Responding to the major air traffic control shutdown that took place yesterday (12 December), Mrs Louise Ellman, Chair of Transport Committee said on 13 December:

“I am very concerned about this major breakdown in UK air traffic control and the impact of the disruption this failure has caused on airports, airlines and passengers. In such circumstances safety remains paramount, but going forward it is vital that we establish what happened yesterday, and what NATS must do in order to ensure the same problem does not recur in future. The Committee will ask the Secretary of State these and other questions when he appears before us on Monday*.

“I also hope that the Committee will call NATS and the CAA to give evidence to us, so that we can get to the bottom of what led up to this weekend’s events.”

The Transport Committee is charged by the House of Commons (the lower house) with scrutiny of the Department for Transport. Its formal remit is to examine the expenditure, administration and policy of the Department of Transport and its associated public bodies.

The Committee is made up of eleven Members of Parliament, appointed by the House of Commons and drawn from the three largest political parties as follows: Mrs Louise Ellman (Labour/Co-operative, Liverpool Riverside) (Chair); Sarah Champion (Labour, Rotherham); Jim Fitzpatrick (Labour, Poplar and Limehouse); Mr Tom Harris (Labour, Glasgow South); Karen Lumley (Conservative, Redditch); Jason McCartney (Conservative, Colne Valley); Karl McCartney (Conservative, Lincoln); Mr Adrian Sanders (Lib Dem, Torbay); Chloe Smith (Conservative, Norwich North); Graham Stringer (Labour, Blackley and Broughton); Martin Vickers (Conservative, Cleethorpes).

The Committee chooses its own subjects of inquiry. Depending on the subject, external deadlines, and the amount of oral evidence the Committee decides to take, an inquiry may last for several months and give rise to a report to the House; other inquiries may simply consist of a single day’s oral evidence which the Committee may publish without making a report.

* The Committee is scheduled to take evidence on 15 December from the Secretary of State for Transport, Rt Hon Patrick McLoughlin MP, and the Permanent Secretary at the Department for Transport, Philip Rutnam on the Government’s long-term vision for the railway network.