

UKACCS ANNUAL MEETING 2017 – KEY POINTS AND OUTCOMES

WEDNESDAY 7 JUNE

UKACCS SECRETARIAT – UPDATE ON NEW WORKING ARRANGEMENTS

- Delegates were updated on the new working arrangements for the UKACCS Secretariat Team (Paula Street, Frank Evans and Rebecca Cox), the work of the Honorary Treasurer (Rebecca Cox) and the development of the new UKACCS website.
- The signatories to the UKACCS bank account and payment authorisation process were agreed.
- Agreed that the UKACCS accounting year would move from 1 March to 1 April to better match the tax year, commencing from 1 April 2017.
- The accounts for 2016-17 were approved.
- Agreed that no change be made to the current scale of UKACCS membership subscriptions.
- The UKACCS Working Group would review the working arrangements and UKACCS budget early in 2018 and would report back to the 2018 Annual Meeting.
- The new UKACCS website was up and running and will continue to be developed over the coming months. It was agreed that:
 - The UKACCS annual meeting papers would be kept on the website for a maximum of 5 years
 - The presentation of members ACC contacts in the navigation bar be reviewed to avoid the need to scroll through a long list
 - A glossary of terms and acronyms be included on the website
 - A page on planning policy and guidance be included, including, if possible, a reference to any differences between the approach in England and Wales, and in the devolved administrations of Northern Ireland and Scotland.

ACC MEMBERSHIP, TERMS OF REFERENCE AND WAYS OF WORKING

(see also discussion on “ACC engagement with wider communities around airports” below)

- Delegates discussed the way in which they reviewed their membership, terms of reference and working arrangements and the requirements of the DfT’s guidelines for airport consultative committees.
- It was acknowledged that all ACCs operated in slightly different ways to reflect local circumstances – a one size fits all approach was not appropriate.
- ACCs confirmed that their membership was reviewed regularly and in most cases local authority representation changed the most frequently as a result of local elections. Local authority members were the elected representatives of the wider communities around airports.
- All member ACCs had community groups’ representation on their committees but delegates recognised the need to ensure a balance of representation across a broad range of interests on their ACC in accordance with the guidelines on the constitution of ACCs. Applications for membership from community groups some 40 miles from the airport were often received but refused and instead advised to work through their local authority representatives.
- Some ACCs had a policy of reviewing membership in the event of non-attendance of members at meetings.
- Many ACCs already had large memberships and there was need to keep the size of the committee manageable to remain constructive, effective and of value to their airports.

THURSDAY 8 JUNE

AVIATION POLICY UPDATE

- Tim May, DfT, gave an overview on plans to update aviation policies and the expected priorities for the new Government to take forward – these included the aviation strategy, Brexit, responses to the consultations on UK airspace policy, the draft national policy statement, drones and next night flights regime for the London airports. The following updates were given with the caveat that work streams and timings were fluid and dependent upon the General Election outcome:

UK Airspace Policy

- The consultation on UK Airspace Policy closed on 25 May 2017 and the responses were now being analysed. There is a need to balance the needs of the aviation industry, passengers, businesses and local communities. The DfT was congratulated on producing a very user friendly document and commended the approach for future consultation documents.
- Whilst delegates welcomed many of the proposals in the consultation, there was concern that the proposed qualifying threshold for the call in facility for the Secretary of State for Transport to intervene needed to be revisited.
- On compensation the broadening of the criteria to include residents living directly under flight paths in noise insulation schemes was welcomed. However there were no specific proposals for compensation payments for loss of property value where new areas were affected by aircraft overflight.
- Delegates were not persuaded that the Independent Commission on Civil Aviation Noise as currently proposed was either necessary or viable.
- The importance of recognising that each airport had different local circumstances and that one size fits all approach should be avoided.
- It was highlighted that the consultation did not appear to highlight the importance of safety.

Draft National Policy Statement

- The consultation closed on 25 May 2017 and the responses were also being analysed.
- The NPS essentially related to the development of Heathrow. The term “National Policy Statement” is the terminology used in the Planning Act.
- Sir Jeremy Sullivan was to produce a report on how the consultation process was conducted.
- 20 local events around Heathrow and 12 regional events across the UK were hosted by the DfT. Some of the regional events were attended by ACCs. Delegates congratulated the DfT on the information presented and the way in which the roadshows had been handled which were informative and very professional with DfT officials being very ready to engage with attendees.
- Delegates were of the view that the NPS should not over focus on Heathrow at the expense of other South East airports. In addition it was important to ensure that there was good regional connectivity particularly for those airports where rail travel was not an efficient or viable option.

Review of Aviation Policy Framework

- There were increasing demands on the Government to update the 2013 Aviation Policy Framework. The Government proposed to consult in 2017/18 on a number of underlying themes to assist policy development. These included consumer experience; impact of new technology; market access; sustainable growth; environmental impacts; competition and regulation and skills.
- It was also noted that the election had also meant that decisions on a number of consultations e.g. the National Policy Statement and a new London night flights regime could be delayed.

CAA STRATEGIC PLAN 2016-2021 “MAKING AVIATION BETTER: OUR KEY STRATEGIES”

- The key highlights and the CAA’s work streams across a wide range of topics were noted.

CAA AIRSPACE CHANGE PROCESS

- Rebecca Roberts-Hughes and Nic Stevenson, CAA presented an overview of the CAA’s role in airspace regulation and modernisation and the current consultation on the proposed airspace design process, stakeholder engagement on airspace design principles and consultation arrangements.
- The CAA advised that it would welcome ACCs’ specific views on two aspects of the new guidance – the questions that might be used to structure the conversation at the Define Stage and the engagement evidence the CAA needed to validate for a sponsor to pass the Gateway.

- Delegates welcomed the improved transparency of the new process proposed by the CAA and the enhanced role proposed for ACCs. The CAA was invited to engage further with UKACCs to help develop an efficient and prescribed process.
- The potential role for ACCs in helping to ensure the airspace change sponsor had the evidence needed for submission to the CAA at the gateway sign off was highlighted.
- The detail of the draft Airspace Design Guidance was discussed and the need for issues such as the terrain under flight paths, centres of population, ambient noise levels and other impacts to be taken into account as part of the process.
- The cost and resource needed to undertake the process was an issue of concern particularly as the scale of the process and the length of time it would take to complete the process may not be appropriate for smaller airports.
- It was highlighted that a “one size fits all approach” should not be adopted. There was a need to tailor the process to suit local circumstances.
- ACCs would welcome further clarity on the various tier categories to assist understanding about the scope of each Tier.
- Agreed that the CAA should be invited to regularly attend the UKACCs Annual Meeting.

EDINBURGH AIRPORT LIMITED'S AIRSPACE CHANGE CONSULTATION PROCESS

- Gordon Robertson, Director of Communications, Edinburgh Airport Limited gave a presentation on Edinburgh Airport's approach to its recent consultation and engagement on proposed changes to airspace around the airport.
- A two staged consultation process was used. The initial consultation took place between June and September 2016 and the second stage consultation took place between January and April 2017. The whole airspace change process is expected to conclude in April 2019 with the CAA's Post Implementation Review.
- To help avoid the potential for judicial review the airport had put in place a comprehensive, transparent and legally compliant consultation process which showed all the options that had been considered and how feedback from the initial consultation had been taken into account in the stage two consultation proposals.
- In planning the consultation the airport had used experts to advise on the form of consultation, sought views of the ACC and advice had also been sought from the Consultation Institute.
- A wide variety of means to reach out and engage with a wide range of communities and interested parties were used such as television advertisements, bill board posters. The airport wrote to 643,655 households and to over 900 stakeholders.
- Hard copies of the consultation document were circulated to all delegates. It was explained that there was a careful balance to be struck between making the proposals easy for the lay person to understand and comment upon and over simplifying the proposed changes and their impacts.
- A dedicated website and on-line response facility was set up.
- The consultation exercise was extremely costly but had only resulted in 3% response rate from impacted communities.

ACC ENGAGEMENT WITH WIDER COMMUNITIES AROUND AIRPORTS

- The Secretariat's paper reporting on new fora set up by the DfT and the CAA was considered.
- The concerns raised by community groups at the national fora about ACCs not being representative of community groups and the membership of ACCs rarely changed was discussed.
- Delegates did not accept the criticisms that had been raised and highlighted the fact that ACCs operated in accordance with the DfT Guidelines and were required to have a balance across a wide range of interests, representation from local authorities/communities being one of the identified categories of interests to be represented on ACCs. Delegates confirmed that they had community group representation on their ACC as well as local authority elected representatives.
- Keeping the membership of ACCs to a manageable size with a balance of interests to ensure constructive debate on a wide range of matters was important. Whilst noise, overflight and environmental impacts were regular topics of debate, they were not the only topics within the remit of ACCs. ACCs were alive to the concerns of and impact on communities from areas beyond the membership of the ACC.
- Delegates emphasized:

- the difficulties of increasing representation on the ACC to community groups particularly as many were understood to be self-appointed (some only involving a handful of residents), lacked legitimacy and were pressure groups. Local community groups had the option of asking their local authority to represent their interests at an ACC or to work collectively with other community group representatives where they have a seat on an ACC.
- the membership of their ACC was reviewed on a regular basis.
- community groups had in recent years enhanced their profile and engagement opportunities at both the local and national level and there was concern that their criticism was undermining the work and role of ACCs. The DfT assured delegates that the Government valued the work and balanced views of ACCs and recognised the success of the coordinated approach facilitated by UKACCs.
- UKACCs agreed that there was a need to raise its profile and that of ACCs with Government officials, particularly the new Permanent Secretary and the new Minister for Aviation. The UKACCs Working Group will consider arrangements for a delegation to the new Minister.
- Delegates suggested that the DfT and the CAA attend meetings of ACCs particularly outside the South East as appropriate and highlighted the added value if ACCs were involved upstream in the development of projects and consultations.
- The need for ACCs to attend the CAA's Community Discussion Forum was emphasised but some delegates pointed out that as ACCs did not have any budget and relied on the goodwill of airports to fund their travel (from great distances across the UK) there needed to be value in ACCs attending the meeting in London. Some delegates also pointed out that the invitation to attend the CAA's Discussion Forum had not been received. The UKACCs Secretariat would forward the up-to-date contacts list to the CAA.

PRM SERVICES AT UK AIRPORTS

- Delegates confirmed that their airports had responded positively and proactively to the results of the CAA's first year's monitoring of PRM services standards at UK airports
- The CAA's report on the 2016 monitoring results was expected to be published in July 2017. The CAA has worked with airports throughout the year, providing support where appropriate and keeping relevant staff updated on how their airports were performing against quality standards framework. Airports this year will be rated as "very good", "good" or "poor".
- Delegates noted the requirements of the CAA's Hidden Disabilities Guidelines issued in December 2016. The CAA had written to airports asking them to provide information on what they have done since the guidance was published. It was also recognised that this was a sensitive issue and some passengers might not wish to declare a disability
- It was emphasised that the hidden disabilities lanyard service being introduced at airports was entirely voluntary for such passengers and experience to date was that it had been well received.

CAA REVIEW OF ISSUES AFFECTING A PASSENGER'S ACCESS TO UK AIRPORTS

- Delegates noted the outcome of the CAA's review of issues affecting passenger surface access to UK airports. It was noted that the CAA review did not extend to rail.
- Delegates reported that their airports had reviewed their surface access arrangements but pointed out that in a number of cases transport services were provided by third parties. This might mean that the airport's influence was limited.

CAA CONSUMER PANEL

- Keith Richards, Chairman CAA Consumer Panel outlined the work of the Panel over the five years of his tenure. He was in his last year of office.
- The Panel had sought to act as a critical friend to the CAA.
- The Panel's work had been wide ranging including the provision of information to passengers; consumer research; PRMs; and disruption/network resilience.
- The key success of the Panel's work to date was the establishment of consumer research, review of the ATOL scheme, the setting up of the alternative dispute resolution system for unresolved passenger complaints, on time departures, managing disruption and resilience and the passenger tracker survey.
- The Panel had also sought to benchmark itself against other consumer panels.

- The Panel's priorities for the next 12-18 months were:
 - reviewing the CAA's information duties to ensure that information was issued at the right time and fit for purpose
 - ensuring the CAA's priorities for PRMs was maintained
 - addressing vulnerability of passengers and how the needs of such passengers are addressed by the industry
 - reviewing the price controls regulation
 - regulatory independence of the CAA.

UK BORDER FORCE AND ACC ENGAGEMENT

- At the previous year's meeting, ACCs had been encouraged to develop close and constructive relationships with the local Border Force officials.
- Delegates were pleased to report that progress had been made at their airports and relationships were being developed. It was noted that the terms of engagement depended upon local circumstances.
- E-gates help to improve passenger queue times.

BREXIT: THE IMPLICATIONS FOR AIRPORTS AND THE AVIATION INDUSTRY

- The Secretariat's paper outlined a number of possible implications for the aviation industry and passenger rights.
- Delegates registered a number of concerns and it was agreed that the UKACCs Working Group would consider further implications for airports as details became clearer.
- The DfT advised that the aviation industry had already been very active in making representations to Ministers.

AIR PASSENGER DUTY IN SCOTLAND

- Delegates were updated as to the future of APD in Scotland. The Scotland Act which has transferred the APD powers to the Scottish Government takes effect on 1 April 2018.
- It is proposed to replace APD with a new airport departure tax (ADT) in Scotland. UK APD will stay in place until the Scottish Government introduces its new rates.

MEMBERSHIP OF THE UKACCS LIAISON GROUP

- The CAA's air traffic statistics at UKACCs airports for 2016 and details of those airports which fall within UKACCs' membership admission criteria were noted.

VENUES FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

- 2018 – Heathrow – 6 & 7 June 2018
- 2019 - Inverness

**Paula Street
UKACCs Secretariat**