



Effect Of A New Heathrow Runway On Destinations

Introduction

There has been an extensive lobbying campaign by Heathrow Airport to convince politicians and opinion formers that the regions will benefit economically from Heathrow expansion. The argument being that there will be more long-haul routes to countries such as China, thereby facilitating trade. It remains completely unproven that having more direct destinations would in fact noticeably benefit UK trade and the economy because all destinations will be available with a change of plane anyway. However, this paper just examines the changes to numbers of direct destinations resulting from Heathrow expansion, especially the effect on destinations from regional airports.

Destination data

The Airports Commission (AC) carried out a detailed analysis of direct routes and destinations, the results being published in ‘Strategic Fit – updated forecasts’ July 2015. ^[1] The number of destinations was forecast in the case of a new (third) runway at Heathrow, termed R3. The number of destinations was also forecast for a ‘do minimum’ case. This assumes no new runway at Heathrow but, crucially, no new runways anywhere else. The do minimum destinations can be subtracted from the destinations with R3 to show the effects of the new runway.

Results

As might be expected, the number of direct destinations served by the UK is larger with R3 than do minimum. The effect is however quite slight. The total destinations served is virtually the same but the number of destinations served daily increases 4 to 5%. Total longhaul destinations are increased by 0 to 2% but the number served daily increases by 6 to 11%. (The ranges reflect different assumptions made by the AC on carbon emissions.)

There are large increases in destinations served by Heathrow with R3. **But these cause a reduced number of destinations served by regional airports. Total destinations served reduce by 4 to 5% while daily destinations reduce by 11%. The effect on longhaul destinations is equally significant – 7 to 9% for total destinations and 9 to 12% for daily destinations.**

See appendix for figures quoted and references.

Conclusions

The conclusions from AC’s data are clear. While a third runway would increase slightly the number of direct destinations served by the UK, **the number of destinations served by regional airports would be appreciably less. It is hard to see how this could be good for regional economies.**

A new runway will tend to increase the concentration of aviation-related and aviation-dependent industries in the southeast SE and away from the regions. It will also mean that government expenditure, estimated at £4bn to £17bn will be spent in the southeast and thus not available to the regions.

Appendix – Number of direct destinations served at 2050

The following tables show the number of destinations forecast to be served by 2050 with and without a new Heathrow runway, according to the Airports Commission (AC). The destinations served by all UK airports and those served by regional airports are shown separately. “Regional airports for this purpose is all except London’s airports. The effect of a third runway is calculated by simple subtraction or division. Figures are given for daily destinations, where there is at least one flight per day, and all destinations, which includes services of all frequencies.

Data for these tables is taken directly from the Airports Commission (AC) report ‘Strategic Fit: Forecasts.

July 2015'. References are given to the table (T) and page number (p) of the report.

“DM” is the AC’s ‘Do Minimum’ scenario where there is no new runway in the SE or anywhere else in the country. “R3” is where the Heathrow NW option is built but there is no new runway anywhere else.

The AC used a number of forecast scenarios with more or less ‘optimistic’ growth projections. However, the one it based its conclusions and report upon is ‘Assessment of Need’.

“Diff” is the difference between R3 and DM destinations; positive number meaning more destinations with R3, negative number means less. Differences are shown in absolute and percentage terms. “Calc” means calculated from data in the table.

Destinations served by all UK airports (carbon traded)

	Daily destinations					Total destinations				
	Dom-estic	Short-haul	Long-haul	Total	Source	Dom-estic	Short-haul	Long-haul	Total	Source
DM	27	135	83	245	T5.9, p86	29	243	130	402	T5.11, p88
R3	28	137	92	257	T6.27, p159	29	243	133	405	T6.33, p165
Diff	+1 (+4%)	+2 (+1%)	+9 (+11%)	+12 (+5%)	Calc	+0 (+0%)	+0 (+0%)	+3 (+2%)	+3 (+1%)	Calc

Destinations served by regional airports (carbon traded)

	Daily destinations					Total destinations				
	Dom-estic	Short-haul	Long-haul	Total	Source	Dom-estic	Short-haul	Long-haul	Total	Source
DM	27	99	26	152	T5.9, p86	29	233	99	361	T5.11, p88
R3	27	85	23	135	T6.27, p159	29	225	92	346	T6.33, p165
Diff	+0 (+0%)	-14 (-14%)	-3 (-12%)	-17 (-11%)	Calc	+0 (+0%)	-12 (-5%)	-7 (-7%)	-15 (-4%)	Calc

In its forecasts and estimates of economic benefits, the Airports Commission (AC) used two different approaches to address the issue of aviation’s climate changing emissions. One approach is ‘carbon traded’. Here a ‘cost of carbon’ is assumed to be included in air fares and this feeds through to demand and economic benefits. The approach is called carbon traded because the cost of carbon (supplied by Department of Energy and Climate Change) is based on the assumption that airlines will have to purchase carbon permits in a traded market. The above tables are AC’s carbon traded scenarios.

AC’s alternative approach is ‘carbon capped’. Here the amount of carbon that aircraft can emit is capped at a level that is consistent with the UK’s CO2 target in the Climate Act and budgets. The tables below shows the effect of a third runway in AC’s carbon capped scenario.

Neither of AC’s approaches take account of non-CO2 emissions that are estimated to add another 60% to aviation’s climate impact.

Destinations served by all UK airports (carbon capped)

	Daily destinations					Total destinations				
	Dom-estic	Short-haul	Long-haul	Total	Source	Dom-estic	Short-haul	Long-haul	Total	Source
DM	27	132	82	241	T5.10, p87	29	241	130	400	T5.12, p8
					T6.28, p160					T6.34, p166

R3	27	137	87	251		29	238	130	397	
Diff	+0 (+0%)	+5 (+4%)	+5 (+6%)	+10 (+5%)	Calc	+0 (+0%)	-3 (-1%)	+0 (+0%)	-3 (-1%)	Calc

Destinations served by regional airports (carbon capped)

	Daily destinations					Total destinations				
	Dom-estic	Short-haul	Long-haul	Total	Source	Dom-estic	Short-haul	Long-haul	Total	Source
DM	27	86	23	136	T5.10, p87	29	230	94	353	T5.12, p89
R3	26	74	21	121	T6.28,p160	29	220	86	335	T6.34,p166
Diff	-1 (-4%)	-12 (-14%)	-2 (-9%)	-15 (-11%)	Calc	+0 (+0%)	-10 (-4%)	-8 (-9%)	-18 (-5%)	Calc

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[\[1\] https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/439687/strategic-fit-updated-forecasts.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/439687/strategic-fit-updated-forecasts.pdf)