Committee on Climate Change

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

3 July 2013

Dear Howard

We read with interest the Aviation Commission's discussion paper "Aviation and Climate Change".

In working out appropriate investments in aviation infrastructure, it is essential to recognise that aviation emissions are included in the target to reduce economy wide emissions by 80% in 2050 on 1990 levels, which is set in the Climate Change Act.

The fact that aviation emissions are in the 2050 target implies a trade off between emissions in this and other sectors of the economy: the higher the level of aviation emissions, the deeper the emissions cuts required in other sectors to meet the economy-wide target.

Our analysis has illustrated how the 80% target could be achieved through reducing aviation emissions to 2005 levels in 2050 and reducing emissions in other sectors by 85% on 1990 levels.

Reducing aviation emissions to 2005 levels in 2050 could be achieved through a combination of fuel and operational efficiency improvement, use of sustainable biofuels, and by limiting demand growth to around 60% in 2050 compared to 2005.

Reducing emissions in other sectors by 85% in 2050 on 1990 levels is at the limit of what is feasible, with limited confidence about the scope for going beyond this.

The Committee on Climate Change
1st Floor,
7 Holbein Place,
London SW1W 8NR
Tel: 0207 591 6262 Fax: 0207 591 6180 www.theccc.org.uk

It is of course possible that there may be scope to reduce emissions more in other sectors, which would allow aviation demand to grow by more than 60% in 2050. However, this may well be the limit, here and in other developed countries, compatible with achieving the internationally agreed climate objective.

Given the need to limit aviation demand growth in a carbon constrained world, we recommend that this should be reflected in your economic analysis of alternative investments. For example, for each investment, you should assess whether this would make sense if demand growth were to be limited to 60% by 2050.

We would be very happy to come and discuss these issues with you and the Commission if that would be useful.

Yours Sincerely,

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Chairman, Committee on Climate Change

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