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Dear Sir Howard,

As a key regional stakeholder in the East Midlands region, we are writing to you in response to your Discussion Paper "Utilisation of the UK's Existing Airport Capacity".

We fully agree with the Commission that airports that have not been shortlisted will play a crucial role in meeting the UK-wide demand for air travel. Indeed we believe that making use of capacity at non-shortlisted airports should be the primary issue for the Airports Commission when looking at any long term airport policy.

We believe that the Airports Commission should be far more ambitious in its assessment of the contribution that regional airports make to their regional economies and the wider UK economy. The East Midlands region is the 9<sup>th</sup> largest regional economy in the UK, with a headline GVA of around £81bn. East Midlands Airport (EMA) plays an important economic role for the region, both in supporting local business and as a wealth generator in its own right. Over 8,500 regional jobs depend on EMA, generating around £239m of annual GVA.

EMA is a significant base for UK manufacturing with major multi-national companies based within the region – partly due to the close proximity to the UK's hub for pure freight. The main factors needed for a successful air cargo industry are available at EMA including available runway capacity, a central geographical location (90% of England and Wales are within a 4 hour truck driving time), excellent surface transport links, and the ability to operate 24 hours a day. This means that EMA is not just hugely important for the economic and social development of the region, but also for millions of exports for businesses across the whole of England and Wales. It is vital that its national significance is recognised and supported by Government policy, to provide stability and confidence in UK investment and we support EMA in encouraging the Government to take a fresh look at the importance of air freight for the competitiveness of UK businesses.

EMA is also home to a sizeable passenger operation. Some 4m business and leisure passengers per year use the airport to connect to a wide range of European destinations, and the airport has ambitions to grow its portfolio even further. It is vitally important to maximise aviation's contribution to the UK economy, not just in the short to medium term, but also when looking at a long term airport policy. EMA has the potential to handle up to 10million passengers a year utilising the existing facilities and within existing environmental limits.

The Discussion Paper describes the non-London airports as 'something of a mixed blessing' and implies that their connectivity is only as good as their links to Heathrow. This is definitely not the case. Geographically, EMA is too

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close to link to Heathrow and instead passengers in our region would rather use their local airport to link into European destinations and routes beyond.

Some intelligent policy interventions from Government would stimulate airlines to take-up the existing capacity that already exists around the UK, creating substantial benefits for passengers and the economy. To this end, we support EMA in calling for the Government to reform Air Passenger Duty in the form of a temporary suspension for new long haul routes. This would have a significant economic benefit for regions across the whole of the UK, including ours. We would also like to see improved road and rail links, to allow EMA to reach its full potential in terms of supporting the region.

We look forward to the Commission's recommendations.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jennifer Spencer', with a large, stylized initial 'J'.

Jennifer Spencer

Chief Executive  
Experience Nottinghamshire

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