

City Airport

In July 2011 Fight the Flights, the organisation which fought the expansion of City Airport, merged with HACAN. HACAN East will take up issues around City Airport.

City Airport opened in 1987 despite a campaign by local residents who felt it was wrong to build an airport so close to where people live in one of the poorest boroughs (Newham) in the country.

Broken Promises

The airport promised it would be just served by quiet planes, 'whispering jets' they called them. But these promises were never kept. City has recently received permission for a 50% increase in the number of planes using the airport which would permit 120,000 planes to use the airport each year. The quieter turbo-prop aircraft are gradually being replaced by jets.

The increase number of jets using the airport has a big effect on the area:

- For many people close to the areas the noise from the turbo-props was bearable; the noise of the jets is not;
- The jets require wider take-off paths so new take-off paths were introduced with the result that wide swathes of East London are now suffering noise nuisance;
- Many areas get Heathrow aircraft as well - some of the East London boroughs are the most-heavily overflowed in London.

People around the airport also complain of air pollution problems.

Economic Benefits?

The local council, Newham, supports the airport on the grounds of job creation. But the number of local jobs has not materialized in the way it hoped for. The airport employs no more local people than a large Tesco would.

The airport has the highest number of business passengers in the country - 62%. Most of these are business people using short-haul flights to get to Docklands or the City.

Questions have been asked whether the noise and air pollution which the airport causes is worth its alleged economic benefits, particularly since many of the short-haul destinations it serves could potentially be reached by a fast rail service. This is one of the questions which HACAN East will explore.

HACAN East will work with local organisations, MPs, the London Assembly and local councils to find ways of reducing the current impact of the airport on local residents.