

Aviation White Paper - Summary

Introduction

The White Paper and the Government's role

The White Paper sets out a strategic framework for the development of airport capacity in the United Kingdom over the next 30 years. In preparing it, the Government consulted extensively. We received around 500,000 responses to our seven regional consultation documents. We have taken a strategic view of where airport development may be needed, balancing the benefits of new airports against the impacts they can have.

But the Government doesn't build airports or add runways. That's down to those who own and operate Britain's airports. And the White Paper doesn't formally authorise (or preclude) any development. Any proposals will still have to go through the planning process in the normal way. The rest of this leaflet describes briefly the issues behind the White Paper and the conclusions we have reached, plus what happens next.

A balanced approach

UK air travel has increased five-fold over the last 30 years. Half the population now flies at least once a year. And freight traffic at UK airports has doubled since 1990.

Britain's economy increasingly depends on air travel, for exports, tourism and inward investment. The aviation industry directly supports around 200,000 jobs and indirectly up to three times that. Airports are important to the economies of the English regions and of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Aviation links remote communities and helps people stay in touch with friends and family around the world. It brings businesses together and has given many affordable access to foreign travel. All the evidence suggests that air travel will continue growing over the next 30 years. But if we want to continue enjoying its benefits, we have to increase capacity.

But we can't add to airport capacity regardless of the environmental cost. So, we need a balanced approach which recognises the importance of air travel, but which also tackles environmental issues.

Environmental concerns

We must do more to reduce the environmental effects of aviation. The UK will take action both internationally and here at home, as well as meeting air quality and other environmental standards and minimising environmental damage.

Emissions trading is the best way of tackling the aviation industry's greenhouse gas emissions. Those responsible for emissions must keep within set limits by reducing their own emissions and/or buying additional 'allowances' from others who reduce their emissions. We will press hard for this approach both in the EU and globally.

Noise

Our aim is to limit and, where possible, reduce the number of people significantly affected by aircraft noise. Today's aircraft are 75% quieter than jets in the 1960s. Practical things that will be done include:

- limits on the size of the area around major airports affected by significant noise levels;
- promoting research into low-noise aircraft;

- strengthening existing rules, applying international regulations and changing the law where we need to;
- making more use of noise-related landing charges, and using the money to reduce the effects of noise; and
- stronger measures by airport operators to insulate properties against noise.

Blight

Planning law already provides for people whose property is affected by airport development proposals, but only once planning permission has been granted or local development plans revised.

However, the prospect of airport development can blight property values for some time before this stage.

We are arranging for airport operators to bring in schemes to deal with the problem of such generalised blight. These will apply in all cases involving a new runway or safeguarding of land for airport development proposed in the White Paper.

Safety and security

The UK aviation industry has an excellent safety record, and for years we have operated a stringent aviation security regime. It reflects the threat at any given time and provides a robust defence.

The Government, the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) and the industry agree that we must maintain our high standards, identify potential threats and make improvements.

Support for regional air services and airport development

A key issue for Scotland, Northern Ireland, the North of England and the far South West of England is ensuring the continuation of air services to the major London airports.

We will protect London slots for essential regional services by imposing 'public service obligations' (PSOs) where necessary. We encourage the setting up of Route Development Funds, to promote new air services at airports outside the South East.

We support the establishment of Centres of Excellence for aircraft maintenance.

Summary of the Government's proposals

Scotland

We reached our conclusions in conjunction with the Scottish Executive.

We do not support the development of a new central Scotland airport.

We support safeguarding land for a new close parallel runway and associated terminal and stand capacity at **Edinburgh Airport**.

We support the provision of additional terminal and airside facilities at **Glasgow International Airport** and the safeguarding of land to allow full use of the existing runway. We recommend that the local authority consider reserving further land for longer-term development.

We consider that the terminal and support facilities at **Glasgow Prestwick** should be developed to meet likely increases in traffic.

We believe there is a good case for developing the terminal at **Aberdeen**. We invite the operators to assess growth so that land for a runway extension can be safeguarded if necessary.

We believe **Dundee Airport** will attract more services and will be able to expand its terminal to cater for these.

The runway at **Inverness Airport** may need to be extended and terminal capacity expanded. Other Highlands and Islands airports may need enhancing.

Wales

We reached our conclusions in conjunction with the Welsh Assembly.

We agree that the terminal at **Cardiff International Airport** should be developed and its exact form decided locally.

We have examined two proposals for a new airport in or around the Severn Estuary east of Newport, but we believe that such an airport would struggle to attract traffic. We do not think it is worth taking forward.

The Welsh Assembly Government is working to establish a network of air services within Wales.

Northern Ireland

Our conclusions take account of the Northern Ireland authorities' views.

We support the development of **Belfast International Airport** within its existing boundaries to serve forecast demand.

Belfast City Airport faces significant constraints. We invite the Northern Ireland authorities to review the form of the planning 'cap', if and when the operator asks them to.

The Northern Ireland authorities will want to consider the future requirements of **City of Derry Airport** carefully, together with the Government of the Republic of Ireland.

The North of England (North East, North West, Yorkshire and the Humber)

We support the principle of developing terminal capacity at **Manchester Airport** provided the noise impacts of the airport are rigorously controlled. Significant further work will also be needed to improve surface access.

We agree that **Liverpool John Lennon Airport** should expand as projected and for the runway to be lengthened in the future, provided it doesn't intrude on nearby protected sites.

We are content that any proposals for expansion at **Blackpool Airport** should be decided locally. We encourage plans to develop **Carlisle Airport**.

We support plans for expansion of terminal facilities and a 360m runway extension at **Newcastle Airport**.

We support extensions to both terminal facilities and runway length at **Teesside International Airport**.

We support the development of additional terminal capacity and a 300m runway extension at **Leeds Bradford International Airport**, provided every effort is made to minimise aircraft noise.

We agree that **Humberside International Airport** should attract all the traffic it can, although it will soon compete with a new airport at Doncaster Finningley.

The Midlands

The Government does not support the option of a new airport between Coventry and Rugby.

We support a second runway at **Birmingham International Airport**. We prefer the wide-spaced option, but with the new runway limited to 2,000m and with other improvements as proposed in the airport operator's 'Birmingham Alternative'. Development should be subject to stringent limits on noise, which should be kept under review.

We believe that the projected expansion of passenger and freight traffic at **East Midlands Airport** should be permitted, but only with strict controls on night noise. We do not support a second runway or safeguarding of land for one, but will keep this under review.

The development of **Coventry Airport**, **Wolverhampton Business Airport** and any civil use of **RAF Cosford** are matters for local determination.

The South West

We support the development of **Bristol International Airport**, including a runway extension and new terminal when needed. But we do not support the option of a new airport north of Bristol.

We agree that **Bournemouth International Airport** should add to the capacity of its terminal.

We expect **Exeter International Airport** to expand and see no need to impose any strategic caps. If any are needed, they can be decided locally.

We did not consult on the proposal for a new airport east of **Plymouth** so we shall leave this decision to local and regional authorities.

We welcome plans to develop **Newquay Airport**.

We believe that **Gloucester** and **Filton** airports should continue serving business aviation needs.

We believe that links with the Isles of Scilly should be protected.

The South East

Our first priority is to make best use of the existing runways at the major South East airports. Beyond that, we support the building of two new runways in the South East in the period to 2030.

We support development as soon as possible (around 2011/2012) of a second runway at **Stansted** as the first new runway for the South East. Noise should be strictly controlled, and loss of heritage and countryside kept to a minimum. We do not support options for two or three new runways at Stansted.

We support development of **Heathrow** provided that strict environmental limits can be met, including a new runway as soon as possible after Stansted (in the 2015-2020 period). We look to the operator to safeguard land for it. We propose an urgent programme of work to tackle the air quality problems at Heathrow and consider how best to use the existing airport.

We believe that land should be safeguarded for a new wide-spaced runway at **Gatwick** both on its own merits and in case the conditions attached to a new Heathrow runway cannot be met. But we will not act to overturn the planning agreement preventing a second runway before 2019. We do not support the option for two new runways at Gatwick.

We support the growth of **Luton** up to the maximum use of one runway, but we do not support a second runway.

We do not believe that there is a strong case for creating a second hub in the South East, whether or not a third runway is built at Heathrow.

We do not support a new airport at **Cliffe**, because of its ecological damage, safety risk and doubtful viability.

We do not support development of **Alconbury** for passengers or freight but we recognise the potential to move aircraft maintenance there from Cambridge.

We believe that there is considerable scope for **London City, Norwich, Southampton, Southend, and Manston** to help meet demand for air services. Nor should the potential of **Lydd, Shoreham, and Biggin Hill** be overlooked.

We do not support any of the other proposals for alternative locations put forward during the consultation.

What next?

Over the next 12 months, we:

- expect the airport operator at Stansted to develop the detailed design for a new runway;
- will institute immediately a programme of action to examine how the environmental problems at Heathrow might be solved;
- expect all major airports to produce or update master plans, to take account of the White Paper;
- will consult on a new night noise regime at Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted;
- will work to bring aviation within the European emissions trading scheme, and will make this a priority during our Presidency of the EU in 2005;
- will monitor airports' progress in bringing forward schemes to reduce the effects of property price blight and aircraft noise;
- will consult in connection with arrangements for supporting regional air services through public service obligations (PSOs); and
- will explain how we will evaluate the effectiveness of our aviation policy.

When Parliamentary time permits, we will legislate to:

- strengthen and clarify powers to control noise at airports;
- permit an emissions-related element in airport charges; and
- impose a new levy to ensure solvency of the Air Travel Trust Fund.

By the end of 2006, we will report on progress generally.

This summary provides a brief overview of the Air Transport White Paper.

If you would like further copies of the free summary please call 0870 122 6236 and quote ref: 03RALMS01843