

ANNUAL MEETING – LIAISON GROUP OF UK AIRPORT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEES

NOTE OF THE 40TH ANNUAL MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 9TH JUNE 2016 AT BELFAST INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

Present:

Aberdeen	-	Dr. Peter Smart
Belfast City	-	Mr. Alan Walker
	-	Ms. Laura Duggan
Belfast International	-	Mr. Tom McGrath (Chairman of the Meeting)
Birmingham	-	Mr. Colin Flack
Bristol	-	Mr. Jeremy Gall
	-	Mrs. Vicky Brice
East Midlands	-	Mr. Barrie Whyman
Edinburgh	-	Mr. Alastair O'Neil
Gatwick	-	Dr. John Godfrey
	-	Mr. Barry Smith
	-	Mrs. Paula Street
Glasgow	-	Mr. John Richmond
Heathrow	-	Mr. Roderick Smith
	-	Mrs Rebecca Cox
Inverness	-	Mrs. Pat Hayden
Leeds – Bradford	-	Mr. Michael Goodwin
Liverpool John Lennon	-	Mr. Marshall Morris
	-	Mr. Mike Jones
London City	-	Mr. Duncan Alexander
Manchester	-	Mr. Steve Wilkinson
	-	Mr. Mike Flynn
Newcastle	-	Mrs Dorothy Craig
	-	Mr. John Scott
Southampton	-	Mr. David Airey
	-	Mr. Richard Ward
Stansted	-	Mr. Frank Evans
DfT	-	Ms. Isobel Pastor
CAA	-	Mr. Stuart Lindsay
	-	Mr. Trevor Metson
	-	Mr. James Fremantle

Apologies:

Bournemouth, Glasgow Prestwick, Robin Hood Doncaster Sheffield and London Southend ACCs.

NOTES OF THE LAST MEETING

1. The notes of the last meeting held on 11 June 2015 were received and noted.

AIRPORTS COMMISSION FINAL REPORT

2. The Secretariat's paper summarising the key matters of interest to ACCs arising from the Airports Commission's recommendations was noted. The DfT's response to Manchester

ACC's letter seeking clarification on the establishment of Community Engagement Boards (CAB) and the proposed Noise Levy was also noted. Delegates were pleased to note that the DfT had no intention of setting up CABs at airports and it was confirmed that the Commission's recommendation only related to the airport where a new runway would be provided.

3. The proposed Noise Levy was discussed. The DfT advised that it was looking at evidence from many airports other than Heathrow and Gatwick about the suitability of such a levy at UK airports. The DfT would consult on how its thinking had evolved based on the evidence gained. Delegates highlighted that local circumstances needed to be taken into account in setting any levy rather than imposing a set levy on a universal blanket basis.

4. The Airports Commission's recommended surface access schemes set out in its Interim Report were noted. Delegates highlighted the need for a joined up approach to planning surface access connectivity to airports and between regional airports and the London airports. It was agreed that ACCs had a role in helping to lobby for improvements to rail and road networks in the vicinity of their airports.

5. Regional access to London airports, principally Heathrow and Gatwick, remained a concern particularly in the short term before new runway capacity was delivered in the South East. Delegates highlighted that domestic access to Heathrow and Gatwick continued to be under threat as airlines looked for more profitable routes to maximise the use of the available slots. The DfT was urged to not lose sight of the urgent need to protect domestic connectivity to London in the short term.

AVIATION POLICY UPDATE

6. Isobel Pastor, DfT gave an update on the Department's work reviewing a number of areas of the Government's Aviation Policy Framework. She explained that in view of aviation navigation technological changes, the recommendations of the Airports Commission and other recent developments/experiences, the DfT had commenced a review of its policies and guidance. The DfT had held a number of stakeholder focus groups to seek evidence and views on a range of subjects.

7. Delegates noted with interest that the DfT was exploring the concept of an Independent Commission on Aircraft Noise (ICAN) to ensure that noise impacts were properly considered in decisions and that all parties were aware of best practice. Delegates pointed out that from the information provided as part of the update, there had been no mention of the work and important role of ACCs. The need for the DfT in developing its thoughts on the proposed ICAN to recognise and reinforce the role/work of ACCs in considering local issues was highlighted.

8. The DfT's airspace and noise project was outlined. As part of this project it was noted that the DfT was considering:

- a review of guidance on concentration, respite and the use of multiple routes. Delegates highlighted that the policy should reflect the need to balance the issues at individual airports.
- the metrics to be used to help calibrate the decisions made on airspace design. Delegates highlighted that metrics needed to be devised which reflected local circumstances e.g. a metric developed for Heathrow would not be appropriate to apply at Stansted due to the rural location of the airport, or if a metric was developed for Manchester it would not be appropriate to apply at Southampton.
- compensation policy/guidelines that reflected the impact of airspace changes.
- the Government's engagement mechanisms.
- the Government's role in regulating airspace and noise. The DfT was supporting the CAA in its review of CAP725 (Guidance on the airspace change process) and was reviewing the DfT's guidance to the CAA.

- A review of the policy on noise preferential routes at the designated airports.
- The framework for dealing with noise that was consistent across all airports – for non-designated airports controls were agreed locally and in light of any independent noise body a review of designation of airports.

9. Edinburgh ACC highlighted its experience with airspace change proposals for Edinburgh Airport and the mistrust of local communities in what the airport and air service providers/regulators advised. It was noted that to help address this issue Edinburgh Airport was in the process of setting up a Noise Forum involving local community groups. The Forum would have its own budget so that it could undertake its own research into issues as a way of helping to regain confidence amongst communities.

10. It was noted that the DfT's review of the Aviation Policy Framework was underway and would be subject to consultation in due course. The UKACCs Working Group was asked to consider the issues raised in the DfT's presentation.

AIRSPACE ISSUES

11. The Secretariat's background paper was received and noted. The meeting received two presentations from the CAA. The first (from Stuart Lindsey - Manager Airspace Regulation) related to future airspace strategy and the second (from Trevor Metson - Policy Programmes Team) covered the proposals to revise the current airspace change process.

Future Airspace Strategy (FAS) Overview

12. Stuart Lindsay explained that the current airspace - which had been developed over 40 years ago - was now out of date and required updating to reflect on technological advance. For example new aircraft were fully equipped to operate Performance Based Navigation. Change would be required regardless what decision was made over runway capacity in the South East. The CAA's Future Airspace Strategy (FAS) was underpinned by four main principles - safety, capacity environment and efficiency. It did not provide a blueprint for airspace design but provided a shopping list of technologies and methods to be used. It was up to industry to design and implement. Working groups had been set up to take matters forward. For example there was a cross industry implementation group as well as a community programme to consider visual flight rules (VFR).

13. Delegates were reminded of the Government's guidance on the altitude based priorities as follows:

- Below 4,000ft the priority was noise
- 4,000 – 7,000ft the priority was the noise and emissions
- Above 7,000ft the priority was emissions

14. Edinburgh ACC highlighted the problems experienced at its airport in taking forward proposed changes to its airspace and the mistrust that now exists amongst communities. The experience at Gatwick over the past few years was also shared.

Review of Airspace Change Process

15. Trevor Metson outlined the CAA's proposals for revising the airspace change process set out in CAP 725 which was currently the subject of consultation.

16. Following an independent review by Helios, the CAA was consulting on new arrangements which sought to provide a fair transparent process (all relevant documents would be published and posted on a new online portal) and sign off at key gateways. It was explained that there would be greater engagement with stakeholders especially local communities. Delegates highlighted that ACCs could play a key role in these new engagement arrangements. It was hoped that the new process would help avoid some of the

previous acrimonious issues that had arisen in the past and help regain public trust in the process.

17. At the time of the meeting four member ACCs had responded to the consultation. The consultation closed on 15 June and all member ACCs were encouraged to respond to the consultation. Some delegates highlighted their experience with the CAA's new consultation response portal and it was generally felt that the portal was not particularly user friendly. The CAA noted this feedback.

USE OF DRONES AND LASERS NEAR AIRPORTS

18. The Secretariat's paper summarising the extent of the problem of incidents involving drones and laser attacks at UK airports was discussed. The extent of the problem was acknowledged. Newcastle ACC clarified that the reference in the Secretariat's paper to the number of laser attacks in the vicinity of Newcastle Airport related to the North East region and not just Newcastle Airport.

19. Manchester ACC highlighted their Committee's concerns about the use of drones near airports posing a threat to aircraft and nearby residential properties. The Minister for Aviation's response to Manchester ACC was noted.

20. The possible role of ACCs in helping to raise awareness amongst communities about the inappropriate use of drones and lasers and the need for communities to help be the eyes and ears for the police was discussed. It was generally felt that this was an important issue in terms of safety that needed to be addressed by the Government and other agencies. There was a need to raise awareness about appropriate use and the good work of the CAA was acknowledged. However it was emphasised that a careful balance needed to be struck in raising awareness so as not to encourage further mischief by users.

21. Delegates were pleased to note that the Modern Transport Bill, announced in the Queen's Speech in May 2016, would bring forward drone legislation. UKACCs welcomed the introduction of new legislation and regulations.

22. Delegates also supported the work of aircraft manufacturers in developing glass to help mitigate the effect of laser attacks.

23. It was agreed that UKACCs should write to the DfT to support the introduction of new legislation through the Modern Transport Bill and also to support the National Police Air Service's work on the Government's multi-agency working group pushing for the need for stronger legislation on lasers to bring the UK in line with other countries such as Australia, New Zealand and the USA.

PRM SERVICES AT UK AIRPORTS

24. The meeting received a presentation from James Fremantle - Consumer Enforcement Manager, CAA. He set out the background to the CAA's current PRM activities. It was noted that PRM numbers had risen twice as fast as passenger numbers between 2010 and 2015. ACCs were reminded that it fell to airports to draw up and monitor quality standards. The CAA would publish a performance report in the summer. This would identify those airports which were performing well as well as those not doing so well.

25. Delegates noted that the results of the CAA's monitoring revealed that generally overall the results were good with many airports measuring 100% every month. Passenger satisfaction ratings on all areas of the PRM service showed generally 60-80% satisfaction with a rating of 'excellent', 'good' or 'acceptable'. However:

- some airports marginally missed targets regularly, including Heathrow, London City, Leeds Bradford, Cardiff, East Midlands, Inverness, Birmingham and Stansted
- Glasgow and Bristol, missed targets by significant margins in 3 months
- Edinburgh, repeatedly missed targets by significant margins throughout the year
- Some airports did not measure and record sufficiently robustly (e.g. Cardiff, Luton, Exeter, Doncaster and Aberdeen). The CAA had intervened with these airports, requiring them to take immediate action to come into compliance
- All airports had reported for 2015/16 except Doncaster Sheffield

26. In discussion it was noted that at some airports there had been an improvement in the performance of the service provider. There were still difficulties about handling passengers who had not pre-notified and then requested assistance upon arrival. In some cases, assistance was provided on a first come first served basis which disadvantaged those PRM passengers who had pre-notified. Pre-notification rates in the UK continued to rise and 74% of passengers were now pre-notifying compared with an average of 54% in Europe.

27. It was noted that the carriage of electric wheelchairs/buggies was increasing and posed a challenge for airlines and airports (16,000 items carried in 2015) which needed to be addressed due to capacity within aircraft holds, safety implications in the tying down of items, and the impact on the airport's operation and on time performance.

28. Stansted ACC had submitted a paper outlining some PRM issues that had arisen at their airport. A particular concern was who had ultimate responsibility for providing PRM services and resolving problems. Whilst the airport had responsibility, service provision was sub contracted out with the airline being another party involved. This left concerns as to who should resolve issues. It was felt that experiences at airports were best handled locally as each airport had different contracts and services in place.

29. James Fremantle, also outlined the CAA's current consultation on "hidden disabilities" i.e. those passengers whose disability was not easily recognised. For example those passengers with autism, dementia, mental health and hearing loss. The meeting welcomed the consultation and the CAA's initiative in seeking to address the issue.

30. It was noted that the CAA proposed to publish guidance in 2017 following the consultation. A number of airports had already initiated action e.g. training staff in handling passengers with dementia and providing information for parents of children with autism. Airlines were also starting to take action. Member ACCs were encouraged to respond to the consultation.

CAA CONSUMER PANEL

31. The report of the CAA Consumer Panel's work over the past year was noted.

32. Delegates expressed disappointment that the Chairman of the Consumer Panel had again given apologies and that there was not a member of the Panel available to attend the Annual Meeting. Delegates commented that they had not had any interaction with the Panel over the past few years and it was not known how the Panel formed its views. It was also commented that the Panel had instigated the CAA's review of issues affecting passengers' access to airports but there had not been any prior discussion with ACCs as to whether there were particular problems at airports and areas for focus as part of the review.

33. It was agreed that UKACCs should write to the Chairman of the Panel to express concern, seek engagement and a commitment to attend next year's Annual Meeting.

DISRUPTIVE PASSENGERS

34. The Secretariat's paper providing an update on the problem of disruptive and drunken passengers at airports and on board aircraft was discussed. The increase in the number of incidents involving unruly and disruptive passengers was a problem for some airports and stag and hen parties were a known problem.

35. Delegates shared experiences of how their airports addressed unruly and disruptive passengers in departures lounges through creating the right environment, working with the police and raising awareness about the consequences of inappropriate behaviour such as posters in restaurants and bars.

UK BORDER FORCE AND ACC ENGAGEMENT

36. The meeting received the Secretariat's paper which provided an update on UK Border Force's (UKBF) performance at UK airports. At previous Annual Meetings there had been concern about UKBF's performance in terms of passenger queuing times and providing a satisfactory passenger experience. However in discussion it appeared that the general level of performance had improved. ACCs were encouraged to seek to actively engage with the local UKBF.

37. One key concern highlighted was in relation to UKBF's cut backs and reductions in resourcing against a backdrop of growth in passenger numbers at airports.

38. Stansted ACC reported on its own local arrangements where a constructive and positive dialogue had been established with UKBF. This enabled the ACC to have an insight on key issues on a mutual trust basis. However the development of the improved engagement had required effort. Other ACCs were encouraged to seek to develop similar arrangements or other appropriate arrangements for their airport.

SURFACE ACCESS TO AIRPORTS

39. The paper from the Secretariat reminded ACCs that the CAA had recently consulted on issues affecting passengers' surface access to airports. The consultation had focussed on two main issues - the market structure and the provision of information to passengers as to the various options. In discussion it was clear that the position varied greatly from airport to airport. There was some support for the view that more information need to be provided to passengers about the range of choices on offer.

40. In terms of improving public transport links to airports, it was noted that finance was often the governing factor and involved a number of parties.

41. It was noted that the CAA's Consumer Panel had input to the CAA's work leading up to the consultation but there was concern that the Panel had not first approached ACCs to seek their views as to whether there were problems with the market structure and the provision of information to passengers. This would be raised as an example with the Consumer Panel.

MEMBERSHIP OF THE UKACCS LIAISON GROUP

42. The CAA's air traffic statistics at UKACCs airports for 2015 and details of those airports which fall within UKACCs' membership admission criteria were noted.

CONSULTATION ON A SCOTTISH REPLACEMENT FOR APD

43. The report by the Aberdeen ACC Chairman on the Scottish Government's consultation on 'a Scottish replacement for APD' was noted.

VENUES FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

44. Offers to host future Annual Meetings had been as follows:
- 2017 - Glasgow
 - 2018 - Heathrow
 - 2019 - Inverness (offer received following the meeting)

VOTE OF THANKS

45. A vote of thanks was extended to Tom McGrath, Chairman of Belfast International Airport Consultative Committee, for his excellent conduct of the meeting, and to the team at Belfast International Airport for their generous hospitality in hosting this year's Annual Meeting.

STUART INNES RETIREMENT

46. Best wishes and thanks were also extended to Stuart Innes, Secretary London City ACC, and UKACCs Support Officer on his retirement from UKACCs. Delegates expressed their gratitude and appreciation for all the time that Stuart had devoted to the work of UKACCs over many years. His outstanding service, advice and friendship would be greatly missed.

Paula Street
UKACCS SECRETARIAT