

Runway Consultation Team
Department for Transport
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Consultation Response: Draft Airports National Policy Statement: new runway capacity and infrastructure at airports in the South East of England

Responses to consultation questions

Question 1: The Government believes there is the need for additional airport capacity in the South East of England by 2030. Please tell us your views.

1. Balfour Beatty believes that international connectivity will be more important than ever if the UK is to remain a competitive, global trading nation post-Brexit. However, official forecasts show that unless work begins on a new runway in the near future, the major airports in the southeast of England will be full by 2030¹. Heathrow has been operating at 98% capacity for some time and the UK is already falling behind other EU countries in terms of runway capacity: Amsterdam has five main runways, Paris Charles De Gaulle has four (and three more at Paris Orly), while Frankfurt and Brussels both have three.
2. Our concern is that the lack of capacity at Britain's major airports will impact UK companies' ability to fulfill their growth potential, with a subsequent knock-on impact on the UK economy. If work does not begin soon to increase capacity in the southeast, London and the UK will have been overtaken by other major European cities as transport hubs, with the consequence that business and investment will move elsewhere and jobs will be lost. We therefore back plans to expand UK runway capacity.
3. We believe that the UK deserves a world-class hub airport which will open up trade routes to parts of the world that are seeing rapid growth, for example, provincial China. Greater runway capacity would also send a signal that the UK remains open for business.
4. Of course, the economic benefits are not the only points to consider: a balance must be struck between environmental impacts of an increase in airport capacity, such as air quality, carbon emissions and other pollution issues, increased noise, and the economic benefits that aviation expansion brings. The Airport Commission considered all of these issues in detail and concluded that a third runway at Heathrow was the best option for the future of aviation in the UK², a conclusion we endorse.

¹ UK Aviation Forecasts, DfT, January 2013

² The final report of the Airport Commission, DfT, July 2015

Question 2: Please give us your views on how best to address the issue of airport capacity in the South East of England by 2030. This could be through the Heathrow Northwest Runway scheme (the Government's preferred scheme), the Gatwick Second Runway scheme, the Heathrow Extended Northern Runway scheme, or any other scheme.

5. We endorse the conclusion of the Airport Commission that the Heathrow Northwest Runway scheme is the best option.
6. However, Balfour Beatty believes that the vote to leave the EU – which took place after the Airport Commission reported - must also be taken into account. In our view, maintaining the UK as a global power outside the EU and as a serious trading nation requires us to be ambitious and forward-looking. We do not believe that one additional runway would provide sufficient capacity to meet increasing demand over the long term.
7. The Airports Commission concluded that a second additional runway would be needed by 2050. However, with demand for air travel forecast to continue to increase within the range of 1% - 3% a year up to 2050 and a need for the UK to open up as many new trading routes as possible, we believe that a new runway will be needed sooner. It is likely that, by the time the new runway opens, demand will have risen to such a level that it is immediately at capacity. We therefore call for runways to be built at both Heathrow and Gatwick.

Question 4: The Government has set out its approach to surface access for a Heathrow Northwest Runway scheme. Please tell us your views.

8. Significant surface transport improvements will be key to ensuring the success of Heathrow as an airport which can compete effectively with other countries around the world, and to ensure that all parts of the UK can access it.
9. We welcome the proposed surface access plan, which include schemes already under way and which benefit the airport, such as Crossrail, which are already funded; schemes which are needed solely for the airport to expand, which Heathrow Airport will fund; and schemes which benefit the airport and the wider public, where funding will be considered separately.
10. There are some schemes which we feel could be of particular benefit, for example, the dual tracking of the Anglian Mainline to Stansted, the southern rail link to Gatwick, and clarification of the connection between High Speed 2 and Crossrail at Old Oak Common, which would require a Crossrail station at Old Oak Common.

Further points

11. In our view, the piecemeal approach to aviation policy-making over the past several decades must end. The Government should now develop a national aviation strategy, which considers the country's future aviation needs holistically and addresses the contribution all the UK's airports can make to improving the UK's global connectivity,

driving growth across the country, and enabling international trade and investment. This was a conclusion of the Interim Davies Commission report, a conclusion Balfour Beatty welcomes.

12. A national aviation strategy should include a national strategy for improving road and rail links to UK airports both in the short-term, future-proofed to ensure that we have the infrastructure we need for the long-term; and an assessment of other ways smaller airports might be supported and given the opportunity to thrive.
13. Balfour Beatty believes that a plan should also be developed to address the growing demand for air services during the 10-15 years it will take to deliver any new runway, to ensure that the UK remains as competitive and as attractive to investment and tourism as possible. This plan should include measures to better use existing runway capacity at other airports – particularly the five other London airports - and to improve surface access to those airports. Options could include extending Crossrail to Stansted, for example.

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