**AIRLINE, TRAVEL AND TOURISM SECTORS RALLY BEHIND CALL FOR URGENT AND FUNDAMENTAL REFORM OF HEATHROW’S REGULATORY MODEL**

* **The Business Travel Association (BTA)** **is** **a representative association for the business travel community and travel management companies, with members accounting for over 90% of all managed travel booked in the UK**
* **The Advantage Travel Partnership represents independently owned travel businesses who operate across 750 locations throughout the UK, with a global network footprint across 83 countries, generating over £15.6 billion in sales annually**
* **The World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) represents over 200 companies accounting for two-thirds of a trillion US dollar in turnover - equivalent to 30% of the entire sector. It is the only global body representing the Travel & Tourism private sector and its numerous industries**
* **The Board of Airlines Representatives in the UK (BAR UK) is the industry association representing the majority of overseas based airlines operating to the UK**

**London, 10 March 2025 –** Today, four of the world’s leading associations representing airlines, the travel community and travel management companies have joined the *Heathrow Reimagined* campaign. The landmark campaign has made an evidential submission to the CAA calling for an urgent and fundamental review into the way in which Heathrow, the UK’s only hub airport and the largest in Europe is regulated, for the benefit of consumers, businesses, and the UK economy.

The announcement comes shortly after the International Air Transport Association (IATA) and American Airlines joined the Heathrow Reimagined campaign and reinforces calls for an improved experience for passengers at the world’s most expensive airport.

**A spokesperson for Heathrow Reimagined,** said:

“Despite spending £15 billion in the last 20 years, Heathrow Airport Limited continues to operate some of the world’s oldest terminals, thanks to a regulatory system that encourages inefficient spend and fails to provide value for money to passengers. Instead of being a source of national pride, Heathrow, Britain’s only hub airport, has dropped out of the Skytrax Top 20 for passenger experience.

“These leading travel associations represent the voice of business and leisure passengers alike, as well as our vibrant industries. Their support for the Heathrow Reimagined campaign sends a clear message to the Civil Aviation Authority that the time to act is now. An urgent review is essential to ensure the right framework is in place before passengers and airlines are locked into high charges for decades to come.”

The evidential submission and request for a fundamental review made to the CAA follows years of declining passenger experience and ageing infrastructure at the airport. Coupled with expansion plans that will raise passenger charges again, Heathrow Reimagined estimates passengers and airlines are paying £1.1 billion more each year than if charges were in line with equivalent major European airports.

**Clive Wratten, Chief Executive Officer of The Business Travel Association (BTA),** said: “We need a clear and fair cost strategy that protects all travellers, especially those travelling for business and are already balancing increased operational overheads. The BTA looks forward to working with the industry as part of this Heathrow Reimagined campaign to ensure that the airport’s expansion and regulatory reform strengthens the UK’s global connectivity without creating unnecessary financial burdens for the businesses who rely on it.”

**Julia Lo Bue-Said, Chief Executive Officer of The Advantage Travel Partnership,** said: “Heathrow is the most expensive airport in the world but it certainly does not offer the best passenger experience in return. As we continue to see a cost of living crisis in the UK, passengers shouldn’t be paying a penny more than is necessary.

“We would welcome regulatory intervention so we can better understand why our customers pay so much more to use Heathrow than any other airport globally. This is more important now than ever, as the costs associated with a third runway could potentially extrapolate these high charges even further.”

**Julia Simpson, President and Chief Executive Officer of The World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC),** said: “As a global authority on the economic and social contribution of Travel and Tourism, it is clear that the UK is at a critical juncture. The Travel & Tourism sector contributed £280 billion to the UK economy last year, making Heathrow, its only hub airport, even more critical in unlocking economic growth across the country. It is clear that for too long, despite being the most expensive airport in the world, Heathrow hasn’t provided value for money for passengers and airlines alike. The Civil Aviation Authority now has an opportunity and duty to review what has gone wrong.”

**Michael Smeeth, Chief Executive of The Board of Airlines Representatives in the UK (BAR UK),** said: “As the UK industry body representing the majority of airlines operating to the UK we are supporting the Heathrow Reimagined campaign, as we believe it is crucial for the UK to have a world class global hub airport that is able to deliver not only good connectivity, but also excellent value. This is crucial to ensure that the biggest benefits to consumers, businesses, and the UK economy are delivered.”

The Heathrow Reimagined campaign continues to actively engage with the wider industry and government toachieve its primary objective of fundamental reform. This can serve as a first step towards delivering value for consumers, UK plc and the government’s growth agenda.The campaign is supported by the Heathrow Airline Operators’ Committee (AOC), Advantage Travel Partnership, American Airlines, Arora Group, Board of Airlines Representatives in the UK (BAR UK), Business Travel Association (BTA), International Air Transport Association (IATA), International Airlines Group (IAG), Virgin Atlantic and World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC).

**ENDS**

**For more information about *Heathrow Reimagined: A Better Hub for Britain*, please visit:** [**www.heathrow-reimagined.com**](https://protect.checkpoint.com/v2/r02/___http://www.heathrow-reimagined.com___.YzJlOnZpcmdpbmF0bGFudGljYWlybGluZXM6YzpvOjM2ZDJjNjdjNmI0YzU0MjJhNTdhYWJiOThiZWE3MmVjOjc6ZmEyZDpiZjk4M2Q5Nzc5MDYwNzI5MjBjYTY1YWM3OTE3M2NhNjkxM2FmN2ExZjZiMTZmYzcxZWI3ZDhiNGI5OGUwNmM4OnA6VDpU)

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**Notes to editor:**

**About Advantage Travel Partnership**

The Advantage Travel Partnership is the UK’s pre-eminent network of travel agents and travel management companies. Its members are all independently owned travel businesses, who operate across 750 locations throughout the UK and represent a large proportion of Britain’s travel agency landscape. In addition, Advantage’s global footprint continues to expand, with representation in 83 countries across 96 network partners, who work together in servicing corporate accounts.

Its global network of members generates over £15.6 billion in global sales annually – with £7.6 billion from travel sales from its UK membership – and caters for many millions of holidaymakers and business travellers by assisting them with their travel arrangements.

**About the Board of Airlines Representatives in the UK (BAR UK)**

The Board of Airline Representatives in the UK (BAR UK) is the industry association representing the majority of airlines operating to the UK.

They present a vital international perspective of the industry at a local level and are highly involved in any issues that collectively affect their members, including policy, regulation, airport capacity, environment, taxation and charges.

A primary focus is on tackling issues that add costs and complexity for airlines and passengers and they are actively engaged and keep their members connected with a host of stakeholders, including senior government ministers, government departments, regulators and airport operators.

**About the Business Travel Association (BTA)**

The BTA is the authority on business travel. Working collaboratively across the industry and with the government to promote the integral role of business travel and events to the wider economy.

Originally founded in 1967, the BTA has a diverse membership and roster of industry partners. It’s TMC membership accounts for over 90% of UK expenditure on managed business travel, delivering value for money and great service to business travellers in the private, public and not-for-profit sectors. The BTA focuses on delivering practical solutions to challenges and market changes, as well as supporting best practice, sustainability and the well-being of travellers.

**About the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC)**

The World Travel & Tourism Council is the global authority on the economic and social contribution of Travel & Tourism.

WTTC promotes sustainable growth for the Travel & Tourism sector, working with governments and international institutions to create jobs, drive exports and generate prosperity. Council Members are the Chairs, Presidents and Chief Executives of the world’s leading private sector Travel & Tourism businesses.

Alongside our Council Members and board of Vice-Chairs, Op-Co and Executive Committee, from our Member organisations, our WTTC directors are responsible for guiding the work of the Council in the fulfilment of its mission.

**About Heathrow AOC**

Heathrow AOC LTD was formed in 2009 to represent and promote the interests of airlines, ground handlers and others operating at Heathrow. We operate in accordance with the scope and remit which has been defined by our members, particularly focusing on operational, capital and regulatory matters and challenges found in the complicated and regulated environment that is Heathrow.

In representing our members we work with Heathrow, the CAA and other authorities as part of regulatory engagement & governance, capital development & efficiency, safety and security, the wide range of charges at Heathrow Airport & operational resilience, and improvement in service quality. We also act on behalf of our members to various industry and community bodies.

**About Arora Group**

The Arora Group is a successful UK-focused private group of companies, which leverages synergies across its specialist property, construction, and hotel divisions to its strategic advantage. Since 1999, the Group has built its standing through meticulously managing projects from inception to delivery and beyond. Today, it owns and manages a diverse portfolio of flagship assets across the nation’s key business locations, partnering with some of the world’s most recognised brands to deliver consistently high service levels and sustainable growth.

**About International Airlines Group**International Airlines Group (IAG) is one of the world’s largest airline groups with 600+ aircraft carrying more than 122 million customers to 260 destinations across 91 countries each year. Its leading airlines in Spain, the UK and Ireland include Aer Lingus, British Airways, Iberia, LEVEL and Vueling. The Group also consists of two complementary businesses: IAG Cargo and IAG Loyalty. As the first airline group globally to commit to net zero by 2050, sustainability is a core part of IAG’s strategy. By the end of 2024, IAG’s investments in Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) totalled $3.5 billion, moving closer to its goal of fuelling 10% of airline operations with SAF by 2030.

**About Virgin Atlantic**

Virgin Atlantic was founded by entrepreneur Sir Richard Branson in 1984, with innovation and amazing customer service at its core. In 2024, Virgin Atlantic was voted Britain’s only Global Five Star Airline by APEX for the eighth year running in the Official Airline Ratings. Headquartered in London, it employs 8,500 people worldwide, flying customers to 30 destinations across four continents throughout the year.

Alongside shareholder and Joint Venture partner Delta Air Lines, Virgin Atlantic operates a leading transatlantic network, with onward connections to over 200 cities around the world. In February 2020, Air France-KLM, Delta Air Lines and Virgin Atlantic launched an expanded Joint Venture, offering a comprehensive route network, convenient flight schedules, competitive fares and reciprocal frequent flyer benefits, including the ability to earn and redeem miles across all carriers.  Virgin Atlantic joined SkyTeam in March 2023 as the global airline alliance’s first and only UK member airline, enhancing the alliance’s transatlantic network and services to and from Heathrow and Manchester Airport.

 Virgin Atlantic has been pioneering sustainability leadership for more than 15 years, committing to Net Zero by 2050 and continuous action that reduces environmental impact.  The airline operates one of the youngest and most fuel-efficient fleets in the skies, with an average age under seven years. In October 2022, Virgin Atlantic welcomed its first A330-900’s to the fleet, continuing its transformation towards 100% next generation aircraft by 2028.

In November 2023, the airline led a consortium to deliver the world’s first flight across the Atlantic on 100% Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF), demonstrating that 100% SAF can be used safely as a drop in fuel in existing infrastructure, engines and airframes. The need to scale production is an industry imperative and Virgin Atlantic is committed to radical collaboration across the energy chain to support commercialisation ahead of 2030.