

**Aviation Recovery Taskforce Meeting**  
**Friday 12<sup>th</sup> June @ 11am – 1pm (via Remote VC)**  
**Record of Meeting**

1. **Introduction:** The Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport made a brief opening statement to the Taskforce, thanking the members for agreeing to participate and underscoring the importance of the work and the urgency of producing recommendations for him to consider in order that Irish aviation can get back to business in a safe and sustainable manner.

The Chairman thanked the Minister – who then left for Cabinet – and made opening remarks, noting the extraordinary contribution of Irish aviation to the Irish economy, summarising the challenges caused by Covid-19 on the industry and posing what he saw as the key issues:

- How do we get people back flying and give them the confidence to do so – the important thing being to provide the consumer with information, assurance and clarity around what the flying experience will be like.
- How to deal with travel restrictions, quarantining, social distancing and related issues such as mask wearing.
- How to deal with the cost implications on the sector arising from a need to invest in safety practices and infrastructure, against a backdrop of reduced capacity, load factors and strained revenues.

The Chair challenged the Taskforce to come up with a small number of immediate recommendations to get the sector back and functioning for the remainder of the Summer and to focus on that before looking at the important actions needed to sustain the sector through Autumn/Winter 2020 and into 2021.

2. **Taskforce Discussion:** There was broad consensus on the scale of challenges facing the sector and the short term actions needed as a matter of urgency:

**Diagnosis**

- Without supports and coordinated action between Government and the industry, Ireland will fall behind competing economies. Global connectivity will be lost for the medium term, having taken many years to build up.
- That whilst Dublin Airport was of national importance and the leading international hub for Ireland, the regional airports and regional connectivity was also very important and any final recommendations had to include provision for securing routes that serve the regions, having regard to broader regional development and in-bound tourism.
- Ireland is at risk of being set adrift by any significant prolonging of the current travel restrictions and quarantine requirements. That there exists a safe and secure path to opening aviation – which others have already taken – and Ireland needs to follow quickly.
- Other European states have taken a march on Ireland in terms of reopening aviation and reviving connectivity, and as a result the long term competitiveness of the sector is seriously at risk.
- The scale of the financial impact on the industry is unprecedented, and without financial supports many viable businesses will not survive. The cash drain is on a cataclysmic scale. A strong case needs to be made for specific and large-scale financial support for the sector to help it build back to 2019 capacity and connectivity levels.
- Every day of inactivity is a step closer to bankruptcies, job losses and potentially irreparable damage to the sector.

### *Urgent Actions*

- Taskforce agreed that the immediate message to the Minister and to Government has to be to lift the quarantine provisions and move in step with the opening up of travel restrictions announced this week by the EU Commission.
- To recognise that the ground work for reopening has been done through the agreement of a Code of Practice, which has been based on Covid-19 protocols issued jointly by the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) and the European Centre for Disease Control (ECDC). To finalise that Code – which sets out how to achieve safe passage through airports - and set a clear timeframe for reopening airports and routes – preferably by the end of the month at the latest.
- To recognise that consumer confidence is critical and to get the messaging and information to customers that is clear, concise and joined-up and to include information to customers about what they can expect financially if they decide not to fly due to DFAT advice of no non-essential travel but the flight has not been cancelled. In particular, the impact of travel advice issued by the Department of Foreign Affairs needs to be understood. Equally, to recognise that customer and worker safety is critical and that the provisions of the Code of Practice provides for the creation of a safe operating environment.
- That the Taskforce would work to develop immediate actions to make an impact on the next few weeks, medium term actions for the next few months and long term actions for the next few years.
- Despite where things are at now, if the right things are done in the right way then there is an opportunity for Ireland to recover its position as a global leader in aviation and become a model of excellence.