



Photo: Steve Morgan



Photo: Bill Orment / Friends of the Earth



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AVIATION: THE PLANE TRUTH



A sustainable aviation and airports White Paper would introduce measures to manage demand for air travel including:

- Ensuring aviation pays for all the damage it causes
- Ending the way aviation's tax-free status distorts demand to fly
- Giving absolute protection to designated wildlife and heritage sites
- Ensuring that people's health and quality of life is protected from air and noise pollution



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AirportWatch www.airportwatch.org.uk



AVIATION MYTHS.....MYTHS BUSTED

1 More runways are essential

FALSE!

In February 2003 The Department for Transport (DfT) re-ran its computer forecasting model (SPASM), now taxing aviation fuel at the same rate as petrol, and with VAT on aviation products. The result? No new runways would be needed anywhere in the UK to 2030. (*AirportWatch*)

2 Environmental organisations want to price people off planes

FALSE!

Introducing fair taxation to pay for the environmental impacts caused by aviation would probably result in fares staying the same in real terms – neither rising nor, as the DfT has predicted, falling by as much as 44 per cent by 2030. (*Aviation Environment Federation, AEF*)

The aviation industry's own figures show that the poorest 10 per cent of people rarely fly. Nor are they likely to fly over the next 30 years, because of the overall cost of trips. Even on budget airlines 75 per cent of trips are by people in social classes A, B and C. Most of the growth predicted for 2030 by the DfT will be the wealthiest 10 per cent flying overseas at weekends. (*Freedom to Fly MORI Poll 1/2002 / DfT*)

3 International agreements make it impossible to end aviation's privileged tax free status including tax-free fuel

FALSE!

The UK Government needs no international agreement to place VAT and fuel tax on domestic flights, and developments within the EU are already making taxation of flights within the EU likely. There is nothing to stop the UK Government increasing Air Passenger Duty (APD).

4 The aviation industry already meets its external costs through Air Passenger Duty (APD)

FALSE!

APD raises just £900 million a year, whilst the European Environment Agency puts the external costs of UK aviation at £6 billion. APD was never intended as an environmental tax.

5 Building new runways has clear economic benefits

FALSE!

The re-run of the DfT's SPASM forecasting model based on conservative and fair taxation showed that a new runway at Stansted would have a net economic disbenefit of £400 million. And even where there are economic benefits there is growing evidence that, in many cases, investment in other industries would contribute more to regeneration. (*AEF / AirportWatch*)

6 Aviation helps the UK tourist industry

FALSE!

UK tourists spend more abroad than visitors spend in the UK. In 2000 the deficit was at least £10 billion. Money spent by overseas tourists rarely penetrates into regional, rural and coastal economies. (*Institute for Public Policy Research, IPPR*)

7 We can meet our international obligations on climate change and still have unrestrained growth in aviation and airports

FALSE!

Aviation is the UK's fastest growing source of CO2 emissions and by 2010 the increase in emissions from aviation would wipe out the Government's Kyoto and domestic reductions programme. (*House of Commons Environment Audit Committee*)

8 We can mitigate, and compensate for, the damage to our environment, heritage and countryside caused by aviation and airport expansion

FALSE!

The Government's airport expansion proposals mean that even if aircraft noise can be mitigated, more and more people will be affected by it. Some 100 of our irreplaceable ancient woods, several designated nature sites and more than 180 listed buildings will be threatened. And no measures can compensate for aviation's role in climate change. (*CPRE / Woodland Trust / Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings*)

9 Airports can expand and we can still meet EU air quality standards

FALSE!

BAA's own figures show that more than 5,000 people nationally will be breathing in dangerous levels of nitrogen dioxide above EU limits if airport expansion goes ahead. (*BAA*)

10 Technology has delivered significant environmental improvements in the past and will continue to do so

FALSE!

Technology has made aircraft cleaner and quieter but the rate of progress has now slowed. Emissions could be cut by 1 per cent a year but this will be more than offset by the Government's forecast growth rate of 4-6 per cent a year. (*AirportWatch / Arthur D Little Consulting for HMG*)