LEADING INSTITUTE URGES GOVERNMENT TO GRASP AVIATION STRATEGY

As the Airports Commission develops its thinking on the UK’s future airport strategy for government consideration during 2015, the Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport (CILT) has now produced its own report outlining long-term strategic prospects for the growth of air transport.

Entitled *The Future of Aviation*, the CILT’s key point is that the economic, environmental, and social benefits of aviation are only likely to be optimised if the UK prospers at least to the same level as the rest of the world. As an international activity, the benefits to the UK from air transport will not be realised in isolation.

CILT’s *The Future of Aviation* makes a number of key points through a series of scenarios each based on the UK’s potential economic growth overlaid by possible advances and developments in key factors including: global changes in aviation; structural changes in airlines and airports; developing aviation technology; sustainability; UK airports strategy; and airport surface access requirements.

The CILT’s report shows that only in the most optimistic scenario will new runways be developed in the UK, with most growth taking place by using existing runway capacity at airports both within and outside SE England. This will be driven by a combination of market forces, that is to say consumer demand for more services and the UK’s liberal regulatory regime.

The report shows that over the next 25 years, aviation in the Middle and Far East will grow most strongly, while in North America and Europe it will grow more modestly, and the steady growth of low cost airlines is likely to continue. The report also predicts that the balance of privately run and state-owned airports around the world will also continue, while in the UK, there will be an enduring turnover of ownership within the private sector, it is understood.

Furthermore, the report suggests that sustainability improvements can be achieved in line with Government targets, provided that growth is sufficient to justify investment.

What may also affect demand for air travel over the next 25 years will be the development of air – rail links, says the report. Improving the quality and extent of surface access, especially by rail, to Gatwick, Stansted and Luton Airports will enable a better use of existing airport capacity. However, the completion of both Phases 1 and 2 of the HS2 rail line\(^1\) is likely have only a limited effect on the demand for domestic air travel by 2035.
The report concludes that the Government should plan for flexibility and modest growth, with a durable strategy that it then sticks to, enabling the aviation industry to have clear plans and commitments that it can implement.

The report has been prepared as part of the CILT’s Vision 2035 initiative and sits alongside other reports on related transport matters (See http://ciltuk.org.uk/PublicPolicy/PolicyandGuidance.aspx ). It was produced by the Institute’s Aviation Forum. Paul Le Blond, who co-ordinated the report, commented, “Predicting the long-term prospects for aviation is not easy, but unless the lack of a long-term strategy for the aviation sector is gripped by government, the prospects for its development here will be dented.

“The work of the Airports Commission is to be commended but this report is designed to ensure there is a continuing focus and dialogue on the need for the UK to develop its aviation sector for the benefit of passengers, businesses and those affected by its activities because it brings considerable benefits to the UK.”

The full report can be viewed online at http://ciltuk.org.uk/Portals/0/Documents/ProSectors/PubPol/Future_Aviation_Report.pdf

About CILT
The Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport is the independent international professional body for individuals and companies associated with logistics and transport. It has over 33,000 members in over 31 countries worldwide. www.ciltuk.org.uk

1. HS2 will see the major cities of the Midlands and the North of the UK connected to the extensive, Europe-wide high speed network. HS2 (see www.hs2.org.uk) will revolutionise, it is claimed, the country’s railways, create thousands of jobs, generate investment in neglected areas and provide passengers with an unprecedented travel service. This will involve transformation of rail capacity, connectivity and trains while driving growth and regeneration.