

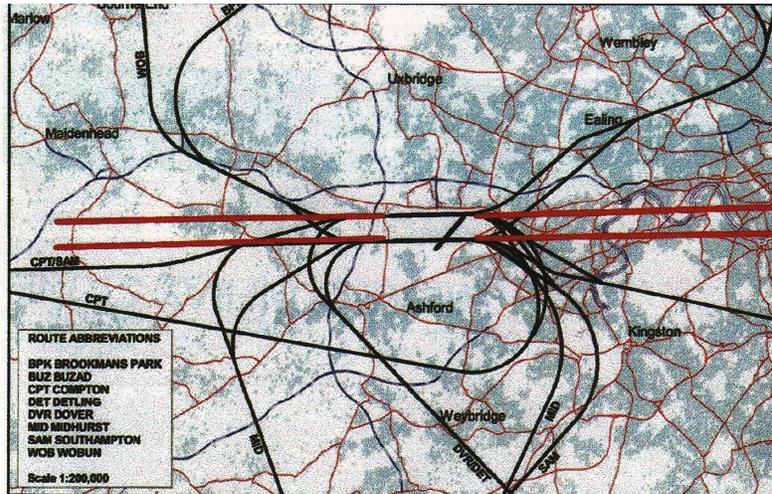
Mixed-Mode

“Mixed-mode, however, should not be introduced. It would deliver a small increase in capacity for a large increase in noise, and the planning process would take almost as long as for a third runway.”
Flying into the Future, Institute of Directors 2012



“Nobody can overstate how hard we would fight to keep our half-day’s break from the noise”
West London resident

All you ever wanted to know about mixed-mode...



Departure (in black) Routes, and Straight-in Approach Paths (in red) for Heathrow

Mixed-mode has been touted both as an alternative to a third runway at Heathrow and as a quick-fix way of increasing airport capacity in London in the short term. It is neither.

What is mixed-mode?

To understand it we first need to understand runway alternation.

Runway alternation

At present planes landing over London switch runways at 3pm to give residents under the flight path a half day's break from the noise. Over half a million people benefit from it.

Mixed-Mode

Under mixed-mode, aircraft would cease to switch runways at 3pm. They would land on (and take off from) both runways all day long. For many people under the flight paths, that would mean a plane overhead every 90 seconds for a lot of the day.

How much extra capacity would mixed-mode create?

Mixed-mode would enable flight numbers to increase from 480,000 a year (the current limit) to around 560,000 a year.

The Myths about Mixed-Mode

Myth One: It is a short-term fix

It is not. It would take many years to put in place.

There are two reasons for this:

- It would require a planning inquiry. By law Heathrow Airport requires planning permission if it wants to exceed the current limit of 480,000. Initially it would need to submit a planning application to the London Borough of Hillingdon, the planning authority. Hillingdon, implacable opponents of Heathrow expansion, are likely to refuse it in which case there would need to be a full-scale public inquiry.
- NATS (National Air Traffic Control) argues that it would take several years for the flight path and other operational changes to be put in place to allow mixed-mode to operate safely.

Myth Two: It would be less unpopular than a 3rd runway

For residents under the current flight paths, it would be more unpopular than a 3rd runway as it would mean a significant increase in aircraft numbers and, for people in the worst-affected boroughs in West London, an end to their half day's break from the noise. Many people only moved into the area because they knew they got this respite period.

Myth Three: It would be a comparatively minor change

Its impact would be felt across wide areas of London and the South East.

There are two reasons why, far from being minor, it would affect a lot of people:

- Already 725,000 people live under Heathrow's flight paths, according to EU official figures. 28% of all people disturbed by aircraft noise across Europe. Mixed-mode might mean over 200 additional flights a day many over these people
- But there would also be new areas impacted by aircraft noise for the first time: Air Traffic Control has made it clear that mixed-mode would require the final approach path to be lengthened to ensure that planes landing on the parallel runways simultaneously were separated well before they reached the airport.

Mixed-Mode: a solution not worth pursuing

“Mixed-mode, however, should not be introduced. It would deliver a small increase in capacity for a large increase in noise, and the planning process would take almost as long as for a third runway.”

That quote on the front page taken from **the Institute of Directors**, long-time supporters of Heathrow expansion, concisely sums up the problems with mixed-mode. It is significant that the Institute, such staunch backers of expansion and still supporters of a 3rd runway, have ruled out mixed-mode.



*“Mixed-mode would cause
a revolution, even in
Richmond”*

John Stewart, Chair HACAN

Briefing by HACAN, fighting noise,
representing residents under the
Heathrow flight paths.

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