BRISTOL AIRPORT WARNS LOCAL ECONOMY COULD LOSE £843M

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Bristol has become the latest airport to clash with the Government over aviation policy.

Britain's ninth busiest airport warned that its local economy could lose £843million if Wales wins the right to set a lower rate of passenger duty for passengers travelling from Cardiff Airport.

Air Passenger Duty is a levy set by the Government. If Wales is given autonomy over the rate, Bristol Airport warns it will see a 25 per cent drop in passenger numbers by 2020 as they flock to neighbouring Cardiff where flights would be cheaper.

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Separately, Europe's third-biggest budget airline, Norwegian Air, posted fourth-quarter earnings above expectations.

It has launched flights to the Middle East, south-east Asia and the United States, bringing the low-cost model to the long-haul market.

In a blow for Heathrow Airport, the independent regulator for railways has ruled against it seeking to charge train operators, such as Crossrail, to use its Heathrow Express track.

Heathrow paid more than £1billion building the line into Central London, and had hoped to charge Crossrail an annual £40million to use it.

But John Larkinson, a director at regulator the Office of Rail and Road, said: 'We have not received sufficient evidence… to support its [Heathrow's] proposed charges.'

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