

Ayrshire Joint Structure Plan and Transportation Committee

**PRESS RELEASE : Aviation White Paper**

At its March meeting, Ayrshire's Joint Structure Plan & Transportation Committee welcomed a report outlining the conclusions of the Government White Paper on the Future of Air Transportation. The Committee were told how in a national review of Air Transportation and Airport Capacity to 2030 the role of Glasgow Prestwick International Airport has been confirmed as the West of Scotland's second runway and as Scotland's main airfreight centre. This means that Glasgow and Prestwick International will together accommodate the growth in air passenger numbers in the West of Scotland and that there will be no need for an additional runway at Glasgow.

Committee Chair, Councillor George Smith, welcomed the White Paper's recommendations, *"This is tremendous news for Ayrshire and offers clear support for the Forum's economic strategy to develop the area as Scotland's Western Gateway. Confirmation of Prestwick's key role in air transport in Scottish and UK terms provides a major boost to the airport, to Ayrshire's image and role and offers great potential for the local economy."*

GPIA's recent rapid growth looks set to continue. Passenger growth per year is forecast to triple to 6million and freight to increase fivefold to 200,000 tons by 2030 according to the White Paper. These new forecasts offer a clear national planning framework for all parties to plan their investment and support and develop the potential for air transport as a key driver for economic development.

The continuing development of passenger, freight and other operations at GPIA will play a key part in enhancing Ayrshire's business infrastructure for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The opening of the M77 and GSOR in 2005 will be a great support, not only, to improve road accessibility for the airport but will have wider benefits for the whole of Ayrshire.

Councillor Smith is cautiously optimistic that *"Ayrshire is developing a distinct competitive advantage through its proximity to both Glasgow and Prestwick airports. The area is now very well served and the people and businesses of Ayrshire will continue to have very good and improving access to air transportation services. Confidence in Ayrshire as a place to live, work, invest and visit can only be strengthened by the White Papers conclusions."*