

Let's Face the Facts on Heathrow

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE 27 SEPTEMBER 2015

Worried about escalating house prices and rents in the south-east?

Agree with the need to re-balance the UK economy through a Northern Powerhouse?

What would you think about a Government decision that increased the over-heating in the south-east and worked against a re-balancing of the economy? You'd think it was nuts, wouldn't you?

Let's look at some surprising facts:

1. Heathrow's third runway would support an extra 41 million passengers a year. But this growth is concentrated at a single airport in the over-heated south-east, and results in a *loss* of 58 million passengers a year from other UK airports, including Birmingham, Manchester and Glasgow. Compatible with the Northern Powerhouse? Surely not.
2. Want to increase the UK's aviation capacity and international competitiveness? The Airports Commission's own data show a *reduction* of 17million passengers for the UK as a whole, including business passengers and domestic passengers, as well as a reduction in flights and connectivity if the Heathrow option is chosen.
3. Want the passengers using the airspace to benefit the UK economy? Over 50% of the new runway capacity would be used for an extra 22 million International to International transfers, providing little economic value to the UK as these passengers don't step outside the airport.
4. And for those of you who are into macro-economic data, a final astonishing fact: The Commission says the investment of £17 billion would result in a net benefit of £1.4 billion (present value over 60 years). This sounds a decent sum but it is negligible in macro-economic terms and within the margin for statistical error. And that's ignoring the fact that the figure may be even smaller if full calculations for noise and air pollution and investment in transport to and from the airport, were to be included.

Don't believe it? We were astonished too. But let's face the facts before investing £17 billion on Heathrow Airport plus a further £20 billion required to improve surface transport access: the evidence shows it will not deliver what we and the Government want. And we haven't even mentioned all the problems of compliance with CO₂, air pollution and noise targets. **These facts are all in the Airport's Commission final report.** Good stuff. But the conclusion reached is not supported by the facts.

The fact is that there is already significant spare capacity at almost all UK's airports including Heathrow itself, which the Commission says has capacity to add another 34 million terminating passengers without any additional flights by using larger planes. Heathrow is far from full. There is no need for this costly new investment in one airport at the expense of others. Allowing the market to grow where it is needed is the right answer – no new runways.

We challenge the supporters of Heathrow expansion to debate the facts with us before it is too late.

Take a look rhcfacts.org/ukhub/. It's astonishing.

Contact details: Richmond Heathrow Campaign

Peter Willan, email: willan829@btinternet.com; tel: 020-8948 4142, mobile: 07530 266436
Caroline Brock, tel: 020-8332 6836, mobile: 07515 681257