

5th September 2019

The Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP
Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government
2 Marsham Street
Westminster
London SW1P 4DF

Dear Secretary of State,

London Stansted Airport planning application delay

The British Chambers of Commerce (BCC) represents over 75,000 firms of all sizes and sectors, employing 6 million people across the country and has been helping to shape the UK's business agenda for more than 150 years.

As you will acutely aware, the next decade will be a pivotal period in this great country's history but our recent Quarterly Economic Survey – the largest and most authoritative private-sector survey of business conditions in the UK – clearly showed an economy in stasis following the relentless uncertainty surrounding Brexit and changes in the global economy. Firms remain deeply frustrated that they do not have clarity on either future trading arrangements or the business environment here at home and as a result continue to put off major decisions.

Companies up and down the UK, including many of those in the East of England, are looking to the new Prime Minister to take swift and tangible steps to inject momentum and confidence into the UK economy and unless decisive action is taken, we believe our economy will remain locked onto a low-growth trajectory. Firms want to see concrete and deliverable plans to tackle barriers to growth here at home and, in particular, progress in boosting the UK's global reputation as the place to invest and trade.

The UK aviation industry will play a critical role in delivering this last objective – it connects this country to the world in a unique way and in doing so contributes some £20 billion per annum to the economy and directly supports around 230,000 jobs.

Across the South East, Stansted Airport currently has the most available full-length runway capacity and it will be this capacity that could enable it to deliver up to 50% of London's total expected passenger growth over the next decade and continue to power the vibrant East of England economy.

For many years, our Chambers in the counties that immediately surround Stansted Airport (Essex, Suffolk, Hertfordshire and Cambridgeshire) have seen first hand the positive impact the airport has on their 6,450 members – supporting their ability to trade in goods and services, enabling inward and outward investment, bringing visitors to their doors whilst also connecting them to friends and families around the world.

We are therefore deeply concerned at the recent actions by Uttlesford District Council to delay final approval for Stansted Airport's recent planning application. The airport is seeking permission for 9 new aircraft stands and two new sections of taxiway, and to raise the cap on passengers from 35m to 43mppa. There will be no increase in the permitted number of aircraft movements outside of the permission that UDC already enforces and there will be no increase in the approved noise contour limit.

By restricting the sustainable growth of the airport, Uttlesford's councillors risk stifling our members ability to further grow their business internationally and add to the half a million people that they already employ across these four counties. The increase in demand for global aviation and greater connectivity is not going to go away, but airlines will choose alternative locations abroad for their aircraft if Stansted cannot provide them with the long-term clarity on how they will be able to grow their operation at the airport.

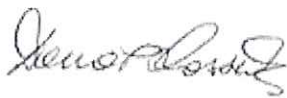
If councillors continue to ignore the advice of their own officers and legal experts this will mean a drying up of what the airport has been able to announce recently – exciting new airlines flying to exciting new destinations all over the world and the business community ultimately paying the price of UDC's filibustering for many years to come.

Successive governments have under-invested in infrastructure and stalled on major decisions and we encourage you to provide your support to the continued and sustainable growth of Stansted Airport in order to stimulate the significant economic and social benefits that will come with this. Any move to row back from this decision would undermine business confidence and damage the East of England's reputation as a place to invest.

Yours sincerely,



Adam Marshall, Director General of the British Chambers of Commerce



Denise Rossiter, Chief Executive of Essex Chambers of Commerce



Briega Leahy, Chief Executive of Hertfordshire Chamber of Commerce



John Dugmore, Chief Executive of Suffolk Chambers of Commerce



John Bridge OBE DL, Chief Executive of Cambridgeshire Chambers of Commerce

cc Cllr John Lodge, Leader, Uttlesford District Council