

**NOTES OF THE 46<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL MEETING OF THE  
LIAISON GROUP OF UK AIRPORT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEES  
(UKACCs)  
HELD ON 23<sup>rd</sup> AND 24<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 2023 AT HEATHROW  
AIRPORT**

**BUSINESS MEETING**

**ACCs present:**

Aberdeen	Alan Stewart
Belfast International	Tom McGrath
Birmingham	Colin Flack (meeting Chairman)
Bristol	David Hall
East Midlands	Guido Liguori
Edinburgh	Robert Carr
	Janice Hogarth
Farnborough	Philip Riley
Gatwick	Tom Crowley
	Monique Smart
Glasgow	David Flint
	Donald Grant
Glasgow Prestwick	Richard Searle
Heathrow	Mark Izatt
	Rebecca Cox
	Laura Keith
Inverness	Pat Hayden
Leeds Bradford	Alan Wrigley
Liverpool John Lennon	Bob Swann
	Mike Jones
Manchester	Rachel Bailey
	Sandra Matlow
Newcastle	John Littleton
Southampton	James Duguid
Stansted	Shena Winning
Teesside	Brian Robinson
	David Cosgrove

**In attendance:**

CAA	John Burton
CAA	Stu Lindsay
DfT	Ian Greene
DfT	Huw Jones
DfT	Lydia Price
Heathrow Airport Ltd	Tim Wheen
UKACCs Secretariat	Paula Street

**Apologies:**

Belfast City	Carole Edwards
London City	Duncan Alexander
Luton	Martin Routledge
Manchester	Mike Flynn
Newcastle	David Haley
Stansted	Frank Evans

## 1. SESSION 1

### 1.1 Welcome and introductions

- Mark Izatt, Deputy Chair of CISHA, welcomed everyone to the meeting and the return to the normal meeting format post-Covid. He briefly outlined the activities of CISHA in the past twelve months, during which the organisation had been set up and a great deal of constructive dialogue with stakeholders taken place. He also reported the challenges facing Heathrow Airport currently, in particular late running flights, congested terminals and punctuality, issues that many airports were experiencing at the moment.
- Colin Flack, UKACCs Chair, thanked everyone for attending in person and welcomed a number of new members, namely Rachel Bailey, John Littleton, James Duguid, Brian Robinson and David Cosgrove. DfT colleagues would now be joining the meeting remotely and the agenda had been reordered to enable them to do so.

### 1.2 Notes of 2022 Annual Meeting

- The matters arising were reviewed. The preparation of a one-pager on airport operators' and other agencies' passenger service responsibilities had been delayed due to staff sickness and would be issued in due course.
- **Approved:** the notes of the 2022 Annual Meeting.

### 1.3 Policy Overview & Key Issues for Aviation and Airports in 2023

- Paper 1 '**Member ACCs' new and emerging issues over the past year**' was discussed. A number of issues were raised, including:
  - **PRM service:** It was recognised that there was increasing pressure on the service and concerns were raised that the money allocated to this by airports would not be adequate going forward. It was agreed that changes should be made to the end-to-end measurement used to monitor the service, as it did not accurately reflect the passenger experience and actual the time taken to travel through the airport with a service provider. The possibility of digitising the service to enable PRMs and their specific needs to be identified at the point of booking, through a system similar to that used for frequent flyer programmes with the information to be shared across their journey was discussed. The problems created by passengers not pre-notifying of their need for assistance were raised, including the impact of these on those who had. It was suggested that airlines that had particularly high numbers who did not pre-notify could be fined (although it was also recognised that this may be very unfair to airlines), and that wheelchairs should be named in order to give priority to those who did pre-notify. The further issue related to misuse of the system in order to jump queues was also recognised. All agreed that this should be an area of focus for UKACCs in the coming months, as once the PRM service was optimised everything else would follow. Four representatives of UKACCs would be attending the DfT accessibility workshop the following week and would be able to cover the points raised.
  - **CISHA air quality project:** Interest was expressed in learning more about the methodology, cost, and outcome of this piece of work, which had been commissioned by CISHA and funded from their grant income from Heathrow Airport. The final report contained recommendations and learnings that would be transferrable to other airports. **ACTION:** CISHA to share with UKACCs members when the [report was published](#) [published on 14/12/2023]. CISHA to also provide a breakdown of costs and the methods used, and a timeline of the phases undertaken.
- **DfT Aviation Policy Updates and Initiatives:** An update was received from Huw Jones outlining the work of the DfT and the challenges faced over the past year as the aviation sector recovered from the pandemic. These activities related to surface access; building resilience at the UK borders; working with airports to introduce the new body scanners; and with other organisations as part of Jet Zero. They also looked at accessibility in partnership with the CAA; reviewed the travel disruption over the summer, identifying areas of focus to improve resilience and performance; and introduced a new reduced APD band on domestic flights aimed at benefitting regional airports. With regard to ACCs, the report on the information gathering exercise had been published in March and in 2024 the DfT would be exploring the possibility of formalising its relationship with ACCs through

UKACCs, whilst maintaining their independence, and collaborating with them to develop a work programme to ensure that they were fully supported by the airports. In response to questions, Huw committed to coming back with an answer on the government's plans to communicate with travellers once the new scanners were in operation to ensure it was understood that overseas airports may not have the same facility; and on what the DfT's involvement would be in the NATS review.

- **The UK's Aviation Skills Programme:** A presentation was received from Lydia Price. This programme had been developed in response to the resilience issues experienced last summer and related to both current and prospective employees. Its aim was to ensure a diverse workforce fit for the future. The presentation outlined why the government was playing a role in skills issues; examples of challenges facing airports; a breakdown of responsibilities; areas of possible collaboration; the breadth of roles within an airport; and how the programme fitted into the government's strategic objectives and the work of other departments. There were five workstreams – outreach; training and opportunities; championing the sector; collaborating with the industry; and research and data. There was also an international element to the programme, looking at identifying best practice and potential opportunities for collaboration, and the creation of the Global Aviation Skills Taskforce and the Global Aviation Ambassadors Programme.
- **DfT Airspace and Noise Policy Updates**

A presentation was received from Tim May and Ian Greene, which would be [attached](#) with the meeting notes.

  - **Slots policy:** An update was given on the level 2 and level 3 designated airports requiring slot coordination. Following Brexit, UK airports were no longer subject to EU policy and the DfT would shortly be launching a consultation on slot reform. During the pandemic, the current system was shown to be inflexible in unexpected circumstances, and the aim was to develop a more efficient, transparent, resilient, and dynamic system. It was noted that this would require primary legislation and would therefore be a lengthy process to take forward after the consultation outcome, and also that some proposals would only apply to new slots.
  - **Aviation noise policy:** In March the DfT published a revised, overarching noise policy statement, balancing the benefits and disbenefits of aviation, including mitigation and both local and national contexts. A new consolidated noise policy paper would be published in the new year.
  - **Night flights:** In early 2024 a consultation on the night flights regime for the three noise designated London airports (Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted) would be published by the DfT. The Aviation Night Noise Effects (ANNE) study was underway. The first stage involved a survey of 4000 people who lived near eight different airports and assessed the association between night noise from airports and its effect on sleep quality and annoyance. This assessment was self-reported and therefore subjective. The second stage would measure the physiological state of 170 people from the original sample while they slept in order to determine their sleep quality and would map this against data from a noise monitor in their bedroom and radar information. The final report on the study was expected in 2025.

#### 1.4 Airspace modernisation programme

- An update was received from Stu Lindsey, CAA on the FASI programme and the work of ACOG who had developed the masterplan. Included in this programme were more than twenty airspace change proposals. It had been developed to enable airports to work together as necessary to move through the process simultaneously. However, this had been more fluid than anticipated, with some airports stepping out of their geographical clusters to avoid them being slowed down by others or for funding reasons. Most airports had now progressed to stage 3, at which point conversations about trade-offs between would need to take place. In order to assist the process, during which airports would be given the opportunity to have input and influence, consensus had been reached that a Single Design Entity (SDE) should be established to help make the final decision on the design. This should help stop airspace change proposals in the UK being progressed "by committee", an approach no other country took. A joint CAA/DfT project team had been

set up to agree what the SDE would do, and whether it should be a new entity – which could require primary legislation – or an extension to an existing organisation. The project team hoped to take a proposal to the Minister by the end of March 2024, but in the meantime, airports had been advised to continue with the FASI programme. UKACCs members were invited to email the CAA direct should they have any questions. They were also asked to consider whether there were any projects they would like to carry out that would fit the criteria for the [AMS Support Fund](#).

## 2. SESSION 2

### 2.1 ACCs meeting the challenges for the future and sharing best practice

- Those present participated in a round table discussion to help inform UKACCs' future discussions with the DfT on whether revisions needed to be made to the DfT guidelines for ACCs and this was an opportunity to share ideas. Participants were asked to consider issues relating to improving ACC visibility and transparency; noise management monitoring and reporting; and airport growth and expansion plans. Following a productive session, suggestions and comments were shared. These would be collated by the Secretariat and taken forward with ACCs and the DfT.

## 3. SESSION 3

### 3.1 London Heathrow's Approach to Enhancing and Improving Passenger Accessibility

- A presentation was received from Tim Wheen, Head of Consumer & Customer Insights at Heathrow Airport, which would be shared with the meeting notes together with the ['Open for All' report](#). This outlined the profile of the airport's passengers, of whom 76.8million had travelled through it in the past twelve months. There had been a significant growth in people using the assistance service since the pandemic, continuing a trend which had seen a 33% increase in the past four years.
- In 2019, Heathrow Airport had commissioned an independent piece of research which found that up to 39% of passengers might have one or more personal circumstances that might impact on their requirements and experience, be they sensory; physical; cognitive; psychological; or relating to culture and identity. These issues affected these passengers' ability to navigate the airport and resulted in lower customer satisfaction scores.
- In order to improve these passengers' experience, the airport had focused on building trust in the service; enabling people to make choices about their journey; and optimising their opportunities to enjoy it. With regard to the existing service, £60m had been invested in improving PRM facilities across the four terminals and training had been provided to ensure that staff were welcoming, attentive, and proactive. In order to reduce the number of people defaulting to the assistance service, they had increased options for self-mobilisation; improved physical and digital wayfinding; and promoted quiet routes.
- In response to questions, a number of issues were clarified. The increasingly short time between the announcement of the gate and departure was raised, as this had resulted in PRMs missing flights. Problems with punctuality meant that at times the airport was not aware of the gate until the plane arrived on the stand. At Heathrow, the problem was compounded by the fact that British Airways managed the stand planning in Terminal 5, so collaborative working was required to address the issue. Due to congestion in the departure lounges as a result of an passengers arriving earlier than advised for their flight, over the summer period gate information at Heathrow had been given 75 minutes prior to take off. In terms of future funding for services given the aging population and more elderly, less mobile people travelling year on year, members commented that there was a need for airports to have adequate funding for the assistance service. Tim Wheen advised that airports needed to have accurate forecasting and dialogue with the airlines and the CAA to ensure that the airport's charges reflected the increasing demand. The issue of digitalisation was again raised and the challenges of data sharing across all parts of the complex ecosystem discussed. There was consensus that aviation needed to get better at joining the dots for such passengers, which was something raised by Heathrow in its response to the CAA's consultation on airline accessibility. It was noted that British Airways had increased their minimum connection times at Heathrow as these had never originally been designed with the needs of those requiring assistance in mind. It was hoped that this would reduce the missed connect rates from 10% to 2%. The point was

reiterated that if an airport got the service provided to those requiring assistance right, the service for all would be right.

### 3.2 Aviation Environmental Sustainability

- A [presentation](#) was received from John Burton, CAA's Sustainability Team, which would be circulated with the meeting notes, outlining the work of the team since it was set up eighteen months ago.
- **Complaints handling review:** The CAA had been commissioned by the DfT to undertake a complaints handling review in England. This had involved surveys with airports and communities, desktop research and stakeholder workshops. The sample of airports included a mix of size and type of operations. Some draft principles had been identified: that these should be easily understood, transparent information available, which should cover all aspects of environmental issues; there should be increased engagement as widely as possible with communities; and that processes should be monitored and improved using evidence-based metrics. The report would not be published as it had been an internal information gathering exercise and the guidance to come out of it would not be mandatory. In response to questions, a number of issues were clarified. The review had not included Scotland and Ireland as it had been commissioned by the DfT. However, the guidance would be transferrable to airports there. Disappointment was expressed that the guidance would not be enforceable. It was suggested that if an airport acted in a way that was diametrically opposed to best practice, the ACCs could escalate it.
- **UK Aviation Environmental Review (AER):** Prior to Brexit, EASA undertook this exercise for the EU as a whole. The CAA had inherited the requirement to complete this for the UK every three years, with the first report due at the end of 2023. Its purpose was to inform interested parties about the environmental performance of the aviation industry in relation to air quality; noise; and climate change/emissions. The first report would be qualitative, with the quantitative to follow in 2024 when there would also be a consultation to determine the format and content going forward. In addition, the CAA would be producing a suite of annual environmental reports, which would feed into the triennial reports. It was agreed that any such reports should assist communities in determining how well individual airports were performing; what improvements had been made; and understanding what good looked like. However, it was confirmed that the first report would be a simple, high-level summary which established a baseline for future comparisons, but would give information on how it would be developed going forward. From an air quality perspective, the technology was not yet available to accurately separate airport data from road traffic data. Regarding noise, DEFRA had invested in a new model that was able to make this separation. This should be available in 2024 and would allow people to search down to one square kilometre. It was suggested that it would be helpful to measure against other global airports, including their mitigations, in particular Frankfurt. This could be an option if access were granted to the detailed methodology to be sure that a like for like comparison was being made.
- **Aviation Noise Attitudes Survey (ANAS):** The aim of this survey was to provide data on the relationship between aviation noise exposure and annoyance which would inform government policy in the UK. It factored in aspects of SoNA and the ICCAN review and involved both the industry and communities. In order to maximise response a postal version had been sent out to the entire sample of non-responders to the online invitation. The design of the study called for 500 addresses within six separate noise contours for each of the ten selected airports, with Wave 1 targeting circa 60% thus creating a wave 1 sample size of 18,000 responses. The first wave of fieldwork was complete, with responses far exceeding expectations. The detailed analysis of the data and the peer review process were being considered currently.
- **Consumer Environmental Information - Call for Evidence:** This had been carried out by the CAA in early 2023. It looked at how to provide information for consumers at the point of booking to enable them to understand what the environmental impact of their flight would be.

A number of key themes and suggestions had emerged in the 120 responses, some of which would be explored further outside of the study. A summary and draft principles would be published in 2024, and in the meantime the team would be working with the DfT who were undertaking additional consumer research.

- **SAF infrastructure:** The CAA was looking at the impacts of SAF on the consumer, together with the other issues related to its use in terms of logistics; availability of food stocks; compliance; and ensuring transparency about its environmental performance. The CAA also recognised that SAF was just one of many environmental solutions and it was looking at alternatives, working with the innovation team and worldwide partners to explore hydrogen and electric flights.
- In response to a request for a one-page summary of the initiatives described; their key objectives and timelines; links to further information; and explanations of the acronyms, it was confirmed that in 2024 there would be a new CAA website which would provide this information. There was a further request by members to minimise the number of consultations. John Burton acknowledged this and advised that where possible consultations would be merged together in order to achieve this.

**ACTION:** Secretariat to arrange future virtual information sharing sessions on single projects for member ACCs.

*The meeting closed at 10.30, with the internal business of UKACCs to be discussed after the break.*