

# Speech for Airport Operators Association annual dinner

Good evening. Thank you for that welcome.

It's a pleasure to join you. And a real privilege – as an aviation enthusiast – to speak at your annual dinner...

So thanks to Karen and her team for inviting me.

And thank you all for making it this evening to celebrate everything that's great about our aviation sector.

An amazing turnout... actually filling one of the largest formal dining venues in Europe.

You'll be supplied with delicious food.

The wine waiters will be constantly checking up to see if your glasses are filled.

So don't hold back.

But do be aware of the staff in the lavatories...

They're secretly working for MI5 and are there to make sure you don't nick any loo rolls.

We stand amid a testing time for aviation, but one that, together, I am certain we shall weather.

And, if we continue to work together, fuelled by friendly competition, tempered by necessary co-operation... I am certain we can overcome the current turbulence for British and global aviation.

First, let me say a few words about the situation today.

I want to thank the staff of FlyBe, the CAA, our new Aviation Minister Kelly Tolhurst and everyone involved in the operation managing a difficult few days.

As you know, the government, along with industry partners, were engaged in attempts to find a commercially viable solution.

However, the onset of the coronavirus proved one issue too many.

As we saw with Thomas Cook, no one company, no matter its pedigree or history, has a right to survive or place an undue burden on the taxpayer.

It's the competitive nature of the industry that benefits passengers and opens up air travel to all..

Yet for employees and suppliers, the distress and uncertainty at a time like this can be wrenching.

Which is why the government is providing support to help people find new jobs.

We are working on a regional connectivity review to ensure no community has to wait too long before the connections they need are re-established.

These individual episodes, however, are in danger of being overshadowed by a much larger crisis.

COVID-19 is having a dramatic impact across the sector.

I am determined that the government, without prejudice to particular firms, does its bit to ensure that a random act of nature doesn't undermine well managed businesses.

On Friday last I wrote to the slots coordination body ACL, to request they rapidly examine the 80:20 slots issue which is proving so vexatious.

It makes no sense, environmentally or financially, for airlines to be forced to fly ghost planes.

This morning I followed this up by calling on the EU Commission to give this matter urgent attention – I look forward to a positive response.

Like industry colleagues, my officials at the department have been working tirelessly in recent weeks and months to help support the sector.

As we meet here tonight, I want to let you know that I understand the enormity of what you are facing, and this Government will stand by your side.

I know the prosperity of your sector and our country, are, after all, intertwined.

Beyond the immediate term, there are other challenges. Whether it's the Court of Appeal's decision on airport expansion, or our departure from the EU and its institutions, we will work together to find solutions.

We will overcome these immediate challenges and we will then go on to overcome perhaps the great challenge of all.

That is the challenge of decarbonising our planet.

The UK has voted to reach Net Zero by 2050 and, as you know, aviation will have to do its part.

This is no mean feat while maintaining, and indeed improving, living standards.

And this mission is particularly challenging in the context of aviation.

Now let me say at the outset which side I am on. I do not believe, like some,

that Net Zero requires us to retreat from progress.

To succumb to some Mal-thusian doctrine.

To lower our sights...

To live a little less...

No. I believe that the answer lies where it has always lain...

In our ingenuity,..

In the creative genius of our engineers and in the dynamism of our economy.

I am confident in our ability to meet the challenge ahead...

I am also mindful of the scale of that challenge.

But you are responding.

You're responding with a level of excellence unparalleled among our global competitors...

From the pioneering work of UK firm Velosys in greener aviation fuels, to the development of electric flight at Cranfield with Airbus.

Or the 300 mph electric plane unveiled in Gloucestershire by Rolls Royce.

Together with billions of pounds of government support for research and development, and your sustainable aviation 2050 Road Map, which I was pleased to help launch last month, this country can once again be on the crest of a new wave of aviation technology.

Working together, government and industry, we can overcome seemingly impregnable barriers.

And in the next few weeks I will be saying more about my proposals to join up government and industry work to give British aviation a head start.

Aviation is by its very nature is dynamic. Your outlook is global, ambitious and entrepreneurial.

And I know that even as we meet this evening, facing challenges on a truly global scale, we will prevail, come out stronger, with you and this sector leading the world once again.

Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for all you are doing,

And have a fun evening – thank you.

---

## [PM statement on attack in Iraq: 11 March 2020](#)

Prime Minister Boris Johnson said:

The attack against the Taji military base in Iraq is deplorable.

Our servicemen and women work tirelessly every day to uphold security and stability in the region – their presence makes us all safer.

The Foreign Secretary has spoken to the US Secretary of State and we will continue to liaise with our international partners to fully understand the details of this abhorrent attack.

---

## [Readout of tech roundtable: 11 March 2020](#)

This evening, major technology companies – including Amazon, Google and Facebook – met with officials at Downing Street to discuss how they can help make sure the public get the most accurate and up-to-date information on coronavirus.

The tech companies were invited to discuss and consider their role in modelling and tracking data of the disease, and the impact any government interventions were having upon keeping the public safe.

Officials set out the vital role they can play in helping deliver the government's action plan, supporting the NHS, and helping develop tools we can use across the country as part of our national effort.

They stressed how important tech firms were in ensuring communities, including vulnerable people, had access to the most reliable information. This would help individuals and families make informed decisions about how to respond to the virus and keep themselves healthy.

In the meeting, the potential extent, scope and impact of disinformation linked to coronavirus was also discussed, and how we can all play a role in tackling this.

Attendees included:

- UK CEOs including representatives from Amazon, Google, Microsoft, Apple and Facebook
  - NHS Chief Executive Simon Stevens
  - No 10 officials
- 

## [Academy SW seminar: Working to prevent international online child sexual offending](#)

### Help us improve GOV.UK

To help us improve GOV.UK, we'd like to know more about your visit today. We'll send you a link to a feedback form. It will take only 2 minutes to fill in. Don't worry we won't send you spam or share your email address with anyone.

Email address

Send me the survey

---

## [Chancellor delivers Budget 2020](#)

The Chancellor has today (March 11) set out a £12 billion action plan in response to the economic impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, as part of a [Budget that delivers historic levels of public investment, levels up the country and lays the foundations for a decade of growth](#).

Chancellor of the Exchequer Rishi Sunak said Britain will rise to the challenge of COVID-19, with a package of measures to support public services, individuals and businesses that may be affected by the outbreak.

In addition to responding to the immediate impact of COVID-19, the Chancellor pledged to put hardworking people first, put more money in their pocket, invest a record amount in infrastructure, boost public services, back business and set out a vision for a greener future.

A record half a trillion pounds (£640 billion) will be invested in Britain's roads, railways and digital networks to give us the infrastructure that will support economic growth.

The Budget also provides billions of pounds to support our world-class public services; with funding for 50,000 more nurses and 50 million more GP surgery appointments a year.

Millions of families will have more cash to spend thanks to tax cuts through an increase in National Insurance thresholds and a cash boost to the National Living Wage (NLW). The Budget also takes action to support businesses of all sizes and accelerates the UK's progress towards a greener economy. The Comprehensive Spending Review, which will set out the government's detailed spending plans for this Parliament, was also launched today and will conclude in July.

[Delivering the budget in Parliament](#) Chancellor of the Exchequer Rishi Sunak said:

This Budget responds, at scale, to the immediate threat of Coronavirus and it reports on an economy whose foundations are strong. It is a Budget that provides for security today.

He added:

This is a Budget that will deliver on our promises to the British people and it is the budget of a government that gets things done.

We're at the beginning of a new era in this country. We have the freedom and the resource to decide our own future.

## **COVID-19**

The Chancellor pledged to do whatever it takes to support the economy through the disruption caused by [COVID-19 with a £12 billion package](#) of targeted measures. It included a £5 billion emergency response fund to support the NHS and other public services, £40 million of new funding for rapid research into COVID-19 and a commitment of up to £150 million to the International Monetary Fund's Catastrophe Containment and Relief Trust.

To support people affected, the Chancellor announced the government would be extending Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) for all those who are advised to self-isolate and their carers – even if they haven't yet presented with symptoms. Statutory Sick Pay costs for businesses with fewer than 250 employees will be met by the government in full for up to 14 days.

Rishi Sunak also set out plans to support the self-employed, those earning below the Lower Earnings Limit of £118 per week and a new £500 million Hardship Fund to directly support vulnerable people. The government will also increase the Business Rates retail discount to 100% for one year and expand it to the leisure and hospitality sectors.

## **Public services**

By the end of the Parliament, day to day spending on public services will be £100 billion higher in cash terms than it is today. This Budget commits more than £6 billion of new funding in this Parliament to support the NHS, including to create 50m more GP surgery appointments, ensure there are 50,000 more nurses. The NHS Settlement provided the largest cash increase in public services since the Second World War – an additional £33.9 billion per year by 2024.

## **Levelling up and getting Britain Building**

Billions of investment will be provided across the length and breadth of the country to support communities poorly served by old roads, communications and housing:

- more than £27 billion will be spent on upgrading strategic roads and £2.5 billion will be spent on fixing potholes
- £5 billion will go towards the rollout of gigabit-capable broadband in the hardest to reach areas
- following the recent floods, which devastated parts of the UK, the Chancellor has pledged a record £5.2 billion over six years for flood defences

## **Cost of living**

The Chancellor also put more money into the pockets of 31 million working people thanks to National Insurance Contribution thresholds increasing to £9,500, saving the typical employee around £104 a year from April, while the National Living Wage will increase to £8.72. This is on top a freeze in Fuel Duty, for the tenth consecutive year, and a freeze in duty rates for beer, cider and spirits, while the 'Tampon Tax' will be scrapped.

## **Backing Business**

From April, small businesses will benefit from an increase to the Employment Allowance, reducing their employer National Insurance bills by £850 on average and there will be fundamental review of business rates.

## **Greener economy**

To accelerate the UK's progress towards net zero carbon emissions by 2050 and protect the environment for future generations, the Chancellor announced £500 million for electric car charging infrastructure, to ensure drivers are never further than 30 miles away from a rapid charger. Tree planting in England will increase by 600% and to tackle the scourge of single-use plastics, a consultation will be launched on introducing a Plastic Packaging Tax.

## **Support for the regions and nations**

The Chancellor has also pledged to level up all parts of the UK, with measures to spread opportunity and ensuring everyone benefits from growth. He announced the West Yorkshire Devolution Deal, which will help the region boom through the creation of a Mayoral Combined Authority, while a government economic decision-making hub will be created in the North of England.

As a result of the budget:

- the Scottish Government will benefit from a £640 million funding boost
- the Welsh Government a £360 million funding boost
- the Northern Ireland Executive a £210m funding boost

Further measures announced by the Chancellor can be found at this [factsheet](#).