Büro für MEHR unveils DRIVE THROUGH AIRPORT design for UK airports

Groundbreaking proposal could resolve the UK's long-term airport capacity crisis and save Heathrow.

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As part of the on-going debate surrounding the UK's future aviation strategy *Büro für MEHR* have submitted a proposal to the Airports Commission to respond to a forecast capacity shortage in aviation.

DRIVE THROUGH AIRPORT (DTA) is a groundbreaking design that will redefine airport operations, resulting in a time, space and cost efficient airport. It is conceived to improve the aviation experience for stakeholders including airport operators, airlines, passengers and the general public.

The UK faces growing competition from emerging mega-hub airports around the world. But the population density of London and the South East make endless expansion difficult. Mayor of London Boris Johnson has called for an expanded hub airport in order to remain competitive, but said: "Anyone who believes there would be the space to do that at Heathrow, which already blights the lives of hundreds of thousands of Londoners, is quite simply crackers."

The DTA design makes expanded capacity – even at Heathrow – possible, and at a lower cost to taxpayer wallets and the environment. And it isn't "crackers" at all.

The DTA design proposes a revolutionary airport in which aircraft "drive through" the terminals, in special pathways underneath the passenger areas. This structure optimises aircraft turnaround by replacing the standard gate structure with dedicated 'Pit Stops' for de-boarding, servicing and boarding. The design can be implemented in existing and new airports. Regardless of which UK airport the Commission recommends for expansion, DTA infrastructure would enhance its efficiency and sustainability.

Büro für MEHR carried out performance studies implementing DTA technology in Heathrow, Gatwick, Stansted, Thames Estuary and Birmingham Airport. In comparison to conventional airport designs, the DTA design would substantially reduce cost, footprint and environmental impact.

Miklos Deri, the founding director and mind behind the design, said: "We believe the Airports Commission should consider, if not push for, a radical approach to transform aviation into an economically viable and environmentally sustainable field."

DTA "Heathrow City" Airport Vision for 2030

The DRIVE THROUGH AIRPORT results in an airport with half the footprint of a conventional facility. Using DTA infrastructure, 160 hectares of land would be made available in the heart of the Heathrow airport, allowing the development of the first real Airport City Supernode. It could be comprised of offices, hotels, retail, short-term apartments, a convention centre and leisure facilities.

"Heathrow (Airport) City" could become a leading model for other airports by becoming a sustainable community. Profits generated could be partially dedicated to noise mitigation improvements in surrounding areas and to improving public transportation access.

The proposal is designed to increase Heathrow's capacity to a total of 105 million passengers. Terminal 1 and Terminal 4 become obsolete, while Terminal 3 can be modified to fit in the airport grid. Together with additional capacity generated at Gatwick or Stansted, long term capacity targets can be met with much more flexibility than with a single hub solution.

Proposals have been made to locate just such a mega hub in the Thames Estuary. Büro für MEHR questions the feasibility and reasonable operability of such a facility due to its sheer size. The success of a mega hub would further depend on Heathrow's closure, which would have far reaching implications for many lives.