

JB/vjs
31st October 2013

FOR THE ATTENTION OF SIR HOWARD DAVIES

Dear Sir Howard,

I am writing to you in my position as CEO of the Greater Birmingham Chambers of Commerce in response to your "Emerging Thinking" speech on the 7th October.

I am very grateful for this opportunity to respond and appreciate the consultative approach the Commission has taken to this whole process. Due to the importance of our airports to our economy, the outcomes of the Interim Report in December and the final decision in 2015 will be critical for areas such as the economic base around Birmingham.

Our Group comprises a number of local institutes and business groups, many of whose members use, or want to use, the services of Birmingham Airport. They recognize that travelling to the South-East to access global gateways has significant time and economic disadvantages. Yet, each year some 3 million business people travel to London airports from the Midlands to visit their customers overseas. Their organisations are based in the Midlands, so why must they travel to the South-East to take advantage of this shrinking business world?

This is why our Group recognizes the importance of the Commission to the local area, and is working closely with the Airport and other stakeholders to put the case forward. Indeed, in July I happily signed a letter on behalf of the Group, along with local LEs, that highlighted to you our endorsement of Birmingham Airport's submission. Furthermore, a letter on the 19th July was signed by over 140 businesses in the local area, so it is right to say the local economic case for the proposal is well backed.

Having listened to your speech with interest, it was clear that surface access and environmental impact are incredibly important to the Commission. I welcome this position. As a Group we support Birmingham Airport's vision because it is well aligned with existing and emerging transport investment strategies; this includes UK Central and, as you rightly highlighted, HS2. This latter development will bring our Airport within 31 minutes of London's passengers, who you rightly pointed out fly on average 2.5 times per year.

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Birmingham Airport is a key economic driver in the local area. I am therefore pleased you will be focusing on economics in your Interim Report, and hope your decisions will reflect the need to think of the UK as a whole. Your initial conclusion that the South-East requires additional capacity, whilst perhaps true, concerns me in so far as it does not present a solution for the UK as a whole. We need a network of great airports for great cities, so that areas like Birmingham are plugged into the global market.

Birmingham Airport's inclusion on any short-list will provide market confidence for a region that is ready for investment. We therefore urge the Commission to consider the economic case of the Airport, and look forward to continuing to engage with you over the coming months.

Yours sincerely,



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