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New poll shows local people support Heathrow third runway

More local residents support a third runway at Heathrow than oppose it, according to a new Populus poll published by Future Heathrow today. The survey also shows that people in the local area think that the advantages of Heathrow generally outweigh the disadvantages.

The poll asked more than one thousand people who live in the 12 local authorities around Heathrow their views on expanding Heathrow by adding a third runway or ending runway alternation. 50% of those polled supported the building of a third runway, compared to just 30% who were opposed. Support was even stronger for the introduction of 'mixed mode' which would increase the capacity of the existing runways, with 56% of residents in support, and just 23% opposed.

The poll also showed that aircraft noise was a lesser concern to local people than issues such as crime and anti-social behaviour, road traffic congestion, and council tax levels.

The results are likely to give the Government confidence to push ahead with the expansion of Heathrow, with a consultation expected to be issued shortly. The poll also sends a warning signal to political parties that there are no votes to be gained in opposing airport expansion.

Lord Soley, Future Heathrow's Campaign Director said:

"This poll shows that people understand the importance of Heathrow to London and the UK. By more than 2 to 1 they say that for their family, their community and the country the advantages of Heathrow outweigh the

disadvantages. There is clear support for the growth of Heathrow, including a third runway.”

The poll also demonstrates that Heathrow is vital for local jobs. 1 in 20 polled say they work at the airport and 11% of people have a member of their family who works at the airport. More than one-quarter have friends who work at Heathrow.

Today, Heathrow has two runways operating at 99% of their permitted capacity. By comparison, Frankfurt has three runways, Paris CDG has four, Amsterdam has five, and all operate at less than 75% of their capacity. The number of destinations served by Heathrow has fallen from 227 in 1990 to 180 today. Over the same period Frankfurt, Paris and Amsterdam have all increased their destinations significantly and can offer new slots to emerging economies. The number of British regional airports served from Heathrow has fallen from 21 to 9 over the same period. But Heathrow's loss has been the continent's gain. Amsterdam and Paris now serve more British regional airports than Heathrow.

Notes to editors:

1. For further information contact Lord Clive Soley on 07785 250456
2. Full poll results are attached. Populus interviewed a random sample of 1,203 adults aged 18+ by telephone between 7th and 17th September 2007. Interviews were conducted across the 12 local authority areas that comprise the 2M Group. These local authority areas were: Ealing, Hammersmith and Fulham, Hillingdon, Hounslow, Kensington and Chelsea, Merton, Richmond, Slough, South Bucks, Spelthorne, Wandsworth, Windsor and Maidenhead. Quotas were set to ensure that the sample was representative of the 12 local authority areas, age, gender, and SEG. The results have been weighted to be representative of all adults across the 2M Group area. Populus is a member of the British Polling Council and abides by its rules. For more details go to www.populuslimited.com
3. Mixed mode involves using both runways for arriving and departing aircraft simultaneously in the same way as at single runway airports like Gatwick and Stansted. Heathrow currently uses one runway for arrivals and the other for departures. Mixed mode could potentially deliver an extra 15% runway capacity at Heathrow by around 2015, allowing up to 540,000 flights per year, compared with today's limit of 480,000.
4. Members of Future Heathrow include Amicus, ATAG, BAA, BALPA, BAR UK, BATA, bmi, British Airways, Boeing UK, CBI, Destination Heathrow, GMB, IATA, London Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Airline Operators Committee (Heathrow), London First, Thames Valley Economic Partnership, TUC, TGWU, Virgin Atlantic Airways, and West London Business.

POPULUS/FUTURE HEATHROW POLL - EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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1. Local population who work at Heathrow.

I am going to read a number of statements relating to Heathrow. For each, please say whether the statement applies or does not apply to you:

	Applies
I work at Heathrow	5%
A member of my family works at Heathrow	11%
I have friends who work at Heathrow	28%

(30% either work at the airport or have friends or family who work at Heathrow)

2. Local population who take flights from Heathrow.

How often do you use Heathrow to fly to, or arrive from, another destination?

More than ten times a year	5%
Between 6 and 10 times a year	6%
Between 3 or 5 times a year	15%
Once or twice a year	37%
Less often than that	20%
Never	16%

3. Priorities for local people.

I am going to read out a number of issues affecting the area that you live in that you may be concerned about. Please say which of the issues concerns you most:

Crime and anti-social behaviour	36%
Road traffic congestion	19%
Council tax levels	16%
Aircraft noise	12%
Litter	8%
Other	1%

4. Benefits v disadvantages of Heathrow

How far do you agree with the following statements about Heathrow?

(a) For me and my family, the benefits of Heathrow generally outweigh the disadvantages

Strongly agree or somewhat agree	53%
Strongly agree	25%
Somewhat agree	29%
Neither agree nor disagree	19%
Somewhat disagree	13%
Strongly disagree	12%
Strongly disagree or somewhat disagree	25%

(b) For my local community, the benefits of Heathrow generally outweigh the disadvantages

Strongly agree or somewhat agree	54%
Strongly agree	22%
Somewhat agree	31%
Neither agree nor disagree	18%
Somewhat disagree	13%
Strongly disagree	11%
Strongly disagree or somewhat disagree	24%

(c) For the country as a whole, the benefits of Heathrow generally outweigh the disadvantages

Strongly agree or somewhat agree	63%
Strongly agree	28%
Somewhat agree	35%
Neither agree nor disagree	13%
Somewhat disagree	11%
Strongly disagree	11%
Strongly disagree or somewhat disagree	22%

5. Support for a third runway.

There are currently two runways at Heathrow. The Government has agreed to support the building of a shorter, third runway at some point between 2015 and 2020, provided that this can be done within stringent environmental limits on noise pollution, air quality, and provided that public transport connections to the airport are improved. Would you strongly support, somewhat support, neither support nor oppose, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose the building of a third runway at Heathrow?

Strongly support or somewhat support	50%
Strongly support	21%
Somewhat support	29%
Neither support nor oppose	17%
Somewhat oppose	9%
Strongly oppose	21%
Strongly oppose or somewhat oppose	30%

6. Support for mixed mode.

Heathrow generally uses one of its two existing runways for departures and the other runway for arrivals in order to minimise noise for local communities. The Government has suggested that Heathrow should consider using its two, existing runways more efficiently by allowing them to handle both arriving and departing aircraft so that more flights can take off and land on them, provided this can be done within environmental limits on noise pollution, air quality, and provided that public transport connections to the airport are improved. Would you strongly support, somewhat support, neither support nor oppose, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose the more efficient use of Heathrow's existing runways so that more flights could take off from, and land at the airport?

Strongly support or somewhat support	56%
Strongly support	26%
Somewhat support	30%
Neither support nor oppose	18%
Somewhat oppose	8%
Strongly oppose	16%
Strongly oppose or somewhat oppose	23%