

Turbulent Times for Douglas Alexander – Stop Airport Expansion!

Heathrow Residents protest to Transport Minister during speech

At 13:05 this afternoon, Tuesday, 6th March 2007, the Rt Hon Douglas Alexander MP, Secretary of State for Transport, was interrupted by Heathrow residents at Chatham House, off Piccadilly, at the closing address of a two-day international conference, appropriately titled: "Turbulent Times: Regulation, Security, and Profitability in the Airline Industry".

The residents, including members of Friends of the Earth [foe.org.uk], the GreenParty.org.uk, HACAN.org.uk, NoTRAG.org [No Third Runway Action Group], and PlaneStupid.com, demanding an end to expansion of UK airports, pointed out the breathtaking hypocrisy of weasel words by Tony Blair and the DfT on a responsible and sustainable aviation industry, and on transparency with the public on addressing climate change.

While some of the protesters entered the building and spoke to the minister and conference delegates, others demonstrated outside with placards and a large banner. [photos]

Inside, delegates were handed leaflets summarising the issues: an annual economic deficit of c. £25 billion, climate change [including air pollution, resulting in ill health, time off work, and premature death], and noise pollution [depriving children of schooling, and residents of sanity and sleep]. After years of broken promises, residents have no faith in the Government, when claims to be open to rational debate on aviation are a very sick joke.

John Hunt, [Hounslow Green Party], told Mr. Alexander and the delegates that, for the sake of air pollution and climate change, Government and the aviation industry must halt expansion, and urgently consider where to begin making cuts.

Dr. Hunt explained: "At Heathrow, Terminal 5 is reportedly on target to open in March 2008; Crossrail is planned to double the frequency of rail connexions; and Government approval for a third runway is expected this spring.

"The DfT's December report, 'Future of Air Transport', shamelessly announced, 'Work since 2003 has confirmed the view recognised in the White Paper that a new runway would have to be supported by a new passenger terminal, as well as changes to nearby roads. With a third runway the airport could eventually support up to 720,000 movements (around 128 million passengers a year). Even at that level, Heathrow would only be satisfying some 70 per cent of its unconstrained demand forecast in 2030.'

"Ten years ago, during the public enquiry into Terminal Five, we were assured that T5 would be the end of expansion. In particular, no third runway would be necessary. Now we are told that R3 will be followed by T6. Will we get as far as building T6, R4, or T7 before our exploit-now-suffer-later Government finally realises the damage caused by air pollution and climate change?"

The same DfT report states: "BAA has submitted a planning application to replace the outdated Terminals 1 and 2 with a new terminal called Heathrow East which, if approved, could open in time for the 2012 Olympic Games."

In December, the Parliamentary Transport Committee reported a "terrible picture of failure" at the DfT, finding that it was on track to meet only two of its seven targets, [for road safety and rail punctuality, but NOT for air quality and carbon dioxide emissions], and that it lacks a clear strategy of what it wants to achieve, and when.

Indeed, the Committee reported that transport is the ONLY sector of the economy in which greenhouse gas emissions have been rising consistently since 1990, [and are projected to continue to rise], and that, while the DfT continues to neglect its responsibility to improve air quality, deaths from respiratory disorders associated with particulates are responsible for over eight thousand additional deaths and ten thousand additional hospital admissions in the UK each year.

228 million passengers passed through UK airports in 2005: predicted by the Government to rise to 350 - 460 million by 2020.

John Hunt concluded: "How any minister has the gall and effrontery to maintain that the sheer lunacy of this unbridled expansion, this pillaging of resources, this destruction of our habitat, and this squandering of the birthright of the world's coming generations, constitutes responsible and sustainable government, is quite beyond comprehension. 'Sustainable growth' in aviation is an oxymoron. Unfortunately, the morons who demand continued growth will, if they are successful, eventually deprive us ALL of oxygen ... and of our planet. Patricia Hewitt's air-conditioning on the NHS won't help."

// ENDS //

NOTES FOR EDITORS

[1] *PHOTOS + further details from:*
jdm.stewart@virgin.net / 07957-38.56.50

[2] *The two-day conference was divided into five sessions:*

- ✈ Protecting Consumer Interest
- ✈ Competition amongst Airports
- ✈ Regulatory Open Skies
- ✈ Competition Law
- ✈ Strategic Implications for Airlines and Regulators

NOWHERE on the advance programme was there any mention of environment, pollution, or responsibility. The only occurrence of "sustainability" was: "*New short-haul market entrants -- how sustainable is their current success?*"

[3] *The DfT website has a section on sustainability ...*
which mentions Walking, Cycling, and Teleworking. Where are Aviation and Shipping?

www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/sustainable/

- ✈ Sustainable travel
- ✈ Smarter choices
- ✈ Travel Plans
- ✈ School Travel
- ✈ Travel awareness campaigns
- ✈ Walking
- ✈ Cycling
- ✈ Home Zones
- ✈ Climate change and transport

- ✈ Teleworking
- ✈ Sustainable travel demonstration towns

[4] [The Dft "Project for the Sustainable Development of Heathrow - Air quality" ...](#) appears not to have got off the ground. [Not a good sign in aviation.] Three initial items were published in 2004. The list of initials [incorrectly called acronyms] was updated in 2005: and still contains several errors. After that, the project evidently could no longer be sustained.

www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/aviation/environmentalissues/heathrow/airquality/

Project for the Sustainable Development of Heathrow – Air quality

Minutes of air quality technical panel meetings – 24 November 2004

Air quality panels: Terms of reference and membership – 26 October 2004

Acronyms used in minutes of air quality panel meetings – 25 October 2005

[5] [Speech by Douglas Alexander](#)
"Progress on the Future of Air Transport White Paper", 14.12.2006

www.gnn.gov.uk/environment/fullDetail.asp?ReleaseID=250348&NewsAreaID=2

Mr Alexander said: "There has been increasing awareness since the White Paper was published of the need to ensure that the aviation industry grows sustainably. The Government has also recognised this as a priority. The progress report confirms our intention that aviation should meet its climate change costs and should limit noise and pollution at airports across the country. ..."

[6] [Speech by Douglas Alexander, 25.1.2007](#)
www.dft.gov.uk/press/speechesstatements/speeches/spchbritairtrans?version=1

9. And tonight, I would like to focus my remarks on what we are doing at all three levels to achieve our policy objective of a safe, sustainable and competitive UK aviation industry. ...

12. Sir Nicholas Sterns seminal report was clear that in tackling climate change effectively trading and taxation are not alternatives - but that both have a role to play. ...

13. Indeed, in candour, aviation has a more pressing need to be transparent with the public on what it is doing to address climate change than focussing its energies on questioning the level of APD. ...

22. Turning to Heathrow - working closely with BAA, we are taking forward the remaining work to identify whether the stringent noise and air quality limits necessary to allow Heathrow's expansion can be met, considering both mixed mode operation and a third runway. We expect to be consulting in detail later this year. ...

51. But we can never afford to be complacent. The reality of the terrorist threat is something that this industry will have to live with. We will need to continue to work together closely in the foreseeable future as we identify new threats.

52. My themes tonight have been ones of responsibilities and partnership. As a Government, we recognise the crucial importance of a competitive aviation industry.

53. And, where we can, we will work to break down the institutional barriers that prevent you from achieving your full commercial potential.

54. But - hand in hand with that - goes the need for a responsible aviation industry.

55. My offer to you is simple. You work with us to deliver the conditions necessary for the sustainable growth of the aviation industry, and we'll work with you to deliver the infrastructure and regulatory framework to make it happen.

56. That way, in partnership, we can see real progress on both your commercial and our shared environmental objectives.

[7] [Extract: "The Future of Air Transport progress report"](http://www.dft.gov.uk/press/speechesstatements/statements/wsairtransportprogressreport?version=1)
www.dft.gov.uk/press/speechesstatements/statements/wsairtransportprogressreport?version=1

Further development at Heathrow

5.27 In 2005, BAA issued its interim master plan, which provided indicative plans for a third runway, including a sixth terminal.

5.28 Proposals for a short third runway north of the airport have been further developed by BAA, as envisaged in the White Paper.⁵¹ Work since 2003 has confirmed the view recognised in the White Paper that a new runway would have to be supported by a new passenger terminal, as well as changes to nearby roads. With a third runway the airport could eventually support up to 720,000 movements (around 128 million passengers a year). Even at that level, Heathrow would only be satisfying some 70 per cent of its unconstrained demand forecast in 2030.

5.29 The complete PSDH environmental assessments will not be finalised before spring 2007. Provisional analysis suggests that the noise contour limit is likely to be a significant constraint on traffic growth on a third runway before 2030, although this would subsequently ease as the aircraft fleet serving Heathrow continues to get quieter. Air quality assessments could constrain the situation further. The consultation will address this.

5.30 Meanwhile, there have been a number of further developments:

.. BAA has introduced noise and property schemes to assist property owners in the event of a third runway going ahead; to help residents affected by existing noise move to quieter areas; and to provide noise insulation in community buildings.

- ✈ .. Further steps have been taken to improve rail links. BAA has launched Heathrow Connect, a halfhourly stopping rail service from Paddington. BAA has also announced its support for developing AirTrack, which would connect Heathrow Terminal 5 to Staines, providing rail services to Waterloo, Guildford and Reading. Longer-term planned upgrades to the Piccadilly Line by 2014 should improve reliability, increase capacity (up 35 per cent) and reduce journey times (down 19 per cent).
- ✈ .. The Hybrid Bill to authorise the construction of Crossrail, including services to Heathrow Airport, continues its passage through Parliament. Crossrail is planned to replace Heathrow Connect services, doubling the frequency and enhancing the airport's rail connections, including to the City of London.
- ✈ .. Terminal 5 is on target to open in March 2008, served by the Piccadilly Line and Heathrow Express. BAA's £4.3bn investment in Terminal 5 will cater for around 30 million passengers annually and provide much needed additional terminal and airfield capacity to make best use of Heathrow's existing runways within current operations.

- ✈ .. BAA has submitted a planning application to replace the outdated Terminals 1 and 2 with a new terminal called Heathrow East which, if approved, could open in time for the 2012 Olympic Games. This 'like-for-like replacement' development is entirely separate from decisions on increasing runway capacity.

[8] [News: Report gives green light to airport expansion plans, 15.12.2006](http://news.flightmapping.com/06/12/15/report-gives-green-light-to-airport-expansion-plans_1125.html)
http://news.flightmapping.com/06/12/15/report-gives-green-light-to-airport-expansion-plans_1125.html

A host of ambitious airport expansion projects have been given the green light from the Government despite increasing concern about the damage caused to the environment by the aviation industry.

Transport secretary Douglas Alexander published his progress report on the Government's 2003 Future of Air Transport White Paper yesterday, outlining New Labour's vision of UK air travel up to 2030.

The report will send a shiver down the spine of anyone hoping for a slowdown in the growth of the UK flights market. Controversial plans for a third runway at Heathrow, a second runway at London Stansted and a runway extension at Birmingham International have all been given official stamp of approval subject to planning approval. There was also further encouragement for regional airports to grow. Mr Alexander said the Government must ensure that the UK has the airport capacity it needs to enhance its economic performance. ...

[9] [Parliamentary Transport Committee: DfT "terrible picture of failure"](http://www.parliament.uk/parliamentary_committees/transport_committee/trans06_07press_notice16.cfm)
www.parliament.uk/parliamentary_committees/transport_committee/trans06_07press_notice16.cfm

Transport Committee / PRESS RELEASE / Publication of Report / 15.2.2007

DEPARTMENT FOR TRANSPORT ANNUAL REPORT 2006

Department for Transport failing in its duty to the public

The DfT is failing to meet its Public Service Agreement targets. This is the finding of the Transport Committee's Report into the Department for Transport's Annual Report 2006, published today.

In setting the PSA targets in 2004, the Government announced the targets were a contract between the Government and the public: an indication of what should be expected from the expenditure. Despite spending £13.5 billion in 2005-06, the Department for Transport is on track to meet only two of its seven targets: those for road safety and rail punctuality.

The Department is failing to deliver in all other areas: against its two targets for congestion, targets for public transport patronage, air quality and carbon dioxide emissions.

Committee Chairman Gwyneth Dunwoody MP said: "This is a terrible picture of failure. The Department's only successes are against road safety and rail punctuality targets. And I imagine that most rail users would be surprised to hear their experiences described as the pinnacle of the Department's annual achievements, whilst success against the road casualty targets is subdued by the daily toll of death and injury."

The Report calls on the Department for Transport to recognise its increased political weight among Departments, and calls for high quality administration and strategic planning to match its status. Mrs Dunwoody said: "The Department has not presented any evidence to convince us that the next five years will bring a radical change in performance. The DfT lacks a clear strategy of what it wants to achieve. Without this vision, it also lacks a timetable of policies which are necessary to bring improvements."

...

The Report condemned the fact that transport is the only sector of the economy in which greenhouse gas emissions have been rising consistently since 1990 and are projected to carry on rising. Mrs Dunwoody said: "To date, transport has not been pulling its weight in the UK's efforts to avert climate change."

She added: "The Department continues to neglect its responsibility to improve air quality. As a result people die in large numbers each year. It must make air quality a priority." The Report notes that the Committee on the Medical Effects of Air Pollutants Great Britain estimates that respiratory disorders associated with particulates are responsible for 8,100 additional deaths and 10,500 additional hospital admissions in the UK each year. ...

[10] www.parliament.uk/parliamentary_committees/transport_committee/trans06_07pn17.cfm
Transport Committee Press Notice / NEW INQUIRY

PASSENGERS' EXPERIENCE OF AIR TRAVEL

Terms of Reference and Call for evidence

Two-hundred and twenty-eight million passengers passed through UK airports in 2005. This number has increased more than 100-fold since 1950 and is forecast to reach between 350 and 460 million by 2020. ...

[11] [Doctors to prescribe free air conditioning on the NHS; 4.3.2007](http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/uk/health/article1466944.ece)
www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/uk/health/article1466944.ece

THE government is to allow GPs to prescribe free air-conditioning on the NHS to help those who have trouble breathing.

Patricia Hewitt, the health secretary, will announce this week that doctors should prescribe mobile units for those with serious lung conditions.

[12] www.guardian.co.uk/Environment/climatechange/story/0,,2026722,00.html
Gov.t CO₂ strategies - little more than a sham. George Monbiot; 5.3.2007

... Our audit reveals that the government's assessment of its own policies is wildly optimistic. Instead of a 29-31% cut by 2020, it is on course to deliver a reduction of between 12% and 17%. At this rate the UK will not meet its 2020 milestone until 2050. This result suggests that the government's claim to be "leading the world on tackling climate change" is simply another product of the Downing Street spin machine. Its carbon-cutting policies are little more than a sham. Take transport, for example. The government expects that national transport emissions (not counting international flights) will rise by 4m tonnes between 1990 and 2020. Maslin's team discovered that the real increase will be between 7 and 13m tonnes. ...

But the biggest greenwash of all involves flying. Under the Kyoto protocol, the pollution from international flights does not count towards a country's emissions. The government has taken this as a licence to ignore flying even when setting its own targets. The emissions simply do not appear on the balance sheet. Otherwise it could not justify its instruction to the UK's airports to double their capacity between now and 2030.

Because they were assessing the government's own programme, the auditors didn't produce figures for aviation. But even the government proposes that carbon emissions from planes will rise by 10.5m tonnes between 1990 and 2020. Had it been incorporated into the audit, this figure would have reduced the cuts for the whole economy by 2020 to between 8 and 13%.

But the government's figure is almost certainly a wild underestimate. It counts only half the emissions from planes flying to and from our airports, on the grounds that only half the passengers belong to this country. In reality, 67% are UK citizens. It also ignores the other greenhouse gases - especially high-level water vapour - that flying produces. If increases in international flights were counted in the national total, they could wipe out all the cuts in the UK's emissions between 1990 and 2020.

[13] <http://news.independent.co.uk/uk/transport/article2328831.ece>
BA cancels 1,000 flights to cut 'no frills' losses subsidiary; 5.3.2007

British Airways is to cancel more than 1,000 loss-making flights over the next three weeks, leaving tens of thousands of travellers stranded.

Each of the targeted routes is believed to be losing at least £1m a year, and the airline has concluded it will cost less to compensate passengers who have already booked, and to pay crew to stay at home, than it will to operate the aircraft.

An estimated 30,000 passengers who have already booked will be affected by the cuts, which start today.

The abrupt cuts to flights from Birmingham, Manchester and Scottish airports are necessary "to protect the ongoing viability of the business," BA said in a terse statement. ...

[14] www.guardian.co.uk/Environment/climatechange/story/0,,2022059,00.html
Livingstone plans to cut carbon emissions by 60% / 27.2.2007

-- Londoners given 20-year target to go green

-- Flights could drastically affect success of campaign

David Adam and Hugh Muir

... The expected increase in flights into Heathrow and City airports will see London's aviation emissions rise from 22m tonnes of carbon dioxide last year to 35m tonnes in 2025. That means, even if today's reductions across the domestic, commercial and transport sectors are achieved, London's overall emissions would only fall by 20%. ...

[15] **Caroline Lucas, MEP, Green Party; 5.3.2007**

"... The truth is New Labour is simply asking the wrong question. Instead of seeking a solution to the problem of how we can continue with 'business as usual' whilst simultaneously cutting emissions, it should be examining which aspects of business as usual are simply unsustainable and must be scrapped if we are to head off the most devastating impacts of climate change - or even just meet our own emissions reduction targets.

"The time for voluntary, incremental change is long past. We need radical reform of our whole economic system if we are to achieve a successful transition to the "post-oil economy" advocated by David Miliband. The good news is that such an economy can be an attractive and positive one. The bad news is that this government still lacks the political will to accelerate the transition. ..."