

Dear Sir/Madam

Following the publication of the Inner Thames Estuary studies by the Airports Commission, I wanted to write to you to add some important context to the evidence presented in the report, particularly the results from the SEGRO survey of local businesses asking if they would relocate from Heathrow should the airport no longer be the UK hub.

Firstly, we welcome the publication of the report by Leigh Fisher. We were glad to have the opportunity to feed into the report and believe that many of the conclusions broadly reflect what our customers have been telling us over the last year. The report states: 'With the exception of Kent businesses, all stakeholders considered the Estuary airport scheme to carry significantly more risk than opportunity. The common risks across all stakeholder groups were cost, surface access, and impacts on the market and economy.' This is certainly the broad feeling that has been conveyed to us.

However, I don't believe that the report quite highlighted the strength of feeling that we have felt amongst the business community in West London and the Thames Valley regarding the catastrophic impact a Thames Estuary Airport would have on the local and regional economy. The report correctly identified that in our survey of over 70 local businesses 50% said they would relocate to another hub airport if Heathrow were no longer the hub of the UK. From our relatively small sample that would mean at least 9000 jobs would be lost from West London/Thames Valley economy which in itself would have a very serious impact on the economy. However, if the 50% was to be extrapolated to the wider business community this would obviously result in huge job losses.

It is also worth noting that a further 26% of businesses are currently unsure what they would do, meaning there is the potential for a very significant number of businesses to leave the area should Heathrow close as it would have to do. Our survey also showed that international companies would consider moving to competitor hubs abroad, highlighting that business will not simply move to another UK airport but could actually leave the UK entirely. This could have a particularly negative impact on the Thames Valley economy where a number of international headquarters are based.

We believe that, without Heathrow as the UK's main and only hub airport, it is likely that the areas around Heathrow would enter a serious state of decline. At least some, if not many international businesses based in the sub-region would inevitably question if the UK is the best location, especially when global air connectivity is growing rapidly in Paris, Frankfurt and Amsterdam.

I wanted to set out the important context behind the SEGRO evidence that was used in the Leigh Fisher report to help you in your deliberations as you consider the Inner Thames Estuary option.

Please do let me know if I can be of further assistance.

Regards

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