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The Scottish Government has admitted that airline travellers will have to endure ‘at least 5 years’ of disruption before services will be able to return to pre-Covid levels.

The Transport Secretary, Michael Matheson, made the admission in a parliamentary written answer to Dean Lockhart, Scottish Conservative shadow Transport and Business Secretary.

The answer stated that some slow recovery in air services was anticipated over the summer, first with domestic, then international routes in line with the SNP government’s phased exit out of lockdown.

Mr Matheson then goes on to state that “Realistically, it will take at least five years for services to recover to pre-Covid-19 levels.”

The admission has prompted calls from the Scottish Conservatives for the SNP Government to bring forward urgent economic recovery plans to mitigate the considerable impact of such disruption.

The issue is particularly urgent in the light of recent news from British Airways that they plan to restructure the business and implement a significant number of redundancies. This could result in dozens of jobs being lost from Edinburgh Airport.

Dean Lockhart, Scottish Conservative shadow business and transport secretary said:

“We are facing an urgent economic crisis of significant proportions.

“The revelation that our airline industry will be disrupted for at least five years shows that this economic crisis will have savage consequences.

“The potential loss of jobs within our airline services, as well as the wider economic impact of lack of tourism and travel will change our economy irreparably.

“The SNP government is clearly aware of this problem and yet we have no idea how they intend to address it.

“The SNP must consider any and all options to revitalise our economy before it’s too late.

“We have all the indications of a massive economic shock, the SNP government has all the powers it needs – it must act now to get our country moving.”