



Top 10 facts about airport expansion

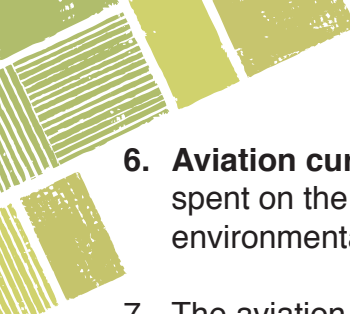
Hopefully, everyone you talk to will be only too keen to become an Airplotter and help you bring your insanely inventive ideas to life, but there will always be some people who will need a little more persuasion.

Facts alone don't usually change people's minds, but they can back you up when you're explaining the issues to them. So here are our top 10 reasons why a third runway at Heathrow (and bigger airports in general) is the wrong way to go if we're serious about beating climate change.

- 1. Heathrow is already Europe's largest airport¹.** Adding a third runway will mean a 50 per cent² increase in flight numbers and operating at full capacity the airport will become the UK's single largest source of CO₂.
- 2. We'll miss our climate change targets.** The government is now committed to delivering 80 per cent emissions cuts by 2050, but if the aviation industry expands as predicted, it could well gobble up nearly all of the UK's remaining carbon budget by then.
- 3. It's unnecessary.** Almost a quarter of flights from Heathrow are to destinations less than 500 km away and already well served by train³. Paris is the number one destination from Heathrow, and Manchester is at number four. Substituting these flights for train services would reduce the need for extra capacity at Heathrow.
- 4. It won't be the economic panacea its supporters claim.** A poll of 500 businesses across the UK found only 4 per cent felt an expanded Heathrow would be a benefit⁴.
- 5. Worse than that, the current growth in air travel has damaging effects on the UK economy:** 67 per cent⁵ of passengers travelling on flights from UK airports are, in fact, UK residents. This means fewer people holidaying at home which is contributing to a £15 billion annual tourist deficit in the UK⁶.

1 World Development Movement, UK Airports and their CO₂ emissions, press release, October 11th 2007
2 Gillion Merron MP, Answer to Parliamentary Question, May 10th 2007
3 HACAN, Short-Haul Flights: Clogging up Heathrow's Runways, 2006
4 Continental research poll, Nov 08 www.woodnewtonassociates.co.uk/heathrow.pdf
5 Cairns et al, Predict and Decide: Aviation, Climate Change and UK Policy, Oxford Environmental Change Institute, 2006 p5
6 Press Association (January 3, 2006) UK tourism deficit hits £17bn, business.guardian.co.uk



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6. **Aviation currently receives £9bn per year in tax subsidies**⁷. This money could be spent on the rail network to help deliver a cheap, reliable high-speed service, and an environmentally sound transport solution.
 7. The aviation industry claims it only contributes 2 per cent of the UK's greenhouse gas emissions. But not only is this figure based on 1992 data, it ignores the fact that most of airplane emissions are at high altitude, meaning that their **actual impact is far greater** thanks to a process called radiative forcing⁸ – the government itself has admitted that aviation is responsible for 13% of the UK's climate impact, a figure which is growing fast.
 8. **We don't have a 'right to fly'**. Around 729 million people in the world's poorest countries never fly (and they'll be the worst affected by climate change).
 9. Despite popular opinion, **cheap flights have not opened up the skies to people with lower incomes**. Figures compiled by Oxford University suggest that bargain basement tickets have just allowed people with more money to fly more often⁹.
 10. **Airport expansion is unpopular**: 70 per cent of people in the UK are opposed to building bigger airports¹⁰.

If you want to dive into the details, you can get the full briefing *The Case Against Airport Expansion* from <http://www.greenpeace.org.uk/files/pdfs/climate/case-against-heathrow-expansion.pdf>.

7 Sewill. (2003) *The hidden cost of flying*. AEF. The figure of £9 billion was confirmed by BAA consultants Voltterra, in November 2003. Since then, inflation and the increased number of passengers raised the figure to £10 billion but it was brought back to £9 billion by the rise in air passenger duty on the 1 February 2007.

8 For more on this, see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Radiative_forcing

9 <http://www.eci.ox.ac.uk/research/energy/downloads/predictanddecide.pdf>

10 IPSOS MORI October 2007