

Haven't We Heard It All Before?

Will an extended runway and an additional 20,000 seats really allow Alderney to expand in the way States Members and Chamber of Commerce envisage?

Not according to some of the reports on which over the past 20 years, much taxpayers' money has been spent investigating the development of Alderney airport.

If it wasn't what they want to hear, it was usually filed away, never to be seen again, until somebody came up with the idea of commissioning another report. Needless to say, if that didn't say the right things, it went the way of the others – and so on.

Just for the historic record, a few quotes showing that we have all been here before.

Alderney Airport Remediation Panel – 2005

No consideration was given to the possible extension of the runway. It was considered that the opinion that such an extension would lead to an increase in visitor numbers thereby adding to the Island's economy was not sufficiently proven to warrant any further investigation.

BurksGreen Alderney Airport Master Plan – 2006

The need for the development of the airport beyond its current capacity and capability is dependent on demand. The evidence for increased demand is presently sparse and based only on tourism initiatives such as those presently being developed by private industry.

Frontier – Alderney Economic Development Study – 2014

An extended runway is not essential to reversing Alderney's economic and population decline.

Moving to ATR planes would reduce the frequency of the service to Alderney. Frequency is seen as of central importance to passengers.

Currently there is not sufficient demand to necessitate larger planes. It is not clear that demand would increase in the event of an extended runway.

York Aviation – An extended runway for Alderney – 2017

The idea of a longer runway is based on high-risk assumptions that are unsustainable, given the likely effect of the introduction of larger aircraft on the frequency of air services offered. Fundamentally, this conclusion is driven by our analysis of the effect of the longer runway, leading to the operation of larger aircraft and so reducing the effective frequency of air services offered without any compensatory reduction in air fares.

The negative economic effects of this are clearly illustrated in the transport economic appraisal such that it would simply not be realistic to assume that the introduction of larger aircraft would result in an uplift in population and tourism.

States of Deliberation - States of Guernsey – 2018

The report demonstrated that the economic growth assumptions on which the runway extensions were based were largely unfounded.

They concluded in their report that introduction of larger aircraft before passenger growth was in evidence, would be more likely to increase the costs of the routes to/from Alderney than to reduce them, leading to higher operating losses for the airline concerned and potentially higher costs of subsidy, even on the basis of reduced frequencies of service and that this would result in no reduction in air fares.

plus ça change