

NEWS RELEASE

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SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT'S DRAFT BUDGET: GLASGOW AIRPORT RAIL LINK MUST BE REINSTATED

Scotland's six leading business organisations today demanded that the Scottish Government reinstate the Glasgow Airport Rail Link (GARL) in its budget for 2010/11 and called on the opposition parties for their support. In a letter to Cabinet Secretary, John Swinney MSP, the heads of CBI Scotland, FSB Scotland, IoD Scotland, Scottish Chambers of Commerce, Scottish Council for Development and Industry and Scottish Financial Enterprise warned of their profound disagreement with the Scottish Government's decision to cancel the GARL project and the adverse effect that would have on Scotland's international connectivity, traffic congestion in metropolitan Glasgow and jobs. The six organisations are offering to meet with the Scottish Government and other interested parties to discuss possible ways forward for the project.

The Director of CBI Scotland, Iain McMillan, today said,

“The Scottish Business community was extremely supportive of the GARL project. It would provide a fast, direct public transport link between Glasgow Airport and the centre of the city, ease congestion and improve Glasgow's and Scotland's international connectivity. It would also provide a much needed boost to the construction sector and create jobs during these tough economic times. We are very disappointed with the Scottish Government's decision to axe GARL”

The Chief Executive of the Scottish Chambers of Commerce, Liz Cameron, added,

“In our view, the GARL project could be affordable. This is a critical piece of a wider jigsaw, not just for Glasgow, but would incorporate the first stage of a wider connectivity to other parts of Scotland, as a building block for both cross rail and faster west coast connectivity. Scotland's economy will only grow if we have an effective transport infrastructure which is supportive of both the public and private sectors contribution to that.

Economic surveys across Europe have shown that there is a direct correlation between the strength of GDP and investment in vital infrastructure. Whilst we appreciate that the Scottish government cannot invest funds it doesn't have, we believe we must raise our vision and look more closely at other funding options. This decision needs to be reconsidered and we have offered to sit down with government and other stakeholders to examine ways to take this forward”.