

I have followed the Inquiry into Ports & Airports with interest and you have asked that I email you as Clerk to the Inquiry with some observations. I will be brief.

In discussing what is required to make a successful airport which is capable of providing significant added value for the economy of South Wales, I am surprised that the debate seems to have centred exclusively on the status quo, notably Cardiff Airport. This approach has limited the debate and I would ask why there has not been a more challenging discussion around what the ideal airport for South Wales might look like. One assumes that this would lead to an insightful discussion about better locations to maximise catchment, including from across the border, and direct interconnectivity with existing motorway and high speed rail infrastructure.

In essence, the solution to Cardiff Airport's failure may be an entirely new and more intelligently sited airport designed to serve not just South Wales, but also the South and West of England.

I would hope that the Inquiry would examine this and reflect on how previous DfT reports (e.g. The Future of Air Transport) misjudged the potential of alternative airport sites, particularly when one considers the subsequent success of a poorly located Bristol Airport and serious capacity constraints at Heathrow Airport. This is particularly relevant as the DfT is currently consulting on the Sustainable Framework for UK Aviation.

Exploring new approaches may also strengthen the case for greater investment in the GWR high speed rail line and M4 motorway.

Kind regards
Brendan Sadka