

## **PRESS RELEASE:**

### **PROPOSAL FOR LONDON AIRPORT ON THE GOODWIN SANDS PROMOTED IN FRANCE**

#### **£39BN PROPOSAL COULD 'PROMOTE CROSS-CHANNEL CO-OPERATION AND BOOST NORTHERN FRANCE ECONOMY'**

The UK is currently debating its greatest infrastructure decision for a generation, 'Where should future hub airport capacity be provided?' With Heathrow full and all political parties ruling out additional runways there an alternative site is required. Expansion of Stanstead, Luton and Gatwick airports are all strongly resisted. Proposals for new airports in the Thames Estuary face massive environmental difficulties.

The newest proposal is for an airport on the Goodwin Sands which lie just 3km east of the Kent coast and 30km north-west of Calais. These sandbanks, which have been a serious shipping hazard for as long as vessels have sailed the English Channel, could now be a major international airport.

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 south-east England needs.

"The south of England is densely populated and there are no suitable sites onshore for such a major item of infrastructure. Current proposals for a new airport in the Thames estuary have encountered equal resistance from environmentalists and local residents. Locating an airport at Goodwin will have the least environmental impact of any option. It is the most sustainable solution available.

"Goodwin Airport will be connected directly to the Channel Tunnel providing a fast connection to Calais and the European high speed rail network. The economic benefit of the airport will therefore spread well beyond east Kent to northern France and Belgium."

The editor of New Civil Engineer magazine, 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.

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."

The BBC's South East Business Correspondent, Mark Norman said: "The fact that it is being called a "hub for northern Europe" gives us a clue as to what the architects are thinking. The discussions about UK airport capacity include arguments about how we need to integrate with and compete against our European neighbours. This new plan might offer a chance to do both."

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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 line. Road access is via the A2 and M20. There will be Eurostar rail connections to Europe.
- Ferry services can serve Dover, Ramsgate, Calais and Dunkirk.
- Unlike solutions connected to the land, Goodwin Airport will allow take-off and landing over water, enabling unrestricted 24-hour operations.
- This site will not impact on any protected environment – unlike other alternatives.
- The site does not interfere with any shipping lanes.
- The airport will not require the demolition of homes or displacement of existing major infrastructure – unlike all other alternatives.
- Goodwin Airport would provide a major economic boost for the economy in East Kent, Northern France and Belgium.

Tim Beckett said: “The UK government forecasts that all airports in the south-east will be full by 2030 at the latest with a doubling of passenger numbers by 2050. The country faces a severe shortage in airport capacity for which there is no easy solution.

“While much of the airport debate has been dictated by local political issues the time is now right for the nation to take a broader view and to consider the wider benefits that a new hub airport can deliver, if it is built in the right location.

“Goodwin Airport, with its close proximity to France and the Channel Tunnel, has the unique potential to bring economic growth and regeneration to both sides of the English Channel.

“Goodwin Airport would be a flagship for cross-border co-operation and integration. It would also give northern Europe the best hub airport in the World.”

**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. Beckett Rankine’s 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 UK’s best known specialists in marine design, 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 1944 and the town of Arromanches-les-Bains

erected a monument to the memory of Allan Beckett (Tim's father) in 2009.

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Issued by Beckett Rankine

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