



ASHFORD CASTLE

HOTEL & COUNTRY ESTATE
EXCELLENCE SINCE 1928



30th September 2019

To Whom it may concern,

I am writing to you today in support of Ireland West Airport as [REDACTED] of the Ashford Castle Estate situated on the Mayo & Galway boarder. The Ashford Estate comprises of Ashford Castle and The Lodge at Ashford, employing 460 direct jobs and a further 50 indirectly through activity providers and contracting maintenance. Both hotels sit under the umbrella company Red Carnation Hotel Collection (RCH) which is a grouping of 20 luxury hotels across the globe. The owners of Red Carnation Hotels, the Tollman Family, own The Travel Corporation (TTC) which is one of the largest travel companies in the world. Its brands include Insight, Brendan Vacations and Trafalgar, and were responsible for delivering 250,000 visits to the island of Ireland in 2018.

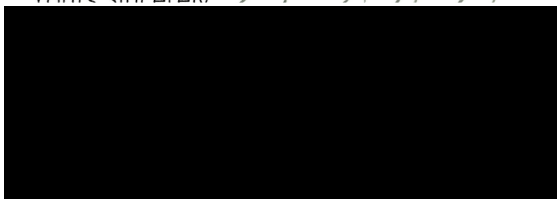
It is clear that regional airports such as Ireland West Airport must be supported by government as accessibility to the West of Ireland is vital to businesses such as Ashford Castle. Accessibility equals success for our guests and to our stake holders. The frequency and variety of flight times available to travellers from London and other European airports is imperative for both business and leisure guests alike.

Tourism Ireland has recently identified high-end affluent travellers from the US as a key focus over the coming years. The accessibility and availability to land private jets at Ireland West Airport has been a key marker and selling point in Ashford Castle's ability to attract affluent clientele to the property. Last year Ashford Castle was directly responsible for over 300 private jets landing at Ireland West Airport and we expect this trend to continue.

The attraction and retention of quality staff is the biggest challenge for many businesses in the West of Ireland. A positive work life balance is vital to ensure we can continue to attract the best talent possible. Ireland West Airport helps significantly when staff are looking at moving to the West of Ireland. Having the ability to travel to the UK and European destinations contributes to a very good and positive work/life balance for many business people on the West Coast.

Finally having a strong and viable regional airport such as Ireland West Airport is vital to the continued success of the Ashford Estate. Therefore I would strongly recommend that government support Ireland West Airport with their required operating and investment aid to ensure they are positioned to meet the global challenges that must be faced over the next five years.

Yours Sincerely,



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