Members of Renfrewshire Chamber of Commerce are overwhelmingly in favour of the proposed Glasgow Airport Rail Link with only a few reservations.

The accepted economic argument is that Glasgow Airport acts as a stimulus to growth in the West of Scotland. A Fraser of Allander Institute report showed that in 2001 Glasgow Airport had around 5000 direct jobs on site and supported a total of 15,700 jobs across Scotland. The estimated contribution to the Scottish economy was in the order of £700 million. British Airport Authorities forecast that the numbers directly employed on site will rise to 8200 by 2015 and 12100 by 2030. It is assumed that this growth will be reflected in new airlines operating from Glasgow with all the associated supply chain opportunities.

The catalyst value of growth at Glasgow Airport is eagerly anticipated by Renfrewshire businesses, however there are anxieties. BAA a member of Renfrewshire Chamber, is concerned about the use of compulsory purchase power to take over ownership of Glasgow Airport land that might not be in the long-term interests of the Airport. BAA would be willing to lease the land. Also BAA is concerned that the Airport needs to be protected against the construction and operation of the railway.

Additional to BAA concerns there are questions within the Renfrewshire business community about the funding of the rail link. The Airlines presently operating from Glasgow do not wish to contribute to the cost of construction and servicing, as they remain unconvinced about the benefits. They in fact quote a possible disadvantage if the cost of the rail link raises the costs of operating from Glasgow. The airlines support their concern by reference to the case of Newquay where an additional levy of £5 per person raised by the local authority forced Ryanair to pullout completely.

There is the additional concern that while both Glasgow and Prestwick Airports will benefit from the associated upgrading of the rail tracks between Glasgow Central and Paisley Gilmour Street only Glasgow Airport is being asked for a financial contribution. This additional cost burden could result in the cost of flying from Glasgow rising and negating the anticipated benefits.

To conclude the members of Renfrewshire Chamber of Commerce would agree that a new railway service between Glasgow Airport and Glasgow Central Station is a sensible policy to pursue but only if Glasgow Airport is protected from unfair cost increases which might impact on the beneficial effects the airport has on the Renfrewshire economy.