COMMUNITIES: Community Action

Activity 1

Case study: Heathrow Airport expansion

For many years, major airlines and other businesses that operate from Heathrow Airport have been pressuring the Government to build a third runway and sixth terminal at Heathrow. The many arguments in favour include the creation of jobs, ease of congestion and improvement of flight connections to the UK and abroad, which would encourage business to come to London and boost the UK economy. This would lessen the risk of business, passenger and cargo flights using competitor airports like Schiphol in Amsterdam, Holland.

In 2003, the Government's Transport Secretary announced the plans for expansion. Since that time there have been protests from the general public, politicians, organisations, businesses and campaign groups. Some of the major arguments against the expansion include:

- the destruction of houses, buildings (including historic buildings), greenbelt land and even an entire village
- increases in noise pollution over a wider area
- increases in emissions of greenhouse gases due to the extra flights
- increases in traffic to and from the airport
- the huge amount of money it will cost, which could be spent on other Government responsibilities.

The ultimate decision will be taken by the Government but protesters use a number of different methods to influence its decision.

Read through the case study above. Do you agree with the expansion plans or do you think this should be stopped? What other advantages and disadvantages of this expansion can you think of?

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COMMUNITIES: Community Action cont'd

Note down some of your thoughts below. What might be the next step for each side – the Government and the protestors - in dealing with this issue?

Now choose another example of a community action project that resulted in a change in your local community or in another part of the world. What were the advantages and disadvantages of the project?

Activity 2

Think about where you and your family normally buy your food and general goods. Do you shop locally using independent businesses or do you shop in 'chain stores'?

- Discuss with your classmates which goods you tend to buy from chain stores and what you can buy from local independent businesses. Are the answers different or the same? Why?
- Consider your local community, what do you think would be a better way to support the local economy?

Activity 3

Start a LETS scheme within your class. What goods and skills could you trade with one another? Try it out for two weeks and then evaluate the benefits and disadvantages of using such a scheme.

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