The Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport (CILT) has responded to the (UK) Airports Commission’s consultation on options for a new runway, which presented the Commission’s analysis of proposals shortlisted last year: two for expansion at Heathrow Airport and one proposal at Gatwick Airport. CILT has concluded that Heathrow is the best transport option, but that the impacts must be capped.

Based in Corby in the East Midlands CILT states that the Heathrow runway options are better from an overall transport perspective simply because the airport is closer to the centre of gravity of the population and economic activity.

Commenting on the Institute’s response Paul Le Blond, Aviation Forum Chair, CILT, said: “The Heathrow options are clearly superior to Gatwick in terms of their business case and airline preference, though significantly worse in terms of a number of environmental impacts.”

The Institute acknowledges that exceeding local air quality limits, aircraft noise impacts and airport-related road traffic is a risk with the Heathrow option. However CILT recommends that the Government, in supporting the Heathrow North West Runway, must cap activity unless targets are met.

CILT recognises that the benefits of the Gatwick option are also greater than the impacts stating that this option should be retained for the longer term.

The Institute is confident that the UK aviation sector can grow within the legislated carbon emission targets and recommends that any additional runway capacity should include ring fenced slots for regional access to London, as part of a co-ordinated and continuously-updated airport strategy for the whole of the UK. This strategy should integrate with other transport modes and fit with wider economic, environmental and social policies.