

**ANNUAL MEETING – LIAISON GROUP OF UK AIRPORT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEES**

**NOTE OF THE 38TH ANNUAL MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 12 JUNE 2014 AT GATWICK AIRPORT**

Present:

Aberdeen	-	Dr. Peter Smart
Belfast International	-	Mr Tom McGrath
Birmingham	-	Mr. Colin Flack
Bristol	-	Mr Jeremy Gall
	-	Mrs Vicky Brice
East Midlands	-	Mr. Barrie Whyman
Edinburgh	-	Mr. Alastair O'Neil
	-	Mr. Tom Wright
Gatwick	-	Dr. John Godfrey (Chairman of the meeting)
	-	Mr. Neil Maltby
	-	Mr. Barry Smith
Glasgow	-	Mr. John Richmond
Glasgow Prestwick	-	Mr. Nigel Wallace
Heathrow	-	Mr. Sam Jones
	-	Mr. Philip Carlisle
	-	Ms. Carole Havercroft
Inverness	-	Mrs. Pat Hayden
Leeds – Bradford	-	Mr. Michael Goodwin
Liverpool John Lennon	-	Mr. Denis Knowles
	-	Mr. Mike Jones
London City	-	Mr. John Adshead
Manchester	-	Mr. Steve Wilkinson
	-	Mr. Mike Flynn
Newcastle	-	Mrs. Dorothy Craig
	-	Mr. John Scott
Southampton	-	Mr. David Airey
	-	Mr. Richard Ward
Stansted	-	Mr. Stewart Ashurst
Conference Secretariat	-	Mr. Tony Kershaw
		Mrs. Paula Street
		Mr. Stuart Innes
Department for Transport	-	Mr. Tim May
	-	Ms. Tamara Goodwin
Airports Commission	-	Mr. Philip Graham
	-	Mr. David Elvy
Civil Aviation Authority	-	Mr. James Fremantle
CAA Consumer Panel	-	Mr. Keith Richards
	-	Mr. James Tallack

**NOTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

1. The notes of the last meeting held on 6 June 2013 were received and noted.

## **AIRPORTS COMMISSION INTERIM REPORT**

2. Delegates considered the Secretariat's paper summarising the work of the Airports Commission and the key recommendations contained in its Interim Report.

3. Mr. Philip Graham, Airports Commission Secretariat gave an overview of the key recommendations of the Commission's Interim Report of wider interest to member ACCs and of Phase 2 of the Commission's work. A copy of the presentation is available on the UKACCs website – [click here](#) to see.

4. Mr. Graham made specific reference to the Commission's current consultation on its discussion paper "[Utilisation of the UK's Existing Airports Capacity \(Discussion Paper 06\)](#)" which focussed on the domestic and international connectivity provided by regional and DA airports and airports serving London and the South East other than Heathrow and Gatwick. It also examined the connectivity trends at airports, how the business models of those airports were developing and whether the connectivity provided by those airports could be enhanced. Delegates noted the deadline for responses which was 25 July.

5. It was noted that making best use of existing capacity and surface access was a key part of the Commission's work particularly over the medium term before new capacity became available. The decline in regional connectivity into London had been acknowledged and this was being considered by the Commission. The Commission would find it helpful to hear the views of ACCs in respect of surface access issues at their airports. The Chairman encouraged ACCs to make individual submissions to the Commission on Discussion Paper 06.

6. Mr. Graham also drew attention to the Commission's recommendations for the short to medium term and that a Senior Delivery Group (SDG) had been set up to drive forward the CAA's Future Airspace Strategy (FAS). This Group was due to publish a road map in the near future setting out the timeframe and sequence of delivering airspace changes which had the aim of delivering greater efficiency and capacity at airports.

7. Delegates noted that the Government's response to the Commission's Interim Report was awaited (due to be published in June 2014).

## **REGIONAL SERVICES AT LONDON AIRPORTS**

8. Delegates discussed the Secretariat's paper which provided an update on the current situation regarding the availability of regional slots at London airports. It also provided details about the Regional Connectivity Fund referred to in the Chancellor's 2014 Budget. There was on going concern about the declining number of slots for domestic services at Heathrow and Gatwick airports.

9. Mr. Graham, Airports Commission and Mr. May, DfT acknowledged the need to examine whether the mechanisms in place to maintain the UK's domestic connectivity – linking regional centres as well as London - were being used in the best possible way. Delegates noted that the DfT was due to consult on the EU State Aid Guidance in the summer 2014.

10. As regards the Regional Air Connectivity Fund, it was unclear as to the passenger throughput threshold that would apply (i.e. airports handling 3 mppa or 5 mppa). Mr. May would clarify this following the meeting. (The DfT's subsequent briefing note is attached)

## **AIRCRAFT OVERFLIGHT AND THE CAA'S FUTURE AIRSPACE STRATEGY (FAS)**

11. Delegates considered the Secretariat's paper giving details of the implications of the CAA's Future Airspace Strategy (FAS), the Government's policy of concentrating flight paths, and the lessons learned at Gatwick regarding consultation processes. Delegates were reminded of the paper and discussion from the 2012 Annual Meeting about the

consultation processes that needed to be followed – [click here](#) to see paper reported to the 2012 Annual Meeting.

12. It was noted that the first phase of the FAS focussed on connections for Gatwick and London City and that the consultation processes and approach used in the first phase would be rolled out to other UK airports. It was also noted that Gatwick was the first major airport to undertake consultation on all levels of its airspace and it was likely that the consultation methods used at Gatwick would be used as a model for other airports.

13. The UKACCs Secretariat highlighted that airspace changes flowing from the FAS could see new or altered NPRs and SIDs at many airports and as such it was important that the consultation processes as set out in the CAA's CAP 725 and CAP 778 were adhered to. Delegates noted the lessons learned at Gatwick.

14. The Government's policy of concentrating flight paths was also discussed in light of a departures flight path trial that was being undertaken at Gatwick. There was concern about the impact on the communities being overflown for the first time under intensively used routes and new NPRs and SIDs and the fact that there was currently no statutory provision for compensation to be paid where loss to property value was experienced in the same way as for new highways. It was agreed that this matter should be highlighted to the Government.

#### **NEW DFT GUIDELINES FOR ACCS**

15. Delegates considered the Secretariat's paper summarising the key changes in the DfT's new guidelines for airport consultative committees (ACCs).

16. Ms. Tamara Goodwin, DfT gave a presentation on the key issues raised as part of the DfT's consultation on the draft guidance, the key changes and the DfT's expectation for ACCs to review the way in which they were structured and how they operated. Delegates complimented the DfT on the way in which the comprehensive review of the guidelines had been undertaken and commended the new guidelines in helping to ensure ACCs were engaged with a wide range of interests and were effective.

17. The Chairman highlighted that a few ACCs had already started to review the way in which they worked. Updates on individual reviews were given by:

- Mr. Philip Carlisle, Adviser, Heathrow Airport Consultative Committee (HACC) – a comprehensive review of the Heathrow Committee had been undertaken by independent consultants. A restructure of the Committee's membership and ways of working were in the process of being changed. A copy of the presentation slides are available on the UKACCs website – [click here](#) to see.
- Mr. Colin Flack, Chairman, Birmingham Airport Consultative Committee shared some of the issues that had emerged as part of the review his committee's membership. It was emphasised that Birmingham ACC enjoyed a positive and proactive relationship with the airport and its member organisations. However the size of the committee's membership was vast and the opportunity had been taken to consider the synergies between the various groups to ensure the future effectiveness of the ACC's role as a critical friend of the airport.

18. Delegates had a general discussion about the specific elements of the new guidelines. The new Code of Conduct for members was considered vital to help members understand their role and account for their actions. The induction of new members was also considered an important part of ensuring members were aware of the purpose and function of an ACC and their role. Newcastle ACC had recently prepared a welcome pack for new members which provided a source of key information for new members and what was expected of them.

19. Managing the size of ACCs was also discussed and it was suggested that credible umbrella organisations could effectively represent the various individual interest groups e.g. represent and work on behalf of smaller residents' groups and business groups.

20. The advantages and disadvantages of holding meetings in public were discussed and examples shared. The DfT emphasised that wherever possible ACCs should aim to conduct their meetings in public.

21. The independence of ACCs (financing, officers, chairmen) and what that meant in fulfilling the role of critical friend was highlighted. This was felt to be a complex issue which warranted more detailed discussion to develop a greater understanding. It was agreed that this matter would be considered by the UKACCs Working Group and would be a topic for discussion, with the possible use of an external facilitator, at next year's Annual Meeting.

22. Reference was made to the Airports Commission's recommendation to create an Independent Aviation Noise Authority and the CAA's suggested Airport Community Engagement Forums. UKACCs was of the view that ACCs were already in place as the statutory mechanism to ensure consultation between airports and local interests, and that they should be used wherever possible, rather than inventing new bodies to deal with specific issues.

### **THE PASSENGER EXPERIENCE**

23. Delegates considered the Secretariat's paper reminding ACCs of the Government's desire to improve the passenger experience at UK airports. The new guidance contained in the DfT's revised guidelines for ACCs was also highlighted and welcomed by UKACCs. Delegates shared details of the way in which their ACCs addressed and considered passenger issues.

24. Gatwick Airport Consultative Committee (GATCOM) gave a presentation on the way in which passenger interests and issues were considered at Gatwick through the appointment of a Passenger Advisory Group (PAG). The PAG's membership comprised 14 volunteer independent passenger representatives (appointed following advertisement and interview) and 6 members of the main consultative committee. The PAG had recently been given a formal role in the CAA's regulatory settlement for Gatwick in that the airport has to formally consult the PAG on its capital investment programme to ensure the passenger perspective was taken into account. Gatwick Airport Limited now formally invited GATCOM's PAG to participate and provide input to project design at inception and throughout the development of a project to ensure the passengers' perspective was embraced in project design and delivery. A copy of the presentation is available on UKACCs website - [click here](#) to see.

### **CAA'S REVIEW OF PRM SERVICES AT UK AIRPORTS**

25. Delegates received the Secretariat's paper providing background information about the work of the CAA over the past year in reviewing compliance with the EC law in relation to the services provided for disabled persons and persons with reduced mobility (PRMs) at UK airports. The CAA was keen to ensure that the results of the review were communicated to airports, airlines and a number of other bodies and interests, including ACCs.

26. The meeting was also advised about the CAA's current consultations:

- Quality Standards under Regulation EC 1007/2006 – consultation launched on 12 May 2014. The closing date for comments - 1 August 2014.
- Revised CAA proposal on information for PRM passengers – consultation launched on 22 April 2014. The closing date for comments – 13 June 2014.

27. Mr. James Fremantle, CAA gave a presentation on the key highlights of the CAA's work and the results of the review of PRM services at UK airports. A copy of the presentation is available on the UKACCs website – [click here](#) to see. Delegates were pleased to learn that the results of the review were very positive on the airport side although there were areas where improvements needed to be made. These included visibility and

accessibility of help points and the quality of the assistance, in particular waiting times, attitude of staff and quality of facilities, e.g. seating.

28. Mr. Fremantle also advised that other issues concerned the consultation on and the publication of quality standards, performance monitoring against quality standards and the publication of PRM charges.

29. Delegates shared experiences at their airports which affected the service quality to PRMs:

- Abuse of the system and “fake” PRMs to queue jump/travel through the airport more quickly
- Pre-notification was highlighted as an area that impacted on the quality and efficiency of the service provided. Pre-notification rates had improved but it was felt that more needed to be done to inform and educate travellers. Mr. Fremantle advised that the CAA had a project to examine this in Autumn 2014.

30. The Chairman encouraged all ACCs to respond to the CAA’s current consultation on Quality Standards under Regulation EC 1007/2006.

### **CAA CONSUMER PANEL – WORK PROGRAMME AND PARTNERSHIP WORKING**

31. Mr. Keith Richards, Chair, CAA Consumer Panel provided an update on the work of the Panel over the past year, the issues being considered and partnership working.

32. The Panel’s key areas of work included:

- Helping the CAA design an effective consumer research and engagement programme remains high on the Panel’s list as this will help the CAA identify situations where consumers, or certain groups of consumers, may be particularly vulnerable to detriment.
- Reforming the industry’s complaints handling arrangements – the Panel will continue to urge the CAA to deliver a system that meets the standards consumers have come to expect in other regulated industries.

33. Delegates enquired about the Panel’s successes. Mr. Richards confirmed that the Panel had successfully inputted to the CAA’s Q6 process and changes had been made as a result of the Panel’s advice. The Panel’s Annual Report was due to be published shortly and would include details of the Panel’s successes. The Secretariat would circulate the Annual Report to all member ACCs.

34. The way in which UKACCs, ACCs and the Panel could work together was discussed. Mr. Richards welcomed the opportunity for the Panel to engage with ACCs and he would value developing better communication flows with UKACCs. He would liaise with the Secretariat to establish how best to achieve this so that the knowledge and experience of ACCs was taken into account in the Panel’s deliberations and vice-versa.

### **MEMBERSHIP OF THE UKACCS LIAISON GROUP**

35. Delegates considered the Secretariat’s paper providing an update on the air traffic growth at UK airports and details of those airports that fell within the Liaison Group’s membership criteria.

36. Durham Tees Valley’s membership of UKACCs was considered given the continued decline in passenger throughput at the airport. The Secretariat read out to the meeting the key points contained in a statement from the ACC submitted to UKACCs for consideration. Whilst delegates had great sympathy for the issues facing Durham Tees Valley Airport, it was agreed that their membership should cease given the need to have a robust membership criteria which was regularly used to respond to requests for membership from other smaller ACCs. The Secretariat was asked to inform Durham Tees Valley of the decision of the meeting.

### **UK AVIATION UPDATE**

37. Delegates noted the Secretariat's paper summarising current UK activity in respect of aviation matters.

### **EUROPEAN AVIATION UPDATE**

38. The meeting received an update on current EU activity.

### **UKACCS SUPPORT SERVICE UPDATE**

39. The meeting received a paper providing an update on the work of the Support Service. Stuart Innes was thanked for his services which ACCs viewed as invaluable in keeping them informed of latest happenings in the world of aviation.

### **VENUES FOR FUTURE CONFERENCES**

40. It was noted that an offer had been received from Manchester to host next year's Annual meeting on 10/11 June 2015.

41. Offers to host the event in 2016 and 2017 meetings were sought.

### **VOTE OF THANKS**

42. A vote of thanks was extended to John Godfrey, Chairman of Gatwick Airport Consultative Committee and the team at Gatwick Airport for the generous hospitality in hosting this year's Annual Meeting.

**Paula Street**  
**UKACCS Secretariat**

## DfT briefing note - Public Service Obligations and Start-up Aid

### Public Service Obligation

- A Public Service Obligation (PSO) is an arrangement by which a governing body offers through an open tender process the opportunity for an airline to operate a monopoly service on an air route for a specific period of time for a given subsidy. DfT have published guidance<sup>1</sup> which sets out how we will normally interpret the EU requirements for a PSO.
- A PSO is normally used to support routes that are not economically viable but offer social and economic benefits to the region.
- The Chief Secretary to the Treasury announced in last year's Spending Round that £20million would be made available over two years to 2016 to maintain regional air access to London where there was the probability that an existing air service would be lost, through a public service obligation.
- The Government announced on the 6<sup>th</sup> June 2014 that it would be providing £2.850 million to support a Public Service Obligation on the air route between Dundee to London Stansted route from 1 July 2014 for a two-year period.
- Cornwall Council have also begun a tender process to find airline to operate the Newquay - London route under a PSO.

### Start-up aid

- Start-up aid is permissible under EU State aid rules to provide financial support to cover up to 50% of airport charges for a maximum period of three years. The aid is payable to an airline wanting to operate a **new route** from an airport of less than 3 million passengers per annum or in 'duly substantiated exceptional cases' airports between 3-5mppa.
- Start-up aid is used to support those routes that are currently not economically viable as present but will be within at least three years. It is not possible at the end of the Start-up aid funding period for the route to become a PSO.
- In this year's Budget the Chancellor went further by doubling the support for regional air connectivity to London, and – significantly – as part of this support also allowing start-up aid for new routes from regional airports which handle fewer than five million passengers per year, providing this meets new EU aviation State aid guidelines.
- The Department for Transport is now developing guidance (which we will hopefully be consulting on in late summer) that will clarify how the Government will ordinarily expect to interpret the European Union aviation state aid guidelines, and explain how the funding process will work.
- All this means we can ensure that we can maintain existing regional air links to London, whilst also allowing opportunities for airports outside the south east to improve connectivity and stimulate further economic growth in their regions.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/public-service-obligation-regional-air-access-to-london>