

ANNUAL MEETING – LIAISON GROUP OF UK AIRPORT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEES

NOTE OF THE 31st ANNUAL MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY, 14th JUNE, 2007 AT STANSTED

Present:

Liaison Group Secretariat	-	Mr. Mike Kendall Mr. Stuart Innes Mrs. Paula Street
Aberdeen	-	Dr. Peter Smart
Belfast City	-	Mr. Alan Crowe
Birmingham	-	Mr. Viv Astling Mr. Lee Stevenson
Bristol	-	Ms. Margaret Thornton
Cardiff-Wales	-	Mr. David Crompton
Durham Tees Valley	-	Mr. David Lyonette
Edinburgh	-	Mr. Alastair O'Neil Mr. Tom Wright
Glasgow	-	Mr. John Richmond
Glasgow – Prestwick	-	Mr. Nigel Wallace
Inverness	-	Mrs. Pat Hayden
Leeds-Bradford	-	Mr. Michael Goodwin
Liverpool John Lennon	-	Mr. Marshall Morris Mrs. Rachel Graves
London - City	-	Mr. John Adshead
London - Gatwick	-	Mr. Peter Bryant Dr. John Godfrey Mrs. Rosemary Pugh
London - Heathrow	-	Mr. Sam Jones Mr. Maurice Hudson
London - Luton	-	Mr. Jim Bailey
London - Stansted	-	Mr. Morris le Fleming (Chairman) Mr. Graham Redgwell
Manchester	-	Mr. Steve Wilkinson Mr. Mike Flynn

- Newcastle - Mr. John Scott
- Nottingham - East Midlands - Mr. Barry Whyman
- Southampton - Mr. Tony Balcombe
- Mr. Richard Ward

Also present:

- Department for Transport - Mr. Jonathan Sharrock
Ms. Lola Fadina
Mr. Frank Evans

Observer:

The Chairman welcomed Mr. Ken Lundy, Director of Toronto City Airport to the meeting as an observer.

NOTES OF THE LAST MEETING

1. The notes of the last meeting held on 22nd June, 2006 were received and noted.

"THE FUTURE OF AIR TRANSPORT" WHITE PAPER - PROGRESS

2. Mr. Jonathan Sharrock, Head of Airports Policy, DfT, gave a presentation on 'delivering sustainable airport capacity'. He outlined the context which underpinned government policy and developments through the Eddington and Stern Reviews. The Liaison Group also noted a background report prepared by the Secretariat on the progress made in delivering the policies of the Air Transport White Paper.

3. The following points emerged from the presentation:

- (a) The increasing importance of aviation to the UK economy and social choices.
- (b) The increase in market activity around airports with changes in ownership of many UK airports since the 2003 White Paper and the increasing attractiveness of returns from infrastructure assets.
- (c) The Eddington Report confirmed the productivity gains from international gateways such as airports and identified them as a key priority for the future.
- (d) The 2006 White Paper Progress Report re-affirmed the Government's approach particularly in respect of environmental protection but there was now a greater emphasis on addressing the global environmental challenge in the context of the Stern Report.
- (e) The percentage of carbon dioxide emissions from aviation would increase relative to other forms of transport. The challenge for ministers was to provide a framework for carbon trading first at a European level then globally.
- (f) Public awareness of global warming issues was increasing but there was low willingness to sacrifice choices.
- (g) Aircraft were getting quieter through technology and operational improvements such as CDA.
- (h) In delivering increased capacity, better use was being made of existing runways, terminals and airspace as well as new infrastructure e.g. Terminal 5 and the construction of a new runway at Stansted.

4. Mr. Sharrock reiterated the importance of aviation to the national economy, both in terms of employment and income, and confirmed that the air traffic forecast given in the White Paper (of an annual constrained growth to 465 million passengers by 2030) still remained appropriate. He also confirmed the Government's commitment to tackle climate change issues and that the inclusion of aviation in the EU Emissions Trading Scheme was a way forward. He believed ACCs could have a role to play in raising awareness of climate change issues at a local level and invited the Liaison Group to consider how it could input to the debate both locally and nationally. Delegates highlighted the difficulties that local committees had discussing what was considered by many to be a national issue. Mr. Sharrock emphasised that as this had become a key issue for Government - ACCs' views on proposed policy would be welcome.

5. Reference was made to the legitimacy of some carbon trading schemes operated by companies and delegates wished to be assured that the Government was monitoring the operation of these schemes. Mr. Sharrock advised that defra was developing a standard for this.

6. Delegates discussed the need for better communication around the public perception of airports becoming less noisy. Mr. Evans, DfT, reported that the Department was seeking to develop information published on its website. For example it recognised the need to provide information about the different noise metrics. The annual contours for the three London designated airports would be published shortly. These used Leq metrics whilst the END directive contours used Lden. It was proposed to have an explanation about interpreting the different metrics on the website.

SURFACE ACCESS PROJECTS AT AIRPORTS

7. Ms. Lola Fadina, Airports Policy Division DfT, gave a presentation on 'How airports are being considered in the context of Eddington'. The Liaison Group also noted a background report prepared by the Secretariat and another paper which included details of surface access projects at the various airports.

8. The following points emerged from the presentation:

- (a) The importance of connections to international gateways was a key recommendation and Eddington had set a challenge of delivering quality access to airports.
- (b) There was a lot of good work being undertaken at airports but there was still need for joint working between airport operators and government to achieve the best outcome for airports and how improvements could best be taken forward.
- (c) Eddington Review was very important to the Government and Ministers were considering how best to respond. An announcement was expected to be made in Autumn 2007 which will set out how the Department will deal with the long-term challenges posed by Eddington .
- (d) The Surface Access Forum held in July 2006 with key stakeholders had recommended that performance indicators be developed to assess the effectiveness of delivering surface access schemes and that best practice be shared nationally.

9. Delegates welcomed the emphasis being placed on engaging stakeholders to share knowledge in helping to shape the best outcome for airports. There was interest in the performance indicators being developed and delegates asked for more information on this. Ms. Fadina advised that the DfT was in discussion with the AOA (Airport Operators Association - the trade association that represents the interests of British airports) on taking forward work on developing indicators. ACCs would be kept informed about the progress made on this work.

10. Reference was made to the strong surface access links that already existed at some airports. In this connection, the decision by the Government to extend the Gatwick Express service to Brighton on the south coast during peak times was raised. While the retention of the Gatwick Express had been welcomed there was concern that trains from Brighton would arrive at the airport already full during the early morning peak. Mr. Sharrock explained that the change to the Gatwick Express service was typical of the type of challenge the Government faced to balance competing demands for road and rail investment. He advised that the Eddington Review provided a framework for making these difficult decisions in the future.

11. Delegates fully supported Eddington's view that priority should be given to delivering quality access to airports but questioned whether the necessary funding would come forward to support improvements. There was a suggestion that revenue from the Air Passenger Duty could be hypothecated to surface access projects to airports. Mr. Sharrock noted this suggestion and advised that matters relating to taxation were a matter for the Chancellor.

CIVIL AVIATION ACT 2006

12. The meeting noted a paper summarising the main provisions of the new Act and the DfT's intention to ask airport consultative committees to be monitor how well the new powers were being implemented at their respective airports. Mr. Evans advised that the new powers provided airport operators with options on ways in which to manage aircraft noise and emissions. The DfT saw the consultative committees as having a key role in monitoring how the airports were using these new powers. Accordingly the Department proposed to consult the committees in Spring 2008 and seek their views on the implementation of the new powers. He would, in the near future, write to committees to explain what was required.

13. Mr. Innes, Secretariat, drew to delegates' attention the requirement placed on airport operators to use the monies received from fines to take forward project/initiatives for the benefit of the community around airports. He advised that some airports had already established Community Trusts and delegates were asked periodically to share information with other members of the Liaison Group about the work of trusts at their respective airports.

14. The Liaison Group discussed the problem of military aircraft over-flying residential areas, sometimes in the early hours of the morning. Mr. Sharrock advised that the DfT was aware of the issues at Birmingham International Airport and these were being discussed with Ministry of Defence. He asked that if there were problems elsewhere that these be shared with the DfT as well as other members of the Liaison Group as it was possible that experiences could be shared on solutions to this problem.

PLANNING FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE: WHITE PAPER

15. The meeting considered a report on the proposals contained in the Planning White Paper insofar as they related to nationally significant infrastructure projects. The Conference Secretary advised that the Government proposed to replace the existing multiple consent regime with a new system to enable decisions on infrastructure to be taken in a timely and efficient way. He explained that the proposed unified consent regime would make the application process more efficient for applicants and the new system of national policy statements and establishing a more inquisitorial rather than adversarial process would streamline the way in which decisions were made. However, there were concerns about the detail of the proposals, in particular whether sufficient weight would be given to local impacts in the determination of applications. National Policy Statements would be the primary consideration for the proposed infrastructure planning commission for England and the devolved administrations in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. However, the criteria to enable local impacts of individual proposals to be considered

against the national need were restrictive and this might limit the powers of the decision making body to refuse a project.

16. The Liaison Group agreed that there was a need to reform the current system and fully supported the change from an adversarial to an inquisitorial, or examining process. It was highlighted however that care should be taken not to impose unrealistic timetables for inquiries. Delegates questioned the detail of some of the Government's proposals and raised the following concerns:

- The statutory threshold for projects to be subject to a National Policy Statement – it was felt that the proposed threshold for airports i.e. projects that would increase capacity over 5 million passengers per annum, although relevant to regional airports would not be appropriate for the larger airports. As currently drafted the proposed threshold for the larger airports would mean that planning applications for many infrastructure development projects would not be determined locally. It was suggested that the threshold should be based on a percentage increase in passenger throughput/capacity.
- Infrastructure Planning Commission - there was much concern that the proposed new approach would strip democratic accountability out of the system, handing decisions to a centralised and undemocratic planning body. It was unclear to whom the Commission would be accountable in respect of the decisions it made. It was also commented that the role of the Commission should not be viewed as a 'rubber stamping' body and that proper account needed to be taken of regional and local issues and impacts when reaching decisions.
- Consideration of local impacts – there was much concern about the weight the Commission could give to local impacts against the national need as set out in the National Policy Statement. The Commission would have powers to refuse a project but only where local impacts were in breach of EC and national human rights law, or where the cumulative local adverse impacts outweighed the local and national benefits. It was felt that the criteria should be further clarified and drawn less restrictively.
- Integration between National Policy Statements - it was felt that further clarification was needed with regard to the linkages across a range of national policy statements and whether a national spatial strategy should be developed. It was also questioned how national policy statements would integrate with regional spatial strategies.

17. It was agreed that the Conference Secretary would submit a response to the Government outlining the above concerns.

AIRPORT SECURITY

18. Delegates noted a paper providing an update on the current issues and developments with regard to airport security. Mr. Innes referred to the increased level of security at airports since August 2006. This had been a huge issue for passengers, airports and the Government alike. There had been problems of different standards between airports, lack of knowledge amongst passengers, and intense media interest. Mr. Sharrock advised that as a result of the specific security threat to the UK since August 2006, the DfT had imposed a security regime on airports that was required to be operated correctly and consistently. He acknowledged that the new regime posed a challenge for airports and that there were implications in terms of the passenger experience. The DfT would therefore welcome views about how the process was working at individual airports.

19. The Liaison Group discussed funding of airport security. Dr. Godfrey made particular reference to the inter relationship between policing and security and highlighted the problems of the current method of determining resources for policing airports. There was a need to find alternative methods of funding for policing at airports which was objective and transparent. It was

also felt that the present system for designating airports for policing purposes was unsustainable. He considered that there was scope for considerable pooling of resources provided there was clear accountability of roles and responsibilities.

EUROPEAN DRAFT DIRECTIVE ON AIRPORT CHARGES

20. The Liaison Group considered a report giving details of a consultation being undertaken by the DfT seeking views on the European draft Directive on airport charges. Mrs. Street, of the Secretariat highlighted that the Directive if implemented as currently drafted, would have significant implications for the airport operators, airlines and the CAA. She explained that in order to address problems at a handful of airports in Europe that act in an anti-competitive or discriminating way, it was likely that the Directive would give rise to more problems than solutions at UK airports. A number of mandatory requirements would be placed on airport operators in the setting of airport charges. Delegates considered the issues of concern set out in the report and agreed that those concerns should be included in a response to the DfT.

21. Mr. Hudson also suggested that the DfT be asked to review the thresholds for the present system of economic regulation which were established by the Airports Act 1986. It was felt that the £1million turnover threshold was now out of date and that it should be reviewed so as to release some airports from CAA regulation. It was agreed that this would be included in the response to the DfT.

ACCESS TO AIR TRAVEL FOR PEOPLE WITH REDUCED MOBILITY (PRMs)

22. Mr. Innes advised that the new Regulation would take effect on 26th July 2008 except for articles 3 and 4 which would take effect on 26th July 2007. The airport operator would now be responsible for the provision of services for passengers with reduced mobility. He advised that airport consultative committees would need to monitor the implementation of the Regulation at their respective airports. Mr. Innes also reported that he had attended the DfT's symposium on the proposed UK enforcement of the EU regulation and as a result of the discussions, it was likely that the DfT would be seeking some changes from the EU.

23. Mr. Bryant suggested that a more measured and sympathetic approach was required with regard to the enforcement of the regulation. Delegates therefore questioned whether individuals at airports should attract a criminal record where there has been a failure in the provision of assistance which may be inadvertent, unspecified or marginal in magnitude. The Liaison Group therefore agreed to express doubts about whether the introduction of a regime of criminal sanctions was the best option and advocated a strong preference for a regime of administrative sanctions.

24. Mr. Evans, DfT suggested that the committee should formally respond to the consultation and make its concerns known about the use of criminal as opposed to administrative penalties. It was open to the committee to propose that the Department should investigate the scope for flexibility. He understood from his DfT colleagues that they envisaged that the powers would only be used as a last resort and it was noted that penalties were meant to be dissuasive.

25. The Liaison Group endorsed the views as set out in paragraph 15 of the report and agreed that a response should be sent to the DfT setting out those views and the concerns expressed at the meeting.

DfT STUDY – ATTITUDES TO NOISE FROM AIRCRAFT SOURCES IN ENGLAND (ANASE)

26. The Liaison Group noted a paper providing an update on the DfT research into how people feel about aircraft noise and the perceived relationship between noise levels and

annoyance. Mr. Evans, DfT reported that once the final report was published, the Department proposed to engage with stakeholders on any emerging recommendations. The Department was still considering the format of this engagement. Options included holding a stakeholder seminar and seeking ANMAC's views.

EUROPEAN DIRECTIVE 2002/49/EC – ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL NOISE

27. Delegates noted the timetable for producing strategic noise maps for airports as required under the EU Directive (i.e. by end of March 2007). Mr. Evans confirmed that the timetable for producing the maps at the non-designated airports had slipped but the majority of them were expected to be submitted by the end of June. As regards the designated airports, the DfT was responsible for producing the noise maps and these were on track to be published by the required deadline (now mid July). Mr. Evans also advised that the next step was the formulation of END action plans and that defra was proposing to issue guidance later in the year. This was likely to involve a consultation exercise.

AVIATION AND CLIMATE CHANGE

28. The Liaison Group considered a paper on the progress in the UK and Europe to deal with the impact of aviation emissions on climate change. Delegates were also informed of the deliberations of the Gatwick Committee in the identification of ways in which global warming could be addressed at the local level. Mrs. Street advised that whilst airport consultative committees did not have a global remit, committees did have role in raising awareness at the local level and in trying to influence the airport management and user airlines. A key conclusion of the Gatwick Committee was that when considering the impact of aviation on global warming, it was important to ensure that statistics quoted compared like with like. Mr. Bryant commended other committees to consider the Gatwick paper.

EUROPEAN AVIATION UPDATE

29. Delegates noted a paper summarising current EU activity in respect of aviation matters. Mr. Innes referred to EU regulation on compensation for denied boarding or cancellation or long delay of flights. He reported that low cost airlines opposed the payment of compensation which was out of proportion to the fare paid by the passenger. Passengers were often disadvantaged due to lack of information about their rights. Dr. Smart reported that the passengers' rights for compensation were well advertised at Schiphol Airport.

MEMBERSHIP OF UKACCS LIAISON GROUP

30. Delegates considered a paper providing an update on the air traffic growth at UK airports and details of those airports that now fell within the Liaison Group's admission criterion. It was noted that based on the CAA's 2006 traffic that Norwich Airport was now eligible for membership of the Group. It was agreed that an invitation would be sent to the Norwich Airport Consultative Committee. Delegates also noted that Bournemouth Airport had now accepted the invitation to join the Group.

31. There was some concern about the increasing number of airports that now fell within the Liaison Group's admission criterion and it was questioned whether the criterion should again be reviewed. Mrs. Street advised that the criterion was only reviewed the previous year and that the issue would be considered as part of the overarching review of the arrangements for conference due to take place in 2008/09.

UKACCS – CONFERENCE ARRANGEMENTS AND SUPPORT SERVICE

32. The Conference Secretary advised that, given the complexity of aviation issues, reports for the future meetings would include a self-contained summary of points for delegates to consider. Background papers would be available for those delegates who wished to research the subject in more depth.

33. The meeting noted a progress report on the work of the support service during the year ended 31st March, 2007. Delegates agreed that the support and information continued to be very beneficial to the participating committees.

34. It was agreed that:

(1) the membership of the Working Group be confirmed as follows:

John Adshead (chairman) – London City
John Godfrey – Gatwick
Michael Goodwin – Leeds Bradford
Pat Hayden – Inverness
Michael Flynn – Liverpool/Manchester
Margaret Thornton – Bristol
Tom Wright – Edinburgh
Maurice Hudson – Heathrow

(2) the membership of the Working Group be reviewed as part of the overarching review of the conference arrangements in 2008/09;

(3) the arrangements for formulating a collective view of the Liaison Group on national and European consultations be reviewed at the annual meeting in 2008.

VENUES FOR FUTURE CONFERENCES

34. It was noted that offers had been received from the following Consultative Committees to host the annual meeting:

2008 - Heathrow
2009 - Luton
2010 - Durham Tees Valley
2011 - Aberdeen

VOTE OF THANKS

35. A vote of thanks was extended to the team at Stansted Airport and to Morris le Fleming for the generous hospitality and the excellent visit to the G2 site. A vote of thanks was also extended for the Secretariat for the conference arrangements.

Conference Secretary