

**Aviation Strategy,  
Department for Transport,  
33 Horseferry Road,  
London,  
SW1P 4DR**

20<sup>th</sup> June 2019

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to give feedback on the Department for Transport's consultation "Aviation 2050 – the future of UK aviation" on behalf of London First.

London First is a business campaigning group with a mission to make London the best city in the world to do business. We convene and mobilise business leaders to tackle the key challenges facing our Capital. We are made up of over 200 leading employers across a wide range of sectors, overseen by a non-executive board of influential business leaders.

For many years London First has actively advocated for increased aviation capacity in the South East, because of its importance to London's competitiveness and the wider UK economy. London receives the second highest number of overnight visitors of any city in the world<sup>1</sup>, making it the UK's international gateway for talent, tourists and investment. The UK's aviation strategy must play its part in enabling London to remain a top destination for businesses and consumers.

London First's "Let Britain Fly" campaign was supported by a coalition of over 100 national business leaders, business organisations and industry bodies. Its main purpose was to secure commitment from the Government to expand runway capacity in the South East. Recent figures show why this is such an important objective. While London's main airports are operating at capacity, or approaching the same point, passenger demand has been growing significantly at UK airports, averaging 4.2% per annum since 2011<sup>2</sup>.

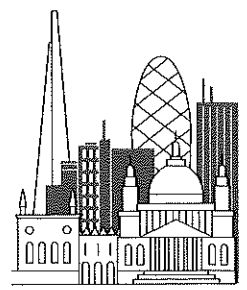
The South East's aviation capacity must expand so that increased demands for improved long-haul connectivity can be satisfied and better regional connectivity can be delivered. This is, of course, important for passengers and the UK's service sector; and it is also vital for UK trade in goods: in 2016 goods worth around £178 billion were shipped by air between the UK and non-EU countries<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Mastercard Press Release, Big Cities, Big Business: Bangkok, London and Paris Lead the Way in Mastercard's 2018 Global Destination Cities Index, September 2018

<sup>2</sup> UK Aviation Forecasts, Department for Transport, October 2017

<sup>3</sup> HM Government, Beyond the horizon: The Future of UK aviation, April 2018



London First strongly welcomed the Government's decision to support a third runway at Heathrow, on the condition that important environmental tests are met, and we will work to help all parties deliver this commitment. We are also keen to see additional commitments made to enhance public transport links to Heathrow and other South East airports, a topic we say more on below.

In order to meet forecasted aviation demand up to 2050, airports beyond Heathrow need to be allowed to make best use of existing runways, and potentially to add new runway capacity. Most immediately this includes:

- Gatwick Airport's proposal to widen its standby runway and bring it into use as a second runway, which would bring more than 100,000 additional flights a year to the airport by 2032<sup>4</sup>;
- London City Airport's agreed expansion plans, which include a significant terminal extension, new multi-storey passenger pier and new aircraft parking stands;
- London Stansted's recently approved plan to build a new arrivals terminal and upgrade its existing terminal, which will lead to an increase in passenger capacity from 35 million people per year to 43 million people per year<sup>5</sup>; and
- Growth plans to create an additional 3,000 jobs at Biggin Hill airport, which will play a vital role in boosting London's ability to provide business aviation services.

The UK has been successful in promoting competition between airports, which has produced tangible benefits for consumers, and the future expansion of airport capacity should be market-led and based on the principles of competition. We also call on the Government to do more to improve border experience for passengers, and work with industry to consider a new operating model.

London First agrees that the Government's aviation strategy must align with the UK's ambitions on sustainability. This means making sure that the UK meets its obligations on tackling climate change, through measures like stepping up support for sustainable aviation fuels, as well as tackling local issues around air quality. Heathrow's proposal to introduce a new low emission zone around the airport, with additional charges for more polluting vehicles, is a good example of the sort of creative thinking that will be required.

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<sup>4</sup> Guardian, Gatwick plans using emergency runway to increase flight capacity, October 2018

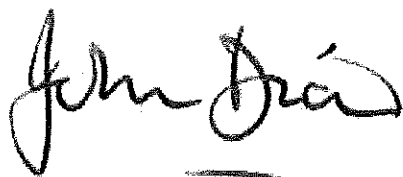
<sup>5</sup> BBC News, Stansted Airport expansion plan approved by council, November 2018



One of the most important ways the Government can ensure aviation becomes more sustainable is to improve public transport links to the South East's airports. National rail links to Gatwick, Stansted and Heathrow all require additional investment to relieve congestion, speed up journey times and provide new connections to areas that currently lack a public transport alternative. We welcome that Heathrow and City airports will both benefit from the completion of Crossrail, but further investment in other routes will be required – for example, the ageing signalling system of the Piccadilly line urgently needs modernisation, alongside new trains.

The private sector can play a role in financing some of these projects. London First welcomed the Department of Transport's (DfT) call for market-led proposals for rail last year<sup>6</sup>, which is reported to have received 30 submissions. These proposals would be financed and delivered by the private sector and include schemes which would enhance airport rail links. We are disappointed at the DfT's failure to follow through on this policy and the continued absence of any clarity from the Government about the terms on which future proposals could progress. The DfT must now set out a clear way forward for privately promoted rail schemes as a priority.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "John Dickie". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a short horizontal line.

John Dickie  
**Director of Strategy and Policy at London First**

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<sup>6</sup> Department for Transport, Rail market-led proposals, March 2018