Thank you for providing Scottish Enterprise (SE) with the opportunity to submit our comments on the above private bill. Please find below our Network response.

The SE Network recognises that Glasgow Airport is a growth pole in the Scottish economy so we are keen to support measures which are likely to spread the economic benefits of the airport to a wider hinterland within Scotland.

It is the firm view of the SE Network that a railway service between Glasgow Airport and Glasgow City Centre is a sensible policy to pursue. In partnership with the Scottish Executive, SE manages the aviation Route Development Fund. This has been and continues to be extremely successful in attracting new direct international flights to Scotland achieving considerable economic benefits. The image created by a high quality airport rail link is likely to assist this cause.

To spread the economic benefits of the airport as far and wide as possible, any new railway service between Glasgow Airport and Glasgow City Centre should provide maximum connectivity throughout Scotland. To attain maximum connectivity, airport rail passengers should have the option of travelling beyond the Glasgow metropolitan region.

I take pleasure in providing support from SE for the proposed (GARL) scheme. However, to achieve maximum connectivity to other metropolitan regions within Scotland, we believe it is important to connect the airport to the wider Scottish population. To achieve this it will also be necessary to deliver Glasgow’s “cross-rail” scheme.

If the Glasgow cross-rail project is not delivered, SE would prefer the airport rail link to connect directly to Queen Street Station rather than Central Station. This is due to the fact that Queen Street Station provides direct inter-city connections to a wider area throughout Scotland and it is our understanding that the cost/benefit case for connecting the airport directly to Queen Street Station (low level) is the same as for Central Station.

Regardless of the configuration of the service in Glasgow City Centre, it is clear that an element of technical engineering work will be necessary between Paisley and Central Station to facilitate the GARL train service.

SE strongly supports the initiative to establish a container transhipment hub at Hunterston in North Ayrshire. It is likely that the Hunterston development will establish demand for a significant volume of containerised rail freight traffic, at least some of which will ideally use the same length of track as GARL trains (between Paisley and Mossend).

The development of rail requirements for the Hunterston project is currently not as advanced as the GARL project. However, it would be sensible to
approach works to the “shared” railway infrastructure in a joined-up approach. It may produce a significant efficiency saving to tackle the railway engineering requirements of both GARL and Hunterston freight traffic at the same time. SE would encourage any measures to promote “joined-up thinking” and efficiency savings.

I do hope the above comments are useful and thank you once again for inviting our written evidence. We look forward to hearing the outcome of the Committee’s Meeting and confirm that we would be happy to provide oral evidence, if required.