

Dear Sir or Madam,

A more sustainable aviation policy would be not to expand capacity at Heathrow or Gatwick and to make better use of existing airports.

For the majority of the UK population getting to Heathrow or Gatwick by surface transport is very difficult. The motorway network around these airports is already severely congested and an additional runway will simply make matters worse. In the case of Heathrow there is no rail link, other than from central London (which is also very expensive). It doesn't make sense that there is no direct link from Cardiff, Bristol or Reading, for example. Improved rail connections would also reduce the need for domestic flights, allowing the spare capacity to be used for international flights. If passengers have a connecting flight then facilities could be provided to check-in luggage and major train stations.

Stansted, Birmingham and Manchester all have spare capacity and offer better road/rail connections to large centres of population than the London airports. If airlines are reluctant to operate from these airports then it would not be that difficult to offer incentives through reduced APD rates/landing fees for regional airports. Looking at the success of Amsterdam in attracting connecting passengers from smaller UK airports it is clear that people prefer to fly from their local airport rather than the hassle of getting to a congested London airport.

The South East of England is congested (both in terms of airspace and surface transport) and dominates the UK economy. Making more use of regional airports would not only reduce pressure on the infrastructure, but also encourage commercial activity away from the SE to regions that need economic growth. There would also be less environmental impact on the areas around Heathrow and Gatwick in terms of noise and air pollution. Large amounts of money could also be saved if additional runways/motorways/tunnels, etc were not required at Heathrow or Gatwick.

Yours faithfully,

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