



## *INDEPENDENT TRANSPORT COMMISSION*

*Britain's independent research charity for transport and land use policy*

[www.theitc.org.uk](http://www.theitc.org.uk)

### **MEDIA RELEASE**

***EMBARGOED UNTIL 01:00 BST, Wednesday 29 May 2013***

#### ***INDEPENDENT TRANSPORT COMMISSION (ITC) RECOMMENDS A SINGLE INTERNATIONAL HUB AIRPORT FOR THE UK***

The Independent Transport Commission (ITC) announces the launch of its report, *Flying into the Future: Key issues for assessing Britain's aviation infrastructure needs*. The report is based on the wide range of submissions received by the ITC in response to its Call for Evidence during Autumn 2012. The key findings are as follows:

First, the report identifies **the crucial importance of good aviation connectivity for the UK economy and jobs**. The report concludes that investing in our aviation infrastructure is a critical challenge that must be met if the UK is to maintain investment from growing economies such as China and India. We face capacity constraints in both long-haul and short-haul travel, particularly in South-East England.

Second, the report notes that short-haul connectivity can be improved by **developing our regional airports**, close to local and regional catchment areas.

But third, improving long-haul connectivity - and even maintaining the UK's position in the face of growing competition from rival European airports - means **ensuring that the UK continues to host a top-tier European hub airport**. This means an airport with significantly more capacity than Heathrow today. The report rejects alternative suggestions such as 2 small hubs, or connecting different airports as a "virtual hub": they would not compete effectively and would leave the UK increasingly dependent on connections via 3rd-country hubs in order to reach global destinations.

The report suggests the most likely sites for an improved hub are Heathrow, Stansted or the Thames Estuary. It recognises that any decision will be contentious and that the Airports Commission and the Government will need to balance many factors. But it highlights 4 major issues:

- Closing Heathrow: the ITC concludes that if a major new hub is developed at Stansted or in the Thames Estuary, Heathrow will almost certainly have to close. This will have major implications, and needs far more attention than it has yet received.
- Costs and charges: on the basis of preliminary, broad-brush, estimates, the ITC fears that airlines and passengers might face charges at a new Estuary Airport more than twice those for an expanded Heathrow, and two-thirds more than at an expanded Stansted. It is essential that far more robust costings are produced for all options and the implications for charges and international competitiveness clearly understood.
- A new town? Building a major new hub, whether at Stansted or elsewhere, could require urban development including homes, schools, and local transport. The ITC estimates the size of such development would be on the scale of a new Peterborough for a 4-runway hub. This needs to be considered as much as the airport itself.
- Noise is the biggest local issue, particularly for Heathrow. But the report notes that planes are getting quieter and proposes an assessment of whether a package of measures - perhaps including moving the runways westward - would enable Heathrow to provide the extra connectivity needed while also reducing the problem of noise for Londoners.

The report is being submitted to the Airports Commission, chaired by Sir Howard Davies. The ITC will consider what further research should be commissioned to follow up particular issues of importance, with a view to assisting policy makers on this vital economic and infrastructure decision.

The report will be published on the ITC website at: [www.theitc.org.uk](http://www.theitc.org.uk).

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## Notes for Editors

For further information please contact Dr Stephen Hickey, Project chairman on 07983 445252, email [shfickey@gmail.com](mailto:shfickey@gmail.com), or the ITC Secretary-General Dr Matthew Niblett on mobile 0207 253 5510, email [matthew.niblett@keble.oxon.org](mailto:matthew.niblett@keble.oxon.org) .

1. The ITC Report, *Flying into the Future: Key issues for assessing Britain's aviation infrastructure needs*, is available in electronic copy and will be posted on the Commission's website on 29 May 2013. It will be submitted in hard copy to the Airports Commission.
2. The report has been authored by the ITC through its Aviation steering group. The group is chaired by Dr Stephen Hickey, and includes Simon Linnett, Professor Peter Jones, David Gray and Dr Matthew Niblett. In addition to his role at the ITC, Dr Hickey is Chairman of the Community Transport Association and was formerly a Director-General in the Department for Transport.
3. The ITC research is based on written and spoken responses received to our national Call for Evidence, which ran over the course of Autumn 2012. A diverse range of groups responded representing all sides of the debate, including HACAN, Unite the Union, and the Airports Operators Association; a full list of submissions can be found in the report. For the purpose of analysis, this data has been supplemented by sources in the public domain and conversations with many key stakeholders.
4. The ITC gratefully acknowledges the support of all our benefactors, the assistance we have received from the CAA and all those who kindly responded to our Aviation Call for Evidence. We are also grateful to the research team, especially David Gray, as well as to Dr Nigel Dennis and members of the CILT for their advice. The views and conclusions of the report are the responsibility of the ITC alone.
5. The ITC, founded in 1999, is Britain's leading independent think tank investigating issues in transport and land use. It comprises a team of 12 voluntary Commissioners, a small Secretariat and has a base at Cowcross Street in central London. Simon Linnett, executive Vice-Chairman of Rothschild, is the current ITC Chairman. The Commission is supported by charitable donations from a wide range of organisations (for a full list of supporters please see our website), but we retain strict editorial independence from all our funding partners.

**Members of the ITC** include Simon Linnett (Chairman), Alan Baxter CBE, Kristine Beuret OBE, Mary Bonar, John Dawson, Nicholas Finney OBE, Dr Stephen Hickey, Sarah Kendall, Professor Peter Jones, Professor Gregory Marsden, Steven Norris, and Professor John Worthington.

**The Patrons of the ITC** include Lord Adonis, Lord Freeman, Sir Patrick Brown, Sir Terry Farrell and Professor Sir Peter Hall.

