

London Heathrow: maximising the potential

Dear Stakeholder:

The pandemic-induced chaos still turning the travel industry upside-down across the globe, simultaneously shook loose a great opportunity for Bermuda. It happened when British Airways agreed to Bermuda's pitch that it move the island's London air service from Gatwick to Heathrow, beginning March 28, 2021. Grounded flights and underutilised gates brought on by the pandemic created an opportunity.



Our analysis suggests this move of airports will help accelerate the tourism recovery for Bermuda. To be clear, it's not a silver bullet. We don't spend much time trying to find those. We spend our energy these days identifying pivots that will speed up the tourism recovery so the unemployed find work sooner and the under-employed are made whole again.

With that in mind, the Bermuda Tourism Authority (BTA) team is clear-eyed about this green shoot from the United Kingdom and Europe and is organising steps needed to maximise potential.

1. This week, the BTA published a Request for Proposal to secure Bermuda tourism resources on the ground in the UK, we haven't had boots on the ground there since 2017. The conditions warrant the change as we pursue an increased share of leisure visitors coming from London and surrounding areas during the next several years. From across Europe, too, as Europeans will now have more convenient connectivity to Bermuda through Heathrow. We've already identified 18 European cities where this is the case.
2. As we find and onboard this new agency talent in-market, the BTA is working closely with British Airways on [sale fares](#) right now to inspire travel later in 2021 when the public-health situation is expected to improve. Local hotel partners are part of this collaboration as well, selling air-hotel packages with British Airways Holidays to stimulate demand and further drive the kind of volume that can sustain hospitality jobs here at home.
3. Shortly after the airport switch to Heathrow, the [Bermuda Grand Prix](#) will take place on the Great Sound—and season two of SailGP is literally off to the races. Importantly, half of the national teams competing in the late-April races are from the UK and Europe, giving Bermuda a marketing foothold in that part of the world we wouldn't otherwise have. And giving us that advantage at exactly the right moment.

Those are some of the steps in the short-term. Strategically, there are long term implications as well.

Observers of the [National Tourism Plan](#) will know that since its release more than two years ago, London has not been on the shortlist of focus cities for Bermuda tourism because, stubbornly, leisure air travel from that market has been stagnant for many years—no matter the level of marketing investment. A BTA dollar invested in a North American focus city like New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Washington, DC, or Toronto returned far more impressively than a dollar spent in London or Europe. The Heathrow switch, we believe, makes investment on that side of the Atlantic far more prudent. You'll see us leaning into this. For example, London, as of 2021, is a Bermuda National Tourism Plan focus city. And as the name suggests, it's one of the primary cities where the BTA will deploy its marketing resources.

Our local tourism industry works best when the BTA and tourism industry stakeholders are strategically aligned. That's why we feel it's important to share pivots like this one with you as the strategy comes together. Ultimately, we hope our strategic objectives and yours are aligned because collaboration will be one of the most crucial components for accelerating Bermuda's tourism recovery.

Sincerely,

Glenn Jones

Interim CEO & Chief Experience Development Officer