

Mayors, Mumbo-jumbo and Near Misses - the Heathrow Consultation steps up a gear

LONDON UNITED



ALL FOUR CANDIDATES FOR LONDON MAYOR OPPOSE A THIRD RUNWAY AT HEATHROW.

They don't agree on much, but they're all against this. Find out why, and what we're doing to stop it.
Text OPPOSE to 63777.

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GREENPEACE

"It should be possible to read, understand and act on a consultation document after one reading. I would challenge anyone to do that with this particular document. Irrespective of the rights or wrongs of the Heathrow expansion plans, consultation carried out in this way is just undemocratic." Steve Jenner, Plain English Campaign

In communities surrounding Heathrow, thousands of people have been packing protest meetings.

700+ people turned up to a meeting in Chiswick. Over 700 packed a church hall in Putney (the largest public meeting in Wandsworth for over 20 years), and around 700 in Hammersmith. A Public Meeting in Richmond was attended by more than 600 people, clearly demonstrating both the strength of public opinion, and that the scope of the government's 'consultation' is inadequate. There have been renewed calls for the consultation period to be extended (2M group), the geographical area to be broadened to include those under new flight paths (HACAN), and the consultation document to be re-written in clear, jargon-free English so that local people can fully participate (Susan Kramer MP). Amazingly, BAA showed their true colours at a London Assembly meeting where Chief Exec Steven Nelson refused to rule out the possibility of a **fourth runway** and a **seventh terminal**. That's another few thousand homes wiped off the map- all very sustainable. 4th runway and 7th terminal story <http://tinyurl.com/2bwh8l> (23.1.2008)

On the 17th January, the release of a joint advertisement featuring all four of London's main mayoral candidates and their opposition to Heathrow expansion plans hit the newstands on the same day that flight BA038 hit the ground some 1,000 feet short of runway 27L, after losing engine power 'somewhere over Hounslow or Feltham.'



Thankfully, there were no fatalities, but inevitably the crash has led to interest in the dangers of expanding aviation in such a highly populated area. It has also raised concerns about the impact of revised Public Safety Zones (PSZs) that could possibly lead to the demolition of hundreds of homes if expansion goes ahead due to the risk of crashes. The Air Accident Investigation Branch have published their formal report, though investigators have failed to determine the reason for the power failure.

http://www.aaib.dft.gov.uk/publications/formal_reports/2_2008_g_euob.cfm

Mass Rally against Heathrow expansion - in London on Monday 25th February



Central Hall, Westminster, the venue for a Heathrow mass rally - at 7.00 pm

The coalition of partners opposed to Heathrow expansion proposals are holding a large public rally, two days before the end of the consultation. **We want to fill Central Hall, Westminster (capacity over 2000) to get our message of Stop Heathrow Expansion, across to the Government as strongly as possible.** We encourage anyone who will be affected by the plans - or any airport campaigners who feel strongly about the government's approach to aviation - to attend.

This will be the culmination of the series of public meetings that HACAN and local authorities have been holding for residents to find out more about the consultation and voice their opinions until the closing date.

The Chair of the event will be Baroness Jenny Tonge. A wide range of speakers has already been confirmed, including:

- Mark Lynas, climate change specialist and author of three books on the subject
- Peter Ainsworth MP, Shadow Secretary of State for the Environment
- Caroline Lucas MEP, Principal Speaker for the Green Party
- John McDonnell MP, Labour MP for Hayes and Harlington
- Brian Paddick, Liberal Democrat candidate for London Mayor
- Councillor Barbara Reid, Hounslow Council cabinet member, representing the 2M group of local authorities
- Leo Murray, Plane Stupid
- Geraldine Nicholson, Chair No Third Runway Action Group
- John Stewart, Chair HACAN

For more information, see <http://www.hacan.org.uk/>

Bristol Stealth Expansion Fears



Bristol residents fear 'walkway' plans herald terminal growth

Bristol International Airport have put in for planning permission under the General Permitted Development Order of the Town and Country Planning Act, to build a massive extension to their terminal building under the guise of a walkway.

The extension is 3 times as long as the existing terminal and has satellite lounges along its length to increase terminal capacity and throughput. In a particularly underhand move given their promises not to 'bury' planning applications during holiday periods, their application was registered with North Somerset Council on the 20th December, **the day after Bristol schools began their Christmas Holidays**. The application was submitted on the 18th December with a three week consultation period - yet it was not visible to the general public until 7th January. Since then it has generated significant local criticism over its impacts and the manner in which it was submitted.

Crucially, BIA's application is not a legitimate Permitted Development as it exceeds planning guidelines on size by a significant margin, and would effectively act as a terminal extension. It is not necessary for urgent operational efficiency reasons, but instead allows significant increase in future passenger numbers. This has never been mentioned in the Master Plan, stakeholder workshops, impact assessments or any other consultation or background literature from BIA in the past. It is clear that BIA is attempting to sneak increases in noise, traffic, passenger numbers and ATM under the nose of the public and the planning authority, under the guise of minor airport adjustments. Like a set of novelty socks, this Christmas present should be unceremoniously returned.

Lydd Airport planning application hits a hiccup:

This time last year, London Ashford Airport (Lydd) formally submitted two major planning applications relating to its expansion. The plans filed with Shepway District Council concerned lengthening the runway by over **444 metres** to handle large jets, (Boeing 737 and Airbus A320 size), and the erection of a terminal building and car parks to attract over **500,000 passengers annually (a 100 fold increase)**. Copies of these applications are available online (Y06/1647/SH (<http://tinyurl.com/2evwwc>) and Y06/1648/SH (<http://tinyurl.com/ynljqy>).



Objections from local residents, including fresh legal advice from Matthew Horton QC, have led Shepway Council to post-poned their 30th Jan decision making meeting, on the grounds that councillors do not yet have the necessary information on environmental and noise impacts to make an informed decision. "This is one of the biggest planning applications this council has ever had to determine and it is one that has wide-ranging implications. It is vital that our councillors have all the information they need when making their decision," said Alistair Stewart, Shepway District Council's Chief Executive.

Campaigners at LAAG (Lydd Airport Action Group) are hopeful that the delay of two to six months will discourage the airport's owners from proceeding with the application, though Zaher Deir, LAA Managing Director, has asserted "We are confident that a positive determination will be the result of the re-scheduled

planning meeting." The council is also under pressure from local political groups to find a meeting venue large enough to accommodate all the residents concerned (rather than the original video-link proposed.)

P-p-pick up a protest



Edinburgh private jets



Ice skating penguins

A double whammy from Plane Stupid as two costume protests pricked the nation's conscience:

On the 12th Jan, activists confronted the Natural History Museum over BA sponsorship of the winter ice-rink. A spokespenguin called Tamsin said: "...we love ice too, but the ice in our own home is melting as a result of global warming. BA has shown no concern for the issue of climate change. It's a major lobbyist for the expansion of Britain's airports - particularly the third runway at Heathrow - which will lead to a huge rise in greenhouse gas emissions at a time when emissions from other sectors are being cut back."

Two weeks later, twenty + environmentalists wearing jet wings blockaded the entrance to the private jet company, Greer Aviation at Edinburgh Airport. Plans to triple Scottish air travel fly in the face of the government's own climate targets, and targeted action against the private jet companies that fly the richest 10% of the population drives the message home.

Fighting the flights at City Airport

East London residents are up in arms after London City Airport marked its 21st anniversary with an application to **double noise factored ATMs**, and increase overall flights to 176,000 pa. The airport has lodged a planning application with Newham Council, covering growth up to 2010. Residents have formed a new opposition group, called **Fight the Flights**. At a recent meeting, residents met members of AirportWatch and local campaign co-ordinators to voice their opposition.

Newham has a high rate of unemployment and low social housing, and the claims made by City about how expansion would regenerate the area have undoubtedly been tempting. There has been a failure to distribute information about the application over all boroughs affected (particularly residents within the 56db contour in Greenwich) and little mention has been made of the new expanded Public Safety Zone, covering acres of existing social housing and preventing the development of any more affordable housing in that area - of which Newham's stocks are critically low.



Community noise monitoring projects have started up and local awareness is growing, but Fight the Flights still have a long way to go, and AirportWatch members are encouraged to offer their expertise. Find out more at: <http://londoncityairportfighttheflights.blogspot.com/>

New FOE Economics Briefing reveals the economic case for Heathrow expansion is fundamentally flawed

As activists, we have all faced arguments putting the economic benefits of airport expansion above the social and environmental costs. However, new research published by Friends of the Earth has uncovered the extent to which the government's sums on economics and aviation expansion don't add up. The Heathrow Economics Briefing shows how, rather than a net benefit of £5 billion, Heathrow expansion could **cost** UK plc tens of billions in climate costs, lost tourism revenue, health and local infrastructure deficits. The report concludes that the Heathrow consultation misleads the public as to the benefit of extra capacity; meaning the prime justification for expansion used by the DfT, BAA, Future Heathrow and the like just does not stack up.

A key quote from the study for Peak Oil enthusiasts;

The DfT assume that oil price "falls from \$64 per barrel in 2006 to \$53 per barrel in 2030 with most of the decline occurring by 2012" (DfT 2007, section 2.29). However at the time they published this report in 2007, the price was over \$90 and has since gone over \$100. Their oil price assumptions are not realistic. AirportWatch is inclined to agree.

..... and independent research indicates that the economic case for Heathrow expansion has been greatly exaggerated

A major new report published on 14th February by independent economic consultants CE Delft undermines the economic case for expansion at Heathrow. It challenges Government claims that its current proposals to expand Heathrow will benefit the economy to the tune of £5 billion. The report argues that the Government's figures are based on flawed research which overestimates the importance of aviation to the economy.

The CE Delft study can be found at: http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/downloads//CE_Delft_Report_Feb_2008.pdf

and the CE Delft press release and key points summary is at:

<http://www.hacan.org.uk/resources/briefings/delft.press.release.and.key.points.pdf>

Carlisle Airport plans get Cumbria County Council support



Carlisle Airport's plans for a new terminal building and runway have been backed by some local councilors, despite opposition from local residents concerned about noise, and the concern of several major environmental organizations. Councillor Geoff Prest, of Cumbria County Council, said that the proposed £25 million development put forward by Stobart Air (which manages the airport) would offer "*significant potential to support growth in Carlisle city and stimulate improvement in the economic performance of the county. Every effort is being made to support the application and to make sure it stands up when the final planning decision is made. It will bring much-needed investment and jobs into the region and also make it easier to use Carlisle as a platform for growth. For too long Cumbrian residents and visitors have had to travel unacceptable distances when using airports.*"

Stobart Air hopes to eventually offer regular passenger flights to London, Dublin, Amsterdam and Paris. The proposed plans would also see the offices of sister company Eddie Stobart, the Cumbrian-based haulage firm, move to the site, as well as the development of an air freight terminal. RyanAir have also expressed interest in using Carlisle as a hub. Opponents of the expansion, including Friends of the Earth and the Green Party, have condemned the short-sightedness of expansion for short-haul flights, and that the application indicates small planes will be used- whilst providing the capacity for larger jets.

Opponents recently staged a costumed protest complete with town crier, at the airport recently. They claim that an expanded Carlisle Airport could become an international air-freight hub for large 737 and 747 jets, and Andrew Tinkler's company, Stobart Air, are trying to pull the wool over the eyes of local residents

RSPB, Cumbria Wildlife Trust and Friends of the Lake District were consultees to the case, and all registered extremely strong objections, unanimously stating that the Environmental Statement provided in the planning application was woefully inadequate.

A petition arguing against the application has been launched. A decision had been expected from the Council in early January, but has not yet been made. More details can be found at http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/news/detail.php?art_id=890

AirportWatch South West Launches at Westminster

AirportWatch South West has recently formed, through the Bristol group, to be an umbrella group for aviation campaigners at airports across the south west of England, principally Bristol, Exeter, Newquay, Plymouth, Bournemouth and Staverton. Sharing expertise and experience between all the airports and coordinating activities will be very helpful. To find out more contact Hilary Burn at : burnfamily30@hotmail.com

On the 4th of February, the newly-formed AirportWatch South West took their campaign to Westminster, meeting with MPs and MEPs to discuss some of their fears about the expansion, including noise, traffic and rises in climate-changing aircraft emissions caused by expansion plans for a number of regional airports.

Maurice Spurway, coordinator of Exeter Friends of the Earth said: "Massive expansion plans for all the airports in the South West mean a severe downturn in quality of life for local communities as noise disturbance and local traffic congestion increase. The driver for airport growth is the increase in budget flights, yet it is cheap flights that are squeezing tourism in the South West, the region's biggest industry.

"Only last week, national hotel chain Travelodge gave evidence at the House of Commons showing that unfair tax breaks to short haul airlines 'are slowly bringing the curtain down on regional tourism', losing the UK £19bn a year." (Story at: http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/news/detail.php?art_id=1194)
The Exeter Airport Master Plan is expected to be published at the end of February.

Newquay Airport is aiming to increase passengers to one million a year, and is one of the five airfields campaigners are targeting. Cornwall County Council, (the airport's owners) have rejected some arguments on emissions and maintain that expansion will boost the local economy. This is disputed by AirportWatch SW and by Groundswell Cornwall. Oliver Baines, from Groundswell, explained: "Our presentation at the meeting concentrated on the economic case against the airport expansion. The economic damage to Cornwall will be £1.9m a year, which we, the taxpayers, will have to carry. Most flights are short haul flights or flights to Spain and France, aimed at people who travel there on holiday or who own a second home. This is another drain to the local economy. People are going out, not in. We want a public consultation or debate, which is something the county council has failed to do. We have to look ahead when this country has to take on its obligations to reduce carbon emissions. It's a real challenge for us and we have to think carefully what we do with our airports."

The South West's main industry is tourism.



Useful Info

- For a **daily digest of transport stories in the papers**, see Anthony Rae's excellent site www.transportinfo.org.uk
- For help organising your campaign, **Seeds for Change** offer free advice and direct action training. Contact oxford@seedsforchange.org.uk or check out their website www.seedsforchange.org.uk
- For legal advice contact the **Environmental Law Foundation**. They give initial advice free. www.elflaw.org

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www.airportwatch.org.uk