

WRITTEN EVIDENCE FROM EDINBURGH AIRPORT

Thank you for the opportunity to submit views on Scottish Government's Draft Budget 2013-14. As requested we are keeping our comments brief and concise.

Under funding for Culture and External Affairs we welcome the continued promotion of Scotland throughout Europe and beyond, particularly given that the world's attention will be focussed on events taking place in Scotland over the next couple of years. Over this period promotion highlighting opportunities for life sciences or low carbon technologies and the growth of the tourism and food and drink sectors, amongst others, plays to our strengths and the budget seeks to maximise these opportunities.

Attracting investment to Scotland and equally facilitating exports is a key part of our economic recovery and Scottish airports will play an important part in delivering this. Connectivity within Scotland is also important and in general we welcome the planned enhancements to the rail network in the central belt and between Edinburgh and the Scottish Borders. We hope that future budgets will also allow the Dalmeny Chord to be brought forward and a timescale for its implementation identified.

We support the principle of increasing funding for the Highlands and Islands Airports Limited which form an important role in the economic and social development of the Highlands and Islands. This support and the continued, albeit reduced, support for the Air Discount Scheme are key to keeping the whole of Scotland connected through, principally, the airports in the central belt to the rest of the world. The EU are however reviewing the European Guidelines on financing of airports and start-up aid to airlines departing from regional airports. Depending on the outcome of this review and any potential changes to the guidelines there may be opportunities to create further links between Scotland and the rest of the world. Such links are likely to be from one of Scotland's four larger airports due to them benefitting from the appropriate infrastructure to potentially achieve the greatest range. Depending on the nature of any potential changes the budget should allow for potential support for such links should government support be an EU criteria.