

Why the direct Alderney-Southampton link is vital to Alderney

We all know the value of the direct Alderney-Southampton link. This has a huge impact on our tourism and businesses, together with the importance of simply keeping in touch with family and friends in the UK. The route is extremely well used, with very high booking levels. Without full rehabilitation of the airport, there is a distinct risk that this route would be lost to Alderney when the current PSO expires in December 2025.

The impact of losing ACI-SOU

2020 research by Clarity Economic Consulting (CEC) confirmed Alderney's own fact-finding that withdrawing the Southampton route would cost Alderney – and therefore Guernsey as the tax authority – between £1m and £3m in direct and indirect revenue in Year One, with a well-researched central estimate of £1.8m. Alderney's economy would plummet and place an ever-greater social burden and cost on Guernsey's shoulders.

The economic effect

CEC warned the Policy & Finance Committee in 2020 that welfare, health, education and infrastructure costs would spiral while direct and indirect tax revenue would be considerably reduced. In addition, key developments would be lost as an economic driver and revenue source to both islands. Even the then decision to reduce the number of Southampton flights put projects such as the Fort Tourgis development on the shelf, although interest could be rekindled with the prospect of airport refurbishment.

Can they not travel via Guernsey?

Of course, they would have to. But in far fewer numbers. There is no doubt that withdrawing the Southampton service would lead to a damaging contraction of Alderney's economy and a return to previous economic problems such as those experienced in the Noughties, including depopulation.

Alderney is proud of the enormous efforts made to ignite and expand our economy, not least as a beautiful place to live and work, and an attractive destination for thousands of visitors. All of this would be put in jeopardy at a stroke if the direct UK route, with its excellent fast direct communication networks to/from London (just one hour), the south-east and beyond, was lost.