

MAJOR NEW HUB AIRPORT PLAN REVEALED FOR NORTH KENT

LONDON MEDWAY AIRPORT BILLED AS ‘THE FUTURE OF THE UK’

A groundbreaking proposal for a new super hub airport in the North Kent Marshes has been launched. The site, north of Cliffe and less than 25 minutes from central London by public transport, has been identified as the most affordable, practical and accessible location for London’s much needed new aviation hub.

The plans for ‘London Medway Airport’ include building a four-runway, multi-modal international airport on 100% existing publicly owned land to serve the UK and Northern Europe.

The adverse economic impact of London’s increasingly problematic aviation restrictions has been well documented in recent months and years, with Heathrow bursting to capacity. A new hub airport in the South East has been encouraged by many senior policy experts in the aviation industry, although some concerns over cost, viability and sustainability have been much talked about.

However, the proposal for London Medway Airport has detailed provision to combat these issues, making the chosen location the most cost effective and potentially the most sustainable amongst all the other currently proposed hub airports for London.

The plans are the result of several months of hard work and research by two young academics with great interest in transport policy and economics. One of the founders, Thomas Aldred, believes that the only solution that makes economic sense is that of London Medway Airport. “The ageing infrastructure and restricted capacity at Heathrow is costing the UK over £1bn every year, due to the lack of access that our small businesses have to emerging markets. A new hub airport is clearly the only real long-term economic option for London and the whole country.

“Additionally, we believe that due to the on-land location of London Medway Airport, our proposed airport along with substantial regional and national infrastructure developments, would cost just £30bn to build; significantly less than all of the other similarly sized airports being proposed in the region.”

As well as being the most affordable option, the new plans would also be the easiest and quickest to construct. The team behind the proposal believe that the airport could be fully built and operational in less than seven years if construction began today. This presents a substantial reduction in construction time in comparison to other proposals, allowing the UK to reap the economic benefits of the project sooner rather than later.

The other director of London Medway Airport, Luke Douglas, explains: “Our plans are not only the most economically viable, but also the most practical. London Medway Airport will be operational within seven years, and will also have the added benefit of being less than 25 minutes from zone 1 of London by rail. This is the closest potential site to London, which increases convenience and connectivity. Our location is also excellent due to the proximity to the already under construction, £1.5bn London Gateway Port development, which is directly opposite the Cliffe site, and will be linked to the airport via a new Lower Thames Crossing road bridge.”

It is thought by logistics experts that the combination of London Gateway and London Medway Airport could be formidable in creating a world class transport and logistics hub on the banks of the Thames.

The Cliffe site has previously been turned down by the Government in 2003, when the 'cost of building a new airport' was cited as a major reason. However, with the admission that a new airport is definitely needed, the Cliffe location is now considered viable. Another issue is the presence of large numbers of wintering birds in the North Kent Marshes. However, Luke Douglas is confident that wildlife in the area will not be harmed if London Medway Airport gets the go ahead.

“At Wallasea Island, we are seeing one of the largest man-made nature reserves in history being created. There are dozens of similarly large sites in the South East and East of England where new reserves can be built, and we are committed to doing this, in order to offset the loss of vital habitats at Cliffe. We are absolutely determined to ensure that not a single bird or indeed any animal is harmed by our airport.”

The founders of London Medway Airport are confident of the project delivering many advantages:

- A capacity of 150 million passengers and 3.5million metric tonnes of cargo would represent the largest airport in the world, more than capable of catering to the UK's aviation needs for many decades.
- With four runways, coupled with extensive local, regional and national infrastructure projects, LMA will be able to handle passengers 24/7.
- Economic benefits will be brought to Medway and the wider area of Kent. Over 100,000 jobs may be needed at the new airport, and tens of thousands will be indirectly supported in the local area. This would go some way to alleviating the region's high unemployment figures and stalled economic development.
- A high-speed rail link will take passengers to central London in less than 25 minutes, while a new Lower Thames Crossing will provide a quick road link to the M25, and the London Gateway Port and Logistics Park.
- No homes will be lost and no residents displaced. The immediate take-off/landing flight paths would also largely be over water or sparsely populated land, allowing for 24/7 operation.

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Written for London Medway Airport Group, 2013.

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