

We'll keep this brief.

As we near the end of this marathon, several facts stand out:

1. For the new arrangements to provide the UK with the best competitive position in hub airport capacity, it will be essential to have 24/7 operation. This, alone, effectively rules out Gatwick and Heathrow from providing a solution.
2. Gatwick is doubly excluded as it is not a hub airport where a high proportion of passengers change planes and fly out again. If it were to have such an ambition, it would need not just one extra runway, but three.
3. Shoehorning in one (two?) extra runways at Heathrow would involve huge disruption for tens of thousands of people while producing, at the end of it, an airport where a very high proportion of passengers would still use road transport to access it. The already seriously off-putting passenger experience there would be made worse.
4. Noise levels would continue to increase in London - Europe's largest and worst affected noise pollution area.
5. If flight BA 38 had crashed just a short distance in advance of its actual landing site, this entire discussion would not have been held as the real and present danger of a crash over London would have been exposed.
6. Every major civil engineering project in the UK has attracted (sometimes) virulent opposition. Inevitably, planners and engineers find solutions to all serious objections and barriers and criticism inevitably disappears. So it will be with an estuary airport.
7. To take a handful of the main areas of controversy, a) migrating birds could be resited in a larger version of Wallasea Island, the RSPB's pioneering project in Essex. In any case, studies have shown that many migrating species are shifting landing stages northwards as climate changes, thus potentially resolving the problem. Also, b) to those who say that the north Kent area would be overrun by new roads bringing passengers to the airport, we say terminals should be built in and around London and linked to the runways by high speed rail. Ebbsfleet is in an ideal position to play its part as it will be connected with Crossrail. This fact means that c) the criticism that the estuary airport is on the wrong side of London is greatly diminished. We have examined all 35 serious objections, like these, and found them either to be without foundation or to be greatly exaggerated.
8. The benefit to north Kent from such a project would be immensely positive as it would generate tens of thousands of permanent jobs, bring in, or create, thousands of businesses and produce at least £100 million annually for the local council to invest in desperately needed improved public services.
7. For all these reasons, a Thames estuary solution is the right, long term, visionary, solution.



DRINK (Demand Regeneration In North Kent)

