



Sir Howard Davies  
Chairman  
Airports Commission  
Sanctuary Buildings,  
20 Great Smith Street,  
London SW1P 3BT

Please reply to:



Email: <mailto:airport.models@airports.gsi.gov.uk>

22 July 2013

Dear Sir Howard,

**Reference: Aviation Policy Framework – Airport Operating Models**

I refer to the invitation for interested bodies to submit views on the discussion paper number 4 on Airport Operating Models dated 16 May 2013 issued by the Commission. I am pleased to respond to a number of the questions asked in the Guidance document on behalf of the Committee and membership of the Friends of Liverpool Airport (FoLA).

*The Friends of Liverpool Airport (FoLA) is an independent non-political voluntary organisation with around 350 members throughout the United Kingdom. Its objectives are: to promote the use of and need for Liverpool John Lennon Airport, to encourage the preservation, development and improvement of Liverpool John Lennon Airport and its facilities, to educate public opinion and give advice and information about and to promote pride in Liverpool John Lennon Airport.*

The members of our Committee felt that the submission made to the Commission by Carolyn McCall Chief Executive of easyJet dated 10 July 2013 clearly made the case for point to point services to be provided where they are economically viable, in order to provide passengers with what they want – direct flights to where they want to go at reasonable fares, rather than having to transfer at a congested hub and at higher costs.

Liverpool John Lennon Airport is one of a number of regional airports throughout the UK which is now able to offer passengers a range of direct services operated by easyJet to key European destinations including; Amsterdam, Barcelona, Berlin, Geneva, Lisbon, Madrid, Naples, Nice and Paris as well as a variety of leisure routes which would never have been possible before the advent of low cost point to point services. Passengers at Belfast, Bristol, Edinburgh and Newcastle have benefited in a similar way by the expansion of low cost point to point routes.

There is an over-emphasis on the importance of the hub, or focal, airport and we would request that aviation policy does not favour hubs and transfer operations over point to point. Point to point accounts for around 90% of all passenger journeys in UK airspace and even at Heathrow Airport less than 20% of passenger journeys use the airport to transfer to another flight.

Existing Airport capacity should be fully utilised. In the short term, existing airports both in the south east and throughout the United Kingdom, including Liverpool John Lennon Airport have the capacity to handle millions more passenger journeys a year than they presently do without any new runways.

Capacity should be provided where there is passenger demand for it - aviation works best when consumers determine outcomes. Airports should only build the infrastructure that provides the level of service that passengers' value and are willing to pay to use. Passengers should only pay for new infrastructure when they actually use it – like toll roads – and not for years in advance.

The future of aviation capacity should be determined by consumer demand not central planning and needs to be delivered cost effectively.

Our organisation would strongly support the arguments so well and clearly made in the easyJet submission, in support of the need to ensure that there is not an over emphasis on the importance of hub or focal airports at the expense of point to point operations.

These point to point operations provide greater choice to passengers and have environmental and economic benefits for both passengers and the country by facilitating efficient, less costly services by making use of existing airport infrastructure and eliminating unnecessary connecting air services or surface transfers to hub airports.

As we stated in our previous response on making best use of existing capacity, we recognise that London Heathrow has a role to play as a national hub serving less popular long haul routes that would not be economic for point to point operations from most airports but only as part of a wider provision of capacity and only if slots are made available to allow access to UK regional feeder routes including Liverpool.

If you require any further information or assistance please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

*Peter Mawdsley*

**Peter Mawdsley**  
**Secretary**

**Friends of Liverpool Airport (FoLA)**

