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To whom it may concern

Response to Utilisation of the UK's Existing Airport Capacity discussion paper

Cheshire Business Leaders brings together senior Directors in over forty of the largest businesses in Greater Cheshire. Our principal objectives are the development of economic prosperity and well-being of the population in the region.

The inherent skills in our industrial heritage embracing a wide array of world leading companies in aerospace, automotive, bio-science, chemicals, engineering, nuclear and other industries, provide an ideal platform for further increases in the level of export activities, combined with a very attractive potential for Foreign Direct Investment.

As Chairman of Cheshire Business Leaders, I wish to emphasise that we totally agree with the content of the response to Discussion Paper 06 submitted by Cheshire and Warrington LEP to the Airports Commission.

Their expertise in aviation issues is reflected in their response, and we would highlight the following aspects which affect local businesses.

Both export activities and foreign investment require excellent connectivity with the world's industrial and business centres.

The London airports do not provide the required level of connectivity to meet the current demands of business. Hence there is a major reliance on overseas hubs for connections from Manchester airport, and a serious disadvantage for businesses in the west of our region as Liverpool airport currently has no air connections to any hub airports.

We recognise that the Airport Commission has determined that the UK requires an efficient hub airport to serve the nation and transfer passengers, and that this airport should be located in the London area where the propensity to travel and population density are greatest.

Our earnest plea is that wherever the long-term solution is located, every opportunity should be taken to both minimise the unnecessary demands placed upon airports in the South East, and also address the distortion to the market which has occurred over many decades, and seriously disadvantaged the regions by artificially concentrating air service expansion into the London airports.

Both the required capacity and demand exist at Manchester to spread the load and benefits of international air services into the UK, and the growth surge in long-haul international routes in the eighties proved how businesses world-wide responded to the new opportunities for supply, co-operation and investment developments which built on the previous substantial travel flows from the region to these new destinations.

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In contrast, Liverpool is typical of those Regional airports which have a local demand for international business and leisure traffic, but volumes of demand to many destinations require access through an efficient hub airport within the UK in order to adequately serve the business community and economic regeneration.

We urge the Commission to determine the future for the London airports in a manner which will embrace the needs of the smaller regional airports like Liverpool, and in the meantime ensure their survival through the tax regime and use of RACF in line with the most supportive competitive European countries.

While we await the new London runway, we also urge the Commission to forcefully impress upon Government the need to promote the larger regional airports internationally to assist the emergence of new routes. This will be of great assistance to the restoration of balance in the UK economy and will provide immediate relief to the congested London airports.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Neville Chamberlain". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Neville Chamberlain CBE
Chairman Cheshire Business Leaders