

Amicus Raises concern for the future of British Aviation

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Amicus Britain's biggest private sector union has joined the campaign for the environmentally-sustainable expansion of Heathrow Airport.

Amicus believes it is absolutely crucial to protecting the airport's status as a world-class hub.

Gordon White, National Civil Aviation Officer of Amicus, said:

"The future of Heathrow Airport as one of the most important international onward destination airports in the world is in jeopardy. Heathrow provides direct employment to 70,000 people most of who are in Trade Unions and enjoy reasonable terms and conditions plus 100,000 associated jobs in the south east of England.

Heathrow have moved down from being the most important international airport in Europe to being fourth on the list overtaken by Frankfurt, Amsterdam and Paris and if capacity remained restricted at Heathrow more and more international airlines would route their aircraft through other European airports. Thus if nothing is done to improve capacity Heathrow will move even further down the list."

Lord Clive Soley, Campaign Director of Future Heathrow says,

"Too many people take Heathrow for granted and assume that because it has always been there and always kept the area prosperous it was not under threat". He reminded them that people had been equally complacent about the future of the London docks and yet within a few short years they had been replaced by more competitive and technically modern alternatives. "When the docks went 50,000 jobs went with them and East London took years to recover. Don't let that happen to the Heathrow region."

Heathrow has contributed hugely to the prosperity of the UK as a whole over the last 50 years by providing an internationally renowned gateway to the UK, to Europe and to the world.

Over the last 40 years we have seen the decline of much of our manufacturing industry, our ship building industry and our coal and steel industry. We currently have a very successful civil air transport industry providing a huge inward flow of cash to the UK and many thousands of good UK jobs, as well as acting as a conduit for other businesses coming to the UK.

We of course have to address the environmental and human issues that undoubtedly arise from any important transport system and any successful industry. To do that will need investment.

Investment and the jobs that go with it will only be there if we have a vibrant and competitive civil air transport industry based in the UK, an industry which is capable of

competing across the world. We have that now don't let it slip away because we take its success for granted.

Gordon White urged those concerned with employment in the UK to raise these issues with community leaders, Councillors and MP's.

He said public, politicians and community leaders in most of the UK understood the importance of a successful aviation infrastructure for their area and for the UK as a whole, but in the south east of England a large part of the public and politicians take for granted the benefits a successful aviation industry brings to their communities.

He said it's time we in the trade unions made our voice heard, we don't want our aviation industry to slip away in the way that so much of British industry has.