



Sir Howard Davies
Airports Commission
6th Floor
Sanctuary Buildings
20 Great Smith Street
London SW1P 3BT

31st October 2013

Dear Sir Howard

As some of the key Local Enterprise Partnerships from the wider Midlands region, we are writing to you in response to your “Emerging Thinking” announcement on 7th October 2013.

Whilst we recognise that this announcement was principally about aviation capacity, we are writing to urge the Commission to keep the national economy at the forefront of its decision-making. The headline announcement that more runway capacity is required in the South East may be a fair assertion to make but this is not a national aviation strategy, nor is it clear how, other than ‘trickle down’, this is to the benefit to economies across the UK.

Furthermore, we would like to challenge the Commission’s assertion in the announcement that you *“have been given a clear message from many regional stakeholders that while their local airports are important to their economies, so is access to the international connectivity available in London and the south east”*. This is not our contention.

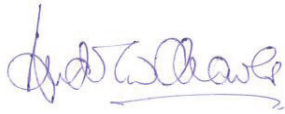
In our experience, passengers want to travel from their nearest airport. It has time and money implications for local businesses to travel to London airports and detracts foreign investors looking to invest in UK cities outside London. For this reason we welcome the runway extension at Birmingham Airport and the introduction of direct flights to the Indian Subcontinent and will be working with the Airport to deliver further routes of importance to businesses in the Midlands region.

At the moment, the Government has challenged all LEPs to produce Strategic Economic Plans and we are working hard to deliver these in early 2014. In order to secure inward investment and help businesses access new markets, the international connectivity dimension is critical to the success of these plans and we have been working with Birmingham Airport in order to deliver this.

You may be interested to read that the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) recently benchmarked the future competitiveness of cities. It predicts those cities that will be 'hotspots' by 2025, based on a city’s ability to attract capital, businesses, talent and visitors. In a list of 120, London is number two and Birmingham is number 43 – above Beijing, Mumbai, Delhi and Moscow. No other UK city features in the index. However, without adequate international gateways cities and their wider regions will not be able to reach their full potential.

We look forward to the Commission's Interim Report in December and hope that it reflects the recognition that major long-haul airports across the UK are fundamental to the success of economies such as ours.

Yours sincerely



Andrew Cleaves
Non-Executive Director
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Chairman
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Peter Pawsey
Executive Chair
Worcestershire LEP



Graham Wynn OBE
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