

If Heathrow fails to grow, it will go the way of London's docks?

Unravelling fact from fiction

Future Heathrow, the pressure group which campaigns for further expansion at Heathrow, has one mantra: Heathrow is falling behind other European airports so businesses will leave London.

Is it an accurate statement or simply a clever slogan which the group hopes that, if it repeats it enough, people will come to believe it is true?

Accurate Statement

or

Clever Marketing?

Future Heathrow's theories are flawed

It persistently refuses to back up its theories with evidence-based arguments

Businesses will move away from London if Heathrow does not expand

Untrue! The London Chamber of Commerce, which backs Future Heathrow, tried to unearth some evidence to help Future Heathrow out on this one. But it ended up with egg on its face. A recent survey it carried out revealed that a massive 78% of firms were against expansion at Heathrow and less than a sixth of firms would even *consider* leaving London if the airport did not expand.

Heathrow will go the way of London's docks if it doesn't grow

Untrue! London's docks lost out because of the introduction of new technology. They were not in a position to compete with containerisation which came in at ports such as Felixstowe and Rotterdam. Any comparison with present-day Heathrow, where BAA is not slow to install new technology, is a misreading of history.

London is falling behind the other cities in Europe

Misleading! Future Heathrow does not compare like with like when it compares Heathrow with Frankfurt, Paris and Amsterdam. The correct procedure would be to compare *all* London's airports with the *all* the airports serving the other cities. When this is done, a very different picture emerges. The figures show that London's 5 airports (Heathrow, Gatwick, Stansted, Luton and London City) are not only way ahead of their rivals, but that over the past decade they have increased that lead over most of their competitors.

	1995	2004	Increase
London's Airports	82.8 million passengers	128.6 million passengers	45.8%
Paris's Airports	55.1 million passengers	73.4 million passengers	18.3%
Frankfurt	38.2 million passengers	51.1 million passengers	12.9%
Amsterdam	25.4 million passengers	42.5 million passengers	59.0%

All these London's airports contribute to the capital's economy and business people use all of them. Future Heathrow has never explained why it has shied away from this more accurate comparison.

There is much more space capacity at Europe's airports

Only half the story! There is more capacity at some European airports. But it is more complex than Future Heathrow would have us believe. It makes great play of the fact that Charles de Gaulle Airport has four runways and Schiphol has five (and Frankfurt may be adding a fourth). What it doesn't say is that all these runways are not in use at any one time. The fifth runway at Schiphol was built in order to give residents some break from the noise. Similarly at Charles de Gaulle, runway use is rotated.

Interchange* passengers are vital to increase destinations served

Not Proven! Future Heathrow's website laments "*Germany's busiest airport, Frankfurt, leads the field with a peak summer network of 262 routes, 31 per cent more than Heathrow. Paris Charles de Gaulle is in second position with 223 routes, and Amsterdam third with 222.*" But Future Heathrow's belief that there is necessarily a link between the number of interchange passengers using an airport and the number of destinations it serves is questionable. At Heathrow today, interchange passengers make up around 35% of total passenger numbers, up from around 25% in 1992, yet it serves fewer destinations today (184) than it did in the early 1990s (over 200). And Gatwick, which has few interchange passengers, now serves more destinations than Heathrow.

There is little opposition to further expansion any other airports in Europe

Untrue! There are lively campaigns at all the main airports, including Charles de Gaulle, Schiphol and Frankfurt. HACAN is in regular contact with these campaigners. Further expansion at these airports would be as fiercely resisted as any expansion at Heathrow. It is also likely that expansion at these airports would cause air pollution limits in the surrounding areas to exceed the EU legal limits (due to come into force in 2010). Just like Heathrow.

* Interchange passengers consist of transfer passengers (those who change planes at the airport) and transit passengers (those whose plane calls at the airport en route to somewhere else).

