

## HENRY SMITH MP



### HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Rt Hon Grant Shapps MP  
Secretary of State for Transport  
Department for Transport  
Great Minster House  
33 Horseferry Road  
London SW1P 4DR

28<sup>th</sup> May 2020

Dear Grant

We are writing to introduce 'The Future of Aviation Group' which has been formed to provide a forum for parliamentary colleagues, in conjunction with the industry, to engage with the Government. The Group will put forward constructive proposals relating to aviation with the intention of helping the industry fulfil its role as a leading engine of economic growth both in the aftermath of the immediate COVID-19 crisis and into the longer term.

The group will be working with all the key industry bodies, trade unions, tourism bodies, local business groups and regional/local authorities to reflect and represent the broad nature of the industry.

As you know, aviation is one of the sectors worst affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, with IATA reporting that industry passenger revenues are expected to fall globally by \$252 billion, or 44% below 2019 revenues. This demonstrates the devastating impact that the virus has had not only on our world class airlines and airports, but on our manufacturing sector, our local economies, our tourism industry and the considerable employment that the aviation sector provides.

The wider aviation family makes a significant economic and social contribution to the UK and will be central to our long-term economic recovery. We are therefore concerned at the lack of progress being made in providing wider support for the industry and in the development of a long-term roadmap that will enable the sector to recover as quickly as possible and play its vital role in our national overall economic recovery.

We have several specific points that we wish to raise as follows:

- How often will the 14-day quarantine period be reviewed, and will Government prioritise 'air bridges' to restart safe travel to and from low risk countries?
- What discussions have been held at an international level to find a Common International Standard for aviation health protocols to build consumer confidence?
- What discussions have been held with local authorities and airport representatives regarding central Government support for business rates relief?
- What consideration has been given to financial measures to support the restart of domestic aviation and to protect vital regional routes?

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- What additional support can be made available to local authorities and the aviation supply chain until passenger numbers increase?
- What assessment has been made of the importance of aviation to the nation's economic recovery?
- What assessment has been made of the likely timescale of the recovery of businesses in the tourism sector who are reliant on international tourism?
- What assessment has been made of the opportunity to support low carbon aviation technologies to support UK economic recovery and help aviation deliver its net zero commitment?

We welcome the measures already put in place by the Government which have helped businesses throughout the sector to an important extent. However, these measures alone will not be enough to enable our aviation industry to survive in a form that the nation needs. We are aware that there have been several conversations with representatives of parts of the industry. But we need urgent action now to safeguard jobs, the UK's international competitiveness as an aviation hub and, crucially, to ensure that our economy recovers from the impacts of COVID-19 as soon as it is safe and possible to do so.

It is of course right that the Government's focus remains on preventing the spread of COVID-19 and that its decisions are based on scientific advice. However, we hope you will agree that it is also essential that the Government focus on the long-term recovery of the aviation sector. The consequences of inaction in this vital area are simply unthinkable.

Yours sincerely



**Henry Smith**  
**Member of Parliament for Crawley**  
**Chair, Future of Aviation Group**



**Christine Jardine**  
**Member of Parliament for Edinburgh West**  
**Vice Chair, Future of Aviation Group**



**Catherine McKinnell**  
**Member of Parliament for Newcastle North**  
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**Gavin Robinson**  
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