

Net benefit of third runway practically zero

I am writing to reply to the letter last week from Rob Gray promoting a Heathrow third runway.

Since the Airports Commission report in 2015, the Department for Transport has reduced the top line 60 year total business benefit to the UK of a third runway by 60 per cent, from £147bn to £61bn, an insignificant proportion of the UK's £2tn GDP per annum.

After substantial costs of pollution, congestion, noise and health ill-effects, the DfT's own report shows that the overall net benefit is practically zero and could easily go negative.

Heathrow's real motivation is to increase the £800million dividends sent last year to foreign Chinese, Qatari, Singaporean, Spanish and Canadian investors, whilst over the previous 10 years they paid only a total of only £24m in corporation tax to HMRC.

Heathrow's original plan was for a third runway budgeted to cost £18bn.

When IAG (parent company of British Airways) and many others criticised this huge cost, Heathrow quickly replied that instead of putting the M25 into a tunnel under the new runway, they would put the runway onto a bridge or ski-style ramp over the M25 and so reduce the cost to £14bn. Many people questioned whether this would be possible, but Heathrow maintained strongly that it would be.

Now strangely in their current masterplan there is no mention of a bridge or ski-style ramp and the cost has now increased to £32bn for a 30 year project!

This is a huge 'land grab' for a project bringing 30 years of construction hell for residents of West London and the Thames Valley.

Heathrow maintain that they can build and use a new runway with its additional 700 flights a day without increasing pollution or increasing the use of cars to and from the airport.

However their masterplan includes the building of two 25,000 space car parks.

Such statements like this, the ski-style ramp, false economics and jobs promises etc are totally disingenuous.

Heathrow's objective also is to be 'the transatlantic cargo hub for Europe' with projections of "Air-truck" transit cargo by weight increasing by two-and-a-half times by 2040.

This means two-and-a-half times the number of freight heavy trucks and vans on the roads to and from Heathrow (M25, M4, A4, A30 etc).

Plus of course Heathrow will expect further growth in their time horizons to 2050 or 60 years. Meanwhile their projections of export freight, i.e. aiding the UK economy, is only 1.7 times – a smaller amount and they admit difficulty achieving export growth

In addition, the Airports Commission budgeted that the cost of public infrastructure (roads and rail) to support a third runway would be £5bn.

Transport for London estimated that it would be more like £15bn, and yet when pressed Heathrow have stated only that they would contribute just £1bn.

The whole project needs to be re-assessed in light of their huge masterplan proposals, Government commitments to be 'carbon neutral' by 2050 and increasing research and public awareness about the serious health ill-effects and cost of noise and pollution.

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