

# Consultative Committee



**Aberdeen International  
Airport**

**2023**

Chairman's  
Annual Report

## Foreward

Welcome to the 2023 Aberdeen International Airport Consultative Committee (AIACC) Annual Report. As chair of the committee, I have compiled the report outlining our work throughout the year.

Aberdeen International Airport (AIA) has been steadily recovering from the pandemic and continues to provide for the travelling community for both business and leisure as well as supporting the offshore energy sector. The airport also has both fixed-wing and helicopter air ambulance services.

In 2023, three committee meetings took place instead of the usual four. This was due to the availability of key committee members.

As Chair, I attended the annual meeting of the UKACCs which was hosted this year at Heathrow. This brought together Chairs and Secretaries of other consultative committees to discuss matters of common interest, and to share best practices and concerns. There were also sessions with the CAA and DfT outlining aviation policies and airspace changes.

I would also like to personally thank Aberdeen International Airport management and staff for the support and assistance given to the committee throughout the year in producing reports and investigating issues raised at the meetings.

For more information, this can be found online at:

[Airport Consultative Committee | Aberdeen Airport](#)

Alan Stewart  
Chair, AIACC



## Who are the AIACC

The Airport Consultative Committee for Aberdeen International Airport is a statutory requirement under Section 35 of the Civil Aviation Act 1982 for all UK airports “to provide adequate facilities for consultation concerning any matter concerning the management or administration of the airport which affects the interests of users of the airport, local authorities and any other organisation representing the interests of persons concerned with the locality in which the airport is situated”.

The Aberdeen Committee has a long history, having been set up in 1953 when the former War Office invited the Clerk of the former Aberdeenshire County Council to establish a consultative committee. Of course, our membership and interests have changed over the years and our agendas have become more

complex and varied to reflect developments in the aviation industry and the growth of the airport in recent decades.

We have no executive powers within the airport management structure but seek to work with the management of the airport in an advisory and consultative capacity, on issues ranging from the impact of noise arising from operations on the airfield to the role of the airport in the economic development of the City and Shire. The following pages give more information about us, our membership and the main items we have been discussing *recently*.

The members of the Airport Consultative Committee for Aberdeen International Airport are made up of a wide selection of business, community and travel representatives. The 2023 membership consist of: -

A Stewart	Chairman AIACC
M Beveridge	AIAL Operations Director
G Mason	AIAL Administrator/AIACC Secretary
L McCann	AIAL Communications Manager
K Douglas	AIAL Terminal Operations Manager
G Morrison	AIAL Sustainability Coordinator
C Foy	Visit Aberdeenshire
J Urquhart	SCDI
W McPherson	British Travel Agents/Scottish Passenger Agents Association
H Gordon	ATPI
K Smith	GA (Light Aircraft / Flight Training)
G Skinner	OEUK
H Morrell	AGCC
Y Chou Turvey	Aberdeenshire Council
R McKail	Aberdeenshire Council
J Gifford	Aberdeenshire Council
N McGregor	Aberdeen City Council
G Al-Samarai	Aberdeen City Council
R Dickson	NESTRANS
M Bochel	NESTRANS
M Rhodes	Bristow and helicopter operators.
A Heseltine	NATS ( <i>Replacing R MacDonald</i> )
A Barclay	Accessibility Forum Co-Chair
K Bannerman	Bridge of Don Community Council ( <i>Replacing L Simmons</i> )
I Elrick	Bucksburn & Newhills Community Council
B Forbes	Dyce & Stoneywood Community Council
J Wood	Passenger Representative
G Berry	Private Traveller

To contact the committee, you should contact our secretary, Gemma Mason by email.

[gemma.mason@aairport.com](mailto:gemma.mason@aairport.com)





## AIACC Visits

In 2023, members of the committee were invited by Airside Operations for an airside tour of the airport. This visit allowed members to see:

- Snow clearing base and machinery.
- Fire station and equipment demonstration.
- Drive down the main runway and key taxiways.
- View a World War II Spitfire in one of the hangers.

Members of the committee also visited the Control Tower hosted by NATS. This allowed members to see how air traffic control services are managed at Aberdeen International Airport and were given a presentation of the airspace managed by Aberdeen.

A special thanks to Robert Paterson of AIA and Mike Simon of NATS for hosting the visits.



## Charity work

The committee must acknowledge the work done by Aberdeen International Airport to support local charities.

The past few years have been challenging times for charities through the cost-of-living crisis. Such work by the airport has greatly benefitted the charities.

Kayleigh’s Wee Stars provides support to families where there is a child with a terminal illness through financial grants. Many families face increasing costs and unpaid time off work when caring for a terminally ill child.

Each grant is used to ease the financial burden on families during what is already an impossible situation so they can spend time with their children without the worry of money and make precious memories together.

We Too! is a customer-driven organisation empowering families of children with life-long, predominately hidden disabilities, such as Autism, ADHD, Tourette’s, and Epilepsy by providing a free, quarterly “What’s On” Guide for families, peer support, a monthly children’s club and a school holiday programme as well as bespoke ASN/Customer Service Training to other organisations to help them host Relaxed/Sensory Adapted Sessions in the community”.

AIA raised more than £62,000 during the partnership through several fundraising initiatives including the unique Runway Run with 400 participants and our Collection Globes which allow any currency to be donated.

One major charity event hosted by the airport is the Runway Run, which took place in June 2023. This allowed runners to run on the main runway at midnight when the airport was closed.

Aberdeen International Airport invites charities, community groups and organisations to benefit from the ABZ Propeller Fund.

Previously known as the Aberdeen International Airport Community Fund, £25,000 has been made available to donate to worthy recipients.

The ABZ Propeller Fund is open to groups, charities, and organisations with links to education, sustainability, and economic regeneration.

Since 2022, £50,000 has been donated to several organisations.

Members of the ABZ Propeller Fund include airport staff, as well as representatives from the local authorities and government. It meets four times a year with the applications open throughout the year.

Information on the propeller fund can be found here, which also includes an application:

[Aberdeen Airport Propeller Fund | Aberdeen Airport](#)





## Drop Off Charges

One contentious issue that is frequently discussed at committee meetings is that of the drop-off charge at the airport. AIA have presented information on this to the committee who fully understand the reasons for the charge. However, a Social Media backlash occurs following any increase in the charge.

Applying a charge with a 15-minute limit controls the traffic movement through the drop-off area which reduces the time vehicles occupy spaces that otherwise would create congestion. This is aimed at a quick drop-off, otherwise after 15 minutes, the charges increase greatly.

However, this does create a problem elsewhere. It has been observed that some drivers tend to drop passengers off at the roundabout and the roads leading from it. This is creating some safety and traffic flow issues around the roundabout.

Blue Badge holders receive 30 minutes of free parking at the short-stay car park. The ticket issued on entry to the parking must be validated at the customer services building on the exit route of the car park.



There is a free one-hour option in the long-term car park. This allows drivers who choose to do so to spend longer in the airport to see off passengers. This free option is serviced by a frequent shuttle bus to and from the Terminal.

Revenue from the drop-off charges is used to invest in connectivity and maintain the airport infrastructure.

Two examples of projects that benefit from the drop-off charges are:

- The Next Generation Security Scanners. These are currently being installed at the airport.
- Also, the runway rehabilitation project is potentially a £15m+ project. The main runway hasn’t been rehabilitated since 2010 and is in the design and options stage with project commencement in 2025.

In comparison to other airports:

Aberdeen - £5.50 per 15 Mins

Glasgow - £5.50 per 15 Mins

Edinburgh - £5 per 10 Mins and then £1 per Min (£10 for 15 Mins) Noting, some discount schemes are available for residents and Electric Vehicles.

Inverness – 1<sup>st</sup> 10 Mins free, then £3.50

Airports like Norwich choose to apply an Airport Development Fee which charges each passenger £10 ( Children 0-15 – Free).



## Airspace Change Proposal (ACP)

The proposal is part of an industry-wide drive, led by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) who regulate the UK’s airspace. This is part of a UK-wide airspace modernisation programme.

AIA regularly briefs the AIACC and where required brings in members of the ACP team to present UpToDate information

To make these changes, AIA are required to follow the CAA process known as CAP1616; a 7-stage process for implementing and engaging in airspace change. This consultation is part of Stage 3 of the process.

During Stage 2 AIA used the Design Principles to develop and assess different options and carried out more detailed analysis to understand the benefits and impacts of these options.

More information about these stages can be found on the AIA Airspace Change Portal page.

[Airspace change proposal public view \(caa.co.uk\)](https://www.caa.co.uk/air-traffic/air-traffic-management/air-traffic-management-consultation/air-traffic-management-consultation-public-view)

Aberdeen International Airport has passed the Consult/Engage Gateway, the stage at which the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) reviews and signs off the documents relating to Stage 3A.

AIA has therefore progressed to Stage 3B – Commence Consultation of the Airspace Change Proposal (ACP) and will publish more information about this soon. The following can be checked:

[Aberdeen Airport Engagement \(consultationonline.co.uk\)](https://www.aberdeenairport.com/engagement/consultationonline)

## The four principal elements



## Noise

At every Consultative Committee meeting, noise issues continue to be brought up for discussion. Not all noise has been attributed to aircraft, some relate to the use of Ground Power Units on the airfield used in ground handling activities, particularly on the East Side of the airport.

The Noise Insulation Grant Scheme (NIS) has been established by Aberdeen International Airport to provide an opportunity for eligible properties to apply for a noise insulation grant. The NIS reflects AIA’s aim to be respectful of the local community and the impact on people who live and learn near the airport.

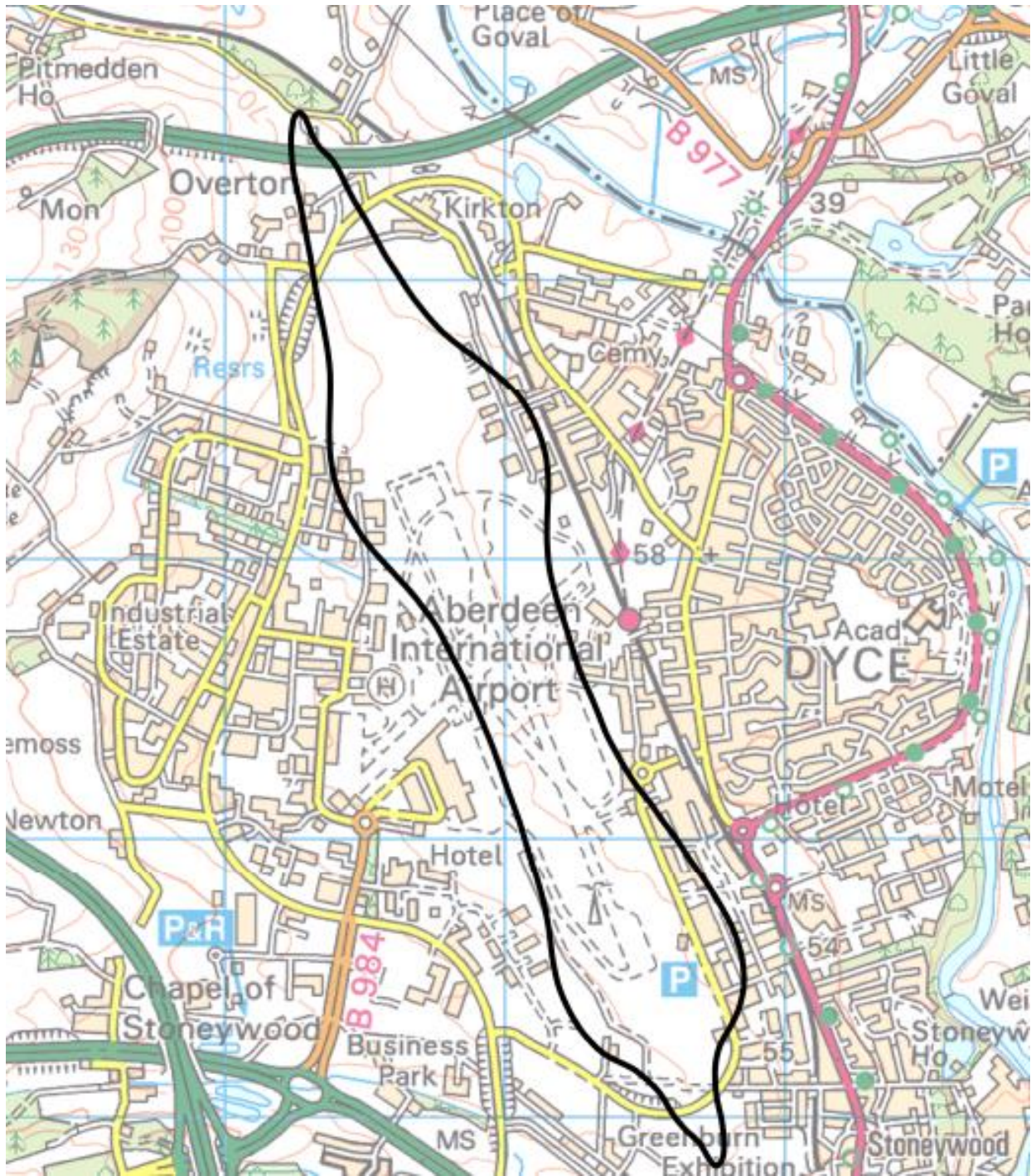
The management of the NIS is overseen by an independent management committee made up of airport managers and representatives of the local communities, known as the Airport Consultative Committee (ACC).

The NIS will be available to eligible residential properties hospitals and schools that were built before the 1<sup>st</sup> November 2023 (i.e. before the month in which the scheme was launched). By Department for Transport policy these properties are to be situated within the 63dB 16-hour summer day  $L_{Aeq}$  noise contour area which is published annually by Aberdeen International Airport.

The current 63dB 16-hour summer day  $L_{Aeq}$  noise contour area is shown on the following page.

These predictive maps of noise levels in decibels (dB) are updated yearly and are always based on the previous year’s summer data as per the regulatory requirement.









## Offshore Working

AIA is a major airport in support of Offshore Energy. Being one of the busiest heliports in the world, a lot of passengers travelling offshore travel to and from Aberdeen International Airport.

The AIACC were asked for several areas of concern raised by offshore workers to bring to the attention of AIA and where applicable the airlines, these were:

- Delayed helicopter flights and cost implications on having to change or buy new tickets through no fault of the passenger. On occasions, this has resulted in passengers hiring cars due to the flight cost change.
- Baggage not being offloaded from an arriving scheduled airline resulting in the passenger not receiving their bag for over a week due to the helicopter flight schedule to that installation.
- Cancellation of an international route through the winter resulting in tickets being rebooked to Edinburgh or Glasgow. Offshore workers who stay overseas and travel to and from Aberdeen whilst working offshore end up with additional travel requirements.

The AIACC can raise matters with the airport, however in most cases it is an airline issue out of the airport’s control.



## PRM

At each of the Committee Meetings. The airport cover Passengers with Reduced Mobility (PRM). If you’re a passenger with a disability or reduced mobility you are legally entitled to support, commonly known as ‘Special Assistance’, when travelling by air. Aberdeen has a good track record in supporting PRMs and has been recognized by the CAA for doing so.

It should be emphasised that passengers who require assistance should pre-arrange this before travel. At the committee meetings, it has been noted that passengers can turn up without booking assistance which can sometimes cause some logistical issues at the time. Information on PRMs can be found here:

[Special Assistance at Aberdeen Airport | Aberdeen Airport](#)

[Passengers with disabilities and reduced mobility | Civil Aviation Authority \(caa.co.uk\)](#)





## Leisure Travel

Aberdeen International Airport caters for leisure travel to several destinations. One recurring discussion point is the frequency of flight delays due to airline operational issues.

Although outside the control of AIA, the committee do discuss the matter to ensure that the airport is doing everything it can to help limit the impact of such events.

One airline in particular frequently had excessive delays on flights, leading to delays of sometimes over a day.

For the first time in several years, one European flight that normally ran over the winter moved to a spring-to-autumn timetable with no flights operating. The airline has also moved from two flights a week to three to that destination.

One of the airlines has also pulled its summer schedule to the Canary Islands and Greece, this reduces available destinations from Aberdeen in the Summer of 2024.

AIA is actively working with airlines to develop new routes and attend route development conferences to promote the airport.



## Ground Handling

One of the biggest concerns of the committee is that of ground handling at the airport. There is only one company which offers this, and there is a risk that if there is any kind of disruption within the company it could have a serious impact on all arriving and departing flights at AIA.

The airport management has frequent meetings with the ground handling company to ensure that personnel levels, employee remuneration and workload do not lead to flight delays.

It has been discussed some equipment issues within the handling company that existed which have since been addressed.

Attracting other companies to work at Aberdeen International Airport has not been easy, the commitment to bring additional equipment to Aberdeen and recruit staff based on the number of flight movements has been a restricting factor.



## Taxis

One impact for all arriving passengers is the availability of taxis at the airport.

Since the pandemic, there has been a decrease in taxi drivers in the area resulting in fewer taxis at the airport. There has been a drive by the airport to increase the number of taxi drivers to support the airport.

An alternative is that passengers can pre-book other taxi companies which can collect passengers from a waiting area within the short-stay car park.

A bus service was set up by a local businessman, Alan Findlater. Using a QR code, the bus can be booked for arriving and departing passengers from hotels around the airport in a “hopper” service. This initiative was welcomed by the committee which recognised the benefits of freeing up taxis for longer journeys. The Committee noted to commitment of Alan Findlater for his efforts.





## General Aviation

The Committee recognised general Aviation at Aberdeen International Airport. Supporting pilot training and handling of business jets is an important element of the airport.

A representative from the General Aviation community to represent private aircraft owners and the flight training company based at the airport was brought into the committee to allow updates to be given to the committee.

Pilots of the future have to come from somewhere. One of the largest flight training companies in Scotland based at Dundee Airport went into administration resulting in the loss of training for many pilots as well as the financial element where many had paid in advance. The only helicopter training facility in Scotland based at Peterculter Helipad closed resulting in no helicopter training in Scotland despite Aberdeen having one of the busiest heliports in the world.

The committee were involved in several discussions with the airport management to ensure that flight training facilities at Aberdeen International Airport remained there.