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PLAN LAUNCHED FOR LONDON AIRPORT ON THE GOODWIN SANDS

MAYOR OF LONDON'S AVIATION ADVISER WELCOMES £39BN PROPOSAL

Sandbanks that have been a serious hazard to shipping for as long as vessels have sailed the English Channel, have been identified as the potential answer to London's requirement for a new hub airport.

The Goodwin Sands, which lie just 1.8 miles (3KM) off the east coast of Kent, are being proposed as the site for the new hub airport needed for London.

The proposal is the brainchild of London-based maritime engineers, Beckett Rankine, whose Director, Tim Beckett explains: "We believe that an offshore hub airport is the only option that can realistically provide the four new, independent runways that research reveals London needs.

"If the Davies Commission endorses the long-term requirement for a new, four runway hub airport for London, then locating it at Goodwin will have the least adverse social and environmental impact of any option. It is certainly the most sustainable solution available."

The editor of New Civil Engineer, Antony Oliver, has welcomed the proposal: "Beckett Rankine has brought an intelligent engineering solution to the challenge of providing for the future expansion of London's runway capacity.

"Goodwin Airport is a solution that needs to be considered along with the Foster proposal and the expansion of Heathrow."

The Mayor of London's Aviation Adviser, Daniel Moylan said: "The Mayor has been encouraging proposals for a new airport to the east of London and this proposal is welcome as a contribution to a critical national debate and as a demonstration that a new airport is feasible and deliverable.

"The arguments for the construction of a new hub airport in the UK are overwhelming and this proposal offers one option of how to build it. We now urgently need to recognise that a new hub airport is the answer to our aviation capacity problems and press ahead with considering the best way to deliver that airport."

Beckett Rankine has identified a number of advantages for the Goodwin Sands site.

- The site comfortably provides space for four runways 1.5km apart enabling independent runway operation to maximize capacity – other alternatives do not.
- The Goodwin Sands location offers excellent transport links with a 40-minute high-speed rail connection to London via the existing HS1 line. Road access is via the A2 and M20. There will be Eurostar connections to Europe.
- The site is within UK territorial waters and owned by the Crown Estate.

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- Unlike the other solutions connected to the land, this alternative will allow take off and landing over water, enabling unrestricted 24-hour operations.
- This site will not impact on any protected environment or interfere with any shipping lanes.
- Unlike the Thames estuary the site is not a bird breeding area.
- The development will not require the demolition of homes or displacement of residents.
- Unlike other solutions, siting the airport on the Goodwin Sands will avoid the need to demolish recently built wind farms.

Tim Beckett said: "The location of an airport offshore is an alternative that crowded island nation's are turning to across the globe.

"It is the solution recently adopted at South Korea's new Incheon Airport and at Kansai Airport in Japan and in Hong Kong.

"Since the 1970s there have been several proposals for locating a new airport in the Thames Estuary. These include proposals for Cliffe and Lord Foster's plans at the Isle of Grain.

"All the sites within the estuary have significant disadvantages. Each proposal is located in at least one internationally designated, environmentally sensitive area. All the sites either interfere with shipping lanes or else are too small to provide four runways sufficiently spaced for independent operation.

"The land connected sites do not provide take off and landing over water which ought to be the principal benefit of a new offshore airport since it enables 24-hour operations, maximising utilisation of the airport.

"Goodwin Airport has none of these disadvantages."

Beckett Rankine is a London-based international engineering consultancy that specialises in the planning, design and project management of marine infrastructure. Many of the firm's designs have been groundbreaking.

A recent project involved the creation of the world's largest manmade harbour in Qatar to accommodate the country's rapidly increasing gas exports. The Beckett Rankine designs for the port of Ras Laffan delivered a massive expansion including construction of over 22km of breakwaters enclosing an area similar to that required for the Goodwin Airport island.

One of the best known specialists in marine design and engineering, Beckett Rankine has a corporate history that dates back over 100 years and includes involvement in many of the most important marine projects across the globe. The firm was involved in the creation of the Mulberry Harbours in Normandy in 1944.

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MEDIA CONTACT: IAN MUIR ON 07973 848376