

ACCS MEETING THE CHALLENGES OF THE FUTURE & BEST PRACTICE

Introduction

1. On 30 March 2023, the DfT published the [Final Report](#) on the findings from its information gathering exercise of Airport Consultative Committees (ACCs). The aim of the exercise was to provide the DfT with a better understanding of ACCs, the challenges faced and key objectives for ACCs to operate effectively.
2. Over the past year UKACCs has reflected on the results of the DfT's information gathering exercise along with the criticisms raised by the AEF (Aviation Environment Federation) about their community members' longstanding [concerns and problems](#) with some ACCs in terms of independence, representation and transparency.
3. UKACCs has been cited in the DfT's Final Report as being a resource for best practice. It is important therefore that there is further discussion on how UKACCs can assist member ACCs in helping to enhance and improve ACCs' effectiveness, transparency and ways of working to help ensure ACCs are able to effectively address future challenges.

DfT Information Gathering Exercise

4. The objectives of the DfT's information gathering exercise were to:
 - Help identify the common issues for Committees, opportunities for cross-working and any best practices that could benefit others.
 - To understand the view of ACCs on their relationship and expectations of government and wider stakeholders.
 - To understand the extent of relationships between aerodromes and ACCs with focus on how this may impact the execution of their perceived role.
 - To uncover the overarching aims and goals that ACCs hold for their organisation and how they intend to achieve them.
 - To explore the effectiveness of the DfT's 2014 guidance for ACCs
5. The DfT was deliberate in not drawing conclusions through the exercise work, weighting any outcomes, or making recommendations. The DfT's relationship with, and approach towards, ACCs is one of support through access to relevant information and guidance to aid the effective running of ACCs. The DfT is of the view that any interference on how an individual ACC operates could be seen as an overstep, harming the fundamentals of the ACC itself. As such, the research was not intended to be a performance review of ACCs and that any recommendations shared are in the spirit of collaboration and support.
6. The DfT is supportive of UKACCs working with member ACCs to identify and prioritise any areas for further consideration arising from the exercise. DfT has shared the summary report on its findings from the exercise with airports. It is important for airports to engage fully with their ACCs in considering the outcomes of the Final Report.

DfT Guidelines

7. The [DfT Guidelines for Airport Consultative Committees](#), published in 2014, sets an expectation for airports to communicate openly and effectively with their local communities and users of the airport about the impact of their operations. The Government remains supportive of this objective, even more so as the aviation sector is returning to growth.
8. The Guidelines recognise that ACCs vary widely in size and scope and also in their operating procedures and arrangements. What works for one airport will not necessarily work at another. The

Guidelines also recognise however that ACCs do, at their heart, have a similar role and purpose and as such can operate to a common set of principles – Independent, Representative, Knowledgeable, Transparent, Effective and Constructive.

9. One of the key aims of UKACCs is to assist its member ACCs achieve the common set of principles.

Visibility of ACCs

10. Transparency of ACCs and their work is of vital importance in helping to build trust with a wide range of interested parties around airports, including local communities impacted by an airport's operation and aircraft overflight and noise. As a reminder, the expectations given in the DfT's Guidelines in relation to basic transparency requirements can be found in:

Para 2.14 – “The wider local community and airport users should be made aware of the existence of the consultative committee and its role in relation to aerodrome operations as well as how to contact at least the Secretary of the committee”.

Para 2.15 – “The website should also include a schedule of the committee's meetings as well as minutes of the meetings themselves”.

Para 3.5 – “publicise the output of the committee and maintain the committee's website (where airport is not responsible for this)”

11. The UKACCs Secretariat has undertaken an on-line search for information available to the wider public about member ACCs' contact details, membership, constitution, calendar of meetings, agenda papers and minutes of meetings. The exercise revealed that there were many differences in what information was publicly available across member ACCs. The findings were shared with member ACCs which were positively received. Many ACCs have discussed the findings with their airport and/or ACC and action is now being taken by at least five airports and their ACC to address the shortcomings identified. One ACC has also offered advice to other ACCs on ways of working.

Achieving Best Practice and Common Standards

12. At the Annual Meeting, UKACCs wishes to explore further the scope for member ACCs to identify a set of common standards which build on those common principles described in the DfT's Guidelines. Through sharing best practice and discussing how that best practice could be applied across member ACCs, will help ensure:
 - all ACCs consistently meet the DfT's expectations.
 - the consideration of issues/concerns in an open and transparent way.
 - the expectations of all interested parties of how issues can be raised, discussed, addressed and, where possible, resolved are managed and the ACC's role understood.
 - the ACC adds value to the airport's management and future decision making.

Proposed discussion

- Consider the scope for UKACCs for a set of common standards over and above the requirements of the DfT's Guidelines to enhance transparency of an ACC's existence and work.
- If so, what should be included in the set of common standards?
- How can UKACCs help ACCs to achieve those standards within an agreed timescale?

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