

Edinburgh Airport looking for new places to go

✘ Scotland's largest airport has announced the launch of a new £15m route development fund, to drive competition and bring new airlines and new routes to Edinburgh.

Speaking to an audience of Scottish business leaders at an SCDI event in Edinburgh on Thursday night, airport Chief Executive Gordon Dewar announced the creation of the fund and his desire to bring Edinburgh's public and private sector together to promote the capital and the airport around the world.

Since taking ownership of Edinburgh Airport in June 2012, the new airport management team, with the support of owners Global Infrastructure Partners, has prioritised the development of Edinburgh's route network.

New agreements have been reached with easyJet and Ryanair, a new Turkish Airlines route to Istanbul is flourishing and Brussels Airlines, Air Canada and Virgin Atlantic have all announced new routes.

These successes mean that Edinburgh Airport will offer Scottish passengers choice from an unprecedented 130 routes this summer.

It is widely understood that developing new routes cannot be left solely to the airport and Edinburgh Airport is clear that there is a role for the city's public and private sector to play.

Recent experience says that airlines value support from civic and business leaders, which provides additional market confidence at the beginning of a new route and which can often be the single factor that determines whether airlines come to

Edinburgh or go elsewhere.

The airport will therefore be working closely with city partners: the Council, the Chamber of Commerce and others to explore how we work collaboratively to promote Edinburgh to the world's airlines.

Gordon Dewar said;- "Creating new routes in and out of Edinburgh Airport is one of our core activities. We came to Edinburgh last summer focused on building Scotland's connections with the world. The deals with easyJet and Ryanair alone will see almost 16 million passengers pass through Edinburgh Airport over the next five years.

"But we are hungry for more success, and will work hard to take business from other Scottish airports and from our European competitors. To fuel that competitive effort, we will invest £15m a year underwriting new direct routes for Edinburgh, sharing the commercial risk with airlines; it is simply putting our money where our mouth is.

"We believe that in doing so we send a powerful message to international airlines – we're going to be the place where Scotland meets the world so come here and we will work harder than anybody else to deliver you long-term success.

"We can't do this alone but be in no doubt, we will lead on the commercial deal, but any business with a significant stake in a new route should be thinking: how can I potentially make a difference?

"In the coming weeks and months, we will approach city businesses to listen. We want to know which markets are important and what the value might be to Edinburgh, and those individual businesses, or new routes into Europe, the Middle East or North America.

"I am confident that Edinburgh Airport will grow and our route network will soon be the envy of many European airports. We

will compete hard and we will compete fairly; importantly, we'll do that as one team and one city."

Details of the route development strategy will be announced over coming months as the £15m fund is targeted.