

NoTRAG Press Release

No Third Runway Action Group www.notrag.org

For immediate use

28 November 2007

Consult? – No, confuse!

The Department for Transport's, 15 page, Summary Document "Adding Capacity at Heathrow" has been sent to 230,000 households

Myth: By now 230,000 households ¹ around Heathrow will be becoming familiar with the proposals to expand Heathrow,

Fact: By now 230,000 householders around Heathrow will be confused.

Why?

- To be able to understand this document and its questions people need to be extremely well educated – probably to degree level and beyond. ² (the average reading age in the UK is 9 years). ³
- This document does not appear to be available in other languages
- This document is not written in Plain English ⁴ – but in civil-service speak – and may even qualify for a '**golden bull' award**' ⁵

Myth: We are holding a series of public exhibitions in the Heathrow area to give you the chance to talk to experts about how potential developments at the airport might affect your community. ⁶

Fact:

- Venues are not in all the communities affected:-
 - The Cranford venue is not in Cranford or Cranford Cross but on the Bath Road in Harlington
 - The Colnbrook venue is not in Colnbrook but beside the Immigration Detention Centre in Harmondsworth.
 - The West Drayton venue is on the main roundabout at the M4 junction with inadequate parking provision.
 - Although people in Hayes will be affected there is NO venue in Hayes
- No information is available about booking signers / loop system at the consultation events
- There is no information about the availability of translators

Christine Shilling, NoTRAG's Press Secretary says 'this consultation insults, confuses and probably falls foul of the Government's own legislation on discrimination. One wonders quite how we are being consulted when it is being made so difficult to get to a public meeting, when people with learning difficulties cannot access the documents, when non-English speakers or those with hearing difficulties do not appear to be catered for.'

Stop insulting us. Produce documents people can read and understand, find venues we can get to and people who can answer our questions. If you fail to do all this nothing you say can be believed. Unless people can **READ** and **REPLY** to your questions they have not been consulted. And if people aren't consulted any data produced from this consultation is irrelevant – invalid and totally unrepresentative of the population it claims to be consulting.'

Notes for Editors

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- ¹ Ministerial briefing held 21st November 2007 informed groups that 230k households in the Heathrow communities would be mailed the Summary Document
 - ² To understand Para 1.25 and question B6 to point 10 on page 3 one needs to be a post-graduate - see
<http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/campaign/SMOG.html>
 - ³ Dr Maged Boulos from Bath University:
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/health/3641634.stm>
 - ⁴ Plain English work with the DfT but have not seen this document
 - ⁵ <http://www.plainenglish.co.uk/goldenbulls.htm>
 - ⁶ <http://www.dft.gov.uk/consultations/open/heathrowconsultation/furtherinformation/>

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