

# SPAGHETTI JUNCTION IN THE SKY !!!

On 23 July 2002, the Government launched a four month nationwide consultation on air transport over the next thirty years. It involves proposals for new airports and runways in many parts of the country.

The implications for the Midlands are particularly severe. Options include –

- **A monster new airport in the green belt between Coventry and Rugby;**
- **A new runway for Birmingham or East Midlands airport;**
- **Expansion of smaller airports such as Coventry, Cosford or Wolverhampton Business Airport.**

## **This is way over the top.**

There is no need for a new runway in the Midlands. People are already suffering serious disturbance from existing levels of traffic. The proposal for a new airport will cause widespread blight and is particularly irresponsible. This leaflet sets out our reasoning in more detail.

Copies of the Government's consultation documents can be obtained by phoning **0845-100-5554**, or on the website - [www.airconsult.gov.uk](http://www.airconsult.gov.uk)

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*before ...*



*... after*

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West Midlands

# One of These Options is Coming to an Area Near YOU.....

A **completely new airport between Coventry and Rugby** would demolish the pretty villages of Church Lawford and Kings Newnham and ruin many surrounding villages. Huge terminals and three runways would destroy about 4,000 acres of Warwickshire's unspoilt, rolling countryside and take a giant slice out of the green belt. The area between Coventry and Rugby would fill up with roads, car parks, industry, warehousing, 21,000 new houses and other related development. The new airport would handle more passengers than Heathrow and over 8 times the number currently using Birmingham, with a flight every 30 seconds or so. 2 miles of Shakespeare's River Avon would disappear underground, covered by tarmac and concrete, with the ancient Fosse Way replaced by a new motorway-style access road. Ryton Organic Gardens and Brandon Marsh Nature Centre would be ruined. ■

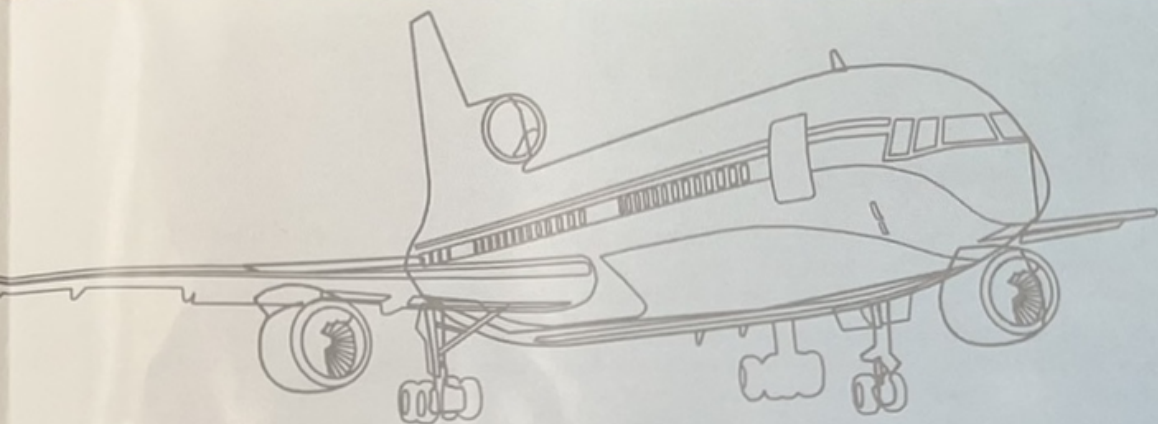
A **second independent runway at Birmingham Airport** would demolish parts of Catherine-de-Barnes and the whole of Bickenhill village and its Conservation Area. It would wipe out the green belt between the A45, M42 and the Grand Union Canal, with huge added impact from new and widened motorways and other roads and associated developments. Many thousands of people would suffer increased noise and air pollution. The A45 would be diverted between the two runways to a new junction on the M42 within sight of Hampton-in-Arden's listed manor. This option would enable Birmingham to handle about 6 times the number of passengers it does now – more than twice the passengers currently using Manchester Airport. ■

A **second runway closer to the existing one at Birmingham Airport** would take less land but be almost as damaging to the green belt between the A45, M42 and Grand Union Canal. The A45 would be diverted south round the new runway, near Damson Parkway, to a new junction on the M42 close to Catherine-de-Barnes. Other impacts would be similar to those above, though fewer houses would be demolished. Birmingham Airport would become as big as Gatwick is now, with 4.5 times its current passengers. ■

A **new runway at East Midlands Airport** would require nearly 1,500 acres of agricultural land, with the village of Diseworth right on the doorstep. Major road works to increase capacity on the M1, A453 and A42, and major new rail infrastructure, would be required. The increased capacity for freight traffic would result in misery for more residents from flights throughout the night, as well as pressure for more land to be released for distribution depots and offices. Depending on the balance between passenger and freight traffic, the airport could cater for almost 14 times as many passengers as now, nearly as much traffic as Gatwick currently handles. ■

A **Maximum Use** option involving more terminal space at Birmingham and East Midlands airports would allow their existing runways to be fully used, enabling Birmingham to handle nearly 3 times as many passengers as it does now, and East Midlands up to 9 times as many. At Birmingham, there would be more exposure to noise and some green belt land would be needed, both for the airport itself and for associated development. Further road and rail improvements would almost certainly be required. At East Midlands, freight traffic would increase significantly in volume and regularity, with greater use of large freighter aircraft, leading to more disturbance from night flights for tens of thousands of people in a wide area around the airport. More land would be needed for freight storage and transshipment facilities, and the road and rail links to serve them. ■

The Maximum Use option could be combined with **greater use of smaller airports**. Expansion at Coventry would require a runway extension and new terminal facilities, leading to some loss of surrounding green belt and increased noise. Expansion of Wolverhampton Business Airport (Halfpenny Green) into a commercial airport would further damage the character of this quiet rural area. Commercial potential at Cosford would depend on the RAF relinquishing all or part of the site and would require a runway extension. ■



# BACKGROUNDS

UK air passenger numbers rose from 32 million in 1970 to 180 million in 2000. This required massive investment in runways and terminals, particularly in the South East. Airports ruin the local environment – noise, air pollution, loss of property, huge increases in road traffic, loss of valuable green belt, threats to wildlife, and a devastating impact on communities and their quality of life. It's not just the airports: the other things they bring with them - maintenance and servicing facilities, hotels, factories, warehouses, housing, large car parks and new roads and railways – take up even more space than the airport itself. Many communities have simply had enough.






Not all the effects are local. Air transport is the fastest growing source of climate change gases which contribute directly to global warming. And what about safety? Ask yourself – can our Air Traffic Control System, struggling desperately to cope with current demand, really deal with growth on the scale the Government is suggesting?

The Government's proposals are based on highly speculative and disputed forecasts that passenger numbers could more than treble over the next 30 years. Most of the increase would be leisure travel, with short breaks leading the way. They are a luxury, not a necessity. If oil prices go through the roof as predicted, many people may not be able to afford them much longer.

Midlands airports currently account for less than 6% of UK passenger traffic but the Government wants to double this to 12%. If the Government ruled out new runways in the South East, a new Midlands airport would become more likely. The aviation industry gets hidden subsidies amounting to some £7 billion every year. There is no tax on aircraft fuel, airport ground vehicles can use tax-reduced red diesel and there is no VAT on plane tickets. The industry barely begins to pay for the environmental costs it imposes on others. This molly-coddling helps to keep the cost of flying down and feeds the remorseless growth in demand.

If the aviation industry paid its way, oil prices rose and the Government was willing to manage demand, as it recommends for other forms of transport, the number of air passengers need not even double over the next thirty years.

## Conclusions . . . .

-  Further rampant growth in demand for air travel cannot be sustained. The aviation industry is spiralling out of control and should be made to pay its way. We must challenge the Government to control the growth in air traffic, not blindly provide for the needs of aviation;
-  If the Government decides not to expand airports in the South East, it does not follow that demand arising there must be met in the Midlands. This would only encourage longer journeys leading to more road and rail congestion;
-  On this basis, neither the new monster airport nor second runways at Birmingham or East Midlands are necessary. They would cause environmental damage out of all proportion to any economic gain.
-  There could be more use of the existing runways at Birmingham and East Midlands but we need to look closely at how this would be achieved to ensure that the social, health and environmental price is not too high: for example disturbance from unrestricted night flying.
-  There may be scope for slightly greater use of some smaller airports, but the government's consultation report fails to provide enough information on which to reach a judgement. Expansion of Wolverhampton Business Airport would be particularly damaging.

## What Can You Do?

# **ACT NOW – THE GOVERNMENT NEEDS TO KNOW YOUR VIEWS**

### Write or e-mail to:

'Consultation on the Future Development of Air Transport in the UK - Midlands'  
Department for Transport  
Zone 1/28c Great Minster House  
76 Marsham Street  
FREEPOST LON 17806  
London SW1P 4YS  
e-mail via [www.airconsult.gov.uk](http://www.airconsult.gov.uk)

*All letters must be received by 30 November 2002.*

### You Could of Course Do Nothing. That Would Mean....

- Intolerable Noise and Disturbance from Night Flights
- More Pollution
- More People Trapped Under Flight Paths
- Planes Every Half Minute or So
- More Doubts about Air and Ground Safety
- Huge Tracts of Unspoilt Countryside Bulldozed to Make Way for Concrete and Tarmac
- Thousands of Acres of Ugly Commercial Sprawl
- More Floods and Extreme Weather
- Wildlife Habitat Destroyed
- Massive Traffic Congestion
- Local Villages Razed to the Ground or Changed Out of All Recognition.

### It's Your Choice.

To obtain further copies of this leaflet, seek more information or join the Council for the Protection of Rural England or Friends of the Earth, please ring Peter Langley (024-7654-0211) or Chris Crean (0121-643-9117).



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