

Key Points from Aviation workshops May 26 (Transport 2000) and 27 (Plane Stupid)

What message do we want to put across?

At Plane Stupid we decided we didn't want to target the individual; we target the industry, the government - those profiting and making it easy to profit and pushing it on the individual. So the individual is indirectly criticised but in context. We want to say to people, no further expansion of airports rather than, don't fly, but still make the challenge to individuals implicit (like targetting the travel agents - targetting industry but highlighting individual responsibility)

On the other hand, we need to ask people: do you care more about your foreign holiday or your children's future? And if campaigns can bring in the local residents or be led by them... we can highlight people who are choosing not to fly and why - Flightpledge etc. www.seat61.com shows people how to travel the world without flying. Eurolines coaches are much cheaper than trains, similar to the cheap flights. Bring in the solutions, the alternatives, offer them to individuals. Travel less, have your holiday in Britain.

Night flights would be a popular target, and they are more environmentally problematic, have a greater warming factor. Anything that restricts capacity at all is worth targetting.

Worldwide Fund for Nature says, if we gave equal pollution rights to everyone in the world, you can have 2 1/2 tons carbon dioxide per person per year - for everything. But that's probably too high, a ton may be more realistic. A return flight to Barcelona is approx a ton. Basically we can't have lots of aviation and equity. If we worked it out per nation - it could only be really important flights.

Why do we feel the need to travel so much? To escape, to get away from it all? What about thinking of building lives that we don't need to get away from? There's that lastminute.com - "are you getting your 5 breaks a year?" - pushing this idea that it's healthy, that you need it. This society is not happy - mental illness, addictions - we are all trying to escape. That's what we need to address.

"Visiting third world countries may be a luxury you can afford, but it's not one they can afford." Challenging the myth that it's good for those areas because of tourism.

A lot of airports aren't profitable. Apparently Stanstead has gone from losing 30 million pounds, to profiting by the same amount, on the basis of their carpark. Their carparking and retail outlets subsidise them. Both those are good direct action and campaign targets.

One of the lines we argued about in a Climate Camp press release - it was going to be, "we should close Heathrow down". We talked for ages about it - what about people's jobs. But in the end we made it "we shouldn't be talking about expanding airports, we should be talking about closing them down." Heathrow is a particularly good target for this line because it causes so much disruption to so many people...we can actually say, let's just get rid of this airport. We figured out that Heathrow emits the equivalent of 31 million CO2 tonnes per year (just the planes) which makes it the biggest emitter, bigger than Europe's biggest power station.

Is it enough to campaign just to close terminals? Do we say, we must close airports - sounds crazy but it's actually necessary, or do you say simply what people are ready to hear? How can we judge what people are supposedly ready to hear? Society's biggest changes always started with people saying apparently crazy things.

There is a way of pitching ourselves which gives us a lot of flexibility. We can make the main point: we should not be increasing flights, we should be going in the opposite direction. Most people will see that. The question is how far in the opposite direction. If we are to achieve the 90% cuts in emissions we actually need to do, then a lot of the way in the opposite direction.

The thing about Climate Change at the moment is, today's radical speech is tomorrow's accepted reality. If we talk about aircraft emissions being brought in the right direction, cuts of 90, 80 or 60% - well, Heathrow is getting ready to build Terminal 5. Climate Camp turns up and says - we're here to mothball Terminals 5,4, and 3: there's your 60% cut sorted! We can literally send mothballing crews to mothball 60% of every airport - 60% of planes - whatever. We could get that reduction message across.

The forces of darkness are saying, it's all ok because we've got the European Emissions Trading Scheme which aviation emissions are going to come into in 2012, we hope, so carbon trading will sort it all out. Our response is: show us scientists that say that this system will work... also, emissions will be allocated not across the spectrum so everyone gets to choose. If your country is allocated 10%, it will be the wealthy that get access to the equivalent flights.

From looking at the aviation sector with a strategy tool, the two main drivers for the growth in aviation appear to be 1) the influence the aviation lobby has on government policy - eg in permitting airport expansion, no fuel tax or VAT, duty free sales etc; and 2) the acceptability and cultural desirability of flying. Doing away with the first would make flights much more expensive, and doing away with the second is self-explanatory! Possibly one angle would be to make support for the aviation industry a political hot potato, as support for the tobacco industry is seen now. This could mean looking at MP's voting records, or corporate links between PR firms and the aviation industry.

Aviation emissions more damaging

Aviation emissions are more damaging because, as they are released at high altitude, the resulting concentrated water vapour and the nitrogen oxide create an effect whereby more warming happens because the cirrus clouds that are formed as a result stop heat escaping from the earth. The government has set the "radiative forcing factor" (RFF) for high altitude aviation emissions at between 2 and 4, but the latest from the IPCC is that they have set it at 2. So effectively, we double the aviation industry's carbon emissions figure to get their total global warming factor.

Airport expansion and UK emissions reduction targets

More airport expansion now for future use will guarantee that we cannot meet our national commitment to reducing our UK CO2 emissions - carbon emissions alone - to a level that MIGHT prevent dangerous climate change.

Plane's Stupid's policy is NO airport expansion; if we create the capacity it becomes inevitable we will use it.

Since 1990, the UK's carbon dioxide emissions without aviation and shipping have actually sometimes been on a decline. But shipping and particularly aviation figures have been on the increase, putting the UK's total emissions on the increase.

The government says the segment of UK emissions the aviation industry was responsible for was at about 5.5% in 2004, now it's about 6.5%. With the RFF that's 13%. The government only measures the outward flights. So it's more than 13%.

The aviation industry just keeps repeating (inaccurately): "It's only 2%"; they're talking of global carbon emissions alone. But the UK government's own figures from a parliamentary question say 13%, taking into account the RFF. Then if you include the return flights of British citizens - which the government doesn't - it's nearer to 20% of total UK greenhouse gas emissions. So with Airport Watch we've agreed - if we have to give one figure, we say 13%, cos the government will admit that. But if we have room to explain, we include the return flights and say nearer 20%.

Projected emissions from aviation

The government has 3 projections for aviation emissions growth. They take three scenarios, based on: growth in the aviation industry, fuel efficiency in the aviation industry, and various other economic factors. (This includes the "new technology will sort it out" line.) Their worst case scenario for emissions would equal achieving 50-60% of their own target of a 60% reduction in emissions by 2050, which is well above what scientists say is the necessary reduction. Even their best case scenario is simply 100% of their *realistic* target.

- When the Tyndall Centre used the same airport emissions categories as the government, but applied their own realistic figures to aviation growth, fuel efficiency, etc, they came up with their own version of this graph, that suggests - if we turned off every light, shut down every road, shut down every factory, stopped eating - only then (because of aviation emissions) might we achieve 100% of the government's supposedly realistic total UK emissions cutting target. How does the government get away with calling this realistic? Because the aviation emissions *aren't included in the target*.

The best thing that could happen, for the environmental movement in general and those campaigning on transport and aviation particularly, is to get aviation emissions included in the government's target figures. Then the government will have to take it seriously, because it will be obviously ridiculous that either 50% or 100% of their total carbon budget for 2050 be used up solely on aviation emissions.

The growth from aviation massively offsets any technological improvement - they allow for that technological improvement in their own figures above in their 3 imagined scenarios. So - Plane Stupid has been stating this: any airport expansion makes achieving our national carbon emission commitment impossible.

160,000 people per year die from climate change - World Health Organisation figure.

Plane Stupid's inspiration is the 90s roads movement; the economic effect of direct action is often enough to put off investors into new projects. On average the 90s anti-roads movement added 24.5% to the costs of road building - and in at least one case 120% (the M11) And they shelved most of the new roads at the time as a result.

Media, Plane Stupid and aviation

Plane Stupid has really good relationships and links with journalists, there's a queue who want to come on actions! We get phoned several times a week for quotes, for big business journals even. **The low cost carriers like RyanAir and Easyjet are starting not to be able to fill their planes; the big business world seems to be suggesting they are feeling the effects of people choosing not to fly for environmental reasons.** That's why they're starting to give away those "penny flights" recently.

Government subsidies to the aviation industry

The aviation industry is effectively subsidised by being tax exempt: no VAT, no fuel tax...these subsidies are estimated to work out at about £9bn per annum. They do sometimes get direct subsidies, they benefit from duty free sales, airports subsidise a lot of their work, especially BAA. It's been worked out that there's a 19 billion pound tourist deficit as a result of increased aviation, from tourists flying out of Britain as opposed to tourists flying in and spending money here.

Where's the main expansion happening?

Everywhere! There's not many places in the country where there's NOT expansion plans, though it's not all new runways. Planned runways are at Heathrow, Stansted - Gatwick's been shelved for ten years - Edinburgh, Glasgow, Liverpool? [massive expansion also planned at Manchester - doubling of capacity!]- there's seven total. But every single-runway airport could potentially be as big as Gatwick, which is single-runway and takes 65 million passengers a year.

Every single-runway airport in the country has applied to expand usage, and they do have to get permission for this expansion even if there's no new building. The reason why aviation is key now, is because they're making all these decisions on permissions NOW, and they are going to be informed by our lobbying, by direct action, by the Climate Camp, by Plane Stupid - and anyone else who can make themselves heard - Airport Watch, local residents groups...

Who gives the go-ahead for airport expansion?

These permissions initially are supposed to come from local planning authorities. But if they don't make the "right" decisions, central government takes over and there's a public enquiry and basically they get fixed. But worse than that, there's the government's Barker Report, which is about "streamlining" the planning system to stop local objections getting in the way, and that's basically for new roads, new runways, and new nuclear power stations. They're saying it's for windfarms, but the others are the big issues really.

Can campaigns be won on anything other than planning permissions/breaches?

Only two transport public enquiries in British history have ever been won by people opposing the project, both roads in the 90s. Mainly you can participate in the public

enquiry to slow things down, increase costs, inform the public. Heathrow Terminal 5 had the longest public enquiry in history.

At Stansted for example the campaign is putting lots of climate change science into the public enquiry, they've got experts coming in, people in low-lying countries who'll be affected by climate change coming in even. But unless there's overall pressure - you're unlikely to win.

There are people for example doing specific campaigns on night flights, there was a really big campaign in Brussels targetting DHL on night flights (it was all DHL package deliveries) and they had a lot of success.

Plane Stupid gave its presentation on aviation and climate change to the South East Regional Planning Assembly and it persuaded them to not approve any more expansion in the south east. But regional assemblies have a lot less power than the regional development agencies, who are in charge of all those frameworks. So although the regional assembly in the south east does have a policy on aviation, it doesn't actually mean very much. The development agency has all the power about making those decisions.

Who is flying?

Studies show - still rich people. It actually isn't poor people now able to travel the world, as the aviation lobby tells us. Only 7% of all flights are made by people who earn £15,000 pa or less. The average wage of someone travelling from Stansted was £48,000 pa. (Report from "Predict and Decide")

How to oppose planning applications and development plans

The reality is the planning laws are pants. English Nature have a very good guide to understanding the planning system and its various stages.

See planningdistaster.co.uk - very important to oppose the Barker report that is pushing a law change that will allow developments to virtually bypass opposition - see above - they're hoping to get it through by autumn.

UPCOMING IMPORTANT DATES

- Autumn 2007: public consultation on Heathrow 3rd Runway. Sixth terminal also to be proposed in autumn.

- March 2008 terminal 5 set to open at Heathrow. People without criminal records could apply to volunteer to test it...they're recruiting 1000 testers for September...

- end of 2008 early 2009: BAA Ferrovial moves towards public enquiry for 3rd runway at Heathrow (massive opposition including political)

For more information, see www.planestupid.com

For a resources and reports (such as the Tyndall Centre's [Growth scenarios for EU & UK aviation: contradictions with climate policy](#)), see

www.planestupid.com/index.php?location=resources