

Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for  
Economy and Gaelic  
Leas Phrìomh Mhinistear agus Rùnaire a' Chaibineit  
airson Eaconamaidh agus Gàidhlig  
Kate Forbes MSP  
Ceit Fhoirbheis BPA



Scottish Government  
Riaghaltas na h-Alba  
gov.scot

Claire Baker MSP  
Convener  
Economy and Fair Work Committee

Copy:  
Richard Leonard MSP  
Convener  
Public Audit Committee

25 June 2024

Dear Claire

As the Committee will be aware from previous correspondence on this matter, Glasgow Prestwick Airport (GPA) is performing well in a highly competitive aviation market and is a profitable business. This is to the credit of the employees and Board at GPA.

Scottish Ministers' longstanding position is that the airport should be returned to the private sector at the appropriate time and opportunity. This must be to an organisation with the commitment and capability to operate businesses directly relevant to GPA.

Any decision to sell GPA must represent value for money for taxpayers and be informed by what is right for the long-term success of the business and its contribution to the local and Scottish economy.

The Scottish Government is not a distressed seller and any bid for GPA must satisfy certain criteria including: to achieve the best possible financial outcome for Ministers in relation to their investment in GPA; to ensure that, in transitioning GPA back to the private sector, the future of GPA as a long-term infrastructure asset is secure; and to ensure that the economic impact and employment opportunities created by GPA in the local area and Scotland are maximised.

Scottish Ministers, special advisers and the Permanent Secretary are covered by the terms of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016. See [www.lobbying.scot](http://www.lobbying.scot)

St Andrew's House, Regent Road, Edinburgh EH1 3DG  
[www.gov.scot](http://www.gov.scot)

**INVESTORS IN PEOPLE**<sup>™</sup>  
We invest in people Silver



Given the Committee's remit to consider matters falling within my portfolio and given my predecessor Neil Gray's letter to your Committee of 14 September 2023 about a previous expression of interest, I wish to provide a further update.

We have received several expressions of interest in respect of GPA, and because of the interest noted, Scottish Ministers feel now is the right time to explore options for the future of GPA. In addition to considering interest from the parties who have already come forward we are also engaging other potential parties in sectors relevant to GPA's operations to assess their level of interest and to understand if they have a sustainable and realistic vision for GPA in the long term.

This process will operate on a fair and objective basis with all parties in the process being treated equally, guided by the above-noted Ministerial objectives. The market testing exercise we have commenced is being led by expert commercial and legal advisors supported by the GPA board. Ministers will receive their collective advice and recommendations before deciding on any interests that may be taken forward for further consideration.

The process is in the early stages and a further update will be provided to you and Parliament when a significant development has been made in the process.

Yours sincerely,



**KATE FORBES**

Scottish Ministers, special advisers and the Permanent Secretary are covered by the terms of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016. See [www.lobbying.scot](http://www.lobbying.scot)

St Andrew's House, Regent Road, Edinburgh EH1 3DG  
[www.gov.scot](http://www.gov.scot)

**INVESTORS IN PEOPLE™**  
We invest in people Silver

