

British Airways response to Airports Commission emerging thinking

British Airways welcomes the opportunity to comment on the emerging thinking set out by Sir Howard Davies on 7th October last. It is clear that the Commission is taking a very rounded and comprehensive approach to the problem.

We concur with most of the points made by Sir Howard, e.g:

- New capacity will be required in the south east
- An overall emissions framework is required
- Employment and surface access impacts are important
- Markets rather than the government should determine which airports people will use

The commission is clearly thinking hard about the “vexed question” of the roles of hub versus point to point models, and whether this dynamic is changing. The low-cost airlines continue to operate their shorthaul point-point model successfully, but we do not see how thin longhaul routes to emerging markets can operate without the feed support available at a hub. The services to UK regional points now operated by the Gulf carriers demonstrate this from the other end.

Our final point in this short feedback relates to the question of affordability. As an airline we cannot afford to pay inflated charges to enable airport investors to achieve excessive returns. Ultimately this will only serve to dissuade passengers from using the new capacity.

We hope these brief comments are useful, and look forward to working with the Commission on the next stage.

With best regards,

Alun Adler,
Airport Policy Manager.

Waterside 31.10.13