

Government announces measures on regional connectivity

In a sign of the Prime Minister's commitment to levelling up all regions of the UK, a review of regional connectivity will ensure all nations and regions of the UK have the domestic transport connections local communities rely on – including regional airports.

As part this work and ahead of the March Budget, the Treasury will also be reviewing Air Passenger Duty to ensure regional connectivity is strengthened while meeting the UK's climate change commitments to meet net zero by 2050.

These measures featured in discussions today with Europe's largest regional airline, Flybe, which plays an important role in the UK's connectivity by flying regional routes that other providers do not operate.

In light of these discussions Flybe have confirmed they will continue to operate as normal, preserving flights to airports such as Southampton, Belfast and Birmingham.

Chancellor of the Exchequer Sajid Javid said:

I welcome Flybe's confirmation that they will continue to operate as normal, safeguarding jobs in UK and ensuring flights continue to serve communities across the whole of the UK.

The reviews we are announcing today will help level up our economy. They will ensure that regional connections not only continue but flourish in the years to come – so that every nation and region can fulfil its potential.

Business Secretary Andrea Leadsom said:

I am delighted that we have managed to reach an agreement with Flybe shareholders to keep the company in operation, ensuring that regions across the country can continue to be connected.

My department and others across government have worked tirelessly in an incredibly short timeframe. This will be welcome news for Flybe, their customers and dedicated employees, as well as those in the supply chain. We will continue to work with Flybe and regional operators to find a sustainable long term future.

Transport Secretary Grant Shapps said:

I am delighted that we have been able to work closely with Flybe to

ensure Europe's largest regional airline is able to continue providing their valued services, connecting communities across the UK.

The Department for Transport will undertake an urgent review into how we can level up the country by strengthening regional connectivity and will look at all the options that we have to make sure our airports can continue to play an important role in driving economic growth, creating jobs and greening aviation, across the country.

Mark Anderson, CEO of Flybe said:

Flybe is made up of an incredible team of people, serving millions of loyal customers who rely on the vital regional connectivity that we provide. This is a positive outcome for the UK and will allow us to focus on delivering for our customers and planning for the future.

Lucien Farrell, Chairman Connect Airways said:

We are very encouraged with recent developments, especially the Government's recognition of the importance of Flybe to communities and businesses across the UK and the desire to strengthen regional connectivity. As a result, the shareholder consortium has committed to keep Flybe flying with additional funding alongside Government initiatives.

Additional information

- At Budget 2018, the government announced that for the eighth year in a row short-haul rates will not rise, staying at £13 for economy and £26 for business/first, keeping down the costs of travelling for 80% of passengers.
- UK passenger growth is strong: passenger numbers at UK airports have increased by 28% since 2013. This strength extends across the whole of the UK, with regional airports handling approximately 39% of all passengers in 2018.