



Future of Aviation Debate Briefing- 18th November 2020

Prospect is a politically independent trade union representing members in the public and private sector across the UK. In aviation the union represents the vast majority of air traffic controllers and systems engineers in the country along with other specialist technical aviation staff and staff at the Civil Aviation Authority.

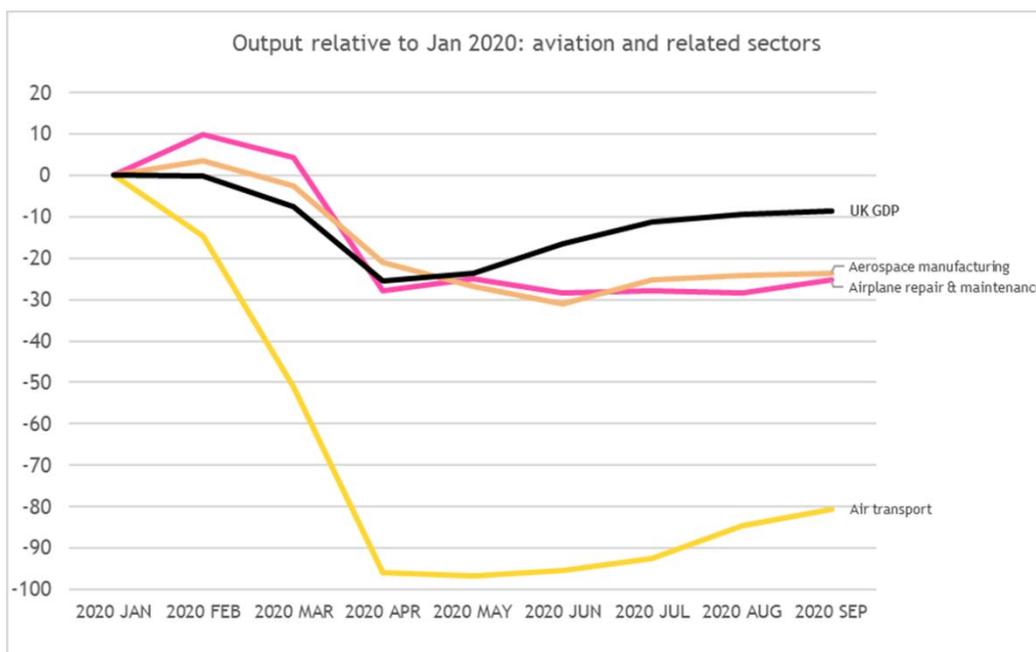
We have been dismayed at the impact of the pandemic on UK aviation, and alarmed at the extent to which the burden of this crisis has fallen on the highly skilled aviation workforce. There is clearly a bright future for the aviation industry once the pandemic has subsided and allowing the industry to collapse and for skilled workers to leave the sector would be a naïve and short-sighted strategy from the government.

The Transport Select Committee recently noted that *“The aviation sector is also a significant employer in the UK, with some 230,000 workers, including at over 40 commercial airports. Within Europe, it is estimated that every person employed directly by the aviation sector, and in aviation-enabled tourism, supports another 4.7 jobs.”*

The sector also provides jobs and connectivity in every nation and region, making it a key element of the levelling up agenda.

UK aviation is in urgent need of a bespoke package of support aimed at stabilising the sector, maintaining strategic assets and key skills, and facilitating a restart of aviation in 2021. In particular, support needs to be directed to supporting the industry’s fixed costs so that UK infrastructure is not damaged.

In the absence of this support and a strategic vision of the future from the government, we will see damaging actions as businesses start to cut into the bone.



In April, Prospect proposed a Capacity Retention Scheme for the industry aimed at securing short-term financial assistance to help the industry weather the crisis. These proposals are available here: <https://d28j9ucj9uj44t.cloudfront.net/uploads/2020/04/Prospect-ATC-and-Covid-19-Capacity-Retention-Scheme-2.pdf>

Since we submitted this proposal, the crisis in the industry has worsened. The collapse in demand and revenues has been deeper and more prolonged than anybody envisaged in April. The industry is laying staff off in large numbers. There is no prospect of a recovery even starting until next spring and the extent of the recovery will be highly dependent on the availability of vaccines. There remains a need to ensure that the industry has the ability to deliver that recovery

We believe the following steps should be part of that strategy:

- The government should temporarily take on the cost of funding air navigation fees to ease the burden on airlines and give NATS security over income
- NATS should be taken back into public ownership and reverse its decision to terminate over 100 Trainee ATCOs when the CJRS comes to an end, thus ensuring crucial skills and capacity are sustained
- 'Moonshot' tests should be made available to the aviation industry on a priority basis to enable air travel to resume
- APD should be suspended
- Increasing the use of Public Service Obligations to facilitate domestic flights
- Seriously consider the nationalisation of Heathrow and other key assets to secure their futures
- Reverse cuts to planned investment in technology and airspace redesign to reduce emissions and ensure that the sector continue to meet climate targets as it recovers

These measures are not without cost, but the cost to the exchequer in the medium and long-term of allowing this industry to fail are far greater.

If you have any questions please contact tom.railton@prospect.org.uk