

Speech: Working together for a thriving aviation sector

Good evening.

Thank you for that introduction and welcome.

It's a real pleasure to join you for tonight's (24 January 2018) annual dinner.

And if it's not too late, to wish Airlines UK and all its members a prosperous new year.

In fact 2018 marks the 99th anniversary of a momentous event in airline history, the launch of the first regular, international, passenger air service in the world.

Like so many transport 'firsts', it happened here in Britain.

Pioneering British airline AT&T began operating daily flights from Hounslow Heath aerodrome to Le Bourget.

With a maximum capacity of 4 passenger, a journey time of 2 and a half hours and the pilot exposed to the elements.

Conditions aboard the de Havilland biplane may have been somewhat primitive.

But it was the start of something big.

Within a few months, there were converted WW1 bombers flying scheduled flights from Cricklewood to Paris, new services from Croydon Airport to Amsterdam, the first opportunity for cargo as airmail flights began serving European destinations and if you were lucky enough to get a ticket on the new London to Brussels route, you'd be served the world's first in-flight meals.

From this modest beginning, our commercial aviation industry grew.

Within 5 years, Imperial Airways had been formed.

Linking Britain with its vast global empire.

And suddenly it was possible to travel to the other side of the world in a fraction of the time it would take by ship.

Aviation importance

Why do I mention this?

First – to explain how quickly commercial aviation became critical to the fortunes of Britain after World War One.

And second – despite almost a century of economic, social and technological development – to show how little has changed.

How air travel and the prosperity of our country remain inextricably linked today.

Just as airlines benefit from a strong UK economy the whole of the UK benefits from a flourishing aviation sector.

Without the £52 billion that aviation adds to our GDP, the million jobs it supports and all the inward investment it generates, we simply could not have reduced our deficit by three quarters over the past 7 years or achieved the record employment levels which we see in Britain today.

It's because we have the largest aviation network in Europe and airlines competing to give the customer a wide choice, and a great deal that so many multinational firms invest in Britain.

And it's because we have a fundamentally strong economy that demand for air travel has grown so fast in recent years.

Aviation strategy

It's against this background of success that the government is now working on a [future strategy for aviation](#).

And I'm delighted that Baroness Sugg – who is attending her first Airlines UK dinner tonight – will be spearheading that work at the DfT.

Liz is going to be a fantastic Aviation Minister.

Some of you will already have met her, but I know that over the coming months she'll be getting around the industry, and listening to what you have to say about the strategy.

After our [call for evidence](#) last year, we will publish our response next month.

Once the response is out there, we want to test policies with different partners.

We want practical feedback on the measures we're proposing.

And if you think they can be improved, then we want to work with you to make them better.

It's crucial we get this right.

As Britain prepares to leave the European Union and as we develop plans for the new [north-west runway at Heathrow](#), it's right that we all focus on long-term prospects for British airlines and airports.

We want a strategy that will support growth across the country while tackling

aviation's environmental effects.

And we want to be ambitious.

Ambitious to be the best.

To lead the world – as we've led the world in the past.

So this will be far more than 'just another statement of intent' from government.

There have been enough of those over the years.

Instead it will be a wide-ranging blueprint for the sustainable growth of aviation over the next 30 years and beyond.

And it's not just the government's strategy.

I want it to be yours too.

A shared plan for how we can make best use of existing capacity, how we can create new capacity.

How we can improve surface access to airports.

How we can modernise airspace to tackle flight delays and reduce the need for stacking.

How we can further reduce noise.

And how we can put the passenger at the heart of everything we do.

I'm grateful to everyone in this room who has contributed so far.

After the call for evidence response, there will be 3 more consultation phases.

So please, continue to engage.

Because we need your voice, your insight and your understanding of the market to design a policy framework that reflects our common priorities in the decades ahead.

Heathrow

I also welcome your continued contributions on expanding capacity in the south-east.

We are currently [considering responses to the draft Airports National Policy Statement](#).

Plans remain on track for a vote in Parliament in the first half of this year.

This is a particularly important few months for the project, a project that will deliver immense benefits for aviation in Britain.

So we need to work together to support it.

A new runway at our biggest hub airport would offer significant growth opportunities for UK airlines and keep Britain plugged in to a rapidly changing global economy post Brexit.

In fact the case for the new runway capacity in the south-east is even greater than we thought.

After consulting on new evidence last autumn, [updated forecasts](#) showed that passenger numbers are growing much faster than we predicted even a few years ago.

Specifically, the new evidence reinforced the case for expansion at Heathrow supported by a world-class package of measures to limit the effects on local communities.

Compared to all other proposals, a north-west runway at Heathrow delivers the greatest benefits soonest.

More choice for passengers.

More business for airlines.

And more jobs for Britain.

Heathrow already handles more freight by value than all other UK airports combined.

That's partly because its accessible to the rest of the country.

In this way, Heathrow drives growth in regional freight.

For example, helping fishermen in Scotland to sell their fresh produce to Japan.

An expanded Heathrow would also be better served by transport connections – for example to HS2 and Crossrail.

But I've been clear that landing charges should be kept as close as possible to current levels something I know is close to many of your hearts too.

Heathrow charges have increased substantially over the past decade.

So that needs to be factored in to future plans.

I welcome the £2.5 billion savings to the scheme already announced by the airport.

I also welcome that progress that's been made in discussions between airlines and Heathrow.

The CAA's section 16 commission has been helpful here.

We must maintain the momentum after it expires in the spring.

So I shall announce an appropriate replacement in due course.

Because we have to make further progress.

I expect airlines and Heathrow to reach a deal on landing charges that will keep the airport competitive so extra costs are not ultimately passed on to the customer.

However, I also want to stress that now is not the time to undermine the scheme in any way.

Until the Parliamentary process is complete and the vote in Parliament has been delivered, we need the whole aviation industry to support the new runway.

With such manifest benefits for airlines, other UK airports, and the wider economy, we need to keep focused on the prize to come and work together as an industry to deliver the right expansion programme at the right price.

Brexit

The next 12 months will also be instrumental in setting a future direction for aviation after we've left the European Union.

Brexit remains at the top of the government's agenda for 2018 and securing a good deal for UK airlines, with the best possible access to European markets, remains one of my biggest Brexit objectives.

No other transport sector will have such a key role to play when we leave the European Union.

I remain confident that we'll get a good deal, and that UK airlines and airports will continue to flourish.

This confidence comes from knowing that it's in the interests of all European countries and everyone who travels between them that we seek an open, liberal arrangement for aviation following Brexit.

Now, I know that the aviation industry wants certainty, and quickly.

So does the government.

So does the rest of the EU.

On the 15 December the European Council confirmed that sufficient progress had been made.

This is an important milestone.

The guidelines published by the Council point to the shared desire of the EU and UK to make rapid progress on an implementation period.

Formal talks will begin very soon.

This will provide reassurance for both industry and consumers.

And then talks will start on the future economic partnership.

The future framework for aviation will of course be a central part of those discussions.

And we are ready for those discussions.

As we move forward it is important to be clear that it is in everyone's interests to do a deal quickly and to make it a good deal.

Let's remind ourselves why:

The UK is the largest aviation market in Europe and remains one of – if not the – most important markets for EU member states.

Good aviation connections between the UK and Europe are critical for tourism, business, and trade – in both directions.

And of course the UK will see significant extra valuable capacity at one of Europe's main hub airports – Heathrow – which airlines from all countries will want to make good use of.

A few days ago, the Article 50 Taskforce in the European Commission published a paper noting that, in the event of an overall 'no deal' scenario, it would be essential to agree a deal to ensure flights continue.

This shows how important it is for both sides to ensure aviation market access continues uninterrupted.

And the demands of airlines across Europe to access Heathrow means we have strong cards in our hand for the negotiations.

With that need to ensure ongoing connectivity in mind, we are working hard to deliver another priority – to quickly replace EU-based third country agreements, with countries like the US and Canada.

I can confirm that discussions on replacing these agreements have begun and are progressing well.

We will be meeting with US officials for a further round of talks in the coming weeks – many of you in this room will be involved in those discussions

And we are confident that these arrangements will be ready for exit.

But whatever the final deal, measures to support UK industry after 2019 are well developed.

And looking beyond Brexit, we have to make sure we capitalise on our new position in the world.

So we will continue to work with other countries to expand our aviation connections.

And through the aviation strategy, we will also look at how the UK can open up more long haul routes to markets like China, India and South America.

Monarch

Despite the healthy demand for flights I spoke about earlier, I know it's tough out there.

Sadly Monarch was unable to stay afloat.

But today I can announce that Peter Bucks has been appointed Chair of the independent insolvency review set up after Monarch's demise.

I welcome the regulatory and finance experience he'll bring to aviation.

The review I've asked him to carry out will help us explore options for a new framework to deal with the failure of airlines and travel companies so that airlines can be wound down in an orderly fashion, and passengers repatriated or refunded with minimal or no government intervention.

Today I'd also like to thank everyone across the industry who helped bring back Monarch passengers who could otherwise have been stranded abroad.

It was a massive effort, with government working alongside airlines and airports to deal with a complex and difficult logistical challenge.

I'd also like to thank British Airways, Virgin, TUI and Thomas Cook Airlines for assisting the Hurricane Irma relief operation last September.

Both responses reflected the airlines industry at its very best.

Conclusion

So in conclusion.

Nearly a century of history has shown the importance of a thriving, sustainable, commercial aviation sector to this island nation.

Whatever success we've had over that period, it's been won by being proactive.

Innovative.

By taking risks.

And by working together.

We're certainly not sitting around waiting for things to happen this time round either.

Through the aviation strategy, Heathrow expansion and Brexit planning we will stand side by side with our partners in the airline industry.

Because Britain needs the connections you provide.

The jobs you bring.

The growth you support.

99 years after that first flight, aviation remains absolutely critical to the national interests of Britain.

That's why we can be confident about the future.

A future we will build together.

Thank you.

Press release: Education standards continue to rise at GCSE and A level

Educational standards continue to rise across England's secondary schools, as [results](#) published today (Thursday 25 January) show more young people from disadvantaged backgrounds achieving good grades in the core academic subjects.

Following the introduction of more rigorous GCSE and A levels to match the best education systems in the world, the data shows:

- The attainment gap between disadvantaged secondary school pupils and their peers has narrowed by 3.2% since last year and 10% since 2011;
- Results for Multi Academy Trusts, with Harris Federation, The Thinking Schools Academy Trust and The Diocese of Westminster Academy Trust among the top MAT performers;
- Schools in London continue to perform strongly, with 12 schools in the top 20 for the government's pupil progress measure (Progress 8); and
- More pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds, SEN pupils and pupils on free school meals being entered for EBacc subjects since last year –

helping ensure pupils have the knowledge and skills they need for future success.

The data builds on the government's record of 1.9 million more children now in good or outstanding schools than in 2010, nine out of ten schools awarded this rating at their last inspection and England's pupils now amongst the world's best readers.

School Standards Minister Nick Gibb said:

Academic standards are rising in our schools thanks to our reforms and the hard work of teachers, with 1.9million more children in good or outstanding schools than in 2010. Today's results reinforce this success, with teachers and pupils responding well to the new more rigorous curriculum introduced by this government.

The attainment gap between the most disadvantaged pupils and their peers has narrowed by 10 per cent since 2011, and more disadvantaged pupils are studying the core academic subjects, ensuring they have the knowledge and skills they need to make the most of their lives.

Many free schools and academies are also delivering excellent results for pupils – with Harris Federation and Dixons Academy trusts leading the way.

We will continue to use this evidence to drive up standards even further for all pupils so that they leave school prepared for future success in their education and beyond, helping to build a Britain that is fit for the future.

Other highlights from the statistics show:

- For the first time statistics about disadvantaged students at post-16 (KS5) have been published. This data will help inform future policy decisions so that we can help to focus social mobility policy further at this stage;
- The number of students entering at least four of the five subject areas which are part of the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) – maths, English, sciences, humanities and modern foreign languages (MFL) have increased by 4.8 percentage points this year – up to 82.0% in 2017; and
- GCSE (A*-C) pass rates at 16-18 have increased in English, up from 22.8% to 27.1%, and total entries to English and maths GCSEs by 16-18 students increased by 26.3 percentage points and 13.6 percentage points respectively. This will help ensure pupils leave their education with

the knowledge and skills they need for future success.

- Schools across London continue to strong pupil progress. Twelve of the top 20 schools in the government's Progress 8 measure were based in London.

Other regional highlights include:

Confirmation of the top performing schools based on Progress 8 measures, which are as follows:

1. Tauheedul Islam Girls' High School, Blackburn;
2. Wembley High Technology College, London;
3. Taheedul Islam Boys' High School, Blackburn;
4. Harris Academy Battersea, London; and
5. The Steiner Academy Hereford, Herefordshire.

Data on the top five multi-academy trusts on EBacc attainment, which are as follows:

1. Thinking Schools Academy Trust (Medway & Portsmouth);
2. Bright Futures Educational Trust (North West);
3. Tudor Grange Academies Trust (Midlands);
4. Diocese of London; and
5. Diocese of Westminster Academy Trust.

Confirmation of the top performing areas on attainment (Attainment 8) by region, with the top regions as follows:

1. London;
2. South East;
3. East;
4. South West; and
5. North West.

Confirmation of the top performing areas for progressing pupils (Progress 8), with the top local authority areas as follows:

1. Merton;
2. Brent;
3. Barnet;
4. Westminster; and Harrow (joint fourth).

[News story: Charity property matters](#)

[survey](#)

The [Ethical Property Foundation](#) is a UK charity which offers voluntary organisations free property guidance, advice and workshops.

It offers a wide range of expert advice on legal issues and premises management working with property professionals.

The Foundation has just launched its bi-annual [Charity Property Matters Survey 2018](#) which takes around 10 minutes to complete. This is the only sector-led property survey about charities' property issues.

You'll need a good understanding of your charity's current property position and any questions about the survey can be emailed to policy@cfg.org.uk

The Charity Commission has been a partner in this research since 2012 and we urge charities to take part.

[News story: BEIS and Welsh Government open geological disposal consultations](#)

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS), covering England and Northern Ireland, and the Welsh Government, today opened separate consultations which will enable stakeholders and members of the public to help shape policies on the geological disposal programme – the draft Working with Communities policy and the draft National Policy Statement.

Geological disposal involves isolating radioactive waste in a highly-engineered facility deep underground and within multiple protective barriers, to ensure that no harmful quantities of radioactivity ever reach the surface environment. Across the world, geological disposal, preceded by safe and secure interim storage, is acknowledged as the best solution for managing higher-activity radioactive wastes in the long-term.

The consultations will explore views on the approach to planning and selecting a site for a Geological Disposal Facility (GDF) in partnership with potential willing host communities.

Ann McCall, Radioactive Waste Management's (RWM) GDF Siting and Engagement Director, said:

Geological disposal will provide a safe, secure and long-term

solution to managing the UK's radioactive waste, and RWM welcomes the public consultations launched today which place communities at the heart of the process. As the delivery body for geological disposal, we are eager to hear people's views on how we can work with communities to progress this important programme on behalf of society.

You can have your say on the draft policies by responding directly to BEIS or Welsh Government through their dedicated consultation websites. If you are resident in England or Northern Ireland you can participate by visiting the [BEIS consultations portal](#). For Welsh residents, please visit the [Welsh Government consultations portal](#). The consultations will be open for 12 weeks.

[News story: New identity checking guidelines](#)

New identity (ID) checking guidelines have been introduced for standard and enhanced disclosure checks. The [new guidelines](#) have been running in parallel with previous guidelines since October 2017. However, the previous guidelines now cease to apply and you must use the new version.

The change is being introduced so that the DBS's identity checking process is aligned with [right to work](#) checks. These state that employers must prevent illegal working in the UK by carrying out document checks on people before employing them to make sure they are allowed to work.

If you have any questions about the changes contact customerservices@dbs.gsi.gov.uk.