

## Press release

01 July 2015

# Thames Hub Airport - Reaction to the Airports Commission final report

The only long term answer to the question posed to the Airports Commission, "how do we maintain our global aviation hub status" is a brand new 4-runway 24 hour airport to the east of the capital, the Thames Hub. It is a bold, flexible, future-proof solution which neither Heathrow, nor Gatwick will ever achieve.

The expansion of London towards the east has now been reinforced with the approval of Ebbsfleet Garden City and moves toward a Lower Thames crossing – further validating the relocation of the airport to the Isle of Grain. The argument against the relocation of the bird habitat has been diminished with the success of the Wallasea wetland project further down the Estuary.

The Thames Hub airport will deliver the global connectivity that Londoners demand whilst bringing respite to all tormented by aircraft noise. Connecting the UK to new global destinations throughout the day and night, it can be built for a cost of £26 billion including upgraded road and rail services in just 7 years – the same time it will take for a new runway at Heathrow to be squeezed into a London borough. An integrated rail hub will connect services to Europe, London in just 30 minutes and the rest of the UK.

With our growing confidence in large scale infrastructure projects in the UK, now is the time to recast the debate within the larger interests of the country. Global trade

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demands newer, higher capacity transport infrastructure, and London cannot afford to be left behind, the credibility of a new Thames Hub airport has never been stronger.

"We need to recapture the foresight and political courage of our 19th century forebears if we are to establish a modern transport and energy infrastructure in Britain. The current 'patch and mend' attitude to increase airport capacity is not the answer to the massive challenges we face today. The Thames Hub is part of a larger ideal to create an infrastructural 'spine', which binds together the rail, communication, and energy networks currently being built across the country. It is a bold concept that continues to gain validity as the city expands eastward and transport links strengthen. We believe the Thames Hub is the only comprehensive, durable solution that can ensure aviation hub status and long-term economic prosperity in Britain for this century and beyond. As someone who is close to the world of aviation, I believe there are also serious security risks of overflying the heart of a city at the scale of London."

**Norman Foster, Founder and Executive Chairman**

Notes to Editors:

The case for the Thames Hub Airport:

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- The Thames Hub airport will be linked to the rest of the UK and Europe by High Speed rail with a 30 minute ride to central London
- It will be closer to shipping ports for the efficient distribution of goods.
- An integrated rail hub at the terminal will serve 300,000 people a day and cater for the 150 million passengers per annum capacity new 24-hour airport that will connect the UK to all the emerging economic capitals of the world.
- Air and noise pollution is a quality of life issue and with the capital's population due to expand by 20% over the next two decades this has become even more pressing. We need to move our hub airport out of our suburbs and unlock the space – equivalent to a new borough – for more homes and jobs within the city.
- The capital is moving east, and the Thames Hub airport is the obvious answer to the question "how do we maintain our global aviation hub status".
- Independent research has shown that in the next decade we need to connect to 55 new destinations across the world to maintain our access to a consistent share of global trade.

Proposals for Heathrow and Gatwick are unworkable:

- Neither Heathrow, nor Gatwick will ever be a satisfactory long term solution. Expansion at Heathrow could never meet London's future emission targets – hemmed in by motorways and dense communities – and would bring unacceptable levels of noise and air pollution to large swaths of London.
- The impossibility of a fourth runway and the need to conform to the new EU guidelines for emissions will seriously inhibit Heathrow's ability to add flights to cope with future demand.
- Even with quieter, low-emission aircraft in operation, noise and air quality at

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Heathrow remains at intolerable levels and set to deteriorate further.

- Heathrow has consistently under-estimated traffic figures and costs, as well as the projected demand for flights in the future.
- Gatwick on the other hand, simply does not answer the original question. Airlines acknowledge that there can only be one national hub, and Gatwick is simply not a viable alternative to Heathrow.
- While we waste valuable time discussing inadequate stop-gap solutions, our global hub status continues to be eroded by rivals such as Dubai, Doha, and Istanbul, all with plans for next-generation airports.
- Many cities around the world such as Hong Kong and Paris have moved entire airports when it becomes clear that the quality of city life has become severely compromised.
- The ban to be imposed on night flights at Heathrow (2330 – 0600) will hamper direct connectivity with destinations from the Far-east.

A number of developments since the project was launched in 2011, means it is more viable than ever before:

- The Ebbsfleet Garden City, close to the Isle of Grain where we propose to build the airport, has been approved for development, creating a demand for jobs and improved road and rail access, including Crossrail.
- The Lower Thames Crossing is expected to be built by 2025 increasing access to the North Kent area – all this infrastructural investment in the area serves to support the idea of the Thames Hub.
- Wallasea, the wetland island in Essex created by tunnelling spoil from Crossrail, and turned into a nature reserve has been hailed a success.

- London Gateway Port has successfully transferred all wildlife from the Thames-side site – settling the environmental argument often levelled at the Thames Hub.
- Park Royal, an industrial site to the north of Heathrow is now ready for development under a Mayoral Development Corporation order, a new town supporting people, new jobs and new clean industry, which can help transition Heathrow employees to new work – answering critics who feel the removal of the airport from the Heathrow site will spell doom for the people who currently work there.
- The new Swansea Barrage, Crossrail, the Super Sewer and HS2 are all projects that prove that we have the vision to think big, and that infrastructure is the backbone of a prosperous country.

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