# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

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| **TITLE**  | **Cardiff Airport Next Generation Security (NGS) Scanners** |
| **DATE**  | **26 October 2023** |
| **BY** | **Lee Waters Deputy Minister for Climate Change**  |

The UK Government’s (UKGs)aviation security regulations[[1]](#footnote-1) stipulate that by June 2024, all UK airports that were handling over 1 million passengers annually in 2019, will be required to have replaced 2-D cabin baggage screening machines with Next Generation Security (NGS) 3-D scanners. Based on its pre-pandemic passenger volumes, Cardiff Airport must comply with this Direction.

As well as mitigating security risks, these scanners will enable passengers to leave laptops and liquids in their carry-on baggage, so will reduce the delay and inconvenience associated with going through security screening. Without these scanners, Cardiff Airport would have to terminate commercial passenger operations by the regulatory deadline of June 2024.

The installation of these scanners is part of the airport’s planned capital investment programme, agreed with the Welsh Government as part of its pandemic rescue and restructuring plan. As recent visitors to the airport may have noticed, work is currently underway to install the scanners in time to meet the deadline.

However, as experienced by many other airports across the UK, the cost of installing the scanners at Cardiff Airport has escalated significantly from initial estimates. This is partly due to inflation but also due to the complexity of installing the equipment in a 1970’s era building; a process which has required the safe removal of asbestos in a live operational environment.

Cardiff Airport is still recovering from the devastating impact on its business from the pandemic. The airport has recovered by 58% so far with 28 of the 52 non-stop routes historically serviced, back up and running, and facilitating 910k passengers last year. There remain inflationary and other pressures on the airport’s cost base.

Whilst aviation security is a reserved matter for the UK Government, it has consistently refused to provide any financial support for the respective UK airports to make the transition to NGS to meet the new legislated deadlines, despite the ongoing inflationary pressures on the industry.

Consequently, the Welsh Government, as the sole investor in the airport, has determined that on a commercial basis it should provide an equity investment of £6.6m to the airport, as a one-off measure to address the cost challenges and meet this compulsory regulatory requirement. This will ensure that passenger security and safety at Cardiff is equivalent to that at other regulated airports across the UK, and will protect the Welsh Government’s investment in the airport for the longer term.

1. Single Consolidated Direction (Aviation)(Next Generation Security Checkpoint)(Variation) 2020 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)