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| |  | | --- | | **[Mayor of London: Airports Commission’s confusing consultation is failing London](http://mmail.dods.co.uk/wf/click?upn=PUcZOS6-2FNT4PrY23eS-2B6NzBfsdvqTeU5dcR-2F818NKWCllkvF6eYk1J3p-2Bio04cP5o-2BcToKZnk1sT3v1l9vJNyVGn2qpGWtxN4NaohmYce9-2FwyN1HrUYMx4UqhB3aDC5q_3YiO3g4OZ88zjwmUl85ryrr41X3s14Hz15ODy2H11NSGHcRvcGqkYfP2k9RnaODO9yvuOEkAUgKD1tpGO2U0-2FIjbGMAdkbpCVxkGWY8aBNNa6tQcnrOxZ29T8FK7lnsjhJwKwV2awqSPFjlzH8yHbzAcqdKpNCTYMz0KiAkhf-2BD2tDuQtnHKgx78wAQcaZ8ISCVBCvHz3An50-2FfN2HCKRFwvYrjzuTY0zpTUcXZVhw4-3D)** | |  | | *UK Stakeholder - Press Releases* | |  | |  | | --- | | UK Stakeholder | | http://email.dods.co.uk/political/2014/uk-monitoring/general-template/images/1x1-spacer.gif | | 04/02/2015 | |
| http://email.dods.co.uk/political/2014/uk-monitoring/general-template/images/1x1-spacer.gif | | |
| |  | | --- | | **The Mayor of London has told the Government Commission tasked with recommending the shape of future airport provision in the south-east that the options they have shortlisted at Heathrow will cost the taxpayer more than they are admitting, contain significant safety risks that have not been approved by the aviation authorities, and would inevitably expose several hundred thousand more Londoners to excess levels of aircraft noise.**  In his response to a consultation being run by the Airports Commission the Mayor also highlighted the poor economic benefits from any expansion at Gatwick airport and the major investment in new surface transport links that would be needed to expand there.  The Mayor’s team have submitted seventeen new documents to the Commission which provide a thorough analysis of the three shortlisted options. That includes a conclusion that the impact on public finances has not been fully assessed. The Commission have been heavily reliant on information from the promoters that requires further work before it can be deemed in any way credible.  The Mayor’s team also believe that by keeping options at Heathrow and Gatwick on the table the Airports Commission have revealed that they are, amazingly, still unsure on the fundamental question of whether the United Kingdom requires a new large airport or not; as two of the options aim to provide a hub while the other would mean abandoning the UK’s hub capacity over time to our European rivals.  The Mayor’s support in principle for a large hub airport is well known. The Commission have attempted to show how the number of people who will be exposed to potentially harmful levels of aircraft noise could be lower than today. However this relies on a number of factors which are uncertain, many of which are unrelated to a new runway. TfL’s noise modelling shows that the only result of a new runway at Heathrow will be a substantial increase in the number of people exposed to noise, and that this is the inescapable result of flying more aircraft over a city that only this week reached a new record level of population. Heathrow’s announcement earlier this week that they will extend noise insulation to an additional 120,000 homes is proof of the problem.  **The Mayor of London, Boris Johnson, said:**  “Sadly the options shortlisted by the Airports Commission reveal that they are thoroughly confused about what the country needs and unfortunately it seems that whatever their final recommendation is, it will be the wrong one. There is still time for them to see the light, but if they fail to see that their approach fails on several fronts then it will be for the Government elected in May to give very serious thought to plans that would provide us with a hub  airport with the capacity to get even larger.”  In the Mayor of London’s response to the Airports Commission consultation his team outline their conclusions for each of the shortlisted schemes. Their key conclusions include that:   * ‘Heathrow northwest runway’ performs better than Gatwick in terms of economic benefit. But with London reaching ever increasing record levels of population  it is also likely to significantly increase pressure for new housing development in west London, when the London Plan envisages a greater concentration on new housing to the east where there is much more land available to accommodate it. There is no indication in the consultation material of how that might be addressed. It would also add huge pressures to key local rail and road links and have a “significantly adverse” effect on air quality. * The issues facing ‘Heathrow extended northern runway’ are comparable if not worse in scale than the northwest runway option in terms of noise, air quality and pressure on local transport networks. The Civil Aviation Authority’s preliminary safety assessment also suggests that approval of a plan that places two runways end to end cannot be guaranteed – and even if approved there is the possibility that there would need to be such significant constraints on the operation of those runways that it would limit their effectiveness. * ‘Gatwick second runway’ would expose fewer people to noise pollution but offers the least economic benefit as it has far less potential for new jobs and economic growth than the options at Heathrow. Again there is no indication of how housing pressures would be addressed and a significant investment in new transport infrastructure would be required.     In his response to the Airports Commission the Mayor also highlighted significant concerns with their consultation process. Those concerns included that:   * With over 5,000 pages of highly technical material the consultation is not easily accessible, clear or easy to navigate.      * Efforts to grasp the consultation material are further complicated by the Commission’s publication of new and even amended documents after the launch of the consultation. New technical documents were being added as late as two weeks before the end of the consultation.      * Very little effort has been made to reach out to the public with the consultation. Only two discussion sessions were held, one at Heathrow and one at Gatwick, which as ticket-only events effectively limited access for the public. Two short two hour drop in sessions received limited publicity and one gave people barely two days of notice.      * The Airports Commission have not sought to engage with people living beyond the immediate area surrounding the airports.     **The Mayor of London’s Chief Advisor on aviation, Daniel Moylan, said:**  “The decision on how to provide new aviation capacity affects millions of Londoners yet the Airports Commission level of engagement with them has been wholly inadequate if not downright careless of the effect it will have on them. The many weaknesses in their consultation process undermine the credibility of the whole consultation and could have repercussions for any recommendation they eventually make.” | | | |
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