

Transport Planning Society

PRESS RELEASE

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TPS is today releasing its response to the consultation on the Government's draft framework for aviation.

It criticises the framework for failing to address the serious economic disbenefits from aviation, while emphasising its benefits. The document fails to recognise that the majority of air travel is for leisure purposes, nor does it distinguish sufficiently between the aviation industry and the air travel industry in its analysis. The detrimental impact on the balance of payments of foreign leisure travel is not taken into account, including the serious loss of sales tax revenue from UK residents travelling abroad. In one instance the framework appears to misquote Government statistics on this subject.

Neither is there full consideration of issues such as ensuring that aviation pays its fair share of general tax (it is zero rated for VAT), as well as paying for the serious impact of the environmental damage which it causes. The framework shows clearly how noise problems, particularly at Heathrow, have a major impact.

TPS calls for a new study of how to improve aviation taxation, for example:

- moving to a per plane tax based on maximum take off weight (thus including air freight),
- a noise charge related to numbers affected, or
- a congestion charge for London and South East airports.

The latter two would help to encourage regional airport use.

The response also includes preliminary results from the TPS annual member survey (% score below), which asked:

Aviation policy is becoming a major focus for Government. In this context, which of the following is closest to your view?

South East airports are reaching capacity and must be expanded
(28%)

Airport investment should focus in the regions to support growth there and not in the South East.
(30%)

If air travel were taxed at the same rate as other goods, or to fully reflect its environmental impacts, demand would fall and new capacity would not be needed.
(42%)

Keith Buchan, TPS Chair, said:

"TPS has no fixed position on whether new airport capacity is needed, or where it should be located. What is required first is fair taxation on air travel, which we believe would be higher than today. In this context we could see what the real underlying demand would be. Then a proper framework could be prepared. Above all, we need a long distance travel framework, not just one for air, to ensure that all modes play their part."

Notes for Editors

The Transport Planning Society is dedicated to facilitating, developing and promoting knowledge, understanding and best practice in transport planning. It provides a focus for all those engaged in transport planning, from a full range of relevant backgrounds and other professional affiliations. It is supported by the CIHT, CILT, ICE and RTPI. Website: <http://www.tps.org.uk>

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