

Sustainable aviation = demand management

Demand management is at the heart of Friends of the Earth's submission to the Government's consultation on *The Future of Air Transport in the UK*. This summary explains why demand management measures are vital for a sustainable aviation policy.

Demand for air travel has grown rapidly, year on year, towards an unsustainable level. The Government forecasts that passenger numbers will almost triple from 180 million in 2000 to over **500 million a year** in 2030. This forecast growth is the result of the price of flying plummeting *in real terms*. At the same time, aviation receives over £9 billion a year in tax breaks and public subsidies. These artificially lower prices and inflate demand to fly. They also allow the industry to compete unfairly with more sustainable forms of travel.

There are dramatic local to global consequences of this growth. The Government has attempted to hide the implications for climate change which are stark: by 2030 aviation carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions will have increased by over **300%** since 1990 and, according to the IPPR think tank, could amount to about half the total UK emissions. If the Government is to hit its target and cut UK CO₂ emissions by 60% by 2050 other industrial sectors and parts of society will have to cut their energy use to make up for aviation's growth. The Government has no firm proposals to tackle climate change caused by aviation growth.

Managing demand for air travel is quite possible just as it is for road traffic. Reruns of the Government's own forecasting model by AirportWatch show that by keeping air fares constant in real terms the forecast demand for 2030 would reduce by at least 170 million passengers a year. This would remove the need for **any new runways or airports**, and solve the principal 'problem' of the Government's consultation - the alleged need for additional capacity - at a stroke.

Yet demand management options were completely omitted from the consultation. Friends of the Earth has strongly criticised Ministers for this omission, which denied objectors to air travel and airport growth any real choice. This was not the only flaw. There are also serious inadequacies in the economic, social, and environmental claims used by the Government to present a rosy view about aviation's importance and to understate the damage that would be caused by expansion.

Friends of the Earth is calling for the Government:

- to base its forthcoming 30 year aviation and airports strategy (White Paper) on a sensible **Integrated Demand Management Regime (IDMR)** for aviation. This would include use of: fiscal measures, fair taxation, economic regulation, environmental regulation, capacity constraint, the planning framework, and sustainable alternatives to air travel such as high-speed rail for short haul and domestic trips.
- to urgently prepare a supplementary consultation document identifying the Demand Management arguments and options omitted from the controversial and flawed 2002/3 consultation.
- to bring forward proposals to begin correcting aviation's taxation anomalies, starting in the 2003 autumn Green Budget statement with an increase to UK Air Passenger Duty - together with other fair taxation and economic regulation measures - as a 'first stage' substitute for any future EU or international action; and to apply the proceeds of such taxation to assist the implementation of the *IDMR* e.g. for community and environmental mitigation, and sustainable transport.
- to withdraw all existing proposals for additional runway capacity or new airports, and establish the principle that no future proposals should be approved *before* the best use of the existing capacity can be demonstrated and *before* existing environmental problems caused by airport and airline operations are addressed.
- to reassess the claimed relationship between airport growth, and regeneration and employment, which is being used to promote air travel and airport growth in all parts of the UK.