

ANNUAL MEETING – LIAISON GROUP OF UK AIRPORT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEES

NOTE OF THE 32ND ANNUAL MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY, 12TH JUNE, 2008 AT HEATHROW

Present:

Aberdeen	-	Dr. Peter Smart
Belfast City	-	Mr. Alan Crowe
Bournemouth		Mrs. Sally Derham-Wilkes Mr. Peter Thorne
Birmingham	-	Mr. Viv Astling
	-	Mr. Lee Stevenson
Bristol	-	Mr. Peter Lacey Ms. Margaret Thornton
Cardiff-Wales	-	Mr. Anthony Ernest
Durham Tees Valley	-	Mr. David Lyonette Mr. David Cosgrove
Edinburgh	-	Mr. Alastair O'Neil
Glasgow	-	Mr. John Richmond
Glasgow – Prestwick	-	Mr. Nigel Wallace
Inverness	-	Mrs. Pat Hayden
Leeds-Bradford	-	Mr. Michael Goodwin
Liverpool John Lennon	-	Mr. Denis Knowles Mr. Mike Flynn
London - City	-	Mr. John Adshead
London - Gatwick	-	Mr. Neil Maltby Mrs. Rosemary Pugh
London - Heathrow	-	Mr. Sam Jones (Chairman) Mr. Maurice Hudson
London - Luton	-	Mr. Jim Bailey
London - Stansted	-	Mr. Stewart Ashurst
	-	Mr. Graham Redgwell
Manchester	-	Ms. Sandra Matlow
	-	Mr. Ian Jones

Newcastle		Ms. Dorothy Craig Mr. John Scott
Nottingham - East Midlands	-	Mr. Barry Whyman
Southampton	-	Mr. Tony Balcombe
Liaison Group Secretariat	-	Mr. Tony Kershaw Mr. Stuart Innes Mrs. Paula Street

Also present:

Department for Transport	-	Mr. Frank Evans Mr. Roy Strapp
University of Southampton MVA Consulting		Dr. Ian Flindell Mr. Paul le Masurier
Civil Aviation Authority		Mr. Daniel Storey

NOTES OF THE LAST MEETING

1. The notes of the last meeting held on 14th June, 2007 were received and noted.

ADDRESSING AIRCRAFT NOISE

2. Dr. Ian Flindell, University of Southampton, and Mr. Paul le Masurier, MVA Consulting gave presentations on the findings and key conclusions of *the Attitudes to Noise from Aviation Sources in England (ANASE)* study. The Liaison Group also noted a background report prepared by the Secretariat on the ANASE study, the new powers of the Civil Aviation Act 2006 and the Environmental Noise Directive.

3. The following points emerged from the presentations:

There appeared to have been a change in public attitude since 1982 when the previous study *Aircraft Noise Index Study (ANIS)* had been carried out. However, the study was not able to identify the precise quantitative size of the increase in annoyance since the earlier study; people's experience of aircraft sound today is very different to the early 1980s and too many other changes had taken place over this period to enable a robust estimate to be made. The relationship between annoyance and sound level was weaker than it was in 1982. The relative balance between annoyance and events seemed to have changed. The number of events seemed now more important relative to sound level. Whilst technology had delivered quieter aircraft, the number of aircraft flying overhead was perceived by the public to have increased.

- (a) The ANASE study had not been able to determine a particular threshold of noise at which it becomes a serious problem. Even relatively low levels of noise can cause some annoyance, which rises as the noise increases. It was concluded that there was a gradual increase in annoyance relative to noise level, but there was no particular point at which annoyance became significant.
- (b) The study also raised the question whether existing noise metrics were still appropriate or needed to be reviewed

- (c) The ANASE study also investigated whether or not a monetary value could be attributed to aircraft noise and its dis-benefit to society.

4. Mr. Evans stated that the DfT had welcomed the ANASE study which had updated the ANIS study. However he noted that the study raised a number of issues. In particular, there remained material differences of view between the study team and the peer reviewers on the robustness and interpretation of the study findings. The peer reviewers had advised that ANASE'S results were not sufficiently robust to use for policy making. He explained that the Department's *Aircraft Noise Monitoring Advisory Committee* (ANMAC) had work in hand on existing noise metrics and monitoring noise at low levels. The Department would also be considering the scope for future work and research to follow up the ANASE study.

Civil Aviation Act 2006

5. Mr. Evans advised that the deadline for responses from individual consultative committees to respond to the request from the Department to report on how well the new powers in the 2006 Act were being implemented by airports had now been extended until the end of July.

European Directive 2002/49/EC (END) – Assessment and Management of Environmental Noise

6. Mr Evans gave delegates details about END and advised that the Department was expecting draft guidance from Defra on how *Noise Action Plans (NAPs)* should be prepared. The consultation on the draft guidance was expected to be issued at the end of June. Airports would then prepare NAPs and Airport Consultative Committees would be included in the local consultation. The NAPs would then be submitted to the DfT and Defra for formal adoption and transmission to the EU and would be reviewed regularly. It was hoped to complete the process by the end of the year.

UK AVIATION UPDATE

7. Delegates noted a paper summarising current UK activity in respect of aviation matters.

Windfarms

8. Delegates from Glasgow (Prestwick) and Newcastle Airports reported on the significant costs to airports of preparing radar assessments as a result of applications for the development windfarms. Delegates considered that the costs of radar assessments should be born by the developer and not the airport, which would also help to prevent speculative applications. Delegates also raised concerns about safety issues associated with the location of windfarms in close proximity to airports.

9. The Liaison Group referred to the protection provided by the Public Safety Zone (PSZ) legislation and felt that there needed to be something similar in respect of the development of windfarms in the vicinity of airports. There was a need for the CAA to produce clearer guidance on the effect of windfarms on radar and it was felt that the Government should be urged to produce guidance to local planning authorities to require developers to submit a radar assessment with planning applications. It was agreed that the Secretariat would pursue this with the CAA and the DfT.

Airspace Change Proposals

10. Mr. Innes reported on the lack of consistency of approach by NATS in its consultations with consultative committees on the plans to change the routes taken by aircraft in London's *Terminal Control North*. There were also concerns about the manner in which NATS had handled consultation with affected local authorities. The guidance agreed last year on the procedures to be adopted for airspace change proposals (CAP 725) might need to be reviewed. The Liaison Group agreed to write to the CAA to express concern about the lack of consistency.

BAA Market Investigation

11. In March 2007 the Office for Fair Trading referred for investigation the supply of airport services by BAA in the UK to the *Competition Commission*. Delegates noted the concerns expressed by the Gatwick Consultative Committee about the Commission's criticisms on a number of issues in their 'emerging thinking' report, published in April 2008. The Commission stated that BAA's approach to developing its airports may well have been a feature that prevents, restricts or distorts competition and had in effect criticised BAA for not taking steps to override the Section 52 Agreement which had prevented the construction of a second runway at Gatwick Airport. The Liaison Group believed that local agreements were essential in providing local communities around airports with certainty about future growth plans and how the impacts would be managed. It was agreed to support the view that local agreements should be upheld in managing airport growth responsibly. It was also agreed that the Secretariat would write to the *Commission* to express this view on behalf of the Liaison Group.

Aviation Duty

12. The proposal by the Government to replace air passenger duty with a duty payable per plane was generally supported by delegates. However, delegates felt that proceeds, or at least a proportion of the proceeds, should be used directly for environmental mitigation measures perhaps by way of a Trust Fund. Such arrangements had been made in other industries, for example the taxes from landfill and quarrying activities were used to mitigate the detrimental effect on local communities. It was agreed that the Liaison Group would write to the DfT and the Treasury to suggest this.

Review of the economic regulation of UK airports

13. A review of the economic regulation of the UK airport system had been announced by the Government. The Liaison Group had discussed the raising of the £1million turnover threshold for economic regulation of airports at its last meeting as there had not been any review of this threshold since the Airports Act 1986. It was suggested that the threshold should be raised to a turnover value of £5million per annum, so as to reduce the number of airports that would fall within the scope of economic regulation by the CAA. However there was not unanimous agreement by delegates for this proposal, with concerns being expressed by the Newcastle Committee.

IMPROVING THE THROUGH-AIRPORT PASSENGER EXPERIENCE

14. Mr Storey, Head of Price Control CAA gave a presentation on the review commissioned by the DfT on the through airport passenger experience. The Liaison Group also noted a background report on the review prepared by the Secretariat.

15. Mr Storey advised that there were three strands to this review:

- 1) Through-airport passenger experience and scope for greater transparency about the quality of service that different parties offer to passengers
- 2) Early passenger experience of Terminal 5, from check-in to baggage reclaim
- 3) Runway resilience

16. Mr. Storey reported that Strand 2 would be put on hold until T5 had been opened for a full season and Strand 3 was about broader technical considerations in relation to the expansion of Heathrow. He explained that the initial findings for Strand 1 had concluded that clearer objectives were needed and that the next stage would be further research with passengers and the airline industry. He explained that consultants would be employed in Summer 2008 to carry out passenger focus research. The findings would be passed to the DfT by the end of the year. Heathrow and one or two other airports (including a regional airport), would be involved in this work.

LONGER QUEUES AT IMMIGRATION

17. The meeting noted a paper which outlined the formation of the new *UK Border Agency (UKBA)* and the Government's new e-Borders programme. Mrs. Street reported on the concerns of a number of consultative committees about the increase in waiting times for EU passengers entering the UK as a result of the more thorough checks which had been imposed by the Government last Summer. Mrs. Street explained that UKBA was working closely with airport operators to improve waiting times but the problem of insufficient staff resources remained the principal cause of longer queues. The Chairman of the Gatwick Airport Consultative Committee had written to the Minister for Borders and Immigration about its concerns but to date had received no response. Several delegates also reported on problems with the Iris Recognition Immigration System (IRIS) which were either technical or associated with staffing the registration process.

18. The Liaison Group agreed to write to UKBA and the Minister for Immigration to request that there should be adequate staff resources available at Immigration and to set targets for passenger waiting times and make arrangements for these to be regularly monitored and reviewed.

IMPROVING SURFACE ACCESS TO AIRPORTS

19. Delegates noted a paper which provided background information on the responsibility of airport operators to bring forward proposals to up-grade or enhance the road, rail or transport network or services to support airport growth. Mrs. Street advised that it was the responsibility of the airport operators to bring forward surface access schemes but this could only be carried out with the support of transport providers, local authorities and Government. It was evident from the submissions by member committees that the principal area of concern was the need to improve the quality and capacity of rail services. Additional funding from Government was needed to improve rail networks serving airports.

20. Reference was made to the recommendations of the Surface Access Forum held in July 2006 relating to the development of national performance indicators. Mr. Evans advised that work was still progressing on this,

UK SECURITY UPDATE

21. Delegates noted a paper providing an update on the current issues and developments with regard to airport security.

Foreign nationals – Criminal Records Checks

22. The Liaison Group expressed concern about the inconsistency of arrangements with regard to the criminal record checks for foreign nationals. There was clearly a difference between the checks made on foreign nationals and those made on British citizens. The Liaison Group considered that any person working airside should have to undergo the same stringent checks. It was agreed that a letter be sent to the DfT expressing concern about the inconsistency of arrangements.

Airport Policing

23. Mr Maltby described new initiatives at Gatwick to assist airport policing. Aviation enthusiasts are being encouraged to participate in a scheme whereby they became 'the eyes and ears' for police. He also described *Project Griffin*. Members of staff at the airport were trained to assist the police in detection and deterring terrorist activity or crime. Mrs. Street advised that the intention was that *Project Griffin* would be expanded to include other airports throughout the UK. Details of the project would be circulated with the notes of the meeting.

UK REGIONAL DOMESTIC AIR SERVICES – PRESERVATION OF SLOTS AT KEY UK AIRPORTS

24. The Liaison Group considered a paper by the Chairman of the Aberdeen Airport Consultative Committee on the perceived need within the peripheral regions of the UK for slots to be safeguarded at the main London airports for regular, reliable domestic air services.

25. A number of delegates supported the need to preserve slots at the main London Airport as they were impatient for the economic prosperity of the regions and their connectivity with world markets. Delegates from some of the London airports stated that while they were sympathetic to the needs of the regions there was problem of capacity at the main London airports and that the allocation of slots was a commercial decision for airlines.

26. The Liaison group agreed that in practice it was slots at Heathrow which were needed and that the matter would be considered at the next meeting of the Liaison Group Working Group which would decide the best way forward in making representations on the issue.

PEOPLE WITH REDUCED MOBILITY

27. Delegates noted a paper which gave an update on the changing framework within which airports operated in providing assistance to people with reduced mobility (PRMs) when travelling by air.

28. Mr. Innes introduced the paper and advised delegates that the new Regulation 1107/2006 – Rights of persons with reduced mobility when travelling by air, would take effect from 26th July 2008. Airport consultative committees were advised to monitor services for PRMs to ensure that airports had implemented the required changes. He also asked for comments on the on the DfT's Consultation on a revised Code of Practice which had been updated to reflect the new European Regulation.

29. Delegates also discussed the 'pick up' arrangements at individual airports, there were few airports which now offered any free parking before charging commences.

PLANNING APPLICATIONS – NOTIFICATION AND CONSULTATION

30. The Liaison Group noted a paper about the scope for inconsistency in informing/consulting local residents about planning applications which have an impact on the area of more than one local authority.

31. Mr. Adshead reported that London City Airport Consultative Committee had raised concerns about the issue following an application submitted by London City Airport to vary limits in the present airport planning permission so as to increase the number of permitted flights. London City Airport was within the southern part of the Borough of Newham. It had become clear that the same steps had not been taken to inform residents living outside the boundaries of the Borough where the impact of the application would be similar and who might wish to make representations. Delegates discussed the various procedures adopted by airports and local authorities to advertise and publicise airport planning applications and agreed that there were inconsistencies in the approach adopted. It was felt that clearer guidance and procedures were needed to ensure that all residents affected by airport planning applications were consulted or notified.

32. The Liaison group agreed to write to the *Local Government Association (LGA)* and the *Association of London Government* and request that they use their influence with their members to ensure a common approach was adopted amongst all local authorities whose residents were affected by airport planning applications. It was also felt that the LGA should also be asked to urge the Department for Communities and Local Government to provide more comprehensive guidance on the consultation arrangements across local authority boundaries.

EUROPEAN AVIATION UPDATE

33. Delegates noted a paper summarising current EU activity in respect of aviation matters.

MEMBERSHIP OF UKACCS LIAISON GROUP

34. 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.

35. There was a suggestion that airports such as Farnborough and Biggin Hill, which were showing an increase in business aircraft movements should have associate or subsidiary membership of the Liaison Group. Mrs. Street advised that the UKACCS website was available to all to access information provided by the UKACCS Support Service. It was agreed that the Working Group would consider ways in which to make the work of the Liaison Group accessible to other airport consultative committees.

UKACCS – SUPPORT SERVICE

36. The Liaison Group thanked Mr. Innes for his work on the support service which was invaluable in keeping member committees informed of developments in aviation policy and at airports.

VENUES FOR FUTURE CONFERENCES

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

2010 - Durham Tees Valley
2011 - Aberdeen

38. Mr. Innes reported that London City Airport was considering hosting the Conference in 2009. Luton and East Midlands Airport would also consider the possibility of hosting in 2009.

VOTE OF THANKS

39. A vote of thanks was extended to the team at Heathrow Airport and to Sam Jones for the generous hospitality and the excellent visit to Terminal 5. A vote of thanks was also extended for the Secretariat for the conference arrangements.

Conference Secretary