



Vehicle safety testing and research will operate alongside aviation

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## Thatcham Research to develop new centre of excellence for future mobility solutions

- Thatcham Research invests in Retford (Gamston) Airport through Gamston Aviation Ltd acquisition
- Vehicle safety testing and research will operate in conjunction with aviation
- Jonathan Hewett, CEO at Thatcham Research says: “Our investment marks the beginning of an exciting new era and ensures we continue to be at the forefront of technological

advances.”

Thatcham Research, the UK’s only ‘not-for-profit’ insurer funded automotive research centre, has acquired Gamston Aviation Limited (GAL), owner of Retford (Gamston) Airport to create a centre of excellence for the research and testing of future mobility systems.

The new facility will enable Thatcham Research to provide a suitable home for the crucial testing and research that will ensure current and future mobility technology is introduced safely and effectively.

This will include testing of active-safety and assisted and automated driving systems on passenger and commercial vehicles. Along with vehicle manufacturer development programmes and testing to the latest Euro NCAP protocols, the facility will enable an increased focus on the assessment of the performance and safety benefits of these systems within an assurance framework for insurers, consumers, and other stakeholders.

The facility will be dual operational with aviation being managed alongside vehicle research and testing. Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) first phase approval for dual-operations has been received.

Speaking about the acquisition, Jonathan Hewett, Chief Executive at Thatcham Research and Director at Gamston Aviation Ltd says: “Our investment marks the beginning of an exciting new era for Thatcham Research, and ensures we continue to be at the forefront of technological advances. We are expanding our extensive research and testing capabilities, whilst supporting and retaining aviation at the aerodrome.

“The long-term vision for the site will see the inception of a first-class vehicle research and testing facility, and provide leading insight to the automotive industry, legislators and insurers.”

The multi-million-pound investment includes the significant reconstruction of paved areas including the runway, and addition of a joining loop to facilitate and host test track operations. Major improvements and upgrades to the building infrastructure will also contribute to the opening of a first-class centre of excellence.

Thatcham Research's current track operations run from a leased site at Upper Heyford in Oxfordshire. Construction at Gamston is anticipated to begin in Summer 2022, with dual-operations beginning from Autumn 2022.

Hewett continues: "In addition to research and testing, our investment provides commercial viability for the site, ensuring it continues to play a key role in the region. With close proximity to the UK's automotive heartland and leading academic institutions such as Loughborough University and the University of York, Retford (Gamston) Airport is ideally placed to be a hi-tech hub for engineering.

"We are working closely with all stakeholders to ensure a smooth transition to dual-operations, and will continue to provide regular updates on the project and its progress."

## **ENDS**

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Thatcham Research is the independent voice of automotive safety, security & repair, advising motorists, insurers and vehicle manufacturers to help reduce accident frequency, severity and costs and to realise the vision of 'Safer cars, fewer crashes', while driving standards in vehicle security.

As well as its world leading crash and track research, Thatcham Research develops repair methods amongst a number of other products and services within the collision repair industry for insurers, motor manufacturers, equipment manufacturers and suppliers.

In addition, Thatcham Research has administered the Association of British Insurer's (ABI) Group Rating system for the past 50 years. Group Rating is an advisory system intended to provide insurers with the relative risk of private cars and light commercial vehicles.

A founder member of the international Research Council for Automobile Repairs (RCAR), Thatcham Research has also been a member of the European New Car Assessment Programme (Euro NCAP) since 2004.

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