

## **GIBA Statement on New Heathrow Route**

David Oxburgh, GIBA Chair says:

“It’s absolutely fantastic news that after a gap of 20 years Guernsey has got a link back in place with London Heathrow. Yes, it’s only a trial and only one flight a day but it is absolutely a step in the right direction.

“Business bodies have been very vocal about the need to improve air links, and particularly to international hubs, so GIBA is delighted that government has financially committed to support this trial – both with route development funding and the reduced airport charges for new routes.

“We all however need to bear in mind that this is only a seven-month trial and whilst an extension of this into next winter is an option, as is the possibility of additional slots, this will of course be dependent on the successful performance of this initial service. We therefore encourage those who have called for a Heathrow link to use the new service – as otherwise it’ll go as quickly as it has come.

“The ‘use it or lose it’ view also applies to the many new routes that will commence over the next few months. So, whilst many of the summer services will hopefully encourage visitors to the island, it’s also our opportunity to ‘get off the rock’ to some new destinations such as Newquay and Glasgow or Edinburgh without having to change flights.

“I would like to pay credit to Charles Parkinson and the entire political and officer team at the Committee *for* Economic Development in getting us to where we are today with air links, which has involved a huge amount of work behind the scenes over the last year. Their efforts in bringing forward and getting the States to agree firstly the “quasi open skies” policy and then the investment objectives for air and sea links, have laid the foundations for improving our connectivity.

“Indeed, with a primary objective of connectivity to an international hub, the States approval of the investment objectives has facilitated the support of the new Heathrow route. With air links being such a key issue it’s great that on this occasion at least the politicians have been working together to bring about this new link - with Policy & Resources supporting route development funding from the Future Guernsey Economic Fund and the States’ Trading Supervisory Board playing its part with the discounted airport charges for new routes.

“Clearly the States still need to consider whether to request further investigations on a runway extension, but for now these improvements in our air links in the short term are to be welcomed.”