

# Press release: Welsh Secretary: Heathrow expansion is the right move for Wales

Now is the time for Wales to seize the opportunities Heathrow expansion presents and to show the world that Britain is open for business.

This will be the clarion call from the Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns during a keynote speech to an audience of Welsh SMEs in Cardiff today (5 July).

The UK Government's preferred location for airport expansion was announced in October last year, signalling its commitment to supporting infrastructure projects for the next generation.

A new runway will improve connectivity in the UK itself and crucially boost Wales' connections with the rest of the world, supporting exports, trade and job opportunities.

Speaking at the Heathrow Business Summit at the Cardiff City Stadium, Alun Cairns will call for Wales to be at the "heart of the action" in the delivery of the £16billion project.

He will say "The close proximity of the majority of the Welsh population to Heathrow means that we will be able to maximise the commercial opportunities presented by this investment". He will add "it is of utmost importance that we provide support to such projects to strengthen the Welsh economy."

SMEs already play a crucial role in Heathrow's supply chain – with the airport spending over £1.5 billion annually with more than 1,200 suppliers from around the UK – and their role is set to grow with the expansion.

The Summit will give Welsh businesses a chance to cement relationships and forge new connections with some of the UK's largest suppliers which could also be leveraged for further work outside of Heathrow's expansion project.

## **Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns added:**

From the commitment to cut the Severn Tolls to the construction of HMP Berwyn in Wrexham, the UK Government is committed to opening the infrastructure support channels to boost the Welsh economy. By supporting the construction of a new runway at Heathrow, we are sending a clear message to the world that the whole of Britain is open for business.

The airport's supply chain are in Cardiff in great force today, ready to build networks and partnerships with Welsh businesses.

I am confident that Wales will not disappoint. Expansion of Heathrow Airport is the right move for Welsh companies, for Welsh passengers and for our communities. Let's take full ownership of the opportunities this exciting project presents.

The Secretary of State will also take the opportunity to underline the importance of both UK and Welsh Governments working together to "address the issues that matter most to businesses in Wales" and that only a "joined up approach can drive forward our opportunity to take ownership of the opportunities presented by Heathrow. That process starts today."