

Mark Harper MP
Secretary of State for Transport
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

13 February 2023

Dear Secretary of State,

RE: Business support for preserving the Controlled Airspace of Doncaster Sheffield Airport (DSA)

We are writing to you as the leaders of the biggest business representative groups in South Yorkshire. Our members employ thousands of people across our region. They value the role that Doncaster Sheffield Airport has played in connecting South Yorkshire to the world, and the potential it still has to unlock economic opportunities in the future. We believe in the vision presented to us for almost two decades of a thriving airport that catalyses economic growth within a framework of environmentally sustainable development.

The recent closure of Doncaster Sheffield Airport (DSA) by The Peel Group is a significant event for our economy. If permanent, it would represent a loss of 2,700 jobs. Re-opening the airport is being pursued, with the potential to generate around £1.56bn in GVA annually, and 35,650 net full-time equivalent jobs across the region through its catalytic effect on development sites and related industry activity.

Our members want to see DSA re-open, with all efforts made to protect the site for use as an airport. As negotiations between the airport owner and City of Doncaster Council are ongoing, and the public acquisition of the airport by Compulsory Purchase Order remains a possibility, we believe it's essential for the airspace above DSA not to be reallocated. Any changes to current airspace arrangements could jeopardise the process and efforts to protect the region's economy.

There is no urgent safety need to reallocate the airspace while its future is still being settled. Doing so would create a number of issues including financial costs, uncertainty for local communities, and delays in re-opening the airport. As such, we strongly support the calls by our local government partners to preserve the current airspace designations through a 12-month temporary suspension of the arrangements that were in place while DSA was operational.

Yours sincerely,

Andrew Denniff, CEO – Barnsley and Rotherham Chamber of Commerce
Peter Edwards, CEO – The Manufacturing Forum
Dan Fell, CEO - Doncaster Chamber of Commerce
Paula Gouldthorpe, Development Manager - Federation of Small Businesses
Louisa Harrison-Walker, CEO – Sheffield Chamber of Commerce
Peter Kennan, Private Sector Board Member - South Yorkshire LEP
Sheffield Property Association