

**ANNUAL MEETING - AIRPORT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEES**

**NOTE OF THE 25TH ANNUAL LIAISON MEETING HELD ON FRIDAY, 15TH JUNE 2001**

Present:

Inverness	-	Mrs. Pat Hayden (Chairman)
General Consumer Council Northern Ireland (Belfast)	- -	Mr. Bill Osborne Mr. Alan Walker
Birmingham	-	Mr. Fred Hunt
Bristol	- -	Mr. Peter Hutchings Mr. Robert Moon
East Midlands	- -	Mr. Barrie Whyman Mr. David Biggins
Edinburgh	- -	Mr. Alastair O'Neil Mr. Tom Wright
Glasgow	-	Mr. John Richman
Leeds-Bradford	- -	Mr. Michael Goodwin Mr. Gerard Norrie
Liverpool	- -	Mr. Gordon Paterson Mr. Michael Flynn
London City	- -	Mr. John Adshead Mr. Stuart Innes
London Gatwick	- - -	Mr. Peter Bryant Mr. John Godfrey Mr. Pat Welch
London Heathrow	- - -	Mr. Sam Jones Mrs. Sue Heeps Mr. Maurice Hudson
London Stansted	- -	Mr. Morris le Fleming Mr. Graham Redgwell
Luton	-	Mr. Derek Brown
Manchester	-	Mrs. Margaret Melrose

Newcastle	-	Mr. Alan Ambler
Prestwick	-	Mr. William Ritchie
	-	Mr. Sam Milliken
Southampton	-	Mr. Tony Balcombe
	-	Mr. Richard Ward
Teesside	-	Mr. David Lyonette
	-	Mr. David Cosgrove

Apologies were received from Aberdeen and Cardiff-Wales Consultative Committees, and the Air Transport Users' Council.

#### PRESENTATION - HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS AIRPORTS

1. Mr. Robert MacLeod, the Managing Director of the Highlands and Islands Airport Limited, welcomed representatives to Inverness Airport and gave a presentation outlining the structure of the ten airports within the highlands and islands group of airports, and their future development.
2. Delegates thanked Mr. MacLeod for the presentation and for the hospitality of Highlands and Islands Airports Limited and Inverness Airport in hosting the annual dinner and business meeting for consultative committees.

#### NOTES OF THE LAST MEETING

3. The notes of the last meeting held on 30th June 2001 were received and noted. With regard to paragraph 19, it was pointed out that even profitable regional slots into the London airports (such as from Leeds-Bradford) had been lost to other routes. It was acknowledged that profitability was not the only criteria used by airlines in deciding on how to allocate their slots into the London airports.

#### DETR CONSULTATION DOCUMENT: THE FUTURE OF AVIATION

##### The DETR's consultation document on Air Transport Policy

4. The meeting considered a paper setting out the latest position regarding the consultation process in respect of the above document leading to a new aviation White Paper. In commenting on the paper delegates expressed their concern at the rapidity at which Ministers for Aviation changed. There was a need for greater continuity of office bearing in mind the important decisions which would need to be taken in respect of aviation in the next few years.
5. The meeting discussed the dominant position occupied by Heathrow and to a lesser extent Gatwick, in the global market, and whether this position could be maintained against competition from airport growth in Europe. There would clearly be great pressure for further growth at Heathrow and Gatwick, and other airports in the

United Kingdom. It was felt strongly that the planning process would need to be reviewed in respect of the development of major infrastructure particularly the provision of additional runway capacity.

6. It was agreed that the Secretary would write to the Government expressing the above concerns. A copy of the letter would be sent to committee secretaries for copying to the MPs in their area.

#### THE ROLE OF AIRPORT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEES - A BASIS FOR PARTNERSHIP

7. The meeting considered a paper on the role of airport consultative committees which had been addressed in the DETR's consultation paper 'The Future of Aviation'. The attention of delegates was drawn in particular to the comments made by the CAA and the Local Government Association Special Interest Group. It was felt that the comments by the CAA and LGA(SIG) were misinformed and had not taken into account the importance of the local community input to consultative committees. Indeed, the Directorate of Airport Policy had recently addressed the Luton Committee and stressed that committees were a particularly important consultee because of the input of local community interests.
8. There was a wide variation in the way airport consultative committees functioned to meet local circumstances. It was essential, therefore, that any new guidelines for consultative committees continued to allow for local flexibility. Consultative committees would need to maintain their independence and should be adequately resourced to enable them to function effectively. It was important that consultative committees had access to independent professional advice in order to deal with the complex issues confronting them.
9. It was agreed that a working group be set up to consider the role of consultative committees and whether improvements could be suggested to the guidelines governing their operations and provide advice on best practice. The working group was also asked to consider the future role of the annual conference and ways of strengthening the Secretariat support between annual meetings. It was agreed that the following delegates should be appointed to the working group which would be clerked by Pat Welch:-

Chairman:	John Adshead (Chairman)	London City
	Peter Bryant	London Gatwick
	Michael Goodwin	Leeds Bradford
	Pat Hayden	Inverness
Secretaries:	Michael Flynn	Liverpool
	Robert Moon	Bristol
	Tom Wright	Edinburgh

Terms of reference for the Group would be circulated in due course, and each airport consultative committee was asked to provide the Group with a summary of how it operated to aid the discussion.

## DEVELOPMENT OF AIRPORTS AND LOCAL AGREEMENTS

10. The meeting received and noted a paper by Mr. Peter Bryant, Chairman of the Gatwick Airport Consultative Committee regarding the approach adopted at Gatwick to managing growth and development, and the value of local agreements. The meeting also noted the role of local agreements in managing development at London City, Manchester and Liverpool Airports.

## REGIONAL AIR SERVICES STUDIES

11. The meeting noted the latest position with regard to the studies being undertaken by the DETR. It was clear that some consultative committees had been more widely involved in the process than others. The matter would be kept under review.

## SLOT ALLOCATION

12. The latest position regarding the European Commission's proposals for the regulation of aircraft slots was discussed. There was clearly a difference between the approach adopted by the UK Government and the European Commission. Major concerns were expressed regarding the implications for maintaining links to the regions. The suggestion that local authorities might be prepared to subsidise slots was considered unrealistic. It was also stressed that the timing of slots to the region was critical to ensure that important business links were maintained. It was agreed that the Government be asked to clarify how it proposed to keep consultative committees informed of the emerging debate regarding slot allocations, and advised of the concerns expressed at the meeting.

## TRANSPORT FORUMS AND AIRPORTS SURFACE ACCESS STRATEGIES

13. Delegates reported on how their respective airport Transport Plans were being integrated into the Local Transport Plan for their area. A number of committees expressed concern at the low priority being given to the enhancement of rail links to airports which continued to be generally poor.

## NOISE ISSUES

### Commission of the European Communities

### Proposal for a Directive relating to the Assessment and Management of Environmental Noise (Ref: 200/0194(COD))

14. The meeting discussed a paper which provided details of the EU proposals to harmonise noise limit. The Government had been engaged in discussions with the Commission on technical issues involving representatives from the DETR. The Government had put forward a number of amendments which would radically alter the Directive's effect. The main area of concern was the need to ensure that the Directive would not impose less stringent noise limits than those which were already in existence in the UK. For instance it was noted that the DETR was now producing noise contour maps for designated airports on an annual basis.

## New DETR study into Aircraft Noise

15. A paper was circulated which outlined the arrangements for a new study being commissioned by the DETR into aircraft noise during the day and at night. It was planned that the pilot results of the study would be available to feed into the White Paper on Air Transport. It was agreed that the Government should be advised that consultative committees should be kept regularly informed of the progress of their respective studies and consulted on the results.

## PASSENGER ISSUES

### European Airport Voluntary Commitment on Air Passenger Service

16. The meeting considered a press release issued by the European Civil Aviation Conference announcing the producing of voluntary commitments by airlines and airports to improve travelling conditions for passengers and to ensure that customer care was given top priority in European civil aviation. A copy of the Airport Voluntary Commitment on Air Passenger Service was also circulated. Signatory airports would each develop their own individual service plans incorporating the Airport Voluntary Commitment on Air Passenger Service. The commitment contained a range of key passenger issues which would need to be considered by the airport in consultation with their respective consultative committees.

### Disruptive Behaviour by Airline Passengers

17. Delegates discussed a paper which provided details of the work being undertaken in the UK to combat disruptive behaviour by airline passengers. It was reported that ground handlers were experiencing difficulty in attracting staff to work on 'front desk' operations because of the aggression from passengers. Both Heathrow and Gatwick Airports were proactive in respect of this issue, and it was hoped that their experience would be available to other committees.

### Air Travel and Health

18. The meeting noted the latest position with regard to air travel and health with particular reference to the effects of the aircraft cabin environment. The transmission of communicable diseases had been widely studied and most studies appeared to conclude that air travel involved an unavoidable risk of transmission due to the large numbers of people spending long periods in close proximity to each other. Aircraft air conditioning systems did not appear to exacerbate the risk. However, the meeting felt that aircraft operators should be required to ensure that air conditioning filters should be changed regularly. The AUC had suggested that prevention of transmission of serious conditions, such as tuberculosis, should be considered as a wider public health concern.
19. The issue of venous thrombosis was considered of more immediate concern as there was a lack of knowledge on any risk factors which were specific to air travel. The AUC has called for better provision of information by the airline industry, the

medical profession and itself. A copy of a press release issued by the DETR announcing a Government sponsored study into air travel and health was circulated.

#### FLIGHT PUNCTUALITY AND RELIABILITY

20. The latest punctuality league table published by the AUC, ranking charter airlines was received and noted.

#### BRITISH TOURIST AUTHORITY: FIRST IMPRESSIONS

21. It was reported that last year the British Tourist Authority (BTA) undertook a survey of the services and facilities provided to overseas visitors at Britain's main ports-of-entry. Its purpose was to discover the quality of welcome that Britain offers to its visitors when they arrive here, and to make a comparison with the quality of welcome offered by a small number of European ports-of-entry.
22. The findings of the survey had been summarised in the publication 'First Impressions', a copy of which had been sent to each participating air/port. The report highlighted good practice and made practical recommendations of measures that needed to be taken to improve standards.
23. Following the survey, the then Minister for Tourism, Janet Anderson MP, convened a working group to take forward these recommendations. The members of the working group recommended that BTA should present its findings of the research to the Heathrow, Gatwick and Manchester Consultative Committees and any other committees who wish to have a presentation. Committees were asked to contact Amanda Sillito, Policy Manager at the British Tourist Authority on 020 8563 3019.

#### FUTURE ANNUAL MEETINGS

24. The Committees noted the programme for future annual meetings as set out below:

2002	Gatwick
2003	Birmingham
2004	Bristol
2005	Liverpool

#### VOTE OF THANKS

25. A vote of thanks was accorded to Mrs. Pat Hayden for chairing the meeting. The Chairmen and Secretaries also thanked Mrs. Hayden, Mr. Robert MacLeod of the Highlands and Islands Airports Ltd., and James Walton, Airport Manager, Inverness Airport, for making the visit to Inverness Airport truly memorable and worthy of the Conference's silver jubilee.