern runway that Heathrow wants.

European Commission’s figures show that over 725,000 people (number has been fact checked) are impacted by noise from Heathrow flights and another 25,000 by flights using London City airport. That is nearly a third of all people affected by aircraft noise right across Europe. John Stewart, chair of HACAN, said that on noise grounds alone a 3rd Heathrow runway should be ruled out. An extra 250,000 Heathrow flights per year is not a reasonable proposition. 27.4.2016 <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=30466>

Teddington Action Group find evidence of slower rates of climb of large planes from Heathrow

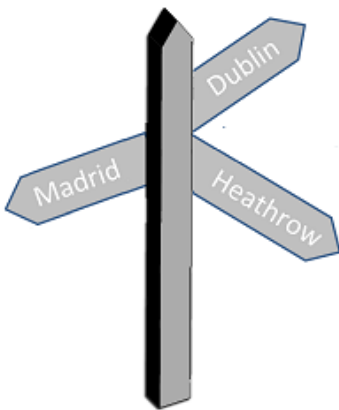
The Teddington Action Group (TAG), formed by communities in the area affected by the noise of Heathrow take-offs towards the east, have been suffering from planes that climb particularly slowly. TAG have done research to show that many planes taking off from Heathrow have some of the lowest climbing rates of any airport in the world. (For example, at 12km from "start of roll," an A380 may be at 2,200 feet, while at Dubai at 3,900 feet. Or a B777 at 1,600 feet at Heathrow and 3,100 feet at Chicago). The result is more noise from those under Heathrow flight paths.

There are required minimum rates of take-off set out in the Heathrow Airport (Noise Abatement Requirements) Notice 2010. The requirements are that planes climb to 1,000 feet by 6.5 kilometres from the "start of roll". Once they reach 6.5 kilometres from start of roll, planes are required to climb at a rate of not less than 4% or 1 in 25. But these rates of climb are so low and out of date that even a World War II Lancaster Bomber fully loaded could make that.

TAG wants the regulations to be changed so that all aircraft must attain at least 2,500 feet [up from 1,000 feet] by 6.5 kilometres from start of roll; and that thereafter all aircraft must keep climbing at a rate of at least 12% [up from 4%] until 6,000feet [up from 4,000feet] 7.4.2016 <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=30242>
Teddington Action Group <http://www.teddingtonactiongroup.com/>

Willie Walsh will fight Heathrow runway, due to cost - content with 3 hub system for IAG instead

Willie Walsh, IAG's CEO, has reiterated his determination not to pay the exorbitant costs of a new Heathrow runway (and that's without the costs that the taxpayer would have to pick up for surface access improvements - which could be £20 billion). He said the current proposal to build a 3rd Heathrow runway is "indefensible" from a cost point of view and he will fight it. BA holds over 50% of Heathrow's slots.



Walsh said he was worried about the current Heathrow proposal because there was now "desperation by the airport to get a third runway and they are willing to do anything to get it." He commented: "So the airport is incentivised to spend money while I am incentivised to save money." Because the coalition government blocked a 3rd runway in 2010, in January 2011 BA and Iberia were merged to form IAG. Then IAG bought UK airline BMI, to get hold of its Heathrow slots, gaining an extra 42 pairs. That ensured IAG had enough Heathrow slots to secure its ability to compete from its hub base.

Since then Walsh has made his plans to use a 3 hub strategy - with Madrid and Dublin as its two others, not depending so much on Heathrow.

IAG also owns Iberia, Vueling and Aer Lingus. Dublin will be adding a new runway - probably by 2020 (see below). 12.5.2016 <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=30693>

2nd runway at Dublin airport threatens Heathrow's position as main IAG hub

Heathrow may face more competition from Dublin for hub traffic, if there is a 2nd runway in 2020 - and airlines prefer using Dublin rather than Heathrow. This might mean Heathrow being partly side-lined. In May 2015 Aer Lingus, the Irish flag carrier, was bought by IAG (International Airlines Group) - which owns British Airways. As part of IAG's takeover, it gained the benefit of new routes and more long-haul flights from Dublin, where Aer Lingus is one of the two main airline customers, along with Ryanair.

Dublin airport is to press ahead with building a 2nd main runway, resurrecting plans that were approved in August 2007 but then put on hold when Ireland was plunged into financial crisis after 2008. The 2 mile runway will be cost about €320 million, with work starting in 2017. It may be ready by 2020. Its expansion will have negative impacts on some communities living nearby, and there are some highly limited conditions restricting night flights very slightly, (65 per night 11pm to 7am) with the 2nd runway.

There were around 25 million passengers in 2015, and the numbers are expected to rise further. Ireland cut its small charge of €3 on air tickets in 2013, while Northern Ireland continued to charge £13 in APD. Many people therefore travelled from Northern Ireland to Dublin, to save money. Dublin airport has the facility to pre-clear US immigration in Ireland, making it popular with transatlantic travellers.

Willie Walsh said in 2015 that owning Aer Lingus would allow IAG “to develop our network using Dublin as a hub between the UK, continental Europe and North America, generating additional financial value for our shareholders”. He believed buying Aer Lingus was a wise move, as it was "inevitable" that Dublin would get a 2nd runway in the next few years. IAG believes that it can expand the group’s flights via Dublin or Madrid - especially if there is no new runway at Heathrow. It could have the impact of removing business from Heathrow - British Airways is the largest airline there with around 50% of the slots.

11.4.2016 <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=30326>

Emirates expects reducing demand for domestic flights to Heathrow, as regional airports increase long-haul routes

The Times reports comments by Laurie Berryman, of Emirates, predicting that the demand for domestic flights in the UK will drop markedly in future. He considers that flights between London and Manchester could end altogether within ten years, because of HS2. The demand for internal flights is reducing each year, except for trips that take too long by train, such as London to Glasgow, Edinburgh or further north in Scotland. This combines with the increase in long-haul flights from regional airports.

Passengers in the regions have no desire to transfer via Heathrow, but would rather go direct. Or they are happy to transfer in Dubai or another airport, not necessarily Heathrow. The HS2 rail line may be able to connect Manchester to London in under 1 hours 15 mins, which is about the same time as flying. Virgin's Little Red domestic airline closed in 2015, due to insufficient demand for its flights into Heathrow. Mr Berryman said: "People who live in Manchester who want to go to Mumbai go via Dubai, not via London."

If Heathrow got another runway, it would damage the profitability of long haul flights from the regional airports. If it does not get another runway, its slots are too valuable to use on domestic routes. Emirates is increasing its long haul routes from Manchester and Birmingham.

9.5.2016 <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=30689>

“No New Runways” message clear at “Going Backwards on Climate” march

The Campaign Against Climate Change organised a dramatic protest, with a difference. Marking the first year of the Conservative government being in power, in which it has gone backwards on climate. So several hundred protesters assembled in Trafalgar Square, and proceeded to march backwards, down Whitehall, to show where the government has been backtracking on climate.

The protesters stopped at various key locations, to hear speeches about particular issues. There was a strong aviation presence on the protest, with a "No New Runway" message. For the government to build a new runway, hugely increasing UK aviation CO2 emissions, means a serious likelihood of the UK missing carbon targets. Adding a runway is going backwards on climate policy.

Outside Downing Street, Sheila Menon (one of the Heathrow 13) spoke about the need to oppose a new runway, at Heathrow or at Gatwick, because of the increase in carbon emissions it would generate. She said this is not merely a UK problem, and there is opposition to airport and runway building in many other countries, with the campaigns linked up.

Other stops on the backwards march focused on renewable energy, fracking, and air pollution, on all of which people have very real concerns. 9.5.2016 <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=30669>



Three Plane Stupid activists – the Tunnel Trio – sentenced to £305 fines each for blocking Heathrow tunnel in November

On 26th November 2015, on the day Parliament discussed airport expansion, three activists from Plane Stupid parked a vehicle across both lanes of the entrance tunnel and locked themselves to it, unfurling a banner quoting David Cameron's election promise in 2010: "No Ifs, No Buts: No Third Runway". The tunnel was finally cleared after 3 - 4 hours.



The activists pleaded guilty, and have now been sentenced - by Judge Deborah Wright - to fines of £200 each, increased to £305 each with the addition of court and CPS costs. The three protestors are: Esme Waldron, 23, a student from Brighton; Alistair Cannell, 26, a bar worker, from Brighton; and William Pettifer, 27, a worker on an organic farm in Somerset. The Judge reduced the sentence from the original level of £300 each, as they pleaded guilty and had been careful to avoid any danger to the public. She acknowledged the good record of each defendant, and their sincerity in their belief of the harm that would be done by a

3rd Heathrow runway. However, she felt they had been inconsiderate of the travelling public in causing around 75 to miss flights, and more to have problems with reaching the airport or parking. The fines were low, as the incomes of all three are low. A lively crowd, including some of the Heathrow 13, assembled before the hearing, to support the activists. 19.4.2016 <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=30407>

Willie Walsh says "Heathrow Hub" runway option should be considered again, as cheaper

Willie Walsh says ministers should not be bound to the Heathrow north-west runway proposal. He wants the Heathrow Hub option (extending the northern runway to the west) given proper consideration, as it would be cheaper. However the costs of surface transport etc falling on the taxpayer, would be similar with either scheme. IAG operates the largest number of flights at Heathrow, and is not prepared to accept exorbitant costs - in order to pay for a "gold plated" runway scheme, with all the add-ons. The Heathrow Hub scheme is understood to still be considered by the DfT, as is the Gatwick runway. (All have very serious environmental and economic problems, which is why the government has not been able to come to a rapid decision - largely knowing it would face well informed legal challenges). 5.5.2016 <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=30654>

While Heathrow try to claim cost of surface access just £2.2 billion, TfL estimates cost of £18.4 billion

Heathrow's management have claimed that only £1.2bn of public funds would be needed to upgrade local road and rail links, for its 3rd runway, while Heathrow itself would spend a further £1bn, making £2.2bn. The Airports Commission estimated the cost to be around £5.7bn, to include widening the M4 and tunnelling the M25 under the runway. But now environmental and transport groups have used FoI (Freedom of Information) to obtain details from Transport for London (TfL), of their estimates of the amount of money the UK taxpayer would be expected to pay, for Heathrow's 3rd runway. TfL say the total cost would be about £18.4 billion, which is hugely more.

If Heathrow paid just £1 billion, that leaves over £17 billion to be paid by the taxpayer. TfL believes Heathrow and the Commission have substantially underestimated the amount of increased congestion the runway would cause on the roads, and on trains due to 30 million more annual passengers. Vehicles transporting freight were also not taken into account.

The government made it clear (Oct 2015) that it expects aviation expansion promoters to cover any surface access costs, for upgraded surface access infrastructure, from which the airport would directly



benefit. But Heathrow's John Holland-Kaye reiterated, to the Environmental Audit Committee (4.11.2015) that the airport would pay only about £1 billion

TfL assessed the costs of the transport links needed to deal with a massive traffic surge from a 3rd Heathrow runway. These include other vital transport infrastructure, such as improving bus services, traffic management measures and alterations to the South West and Great Western Main Lines. The documents obtained through FoI show the figures published in the Commission's report did not take into account the costs of key rail schemes, extra buses, additional operational spending and road traffic management.

TfL says none of the schemes in its £18.4bn figure are already committed, funded or planned. The vast amount of money required throws into question both the financing and feasibility of a crucial part of the project. The Treasury needs to properly assess the real costs of expanding Heathrow and guarantee taxpayers won't be left to pick up the bill. The Campaign for Better Transport said the money would be better spent elsewhere eg. on the Northern Powerhouse. 25.4.2016 <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=30472>

Advertising Standards Authority rules against misleading "Back Heathrow" ad claiming 60% support for runway

The Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) has banned an advert from "Back Heathrow" claiming that most local people back Heathrow expansion. "Back Heathrow" is a lobby group, funded through Heathrow with the aim of pushing for the 3rd runway. It ran a regional press advert headlined "Rallying for the runway" with the line "Don't believe the hype. Most people living in communities near Heathrow Airport support its expansion." They claimed from polls there was 60% support.

The ASA says the claim was misleading, and the 60% figure had only been massaged up from 50% to that level by omitting the 15% who did not express an opinion. The ASA considered most consumers were likely to understand it to mean that a clear majority of those surveyed in the poll (the original sample) were in support of expansion. They ruled that removing the 15% was "not a suitable methodology by which to draw such a conclusion, and was misleading. The ad must not appear again in its current form, and "Back Heathrow" must not repeat these claims "unless it held robust substantiation for them."



This is a blow to "Back Heathrow," the strategy of which has been to try to convince decision-makers that a majority of local people back a 3rd runway. That claim looks flimsy. 20.4.2016 <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=30423>

Research paper done for GACC shows the techniques Gatwick uses to pay no UK corporation tax

It has been well known for several years that Gatwick airport uses a range of (legal) techniques and schemes to minimise its tax payments in the UK. Now a research paper - one of a series that local campaign GACC (the Gatwick Area Conservation Campaign) is producing - sets out much of the detail of how Gatwick does it. The paper shows how Gatwick earns revenues of over £630 million per year, and yet pays no corporation tax. While public attention and anger have concentrated on Google and Starbucks, Gatwick is playing the same game.

It pays no tax by complicated arrangements that include a combination of tax allowances for capital investment and deductibility of interest on debt, aided by a tangled web of inter-related company ownership in tax havens such as Luxembourg, Guernsey and the Cayman Islands. This complexity is not available to small companies. GACC says its new study is not easy reading for the layman but will be of considerable interest to investors who may be asked to fund a new runway, and to the DfT, which is at present trying to work on the new SE runway issue. EU Finance Ministers met in Amsterdam on 22nd April to toughen company tax rules. That could cast doubt on the financial viability of a 2nd runway if some of the tax deals are tightened by the EU and the G20. 19.4.2016 <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=30394>

New GACC research paper indicates higher Gatwick charges for runway could lead to airlines moving to other airports

There is a problem about how Gatwick would pay for a 2nd runway, bearing in mind the airlines that use it are not keen on extra charges. Local campaign GACC (Gatwick Area Conservation Campaign) has produced a short research paper looking into this. **“Paying for a new Gatwick runway”**. It concludes that the steep rise in airport charges at Gatwick which would be needed to pay for a new runway could cause airlines to decamp to other airports such as Stansted or Luton. Paper at <http://tinyurl.com/Paying-for-a-Gatwick-runway>

The GACC study is based on the estimates made by the Airports Commission that the cost of a new Gatwick runway would mean a rise in airport charges from the current £9 per passenger to £15 to £18, rising to £23 at the peak. Chairman of GACC, Brendon Sewill pointed out: "That is a rise of over 100% and would be serious shock for airlines. EasyJet and BA have already expressed anxiety about higher charges, and their unwillingness to pay them. Stansted is at present half full and would be overjoyed to attract business from Gatwick." Manchester airport is a salutary reminder of the risk; its new runway opened in 2000 but was followed by a fall in passenger numbers. Manchester airport is still only at about 60% of the capacity of a single runway. Competitive pressure from other airports could make the financing of a new Gatwick runway challenging. 25.4.2016 <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=30480>

The full list of GACC research papers is at <http://www.gacc.org.uk/research-studies.php> As well as **paying for the runway**, and **avoiding tax** (see above) other research papers are on **ambient noise, climate change, urbanisation in Crawley, and landscape impacts**. Others will soon be added. CAGNE has also done a study on **air pollution**.

Gatwick Chairman confirms no public disclosure of flight paths until after the public consultation of the Gatwick Arrivals Review closes

Arrivals Review team member, Graham Lake, and Sir Roy McNulty, Chairman of Gatwick, confirmed that ‘mapping’ of the proposed flight path routes proposed by the Gatwick Arrivals Review will not be disclosed until after the public consultation closes (16th May). This statement was made at the Arrivals Review community meeting on 26th April. There is concern that without any input from affected communities or other organisations, it will only be NATS and Gatwick that have any say over how the arrivals flight paths are set. Many residents affected by Gatwick aircraft noise have little trust in the airport, after being let down and – if not actually lied to – given only very partial information.

But people are being asked to comment on the consultation without vital information. Gatwick said in 2012 that if the impact of PRNAV routes was too "detrimental", then they should be withdrawn. However, there is no indication this is being followed. People living near the airport and already getting the noise of narrow departure routes are concerned that they may also get the noise from narrow approach routes. The CAA has confirmed that there is nothing in the Arrivals Review to stop arriving flights joining the final approach (the ILS) continuing to be placed in narrow ‘swathes’, as they are now. Narrowing the swathes for arrivals and departures enables more planes to use the runway per unit time. Responses to a consultation, which omits necessary details, cannot be comprehensive. 3.5.2016 <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=30588>

Luton plans light rail link to speed transport, making it a stronger competitor against Gatwick

Luton plans to replace its much-maligned bus transfer service, from the station to the airport, and instead build a light rail link, costing £200 million. The 1.3 mile line could cut the journey time from London St Pancras to the Luton airport terminal to less than 30 minutes, which is faster than the time to Gatwick. It would connect to the terminal from within the Luton Airport Parkway railway station, one level above the platforms. A normal rail link has not been possible due to the steepness of the climb uphill to the terminal.

The automated light rail service will be funded by Luton Borough Council, which owns the airport freehold and owns the necessary land. The role of the council will be controversial and the scheme will need to be scrutinised for conflict of interest. The airport is spending a further £110 million on redeveloping its

terminals and layout to expand capacity from 9 million to 18 million passengers per year by 2020. EasyJet, the biggest airline using Luton, said the redevelopment was a key factor in its pledge to double the size of its operations there over the next decade. A planning application would be made in autumn for work to begin in 2017. The DfT is also working to enable travel between London and Luton by Oyster card or contactless payment by 2018. 16.4.2016 <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=30373>

Judge gives ClientEarth permission to pursue a JR against UK government over air quality

Environmental lawyers, ClientEarth, have been granted permission to take the UK government back to court, over its failure to tackle illegal levels of air pollution. A judge at the High Court granted their request to pursue a Judicial Review against Defra. ClientEarth's CEO James Thornton said the decision by the court to grant a hearing was a victory in itself. "The UK government has claimed that it has done everything required by last year's Supreme Court ruling. By granting us permission to return to court the judge has decided that the government does indeed have a case to answer."

ClientEarth lodged papers at the High Court in London in March – naming the UK Environment Secretary Liz Truss as defendant. Papers were also served on Scottish and Welsh ministers, the Mayor of London and the DfT as interested parties in the case. ClientEarth said the government's latest plans are woefully inadequate and won't achieve legal air quality limits for years to come. ClientEarth believes the government is in breach of its legal duty to produce new air quality plans to bring air pollution down to legal levels in the "shortest possible time", despite being ordered to do so by the UK Supreme Court. They have asked judges to strike down the plans produced by the government in December, order new ones and intervene to make sure the government acts. #no2dirtyair 28.4.2016 <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=30563>

All Party Parliamentary Group on Air Pollution set up, as greatly increased interest in air quality by MPs

A cross-party Parliamentary group of MPs, Peers, businesses and other stakeholders has been set up to specifically look at air pollution issues in the UK, with Labour MP Matthew Pennycook (MP for Greenwich) acting as its chair. The All Party Parliamentary Group on Air Pollution held its inaugural meeting on 26th April, and 3 vice-chairs were also elected (Daniel Poulter; Helen Hayes; and Baroness Sheehan). Trade organisation the Environmental Industries Commission (EIC) will act as secretariat for the Group, through its chief executive, Matthew Farrow. More interested MPs will be recruited. There has recently been a much increased level of interest in air pollution, especially in NO₂ - brought into the spotlight by the VW "defeat" devices scandal. The emergence of the group is timely, after the news that ClientEarth has permission to pursue its JR against the government (see above). Heathrow's hopes of a 3rd runway are at risk, due to legal levels of NO₂ already being breached. Gatwick also risks breaching legal limits, if it had a second runway. 30.4.2016 <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=30576>

Defra and DfT set up JAQU (Joint Air Quality Unit) to deliver national plans to cut NO₂ levels

A new joint unit between Defra and the DfT has been established, to deliver national plans to improve air quality and meet EU limits. The new body, the Joint Air Quality Unit (JAQU) will be hosted at Defra. It will be led by Defra's deputy director of flood risk management, Susanna May. The JAQU will report to Defra air quality minister, Rory Stewart, and Under-Secretary of State for Transport, Andrew Jones. It will focus on delivering the UK's national air quality plans to reduce levels of NO₂. These plans were publicly consulted on by Defra last year and include proposals to establish Clean Air Zones in five UK cities by 2020.

The Unit will develop more detailed proposals for the Clean Air Zone framework and legislation to mandate zones in certain cities, with a view to consulting on these later this year. A number of Defra and DfT staff who worked to develop these plans have transferred into the new Unit. Day-to-day responsibility for air quality matters will remain with Defra. Work on aviation matters will still be taken forward by the DfT. The new unit is timely, due to the further legal action against the UK government by ClientEarth.

22.4.2016 <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=30571>

After just a few days as Mayor, Sadiq Khan drops GLA objection to compulsory purchase of land for London City Airport expansion

Within the first few days as London Mayor, Sadiq Khan has re-opened the possibility of expansion at London City Airport. He has dropped the GLA objection to a Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) of 26.4 hectares of Royal Docks Land, owned by City Hall. However, a final decision on the airport's expansion is not in the Mayor's hands. The decision rests with the Planning Inspector, who will make a recommendation to both Transport Secretary Patrick McLoughlin and Communities Secretary Greg Clark, following the main planning inquiry into expansion of City Airport that concluded on 5th April. A decision is not expected till the summer.

The plans were rejected by Boris Johnson on noise grounds. The GLA said: "The Mayor continues to support the case for improved noise mitigation measures that will be considered by the Secretary of State when he decides on the planning appeal in due course." The airport wants to CPO 26.4 hectares of GLA land to facilitate their CADP1 expansion programme which includes parts of the London Plan protected Blue Ribbon Network of waterways and bodies of water. GLA Land was one of four remaining objectors to the expansion plans. The Inquiry into the CPO was adjourned until Tuesday 17 May.

Meanwhile the owners of London City Airport paid themselves a £27.7m dividend pay-out last year after the airport attracted its highest ever number of passengers, increasing profits by almost 20%. The airport, while being considered to have the largest proportion of business passengers, is increasingly for leisure trips. London City's higher customer numbers last year were in part driven by its new travel routes including Berne, Hamburg, Mykonos and Santorini (all just holiday destinations) and extra flights to Edinburgh, Luxembourg, Geneva and Guernsey. 10.5.2016 <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=30715>

BA warns London City Airport not to raise landing charges, or it might pull out

Willie Walsh, Chief Executive of IAG, owner of British Airways has issued a further warning to the new owners (a Canadian consortium) of London City that moves to raise its landing charges will be resisted. He said: "The airport is good, there's good demand for it, but the off peak demand is very price sensitive and there's no way you can serve that sort of demand if it's very expensive to operate from there." BA currently has about 40% of the flights at London City airport. He said: "We have 18 aircraft there. It's principally a leisure airport, but there's only so much you can do for leisure flights. We'd have no problem moving away from London City. There's no way we're going to be held hostage there and if the charges go up we'll move the aircraft." 7.5.2016 <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=30657>

Recent opponent of Heathrow runway, Sadiq Khan, appoints pro-Heathrow runway, Lord Adonis on transport

Until June 2015, Sadiq Khan (now London Mayor) backed a 3rd Heathrow runway. He was Transport Minister under Gordon Brown, pushing for it. He then appreciated that he could not be elected Mayor if he backed the runway as it is so unpopular with millions of Londoners, who are adversely affected by it. Ministers are saying his election, and his opposition to a 3rd runway, will not influence their runway decision. The Mayor's opinion on a runway carries some weight, but the decision is not his.

Worryingly, Sadiq will appoint former Transport Secretary Lord Adonis, who strongly backs a Heathrow runway, to run transport in London. The Labour peer also heads the government's National Infrastructure Commission. Sadiq backs a 2nd runway at Gatwick to increase airport capacity, as people in areas adversely affected by Gatwick did not get the opportunity to vote in the Mayoral election. He also backs improved rail links to Stansted. It would be easier for a Conservative government to resist the opposition of a Labour mayor, than a Tory one, to Heathrow expansion. **Transport Professor, David Metz, said: "There is a respectable case for deferring this difficult political decision, to see how a very competitive aviation sector copes with the growth of demand for air travel"** ... seeing how market forces displace leisure travellers from Heathrow to Stansted in future.

9.5.2016 <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=30691>



Transport Select Committee wants rapid decision on runway location – then sort out the problems later

The Commons Transport Select Committee, chaired by Louise Ellman (for years a strong advocate of a larger Heathrow) has published a report that wants the government to make a rapid decision on the location of a new south east runway. Ms Ellman says Patrick McLoughlin should set out a clear timetable of the decision making process. He should also set out what research the government has already done and what remains to be done. The Committee wants a decision in order to, in its view, remove uncertainty for business so companies can be planning and investing.

The report is entirely of the view that a runway is needed for links to emerging markets. It ignores the reality that most journeys are for leisure, and it ignores the huge costs to the taxpayer, of either scheme. The Committee wants a location decision, and somehow believes that all other environmental and infrastructure problems will then (magically?) be sorted out. **They say: "... we believe that the noise and environmental effects can be managed as part of the pre-construction phase after a decision has been made on location, as can the challenge of improving surface access and devising suitable schemes for compensation for residents in affected communities."**

So decide first - with what is likely to be a bad decision - and work out how to deal with the intractable, and inevitable, problems later. Is that a sensible course of action for a responsible government? . The DfT agreed to respond to the Transport Committee report by the end of May.

Local resident-led group Stop Heathrow Expansion (SHE) issued an open invitation to Louise Ellman, to visit Harmondsworth, Sipson, Longford and Harlington – the Heathrow villages that would be destroyed or largely uninhabitable if a 3rd runway were to be built. 4.5.2016

<http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=30607>

Surprise! None of the Transport Select Committee members, wanting rapid Heathrow decision, live anywhere affected by a vast airport

None of the MPs on the Committee themselves experience the problems of living near an airport of the scale of Heathrow. Louise Ellman is the MP for Liverpool. The constituencies of the others are: Stoke on Trent South; North Tyneside; Lincoln; Glasgow South; Fylde; Bexhill and Battle; Colchester; Milton Keynes South; Blackley and Broughton; Cleethorpes. Perhaps if the problems facing the Heathrow Villages were in any of these constituencies, they might not be so gung-ho? <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=30713>



Residents in Heathrow villages say airport failing to tackle nightmare of parking by private hire vehicles

People in the Heathrow villages have the continuing anxiety of having to move out of their homes, if the government decides to approve a Heathrow runway. Now, in addition to the many trials and tribulations they face, from their airport neighbour, there is an increasing problem of parking by Uber drivers, waiting to get lucrative trips from Heathrow. Stop Heathrow Expansion (SHE) report that for years they have had to endure the anti-social behaviour of private hire vehicles in their streets. SHE have found bottles of urine, excrement and litter left by the legions of private hire drivers who park in every available space. This nightmare takes place in Harlington, Colnbrook, Stanwell Moor and many other locations that enable these drivers to have speedy access to Heathrow.

None of these drivers live close to Heathrow, or otherwise they could park in their own streets. So the taxi work is not going to local people. SHE says complaints have been made to Heathrow and TfL for years but residents have just been fobbed off with excuses, but there has been no action or improvement. Residents have experienced intimidation and threats from drivers if they photograph them and their cars. The number of Uber drivers licensed grows by several hundred every week. Better control seems to be needed.

22.4.2016 <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=30432> On 12th May, Heathrow made some proposals <http://tinyurl.com/PrivateHireVehiclesHeathrow> Time will tell if they have any impact.

AEF research sets out clearly how the need to take climate change seriously rules out any new UK runway

A new research study by the Aviation Environment Federation (AEF) shows that the need to take climate change seriously rules out any new runway – at Heathrow or at Gatwick. The study, commissioned by GACC, particularly shows that, for the UK to play its part in making December's Paris Agreement on climate work, must mean cancelling plans for a new UK runway. The Airports Commission's work shows they were well aware of the problem of UK aviation emissions exceeding their cap level of 37.5MtCO₂ per year, but this was brushed under the carpet. Even with no new runway, while all other industries in the UK are - by law - due to decrease their CO₂ emissions by 85% on average (by 2050 compared to their 1990 level), aviation is permitted to increase its CO₂ pollution by 120%.

If a new runway is built, that would be even higher. The hope of an effective world-wide CO₂ emissions trading scheme succeeding in limiting emissions looks impossible to achieve. Big tax increases on flights, in order to limit demand when there has been expansion with a new runway, would be political dynamite. Limiting growth at regional airports, to permit full use of a new south east runway, would not be helpful to the regions. "It is time for the Government to stand up to the lobbying by the aviation industry, and tell them that there will be no new runway." A new runway means storing up unnecessary problems in future.

<http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=30593> Paper (12 pages) is at <http://tinyurl.com/AEF-Climate-Aviation>

ICAO aviation offset market talks yield little progress, but backtracking on previous agreement

ICAO has concluded 3 days of talks to try to achieve a deal on a market-based offsetting mechanism for international aviation emissions from 2020. It has not made much progress. The industry has expressed the hope of “carbon neutral growth” after 2020, which means continuing to grow and emit more carbon, but buying offsets from other sectors that actually do cut CO₂ emissions. Unless this is done, the prospect of the world achieving a limit of global temperature of 2 degrees C is remote. However, there are difficult issues to be resolved, of how to divide up the offsetting responsibilities between fast-growing airlines in emerging economies, and established carriers often with older, less fuel-efficient fleets and based in the industrialised world. Neither side will accept being disadvantaged. There have been proposals to try out a “pilot” scheme, and delay the 2020 date.

Either way, the ICAO scheme only intends to cover international flights, not domestic – which form a large proportion in countries like the USA and China. That means only about 62% of the total aviation CO₂, assuming the EU counts as a single bloc (more like 40% otherwise). Airlines do not want a patchwork of different systems in different parts of the world. 16.5.2016 <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=30812>

Some news stories in brief:

CAA gives approval to new PBN flight path from Birmingham airport to the south

At the start of April, the CAA approved changes to flight paths at Birmingham Airport, deemed necessary because of the runway extension. There were trials of new flight paths to the south in 2014, which generated a lot of anxiety and anger. The village of Balsall Green will be less impacted by this choice and they campaigned very effectively against the route being over them. But the smaller village of Barston, nearer to the end of the runway, will get relentless noise.

12.4.2016 More at <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=29150>

Birmingham gets weekly flights to Beijing and Hangzhou with Beijing Capital Airlines

It is expected that direct flights by Beijing Capital Airlines, from Birmingham to Beijing and to Hangzhou, some 60 miles from Shanghai, will start on July 19th. At present there are only direct UK flights to China from Heathrow, with flights 4 times per week from Manchester with Hainan Airways starting this June. Flights to the Far East were a major target for Birmingham airport, after its £40 million runway extension allowing use by heavier (noisier) planes. Birmingham already has two daily flights to Dubai.

22.4.2016 / <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=30436>

Farmer at Stansted still awaiting compensation, due to airport loophole of not completing all work – to avoid paying

In 1999 a farm owner who won £1 million compensation from Stansted, because planes flying over his £2 million home (about 1.5km from the end of the runway) slashed its value in half, is still waiting for the pay-out 17 years later. But Stansted is using a wily “legal loophole”, which says the money needs to be paid only once all work is finished on the airport. Because white lines have not been painted on a strip of airport apron, (presumably deliberately ...) and a fuel pump has not been installed, the airport still has not paid. He is considering suing. Stansted’s owners, MAG are well aware. <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=30722>

Assessment of proposal to cut APD by 50% in Scotland shows likely overall fall in revenue

An assessment of the Scottish Government's plans to cut the rate of Air Passenger Duty (APD) by 50% shows that the aviation industry’s analysis has not accounted for the impact of a fall in domestic tourism. The cut would have the effect of damaging the Scottish economy and reducing funding for public services. A new report “**APD Cut: A Flighty Economic Case**” suggests that cheaper air tickets will encourage more Scots to take cheap foreign trips. The amount of money they take out of Scotland on these extra trips is likely to be larger than the amount brought in. 17.5.2016 <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=30824>

New briefing from AEF explains position with UK aviation use of biofuels, and the Renewable Transport Fuels Obligation issue

The Committee on Climate Change (CCC) that believed UK air passenger numbers could grow by at most 60% of the 2005 level by 2050 (keeping within the 37.5MtCO₂ cap) - **assuming 10% use of alternative fuels**. (ie. less than 60% growth if the amount of alternative fuels is lower than 10%). Estimates of how much biofuel will actually be used by 2050 vary greatly from the (frankly crazy) estimate by "Sustainable Aviation" that it will account for 40% of all fuel, to the more realistic estimate by the DfT that it will make up 2.5%. And the hope by the Airports Commission that it might reach 5.6%, with government help. AEF’s useful 2-page briefing explains the issues. <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=30258>

National Audit Office sustainability overview of DfT – critical on aviation carbon emissions

The National Audit Office has carried out a departmental sustainability overview of the DfT, as it has done for some other departments. It was done at the request of the Environmental Audit Committee. The NAO says on international discussions on aviation, "it is unclear what the government’s goals are in these negotiations, and what action should be taken by industry in the interim." And the CCC has recommended the publication of a policy framework for aviation emissions with long-term assumptions as a proxy for outcomes under an international agreement, but the government response simply repeated support for regional measures, particularly the EU ETS.” 5.5.2016 Details <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=30619>

Some Useful Links

- For large amounts of up-to-date news on airports and aviation, see **AirportWatch**'s news pages <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/latest-news/> with many topic sub-sections
- For daily transport news in the UK - **Transportinfo** at transportinfo.org.uk
- **Transport & Environment (T&E)** <http://www.transportenvironment.org> Twitter [@transenv](https://twitter.com/transenv)
- News and expert analysis on the **AEF (Aviation Environment Federation)** website at www.aef.org.uk and on Twitter [@The_AEF](https://twitter.com/The_AEF)
- **HACAN** www.hacan.org.uk Twitter [@HACAN1](https://twitter.com/HACAN1)
- **GACC (Gatwick Area Conservation Campaign)** www.gacc.org.uk/latest-news
- **Stop Heathrow Expansion (SHE)** <http://www.stopheathrowexpansion.co.uk>
- **Gatwick Obviously NOT** <http://www.gatwickobviouslynot.org/>
- **CHATR Chiswick Against the Third Runway.** <http://www.chatr.org.uk/>
- **HACAN East** at London City Airport. <http://hacaneast.org.uk/news> Twitter [@HACANEast](https://twitter.com/HACANEast)
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Bulletin compiled by Sarah Clayton - thanks to many people for their help, input & guidance. 17.5.2016
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