

Anne-Marie Trevelyan MP  
Secretary of State for Transport  
House of Commons  
London  
SW1A 0AA

05 October 2022

Dear Secretary of State,

28 days ago, the Prime Minister voiced clear support for preserving Doncaster Sheffield Airport in response to Conservative MP Nick Fletcher's question in her first Prime Minister's Questions.

She then reiterated this support just days later asserting the importance of the airport and regional aviation to growing the local economy. We, the three South Yorkshire Chambers representing the region's business communities, greatly welcomed this statement of support, and the indication it gave as to Government's commitment to supporting economic growth and levelling up. Indeed, we were waiting in eager anticipation to understand exactly what this expression of support would look and feel like for our region given the urgency of the issue in hand.

It was therefore somewhat perplexing to hear your recent comments to Calendar News during the Conservative Party Conference putting responsibility and leadership for resolving this issue solely at the door of the local authority and seemingly reneging on Government's offer to support our region in resolving this matter.

We therefore write to you seeking clarification and clear action on four specific points.

1. As aforementioned, the Prime Minister stated her support for saving the airport on 7<sup>th</sup> September. Please could confirmation be provided on what actions have been taken to save DSA by Government and your Department since this date?
2. In relation to the contradictory comments to Calendar News, please advise whether the Prime Minister's offer of support for South Yorkshire remains in place. If this is still the case, what form does this take?
3. 11 MPs from across our region wrote to you earlier this week requesting the use of powers that were granted under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004. Doing so will enable you to – at least temporarily – prevent the airport's closure, by citing its strategic importance as a base for many emergency and security operations. The majority of these operations have several years remaining on their leases, and were established with multimillion pound investment from the Home Office, the Ministry of Defence and the taxpayer. Has Government reviewed this request and is Government minded to respond positively to the use of the Act?
4. Based on your comments earlier this week, what actions specifically is Government urging local partners to do that has not or is not being done already?

On behalf of South Yorkshire's employers and wealth creators, we ask for an urgent response given the looming deadline for the closure of the airport.

Over the past 10 weeks, since Peel's first announcement of a strategic review on the future of Doncaster Sheffield Airport, the number of parties who have given their time and resource to the

mission of preserving this vital asset is substantial. As Chambers of Commerce, we work hand in glove with our local and regional partners to support the growth of South Yorkshire's economy, but we also remain distinctly separate acting as a critical friend where needed. In this case, however we openly acknowledge and commend the significant endeavours displayed by our local partners to save DSA and are concerned by your recent public critique of these efforts.

Though recent efforts are indeed substantial, let's also not forget that this is of course on the back of twenty years of hard work and determination to establish a regional airport in the first place and to making it a success – not to mention many millions of pounds of private and public investment that local partners have worked to leverage into the airport and neighbouring Gateway East site.


The Prime Minister stated that the Government and your department would make a clear offer of support to the South Yorkshire region, its people, its businesses and the 2,700 employees whose livelihoods continue to hang in the balance. It is now incumbent on Government to follow through on this promise and show true and clear leadership at a time when it is most needed. We look forward to your urgent response to our four simple and reasonable questions.

Yours sincerely,

Daniel Fell  
Chief Exec  
Doncaster Chamber



Andrew Denniff  
Chief Exec  
Barnsley & Rotherham Chamber



Louisa Harrison-Walker  
Chief Exec  
Sheffield Chamber

