



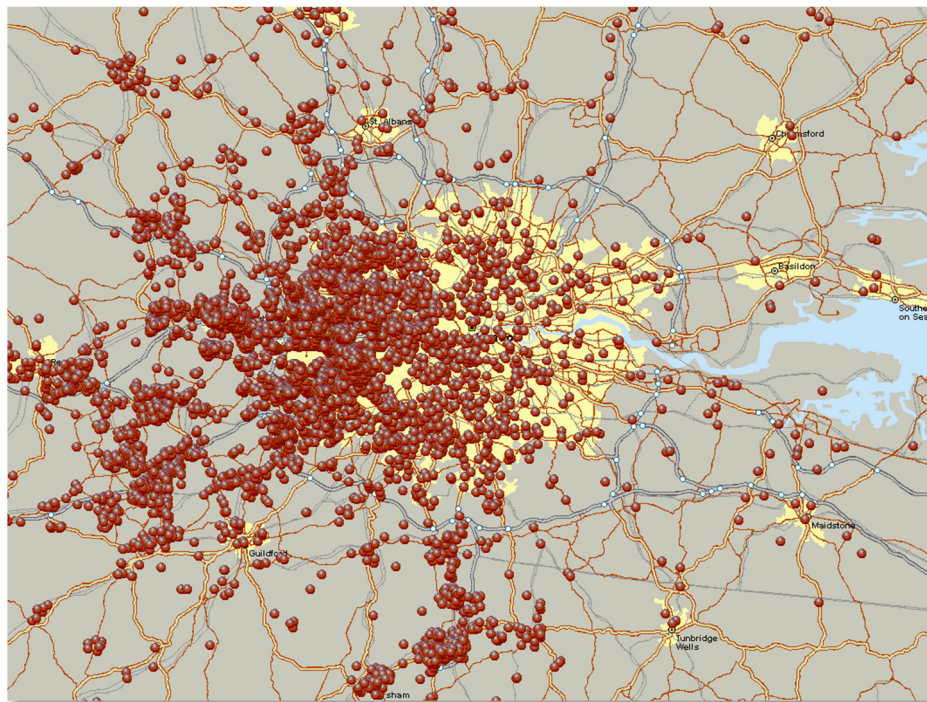
Unite response to the Airports Commission Inner Thames Estuary Feasibility Studies

1 Summary

- 1.1 This response is submitted by Unite the Union, the UK's largest trade union with 1.42 million members across the private and public sectors. The union's members work in a range of industries including transport, manufacturing, financial services, print, information technology, food, construction, local government, education, health and not for profit sectors.
- 1.2 The Civil Air Transport (CAT) membership of Unite is currently the largest representative group of workers employed within the aviation industry. The union's current membership includes 67,000 members working within Civil Aviation and many thousands more whose employment is dependent on the fortunes of the aviation industry supply chain.
- 1.3 Unite firmly believes that due to the continuing lack of capacity at our hub airport that the UK as a whole has lost and will continue to lose business opportunities. Despite this urgent need, Unite does not believe that the option presented by Lord Foster for an airport on the Isle of Grain is a solution to this capacity problem.

2 Employment

- 2.1 Heathrow currently provides direct employment for around 100,000 individuals and a further 60,000 workers in the supply chain. Lord Foster's airport would not, according to their proposal, provide all of these people with jobs at this new airport.
- 2.2 The individuals that work in the aviation industry are often highly trained in their chosen field and in a role which is in demand globally. Consequently if the hub airport was to relocate there is no guarantee that these staff would wish or were able to move their family to the east of the capital or would, or could, entertain commuting from their current home to their new place of work, when there are many other opportunities available globally. As a consequence, Unite believes that the closure of Heathrow would create a significant skills shortage which would not be easily overcome.
- 2.3 The area around the proposed site in northern Kent, nor its neighbour across the Thames estuary, is not equipped to cope with the demands that would be made of it in order to cope with the influx of employee accommodation demands that would be needed. Nor are they equipped to provide all the schools, hospitals and other requirements for the proposed airports staff. By the time you include the families of the new hubs workforce and the additional families of the people working in the community support infrastructure, you would probably need to find housing equivalent to that of another Nottingham.



- 2.4 The image above shows the home addresses location of members in the Civil Air Transport sector of Unite whose workplace is at Heathrow Airport. As would be expected there is a considerable density around the airport and around West London. You may also note that there is only one individual who currently lives on the Isle of Grain.

3 Economics

- 3.1 The West of London and the M4 corridor has become an important focus for international commerce, attracting some major global companies, who have chosen the location due to its proximity to Heathrow. If Heathrow closes, these companies will inevitably also reassess the viability of their position. If so, why would they choose to locate their European head office in either Southern Essex or Northern Kent?
- 3.2 Other options for a global companies' head office include Frankfurt which is well connected to the rest of Europe via high speed rail lines that connect at the airport with regional rail and bus services. Frankfurt is also the home of the Central European Bank and its airport has four runways in operation already.
- 3.3 Istanbul is building a new six runway mega hub airport to the north-west of the city. The geographical location of Istanbul means that it is able to provide frequent short haul connections not just to European destinations but to those in Russia, China, India, Northern Africa and the Middle East. As Turkey is outside of the European Emissions Trading Scheme, it can financially benefit from not having to charge airlines for the amount of carbon they emit resulting in a significant financial saving. Turkey does not have any Air Passenger Duty or anything equivalent to it either, making it a very attractive option.
- 3.4 The Mayor of London is suggesting that if the airport relocates the site left behind could be redeveloped. If there is such a massive upheaval of workforce away from the Heathrow area and West London to the East, it will cause a major shift in the

economy of the area. Consequently, whilst East London may benefit and its economy may boom, the reverse would be said of West London.

- 3.5 The relocation of the hub to a new site would require several key pieces of infrastructure to either close or reduce capacity, resulting in the need to compensate the current owners. New surface transport links would be required to enable access by a variety of modes to the new site requiring additional financial expenditure. In addition, the location would require the majority of the population to traverse the ring roads and rail connections around London to arrive at the airport requiring major upgrades to existing infrastructure. All of these changes will come at a price which will inevitably need to be met by the tax payer.
- 3.6 Unite believes that whilst none of the options identified are cheap, this proposal to build an airport on the Isle of Grain is by far the most expensive.

4 Airport Closures

- 4.1 To force airlines to use the new airport Heathrow would need to close. Southend Airport will also close due to its proximity to Lord Foster's proposal and London City would also need to close due to air space conflicts with the proposed hub. As a consequence, four runways in the London area would need to disappear to be replaced by four runways at the hub. The emergence of flights from the Isle of Grain and the loss of Heathrow would inevitably move the centre of air space congestion the east, disrupting flights from Gatwick due to the alignment of its runway and main taxiway.

- 4.2 In the twelve months to February 2014 the London airports carried the following number of passengers.

HEATHROW	72,580,245
GATWICK	35,732,151
STANSTED	17,999,927
LUTON	9,731,202
LONDON CITY	3,413,606
SOUTHEND	1,001,317

- 4.3 Unite believes that, whilst these changes to condense the traffic from three airports into a single hub would normally simplify air traffic control over London and enable more transiting customers via the single airport, the Isle of Grain is the worst place to place an airport. Unite believes that the difference in airport capacity from the move, would not be sufficient to mitigate demand.

5 Ecological and Safety Concerns

- 5.1 The ecology and diversity of wildlife in the estuary represent a significant concern to Unite members who work on board aircraft. Bird strikes are not only a problem for the continued existence of wild life in the area but also a major concern from a health and safety aspect. Whilst the skin of a passenger aircraft is normally sufficient to protect those on board from coming into direct contact with a bird impacting on the fuselage, this protection does not extend to the engines.
- 5.2 US Airways flight 1549 famously struck a flock of Canada geese as it climbed out of LaGuardia Airport in New York on 15 January 2009. The miracle safe landing on the Hudson that resulted was only possible due to several factors including the skill and

experience of Captain Sullenberger, a safety expert for the airline, the size and position of the holes torn in the fuselage by the water on impact and how calm the waters were that day. On any other day, with any other pilot, with any other wind and weather conditions, the aircraft would have disintegrated on impact.

- 5.3 In the Thames in that area, there are some bird life which are considerably larger than Canada geese which can do significantly more damage. If the aircraft is departing to the West it would be heading away from this conservation area, but at the same time would be heading towards Docklands and Central London.
- 5.4 To comply with European law it is technically possible to encourage the bird life to relocate but to do so would require a substantial area of land to be set aside and developed into a similar habitat to that found in the estuary. Such a development would of course add to the price of the project.
- 5.5 Wind farms in the area are generating much needed additional generation capacity for the national grid. Due to the interference and false reflections created by these installations the Civil Aviation Authority has published CAP 764 which outlines where it is permissible to safely place any turbines. If a major airport was located on the Isle of Grain it would force the closure of several of these existing farms. At a time when the cost of energy is becoming ever more apparent, such a move would further increase the cost of energy to both consumers and business.

6 Conclusion

- 6.1 Unite does not support this proposal and believes that its proposal has been a political weapon to enable the Mayor of London to appease the business community by calling for more capacity whilst also appeasing the aviation lobby in the marginal seats of west London. Unite believes that it is about time the Mayor stopped wasting tax payers money and supported the economy of London by backing the only realistic option for additional hub capacity in the short term - an additional runway at Heathrow.

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