



Heathrow Expansion

The Facts

What impact would a new runway at Heathrow have on the UK Economy?

The Airports Commission's brief was to maintain the UK's position as Europe's most important aviation hub. The Commission's conclusion and recommendation for a northwest runway (NWR) at Heathrow is not supported by the Commission's own evidence.

This Fact Sheet, updated to reflect the Commission's Final Report, shows that the Commission's evidence, if not the conclusions, demonstrates on economic grounds that Heathrow should not be expanded:

- Expansion reduces overall UK aviation growth and diverts growth from the rest of the UK at the expense of regional balance.
- Fifty percent of the new runway would be used by international-to-international transfers that add little economic benefit to the UK.
- Expansion has a negative impact on the two main sources of economic benefit: it reduces growth across the UK of inbound tourism and of long-haul business passengers that bring trade to the UK.
- It results in no material change to the number of destinations from the UK or domestic destinations and hence no improvement in connectivity.
- Air travel would be concentrated with limited competition at a single airport, Heathrow - the most expensive major airport in the world.
- The economic return on investment using Government criteria is bordering on poor.
- Expansion may not be deliverable without substantial State aid, ultimately to support international-to-international transfers and leisure passengers from the UK which provide little benefit to the UK economy.

These highlights are expanded in a [two page summary Fact Sheet covering the impact on the UK economy](#).

[For more detailed info see rhcfacts.org/economy](#)

Is a new runway at Heathrow deliverable?

With an additional runway, Heathrow is estimated to require £28 billion in debt and £6 billion in equity financing through to 2050 (Airports Commission estimate). Up to £20 billion (Transport for London estimate) will be needed for improved surface access.

So the project may require up to £54 billion in total. This may be difficult to obtain through the markets. For comparison, the total of all investment grade bonds issued by UK corporates in 2013 was around £46 billion.

State aid to fund this may require further Government cuts elsewhere in the economy, and may be contrary to competition legislation. It would also be difficult to justify given the spare capacity at other airports and the prevalence at Heathrow of transfers and leisure passengers from the UK, which provide little benefit to the UK economy.

[For more info see rhcfacts.org/deliverable](#)

What impact would a new runway at Heathrow have on UK Carbon commitments?

In 2009 the government adopted a target to reduce UK aviation emissions back to the 2005 levels of 37.5 million metric tonnes of CO₂ by 2050, which is 25% of the UK's total CO₂.

Carbon capping may provide some scope to meet this but would result in re-distributing growth to Heathrow at the expense of the rest of the UK economy. Carbon trading would challenge the rest of the UK economy for limited carbon credits and only be practical if adopted worldwide.

There is therefore a risk that Heathrow airport's growth will be constrained even more than currently predicted in the Airports Commission's modelling by the impact of carbon emissions, potentially rendering a third runway uneconomic.

[For more info see rhcfacts.org/carbon](#)

What impact would a new runway at Heathrow have on Air Quality?

The UK as a whole is already breaching legal air quality standards. Reducing these levels is challenging, and may be costly. Expanding Heathrow would increase local air pollution as the number of flights and passenger land based journeys to and from the airport rise. This could affect over 100,000 additional people.

Given that existing airport operations already result in a breach of legal air pollution limits, it seems unlikely that a third runway could be built while remaining within the law.

For more info see rhcfacts.org/air

What impact would a new runway at Heathrow have on Noise?

Heathrow's noise impact dwarfs that of all European airports. It is estimated that 725,500 people are exposed to noise from Heathrow. The next noisiest airport, Frankfurt, exposes only around one third of this number. Heathrow night flights, from 4:30am onwards, currently impact at least 420,000 people.

Although World Health Organisation (WHO) guideline noise levels have been in place for over 15 years, they are not yet applied to Heathrow. If they were applied, the number of people exposed to Heathrow aircraft noise in 2050 could rise from 1 million to 1.5 million with a new Heathrow runway.

Heathrow expansion is likely to expose several hundred thousand Londoners to aircraft noise for the first time and the uncertainty of flight paths may blight London for several years.

For more info see rhcfacts.org/noise

What impact would a new runway at Heathrow have on the Local Economy?

The local economy will grow whether or not Heathrow expands. Expected Heathrow passenger growth even without an additional runway is as much as 30%. So any decrease in the number of jobs would be due to increased productivity and would happen over many years.

With an additional runway, the Airports Commission recognises that providing the number of houses and other infrastructure required for additional employees could be challenging. It has not yet been shown how sufficient housing could be provided to support Heathrow expansion.

For more info see rhcfacts.org/local

What impact would a new runway at Heathrow have on Surface Transport?

Demand for road and rail transport in London is set to rise substantially. 52 million passengers currently end or start their journeys at Heathrow. This, without a third runway, is set to rise to 90 million by 2050. With a third runway it will be 112 million – a 100% increase on today.

Transport for London (TfL) has calculated that an investment of up to £20 billion will be needed to support this increase. The consequences of inadequate investment would be poor travelling experience on public transport and increased resort to road transport, generating more air pollution and traffic congestion.

For more info see rhcfacts.org/surface

How would safety be assured with Heathrow expansion?

New flight paths need to be integrated with the general re-design of London's airspace currently underway. Proposals for steeper flight paths on landing and for curved approaches to reduce noise raise new safety concerns. The multi-use of a single extended runway for take-off and landing has not been tested at any airport in the world, let alone one as busy as Heathrow.

For more info see rhcfacts.org/safety

About us

The Richmond Heathrow Campaign represents three amenity groups in the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames: **The Richmond Society**, **The Friends of Richmond Green**, and **the Kew Society**, which together have over 2000 members. We have been active in responding to the Airports Commission's consultations, having submitted fifteen papers totalling 185 pages of evidence. Based on this evidence, we believe there is no case for an additional runway. You can contact us via email: contact@richmondheathrowcampaign.org.

For more info see rhcfacts.org/about