



Harvey McGrath, Chairman of London First
Wednesday 13th February 2008

Welcome one and all to the London First 2008 London Party, or as we might subtitle it today: 'Come Fly Away with London First and BAA'

May I begin with some thank yous.

Firstly, a thank you to BAA and particularly to Sir Nigel's team for making this evening possible. Only because of Sir Nigel and Rafael del Pino of Ferrovial's commitment and willingness to work with us to overcome the complications of security, of staging an event in what is still considered a construction site and working around the shopfitters and lift engineers..... are we able to be here at all.

Thank you to Brian and his Heathrow Express team for getting many of us here in style and in comfort – you are some of the first ever passengers to ascend from the new T5 station.

Thank you to Ruth Kelly, Secretary of State for Transport, for giving up an evening of her half term to join us here. Thank you, Ruth. Your presence is a signal, I believe, of the Government's understanding of just how important Heathrow and international connectivity is to London and the UK economy.

And let's be clear. London doesn't dig coal, bash metal, make cars or even silicon chips. London is a centre for world trade. A successful Heathrow today is as important as the docks were to the capital a century ago. We have to be able to reach our customers, our peers and our suppliers easily, efficiently, reliably, comfortably. Or we lose business.

Put bluntly, Heathrow and the international connectivity it represents is vital to London and the UK's competitiveness. So London airports and Heathrow in particular are at the top of London First's agenda for 2008.

I've no intention of rehearsing at length our policy positions now, but:

We seek a world class airport for London.

- 1 Having put **passenger experience** on the media (and dare I say it, Government) agenda last year, we won't rest until "Heathrow hassle" is as old hat as Green Shield stamps.

The Secretary of State recently published a welcome report on end-to-end journeys – a good step towards putting the passenger first, but I'm sure Ruth won't mind me reminding her that immigration, passport and customs queues are firmly in the Government court.

- 2 **Regulation** needs to put the passenger first – so that there is headroom for infrastructure investment, but proper incentives for high quality customer service.

- 3 **Expansion?**

If Nigel can demonstrate that Heathrow will be world class, in terms of passenger service and local environmental impact, then we'll cheer BAA all the way.

If we can get global environmental impacts built into the fiscal and market regime so that passengers are paying the true and full cost of their journey, then we'll applaud the UK Government and EU.

If, when those changes are in place, Heathrow is still bursting at the seams, we **must allow and encourage** investment in expansion of airport capacity.

Before we can talk about growth, we must make the best use of what we have.

Which brings me back to this magnificent building - Terminal 5 – a fitting symbol of a future where the passenger is king in air travel, and a tribute to BAA and their partners. At last, Heathrow has a terminal purpose-built to serve the needs of 21st century passengers. I'm sure you'll all enjoy the tours and, like me, you're already looking forward to the T5 experience 'for real' in a few weeks time.

I'll now hand you to one of the stars of the Cabinet and Transport Secretary, Ruth Kelly.

For more information please contact Rob Fox on 020 7665 1502