

Edinburgh Airport calls for rethink on London airports



In the light of the UK Government's decision to delay a decision on new London airports capacity, the chief executive of Edinburgh Airport has called for Scotland to rethink its relationship with London's airports.

Gordon Dewar, Edinburgh Airport's Chief Executive, said:

"Regardless of the merits of its case, we have long believed that a new runway at Heathrow is undeliverable and would in any case be a poor choice for Scotland. We are where we have been many times before and it is time for new thinking.

"At Edinburgh, we will launch 26 new routes between this winter and next summer and our unprecedented growth is being driven by direct international traffic, in turn fuelled by Edinburgh and Scotland's growing global reputation as a year round destination for international visitors.

"We now have some of the world's largest airlines serving Europe, the Middle East and North America from Edinburgh.

"We no longer need to think of ourselves as feeder airports for London airports, whether Heathrow or Gatwick, and the Government's move to delay a final decision on London airports must be seen as an opportunity to rethink our relationship with those airports in the south.

"We might be owned by the same company that owns Gatwick, but we are run independently and I am happy to compete aggressively with Gatwick and other airports for Scotland's share of air traffic to and from this country. That competition can only exist if we move on from the age-old

obsession with Heathrow, which has been supported many times in the past and which has been grounded every time.

“Our plans for further expansion go hand-in-hand with aspirations for Scotland to have greater leverage on global scale; Edinburgh Airport’s growth directly leads to job creation and enhances connectivity and tourism spending here in Scotland.

“Scotland is punching above its weight in the world aviation industry; all of our airports – supported by the Scottish Government and others – are better connected than they have ever been.

“We should be confidently standing on our two feet and completely redefining our relationship with Gatwick and Heathrow, and I look forward to building support for that case over the next few months.”

On Thursday last week the UK Government announced that they were delaying taking any decision on where the new London airport might be until next summer. While the government accepts that there is a case for airport expansion in the south east, it said in a statement that more work was needed.

Secretary of State for Transport Patrick McLoughlin said:

“The case for aviation expansion is clear – but it’s vitally important we get the decision right so that it will benefit generations to come. We will undertake more work on environmental impacts, including air quality, noise and carbon.

“We must develop the best possible package of measures to mitigate the impacts on local people. We will continue work on all the shortlisted locations, so that the timetable for more capacity set out by Sir Howard is met.

“At the first opportunity I will make a statement to the House

to make clear our plans.”