

Aviation Scoping Document consultation launched, with recognition that aviation growth must be within environmental limits



Scoping Document on new aviation policy

The Government has launched its Scoping Document on Aviation for consultation. It focuses on the 3 themes: aviation and the economy, climate change and local environment.

The starting point will be that aviation should be allowed to grow because of its economic contribution, but that it should do so within environmental limits. Transport Secretary Philip Hammond said: "Aviation is a crucial part of this country's transport infrastructure, it should be able to grow, prosper and support wider economic growth. But we are not prepared to support this growth at any price - the environmental impacts of flying - both local and global - must be addressed." The consultation document reiterates the position on no new runways at Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted. 30.3.2011.

The consultation closes on 30th Sept, and details are at <http://bit.ly/hkIWoz>

Aviation Scoping Document - a chance to "drag UK aviation policy into the 21st century"

The Scoping Document compares favourably to the 2003 Air Transport White Paper. It has a very different feel and tone to it. It is much more about the challenges and issues of the 21st century than the White Paper ever was. Indeed the Transport Secretary Philip Hammond is very critical of the White Paper. He calls it "fundamentally out-of-date because it fails to give sufficient weight to climate change," adding "in maintaining its support for new runways – particularly at Heathrow – in the face of the local environmental impacts and mounting evidence of aviation's growing contribution towards climate change, the previous government got the balance wrong" Hammond says that the new Government is not prepared to support the growth of aviation at any price.

Of course AirportWatch groups will have their concerns about aspects of the document. There appears to be support for expansion at regional airports. There are hints that, if the industry can get its act together on noise and emissions, growth will become less of a problem. The new idea of a 'noise envelope' - "define an envelope within which growth would be possible, as technology and operations reduce noise impacts per plane" – could be a recipe for growth.

There will be other concerns, too. AirportWatch and its supporter groups will each express their views in our responses to the consultation. AirportWatch might look to commission relevant research.

We are also producing a longer critique of the Scoping Document which should be available to supporters shortly. And we are looking to organize a conference. But I believe our short-term strategy should be to give the document broad support to counter the ferocious attacks that have started to come from the aviation industry and their backers. This document is addressing issues and making statements that would have been inconceivable just a few years ago. A corner has been turned.

We need to defend the gains we have made.

The document also throws out an implicit challenge to the Labour Party as it re-evaluates its aviation policy over the summer. Will it allow itself to be less green and less concerned about local communities than the Government? To do so it will need to ditch much of its old aviation policy.

John Stewart - Chair AirportWatch

Philip Hammond: Aviation growth - but not at any price

Letter to the Times 30th March 2011:

Sir, It is complete nonsense to suggest that the Government does not have a strategy to help UK aviation grow and prosper ("Business chiefs call for airport strategy", Mar 29 - see below).

We have already announced proposals to reform the economic regulation of our major airports - providing a regime in which the passenger comes first.

We have listened to concerns on Air Passenger Duty and are consulting on reforms to make aviation taxation fairer. We are improving the way airport security is regulated to make it more efficient while maintaining the existing high levels of protection.

We are working with the CAA to improve the management of our airspace and reforming financial protection for holidaymakers.

The mistake that is being made is to assume that a strategy for UK aviation to grow and prosper necessarily means building more runways at Heathrow, Stansted and Gatwick. Aviation contributes to our economy, but it also contributes to global carbon emissions and has significant local noise and air quality impacts which must be addressed if the industry is to grow. This government will support aviation, but not at any price.

Philip Hammond, MP, Secretary of State for Transport

Letters to the Times on UK airport capacity and south east runways by Brendon Sewill and John Stewart

Sir, Complaints about lack of airport capacity need to be kept in proportion. London - with Heathrow, Gatwick, Stansted, Luton and City - has six runways, more than any other European city. London has flights to more destinations than any other European city. Last year London airports handled more passengers than any other city in the world.

Far from demand outgrowing capacity, in the past two years air travel has declined. Gatwick is now working at 75% capacity and Stansted at little more than 50%. The Government's policy of building no new runways is absolutely justified. The policy is also justified on economic grounds - it makes little sense to waste money building new infrastructure for a demand, mainly for leisure flights, which is artificially stimulated by low taxation. The revenue lost from no fuel tax and no VAT is four times the revenue received from air passenger duty.

Brendon Sewill Chairman, Gatwick Area Conservation Campaign (GACC) 31st March

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Sir, The aviation industry is right to seek a clear aviation strategy. But it is right for the Government to rule out the expansion of Heathrow from its future strategy. There is no overwhelming economic case to expand the airport.

The 2008 report from the Dutch consultants CE Delft was quite clear that a third runway was not critical to the London economy because, for business as a whole, other factors were of greater importance than the size of Heathrow.

There is also a lack of evidence to back up the claim that business would lose out if the proportion of transfer passengers using Heathrow fell. However, transfer passengers use routes that are already highly profitable: New York, Manchester, Edinburgh, Chicago and Hong Kong. The top destinations where transfer passengers do make a difference to the financial viability of the route - Bishkek, Freetown and Provinciale - are not key destinations for London business.

There is a business case for more flights to serve the expanding economies of Asia over the coming decade. The way to accommodate them at Heathrow is to auction the slots to reduce the number of short-haul leisure flights, which are clogging up the runways, and to invest in a high-speed, affordable rail system that allows rail to become a viable option for many of these short-haul trips.

John Stewart London SW9 31st March

Business bosses call for airports rethink and claim we mustn't ignore the "economic benefits of flying"

A group of 74 UK business leaders wrote to the Times on 29th March, to urge the Government to recognise the contribution of aviation in its forthcoming aviation review - published the next day. The chairmen or senior executives from industry, finance and the service sector, including those at Siemens, Lloyds Banking Group and PwC, said Britain needs a "strategy for growth" and claim there is not enough airport capacity in the south east, and the UK will lose out without more runways. In their letter the business leaders said the review must address carbon reduction targets and local air pollution but, they added, "it cannot and must not ignore the economic benefits of flying." They say: "All options must be considered, short and long term, to address growing demand." Some business leaders fear that as the cost and delays associated with flying to London escalate, airlines will transfer to other cities in Europe, depriving Heathrow of feeder traffic and undermining its status as the pre-eminent hub. The aviation industry claims it directly contributes £11.4 billion to the British economy and supports 520,000 jobs. <http://bit.ly/fBP8db>

Budget: George Osborne confirms no per plane tax, no APD on business jets, and no increase in APD this year

No per plane tax

On 23rd March the Chancellor announced that the government would not be replacing Air Passenger Duty with a per-plane tax, despite having pledged to do so in the Coalition Agreement in May 2010. Osborne said the proposed per-plane tax would be illegal, and it is believed that legal action from foreign governments or airlines was feared because the per-plane tax has similarities with a fuel tax. Taxing aircraft fuel is prevented by certain international agreements, although there is no blanket ban. However, the legal situation is not clear-cut. (See AEF www.aef.org.uk/?p=1219)

Had there been a per plane tax, it was expected to cover cargo airlines, private jet flights and transfer passengers – all of which escape passenger duties. It would have hit harder at airlines with large numbers of transferring passengers, such as British Airways, which argued it would create “significant competitive distortion”, and airports with big air cargo customers. But EasyJet, with high load factors, was one of the few airlines to back the per plane tax plan. <http://bit.ly/gkoGOB>

Air Passenger Duty

Comment:

One of the major achievements of AirportWatch and its allies over the last decade was to change the climate of debate on aviation taxation. Through the work of Brendon Sewill and others we got across the way in which aviation was under-taxed. To such an extent that our figures were being quoted by senior politicians. The recent fight-back by the aviation industry was entirely predictable. Their arguments may be Orwellian but their aim is to reverse our gains and get the debate back on to their territory; that the ‘high level’ of Air Passenger Duty (APD) is unfair on passengers, is hurting the aviation industry and is putting UK business as a whole at a competitive disadvantage.

Superficially, it is a believable argument. We need to challenge it not just in our responses to the current consultation on Air Passenger Duty but publicly wherever we can. We need, once more, to make it the conventional wisdom that aviation is under-taxed; that Air Passenger Duty would need to rise four-fold to compensate for tax-free fuel and a VAT-free industry. From our meetings with Treasury ministers, we understand that, given the need for some sort of European or international agreement on fuel tax and VAT, APD is currently their tax of choice. Let’s strengthen their arm in the face of the assault from industry.

John Stewart

Budget: AirportWatch welcomes government proposal to charge APD on business jets

The budget at long last proposed charging Air Passenger Duty on business and private jets. For decades the anomaly persisted of the richest fliers - and the planes with some of the highest per passenger carbon emissions- being tax-free. However, the tax will not come into effect for at least a year, after a consultation. The Budget statement said the government "plans to extend aviation tax to include 'business jets' on a per passenger basis for all qualifying flights with an authorised take-off weight in excess of 5.7 tonnes. The proposal is to have a single rate of duty per passenger in 2012-13, irrespective of distance travelled, equivalent to the highest standard rate of APD. Stakeholders are invited to comment on whether this proposal offers a fair and effective way of extending the APD regime to include passengers aboard 'business jets'. In particular, views are invited on the appropriate definition of 'business jets', the range of exemptions and expected market impact of the Government's proposals." <http://bit.ly/dGR99i>

One industry source said that the charge per passenger is relatively low, will not affect demand, and "it is genuinely hard to argue why business jet passengers should not have to pay when everyone else does." Business jets were originally only exempt because collecting it would be time consuming. Operators of business jets say they are more concerned about the start of VAT on business jets, which came in on 1st January. But as business jets are bought by companies, they can reclaim the VAT - so they just lose use of the money for a few months. <http://bit.ly/hnSi25>

Budget: No increase in APD this year

The Chancellor said he will not increase APD this year, although there had been speculation by the airlines that this year's increases to APD – scheduled by the previous Government – might have been scrapped entirely. Rises in line with the Retail Price Index are likely in 2012. ABTA had launched a campaign entitled "A Fair Tax on Flights" on Facebook, and the aviation and travel industries have moaned long and loudly to anyone who would listen for the past few months about the alleged iniquity of APD, at all of £12 per passenger for flights of up to 2,000 miles. Tim Johnson, Director of the Aviation Environment Federation, commented that "In the absence of reform, an increase in APD rates is urgently needed. This would be a step towards making the aviation industry pay for the environmental costs such as noise and CO2 emissions that it imposes and to make a fair contribution to the nation's finances. The present tax – around £2.3 billion per annum – is well short of what would be required to equalise aviation taxes with other sectors of the economy. For instance, if aviation fuel were taxed at the same rate as petrol, this would raise £10 billion pa."

The HM Treasury consultation on APD, with questions mainly on taxing private jets, and changes to the APD bands, closes on 17th June and is at http://cdn.hm-treasury.gov.uk/2011budget_airpassenger.pdf

Airline and travel industries' campaign, "A Fair Tax on Flying"

"A Fair Tax on Flying" (organised by ABTA) says it is an alliance of over 25 airlines, airports, tour operators, destinations and travel trade associations calling on the Government to make UK aviation tax fairer. They say "Currently, we pay the highest levels in Europe."



<http://www.fairtaxonflying.com>
<http://www.facebook.com/fairtaxonflying>

In response to the industry's attempt to drum up wide-spread support for their "A Fair Tax on Flying" campaign, to cut APD and have cheaper flights, another one looking remarkably similar sprang up



on Facebook
<http://www.facebook.com/afairtaxonflying>

The amount of money the Exchequer loses through the aviation industry's tax-breaks amounts to almost 20% of the cuts the Government is making to public services

Airlines pay no tax on aircraft fuel

Motorists pay 59p a litre in fuel duty + VAT at 20%. Thus petrol tax is at a rate of approx 160%. Tax on aviation fuel is 0%.

Airlines pay no VAT

- on airline tickets.
- on the purchase of aircraft. Motorists pay VAT at 20% on the purchase of cars.
- on the servicing of aircraft. Motorists pay VAT at 20% on the servicing of their cars.
- on goods sold in airport duty-free shops or on meals served on aircraft. Motorists pay VAT on most goods and meals in motorway cafés.

Airports pay no tax on alcohol and tobacco

No tax is paid on drink and tobacco sold in airport duty-free shops. Tax on a bottle of whisky in the High Street is £6.66. Tax on cigarettes in the local shop is about 80%.

Airlines DO pay air passenger duty

The total revenue from air passenger duty in 2011-12 is forecast at £3 billion.

The Treasury estimated in October 2009 that the loss of revenue as a result of no fuel tax and no VAT on airlines was at least £10 billion a year.

With the increase in fuel tax and VAT since then, the figure must now be around £12 billion.

Thus, compared to car travel, air travel benefits from an annual tax subsidy of around £9 billion.

To achieve fair tax with motorists, air passenger duty would need to be quadrupled!

European consultation on the future of EU VAT

At the end of 2010 the European Commission published a Green (Consultation) Paper on the future of EU VAT. This is a vital topic, and a not-to-be missed chance to have a say on how the VAT system could be made to work better. The EU consultation on VAT says that ‘consumption taxes, of which VAT is by far the most important, should be levied on the broadest possible base “thereby reducing the distortive effects of taxation, with favourable effects on growth and employment.”’

The very low tax currently levied on the aviation industry is an anomaly. The zero rating of air travel has distortive effects on the economy, which increase demand and supply of air travel above the economically optimal level. Because of its zero rating, VAT on purchases of aircraft and other supplies can be reclaimed - leading to further economic distortions.

Absence of VAT on air travel is unfair and regressive. The great majority of air travel is for leisure and the great majority of air travel is undertaken by well-off people. Absence of VAT on aviation means that higher taxes (VAT or other) have to be levied elsewhere, often on poorer people. Bringing aviation tax up to the levels of other products and sectors of the economy would bring social, environmental and economic benefits.

AirportWatch does not accept the lobbying and special pleading coming from the aviation industry and its supporters that aviation should not pay taxes that most other businesses and most other sectors of economy have to pay.

There are some technical difficulties in charging VAT on aviation, such as levying the charge on one country where the ticket is bought, when the travel takes place in another, or when several countries are involved in one journey. However, these problems do not seem insuperable, at least for intra-EU and domestic flights. If, despite all efforts, the Commission is unable to propose a viable way of applying VAT to air travel, it should recommend other means to restore the taxation imbalance and thereby remove economic distortions. The UK Air Passenger Duty is an example of a useful (but far from perfect) alternative to VAT. *(With thanks to Nic Ferriday for his advice)*

The consultation closing date is 31 May 2011. EU VAT Consultation is at <http://bit.ly/huf7kL>

Boris Johnson – a Trojan Horse for more London airport capacity?

Recently, during a People's Question Time in Hammersmith, Boris said the government's refusal to discuss new runways at London's airports was "crazy" and its air passenger taxes were an "absolute disgrace". He told the audience that the government's move last year to scrap new runways in the South East of England was hindering London's long-term competitiveness. <http://bit.ly/dVYt8q>

Boris has been called many things in his time. But never a Trojan horse. Yet that is what he may turn out to be. Probably unwittingly. He would like his recent calls for more capacity and new runways in the South East of England to lead to a new off-shore airport. He has been firmly against the expansion of Heathrow. But his consistent calls for expansion may result in that happening, which would delight much of the aviation industry and sections of business. If the mantra for more capacity and new runways takes hold and if an off-shore airport is ruled out (as is likely) the pressure is again on Heathrow. A report for the City of London Corporation, by York Aviation 'Aviation Services and the City', bemoaned the lack of capacity in the South East and called for a 3rd runway at Heathrow, expansion of City Airport and a new runway at Stansted or Gatwick.

GACC meets Aviation Minister, Theresa Villiers

The Government's new consultation on the future of aviation was welcomed by GACC (Gatwick Area Conservation Campaign) representatives when they met Theresa Villiers MP, on 4th April. The GACC team, who were accompanied by Sam Gyimah MP (East Surrey), thanked her for the firm decision by the Coalition Government to veto any new Gatwick runway.

'The Minister gave us a sympathetic welcome and we had a constructive discussion' said GACC chairman Brendon Sewill. 'We pressed on her that it was not sufficient to say that technological progress would enable more flights: it was also important that any benefits should be shared with the local community.'

The Government's request for 'evidence based' responses to the consultation was at risk of putting environmental groups at a disadvantage, GACC suggested, because the aviation industry could afford to employ tame consultants to produce biased reports.



One of the main items discussed with the Aviation Minister was the problem of approach noise on which GACC had prepared a detailed paper with a number of constructive proposals. The Minister promised to give the proposals serious consideration.

Among the issues raised was whether approach paths should be concentrated or dispersed. 'The Minister showed real interest and understanding, and GACC were able to discuss with her both the injustice of concentrating the misery on the few and the problems of spreading the disturbance over a wider area with a greater number of people, all of whom would need to be consulted.

More recent news from GACC <http://www.gacc.org.uk/latest-news.php>

Stansted: BAA told by Competition Commission to sell 2 airports - welcomed by SSE

BAA was told by the CC that it should sell Stansted and either Glasgow or Edinburgh airports. BAA has mounted a string of legal challenges over 2 years to try to keep them ever since the commission initially ruled in 2009 that it must sell 3 of its 7 UK airports. The Commission said its provisional decision was "fully justified".

Stop Stansted Expansion (SSE) welcomed the decision, and called upon BAA to sell Stansted soon without further prevarication or delay, to remove the blight - saying "Don't prolong the agony" for employees or local residents. The CC has invited responses to its provisional findings before publishing its final verdict in May/June. SSE will be contributing to this, reiterating the views expressed in previous stages of the market inquiry. 30.3.2011 <http://bit.ly/eNDHY5>

Opportunity to influence Stansted's future in new aviation consultation

SSE has welcomed the new Scoping Document consultation, which makes clear that the 2003 Air Transport White Paper is now fundamentally out-of-date and, encouragingly, takes as its starting point the premise of no new runways in the south east - including Stansted. The consultation provides an excellent opportunity for those concerned about the future growth of Stansted to give their views. Local concerns are highlighted as having been a key consideration in the scrapping of the Stansted 2nd runway plans, with night noise as the least acceptable impact of aircraft operations.

Noise comes in for a special focus as the Government seeks to gather views which will be important in a separate consultation on the night flights regime scheduled for later this year, making it doubly important for people to respond if they are currently affected by noise, or could be under anticipated route changes flagged up in the consultation. <http://www.stopstanstedexpansion.com>

SSE will be issuing guidance to those wishing to respond. However, SSE's full response will not be completed until after new passenger forecasts are published by the DfT this July. The Government is also due to reply to the Climate Change Committee's report on UK aviation some time in July, though it is thought this may only take the form of a holding document.

The core of the SSE response to the consultation will be renewed pressure for a long-term moratorium on any 2nd runway plans and the need to prevent any future push by Stansted's owners to exceed the 35 million passenger limit. The airport is currently operating at 18 million passengers a year compared to 23.7 million in 2007.

More news from SSE at <http://www.stopstanstedexpansion.com/media.html>

Fight the Flights Legals Move Closer to Appeal Court Hearing

In 2009 Newham Council voted to approve the 50% flight expansion at London City Airport, taking the current annual air traffic movements up to 120,000 a year. With the help of lawyers at the Friends of the Earth's Rights & Justice Centre, Fight the Flights legally challenged the decision at the High Court in November 2010. FtF did this by pointing out that the climate change and air quality impacts of the expansion had not been considered properly.

Disappointingly the High Court judges did not rule in FtF's favour and ruled in January that local authorities do not need to take account of the new policy target from the previous government - of reducing aviation emissions back to the 2005 levels (by 2050). The government however have not issued guidance to Local Authorities and until they do airport expansion and the associated growth in aviation emissions will go unchecked, making aviation emission targets more difficult to meet in

future, doing further damage the local environment and community. The January decision has the potential to negatively impact on every current and future campaign against expansion, and there are indications that it has been used to justify expansion at another airport.

Appeal papers have now been lodged by the Fight the Flights legal team at the Court of Appeal to appeal against the High Court decision in January. The appeal is completely reliant upon a protective costs order being granted as, without this, legal costs would be prohibitive. 22.3.2011

APPEAL: In the meantime Fight the Flights have launched a fundraising appeal for donations towards the legal costs. Small and large donations are welcome and may be made online using Paypal from the FtT website: www.fighttheflights.com or by emailing fighttheflights@yahoo.co.uk for other payment methods.

FtF believe the case is an important one, and worth fighting, because the expansion planned threatens the local environment, social justice, and health and safety. Their legal team have advised that there are good grounds for an appeal of this decision at the Court of Appeal and FtF feel that due to the possible implications of this decision on all expansion plans, the appeal is essential.

Birmingham: Green groups urge high-speed rail rethink

Birmingham FOE with colleagues Sustainability West Midlands www.sustainabilitywestmidlands.org.uk hosted a public meeting on "High Speed Rail; Creating Sustainable Transport and Jobs." The topic of strategic (ie BIG) transport projects is once again dominating the debate across the West Midlands. Over recent years we have seen the M6 Toll road open, and successful campaigns against the Western Orbital and the M6 expressway between the West Midlands and Greater Manchester. The road builders never take no for an answer and always come back for another go.

The issue of High Speed Rail in the West Midlands is directly relevant to the aviation debate. The Tories announced their plans for HSR at their party conference of 2008 held in Birmingham. This came hot on the heels of their position on a Heathrow 3rd runway - which has been pivotal in plans for HSR and the fixation with a link to Heathrow.



Birmingham Airport and the vast majority of the Birmingham and Solihull business lobby are massively in favour of HS2. The Airport see this as their opportunity to become a London Airport and are actively shouting "we are Heathrow's 3rd runway and with HS2 we "will be in zone 5 of the London travel map."

There are many within the business community who are not so keen on HS2 and would prefer the money, some £2bn per annum, neatly switched from rail funding to road building. While we have some major concerns with HS2 we can't let the road builders get their hands on that money; nor can we see this proposal as another massive subsidy to Birmingham Airport.

A number of NGO's (including CPRE, RSPB and Greenpeace) have signed up to a HSR charter which seeks to ensure that the government not only participates and consults properly on HSR but also delivers a wider national transport policy which cuts carbon and sees a move from strategic (er ..BIG) to policies which reduce the need to travel, deliver a modal shift from air and road to rail as well as meeting our climate objectives. The coalition says there has been too little consultation on the HS2 scheme. Its charter sets out four principles "for doing High Speed Rail well". The alliance is also backed by CBT, Chiltern Society, Civic Voice, Environmental Law Foundation, FoE, The Wildlife Trusts, and Woodland Trust. 7.4.2011 <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-12993445>

Update from Southend

SAEN (Stop Airport Extension Now) is involved in 3 legal actions in relation to the Airport. In addition there is another Judicial Review that SAEN are not involved in.



The front wall of St Laurence Church is threatened with demolition

(1). **The Church Wall.** There is to be a Petition hearing between 3rd and 5th May at St Laurence and All Saints Church. SAEN may be directly involved in these proceedings - it remains to be seen - and have offered assistance to the Parties Opponent - a group of parishioners and church-goers who have objected to the proposed demolition of a section of the front wall of St Laurence Church. The demolition of the Church wall is no sideshow. Should the airport get to molest this Victorian wall and impinge on the sanctity of the graves and burial plots, this could be just the start of the airport's ruination of this beautiful church and its setting.

(2). **The Public Inquiry (PI).** A date for the Public Local Inquiry into the Stopping Up order on Eastwoodbury Lane has been set for 10th May, and it may last at least a week, possibly two. This is a major event for SAEN, which will be channelling a lot of effort into getting proper legal representation, as well as collating all the relevant information to mount a major challenge.

(3). **The Judicial Review (JR).** The Oral Hearing, to take place shortly, is expected to grant permission for the JR mounted by Laura Millard, a SAEN member. This is the JR which SAEN is supporting, both financially and with their legal group's full resources. The challenge is about the legality of the Council decision to grant planning permission for the extension of the runway. It was the first chance, outside of council-run consultations, to mount a challenge against the granting of the runway extension planning permission.

The Oral Hearing is the opportunity for Laura's barrister to explain to the judge the reasons that the JR should go forward to be heard at a full Judicial Review hearing.

As is often the case with buses, SAEN have been waiting for months to get to this stage in the JR process, and now two other challenges have also arrived at the same time! Of course, this means a mountain of work for the legal group, who have the full support of the SAEN committee.

There is a lot more news on SAEN's website <http://www.saen.org.uk/category/media>

Contrails warm the world more than aviation emissions

New Scientist reports an IPCC study showing that contrails have contributed - by trapping heat like high altitude cirrus cloud - to more global warming so far than all aircraft greenhouse gas emissions put together.

Using satellite observations of spreading contrails as a guide, the researchers built a model that simulated how they form, spread out and dissipate. This was then embedded in a global climate model, which found that contrail cirrus ended up covering 0.6% of Earth's surface – an area 9 times as great as that covered by line contrails. The figures were then used to produce a more accurate estimate of the total energy trapped by contrails. Calculations suggest a global figure of 31 mW/m² – higher than the 28 mW/m² trapped by all of the CO₂ released by aircraft engines since the start of aviation.



While contrails disappear in a day or so, the CO₂ stays in the atmosphere for hundreds of years.

<http://bit.ly/hsS7XJ> 29.3.2011 Radiative forcing explained by MIT at <http://bit.ly/gxm6fn>

Edinburgh Airport flight monitoring and data

Back in April 2009 a keen and dedicated AirportWatch member, Bruce Vickery, living in Edinburgh, bought the necessary "kit" to record aircraft transponder signals used by Air Traffic Control. With appropriate software it was then possible to keep detailed logs of the aircraft using Edinburgh airport, or passing overhead. Bruce has now been keeping these records for almost 2 years, and so is starting to be able to compare data between years. The motivation of recording details of aviation at Edinburgh was both to compare the actual flight movements and flight paths with information produced by the airport - and also to assess the true numbers.

For those interested in monitoring aircraft movements at airports across Europe, the European Aircraft Noise Services contains a great deal of data - including Bruce's from Edinburgh - recorded daily over several years. The website is at <http://www.eans.net> and shows flight tracks as well as noise measurements.

During March 2011 the number of Edinburgh flights that Bruce's system has logged reached over ½ million. There are regularly over 800 aircraft movements per day, often peaking at over 1,000.

There are 5 types of flight recorded. (a). En-Route flights or flights above 25,000 ft where the aircraft is going from say London to Los Angeles, (b). Aircraft taking off from Edinburgh Airport, (c). Aircraft landing at Edinburgh Airport, (d). "Other" flights – such as those to and from Glasgow, Aberdeen, Dundee, Newcastle, (e). Military flights.

The figures for March 2011 are disappointing as they show an increase of traffic of +8.5% over March last year – 21,431 movements compared with 19,752.

Comparing March 2011 with March 2010, the different types show the following pattern -

- (a) En-route flights 4,358 – up 7.2% (around 22% of the total)
- (b) and (c) 9,128 flights – up 4.4% (around 41% of the total)
- (d) "Other" flights 7,607 – up 15.9% (around 35% of the total)
- (e) Military flights 338 – down 11.5% (around 2% of the total)

Glasgow Airport has been retreating somewhat in recent times and the large increase of 15.9% in the "Other" flights may represent a revival of their traffic. Bruce Vickery blv@blueyonder.co.uk

Noise at night can make you sick

A new briefing from HACAN called *"Nightmare of Night Flights - Impact on Health"* was produced in March. There is increasing evidence that noise at night damages our health if sleep is disturbed. <http://bit.ly/ffvyLk> A few facts:

- A 10 decibel increase in night-time aircraft noise increases the risk of high blood pressure by 14% - a key finding of an Imperial College study. □

- Chronic lack of sleep produces hormones and chemicals in the body, which increase the risk of developing heart disease, strokes and other conditions such as high blood pressure, raised cholesterol, diabetes and obesity – from a major Warwick Medical School study. □

- "If you sleep less than six hours per night and have disturbed sleep you stand a 48% greater chance of developing or dying from heart disease and a 15% greater chance of developing or dying from a stroke." – Warwick Medical School Study

- The World Health Organisation recommends an 8 hour night so as to ensure most people get the sleep they need. (WHO Night Noise Guidelines for Europe 2009 <http://bit.ly/dKU77D>)



Belfast City Airport - Judicial Review of annual passenger limit to proceed

A legal challenge to the lifting of a cap on passenger numbers at Belfast City Airport is to proceed to a full hearing, a High Court judge has ruled. The full hearing will take place over 3 days in June. Rival Belfast International Airport was granted leave to seek a judicial review of the decision to remove the annual seats for sale restrictions. The local residents' group, Belfast City Airport Watch



Ltd, has issued similar proceedings. The decision on passenger numbers was announced by Edwin Poots in December, but lawyers for the international airport claim the minister's decision was unlawful and failed to take into consideration environmental information. Both opponents want an order quashing the decision which lifts the limit of 2 million seats a year. The cap on 48,000 annual flights at Belfast City is to remain in place. BIA's QC argued that a strong correlation exists between the size of aircraft and noise emitted, as to keep

within the flights cap, larger planes would be used and these would be noisier - with jets replacing turboprops. A further ground of challenge centred on claims that the seats restriction was removed without checking whether there was an effective noise control system and an improved noise management system in place at Belfast City Airport. 1.4.2011 <http://bit.ly/hCuG5F>

Inclusion of aviation in the EU ETS:

Commission publishes historical emissions data on which allocations will be based

The EC has published the historical aviation emissions on which future aviation emissions allowances will be based, from 2012 onwards. They have chosen emissions of 219,476,343 tonnes of CO₂, represents the average of the estimated annual emissions for the years 2004 - 2006. The 2004-6 emissions were even higher than they are today, giving no real incentive to reduce CO₂. The allowance for 2012 is 212,892,052 tonnes CO₂ (97% of the baseline) and the number of aviation allowances to be created each year from 2013 onwards amounts to 208,502,525 tonnes CO₂ (95%). The free allowances will be allocated by a benchmarking process which measures the activity of each operator in 2010 in terms of the number of passengers and freight that they carried and the total distance travelled. The benchmark should be published by 30 Sept 2011. 7.3.2011 <http://bit.ly/eHuscK> Transport & Environment (T&E), the sustainable transport campaign group, say that the cost to the aviation sector will be the equivalent of a one-cent per litre tax on aviation fuel, currently untaxed in the EU. So not a lot. Interesting letter from Bill Hemmings on the American airlines legal case against EU ETS on 7.4.2011 at <http://bit.ly/hwYQti>

Manchester Airport named as new enterprise zone - "Airport City"

Manchester Airport has been named as one of the government's 21 new "enterprise zones" announced in the Budget. It will have business rate discounts, simplified planning and access to superfast broadband. Called Airport City, the development will be run by the newly established Manchester Local Enterprise Partnership, and claims it will create "between 7,000 and 13,000 jobs" though in effect some of these will be taken from elsewhere. 25.3.2011. The concept of "Airport Cities" seems to have been catching on, with a number of aspiring candidates in Europe, such as Amsterdam (Schiphol), Brussels, Düsseldorf, Frankfurt and Vienna among them. The aim to be an international transport hub for both passengers and cargo, with an urban character, bringing together uses associated with the old city center and providing a growing number of services and facilities not directly related to actual transport functions. There is the even worse "Aerotropolis." "extending as far as 60 miles from the inner clusters of hotel, offices, distribution, and logistics facilities" with some in Asia. More info on Airport Cities at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Airport_City

Biggin Hill Airport Olympic proposals rejected by Bromley Council

For 11 years Bromley FoE and local residents have been fighting schemes to extend operations at the airport. Regular passenger flights have always been the airport's objective. When the airport submitted a request to its landlord, Bromley Council, for longer opening hours and permission to take fare paying passengers during the Olympics, several local groups joined together to form the campaign group Bromley Residents Against Airport Development (BRAAD). The airport's current lease does not allow any fare paying passengers. BRAAD saw the Olympics proposals as a dangerous precedent to achieve a permanent change to the lease, and be "the thin end of the wedge". This was confirmed when BRAAD used the Freedom of Information Act to unveil correspondence showing that the airport and the council had already discussed the possibility. People were very nervous that if the lease was altered to allow fare paying passengers in the longer term, it would leave the door wide open for easyJet and cheap airline operators, with the unwelcome prospect of the airport "ending up as a Luton".

The airport wanted to open from 6.30am to 11pm each day from July 13th to Sept 23rd in 2012. Its current opening hours are 6.30am and 10pm during the week and 9am to 8pm at weekends. There were also fears of an increase in noise pollution, which is a particular problem for the Princess Royal University Hospital, lying beneath the flight path. The airport had offered a money sweetener to the council for every Olympics passenger flight landing there, and used an advertising campaign and a professional PR company to tell their story.



A public consultation on the Olympic proposals ended on

18th February, with almost 95% of the 2,194 responses opposed to the plan.

On 22nd March, Bromley Councillors threw out the application. 37 councillors voted against the proposals, 8 in favour and 10 abstained, before the council's executive rejected the airport's application. But the story does not end there: the airport has already announced that it will make a further application to loosen the conditions of its lease. <http://bit.ly/hgoXmY>

Useful Info

- ❖ For up to date news see AirportWatch's news pages <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/news/index.php>
- ❖ News and analysis on the AEF website at <http://www.aef.org.uk>
- ❖ For websites of **airport-related groups** and other organisations <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/links.php>
- ❖ For a daily update on aviation and transport news from national and local media, go to www.transportinfo.org.uk
- ❖ How to really offset the climate change impact of your flight: www.ThinkBeforeYouFly.com
- ❖ Compare different components of personal carbon footprints <http://bit.ly/gg0m9O>
- ❖ Work out your carbon footprint <http://www.carbonfootprint.com/calculator.aspx>
- ❖ Weekly update by IATA on jet fuel price. <http://bit.ly/gCtAnD>
- ❖ Great video & very catchy "BAA: No Third Runway" song <http://www.youtube.com/user/SSECampaign>
- ❖ "If God had really intended men to fly, he'd make it easier to get to the airport." George Winters

www.airportwatch.org.uk

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