



Mark Isherwood MS
Chair
Public Accounts and Public Administration Committee
Senedd Cymru
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

13 October 2025

Dear Chair

CARDIFF AIRPORT

I am writing to provide the Committee with an update regarding the timescale for the legal challenge being pursued by Bristol Airport in respect of the economic investment package for Cardiff Airport, as well as some recent operational developments.

Competition Appeal Tribunal (CAT): Bristol Airport vs Welsh Ministers

The CAT has published a [summary of the appeal](#), as it currently stands, on its website. However, Bristol Airport have permission to apply (by 17 October) to amend their case, so this may be subject to change. If the case being brought against the Welsh Ministers is amended, the CAT is likely to publish an updated summary of appeal in due course. You may recall that pre-action correspondence was received from two other UK airport operators – Regional and City Airports and Birmingham Airport. These parties have not filed a formal legal challenge and the window for them, or any other third party, to do so has now closed.

The hearing of the appeal by Bristol Airport has been listed to take place during the week commencing 9 February 2026, over a period of two days. It is not known when the CAT's judgement will be provided, but it may be a number of weeks (or even months) after the hearing. The judgement will not necessarily conclude the matter, as it could be subject to appeal. It will be published by the CAT and therefore publicly available.

I will inform the Committee of any further updates to the timescale for the progression of the legal proceedings in my subsequent (quarterly) update, but it would not be appropriate for me to comment further on matters relating to the investment package, until such time as the legal proceedings are concluded.

Cardiff Airport: Performance Update

I am pleased to provide you with the following performance update on the airport.

Passengers

Passenger performance has been strong for 2025, with the airport reporting an increase on passenger throughput for the previous rolling 12 months. The airport plans to make an announcement on this shortly. These achievements have been driven by organic growth with existing partners through increased frequencies, additional routes and improved load factors, and the upshift in demand is a demonstration of the hard work of the airport's management and staff.

Route development

The executive team attended the 30th 'Routes World' event in September which was held this year in Hong Kong. The Routes conference brought together senior leaders from across the global industry. The airport was supported by Visit Wales, and the event provided the team with the opportunity to promote Wales and the airport on the world stage, through a series of face-to-face meetings and networking events, and developing existing and building new relationships with other airlines.

Winter 2025 will see new routes to Salzburg and Fuerteventura (TUI), and Alicante (Ryanair) which is additional to Vueling and TUI who already operate this route. Summer 2026 will see a fourth additional TUI-based aircraft which will open up routes to Hurghada (Egypt) and Faro (Portugal). Ryanair had its largest ever summer programme in 2025 from Cardiff Airport.

We were disappointed that Loganair announced that their Cardiff to Edinburgh route will cease from 4 January 2026. The airport executive team are working hard to explore opportunities to bring flights back between Wales and Scotland as soon as possible, as well as exploring other opportunities to improve UK regional connectivity to Wales.

Infrastructure development

The runway rehabilitation project is due to be completed in full in October and is projected to come in on time and within budget.

New CEO

Following an external recruitment exercise, on 6 October the airport announced the appointment of Jon Bridge who will join Cardiff Airport as the new CEO on 3 November

2025. Jon has held a range of senior leadership and advisory positions including CEO of SA Brains & Co where he successfully steered the company through a period of transformation following the Covid-19 pandemic. Jon will bring a wealth of experience to the airport, built up over three decades in the retail, hospitality and transport sectors. Andy Jones, the current interim CEO, will return to his usual Non-Executive Director duties following Jon's arrival, whilst remaining on hand to provide continuity and any handover, as necessary.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Slade', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Andrew Slade
Director General
Economy, Energy and Transport