

[REDACTED]
Essex County Council
County Hall – E Block 3rd Floor
Market Road
Chelmsford
Essex
CM1 1QH



22nd May 2014

By email

Airport Commission
Sanctuary Buildings
Great Smith Street
London SW1P 3BT
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Dear Sir/Madam

Re: Inner Thames Estuary Airport – Call for Evidence

This letter is submitted to Airport Commission in response to the Inner Thames Estuary Airport – Call for Evidence.

The County Council appreciates that in December 2013 the Airport Commission published the Interim Report setting out the nature, scale and timing of steps needed to maintain the UK's status as an international hub for aviation, alongside recommendations for making best use of the UK's existing runway capacity over the next five years. The Commission set out three short listed schemes at existing airports to be taken forward for detailed development work, for national consultation this autumn. These three schemes included 1 proposal at Gatwick Airport and 2 proposal options at Heathrow Airport.

The Interim Report did not short list the Thames Estuary options; however it recognised the potential merits offered by the proposals. The advantages highlighted by the Commission include the possible reduction in aviation noise impacts for the South East of England, and the support the proposals may provide to economic development to the east of London.

The Interim Report acknowledged that the Inner Thames Estuary Airport proposal has uncertainties and challenges. The report indicated that additional analysis in respect of the Isle of Grain option and more specifically an Inner Thames Estuary proposal would be undertaken in the first half of 2014.

In January 2014 the Commission highlighted its intentions regarding the detailed work to determine whether the Inner Thames Estuary Airport proposal may be viable by undertaking feasibility studies and a Call for Evidence. The Terms of Reference for the feasibility studies were published and a Call for Evidence opened.

The County Council submitted comments to inform the Terms of Reference for the four Feasibility Studies, and it is acknowledged that the Commission has amended the Terms of Reference to reflect some of our concerns.

The County Council has also produced a document entitled "Flights of Fancy: Getting Real on Aviation" to articulate the organisation's position on airport capacity. This document has

already been submitted to the Commission but it is worth noting that the County Council does not support the Thames Estuary Airport proposal. It is considered that a Thames Estuary Airport is not 'practical, desirable or viable'. Given our view on the Thames Estuary Airport the County Council has worked with the Thames Gateway South Essex Partnership to respond to the Airport Commission's Inner Thames Estuary Call for Evidence. We have contributed to the Thames gateway South Essex Partnership response, and therefore request that the Airport Commission accepts their response as reflecting the County Council's views.

Yours faithfully,

A black rectangular redaction box covering the signature and name of the official.