

ANNUAL MEETING – LIAISON GROUP OF UK AIRPORT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEES

NOTE OF THE 33RD ANNUAL MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY, 28TH MAY, 2009 AT BELFAST

Present:	Aberdeen	-	Dr. Peter Smart
	Belfast City	-	Mr. Alan Crowe
	Birmingham	-	Mr. Viv Astling
	Bournemouth	-	Mr. Peter Thorne
			Ms. Ruth Osborn
	Bristol	-	Mr. Peter Lacey
			Mrs. Margaret Thornton
	Cardiff	-	Ms. Jocelyn Barton
	Durham Tees Valley	-	Mr. David Lyonette
			Mr. David Cosgrove
	East Midlands	-	Mr. Barrie Whyman
	Edinburgh	-	Mr. Alastair O'Neil
			Mr. Tom Wright
	Gatwick	-	Dr. John Godfrey
			Mrs. Paula Street
	Glasgow		Mr. John Richmond
	Heathrow	-	Mr. Maurice Hudson
	Inverness	-	Mrs. Pat Hayden
	Leeds – Bradford	-	Mr. Michael Goodwin
	Liverpool John Lennon	-	Mr. Denis Knowles
	London City	-	Mr. John Adshead
	Luton	-	Mr. Jim Bailey
	Manchester	-	Mr. Steve Wilkinson
			Mr. Mike Flynn
	Newcastle	-	Mrs. Dorothy Craig
	Prestwick	-	Mr. Nigel Wallace
	Southampton	-	Mr. Richard Ward
	Stansted	-	Mr. Stewart Ashurst
			Mr. Graham Redgwell
	Conference Secretary	-	Mr. Barry Smith
	Department for Transport	-	Mr. David Hart
			Mr. Frank Evans
			Mr. Roy Strapp
	Observer:		
	Belfast International Airport	-	Ms. Deborah Matchett

NOTES OF THE LAST MEETING

1. The notes of the last meeting held on 12th June, 2008 were received and noted.

UK AVIATION UPDATE

2. Delegates noted the papers summarising current UK activity in respect of aviation matters.

Competition Commission – BAA Market Investigation

3. Delegates expressed concern about the findings of the Competition Commission which appeared to be driven by economists. There was concern that the narrow remit of the Commission, which was solely concerned with ensuring fair competition, had prevented it

from looking at the much wider and complex picture of the aviation market. Delegates believed that the Commission's criticism of the Government's Air Transport White Paper were unfounded and the impact of its findings might lead to a slowing down in the provision of additional runway capacity in the UK. Delegates were not convinced moreover that the Commission had understood the linkages between the local, regional, and national planning policy framework and that its decisions were potentially damaging to BAA, a successful company, as well as the industry as a whole. The meeting emphasised the importance of trying to influence the Government and others about the importance of not altering the policies in the Air Transport White Paper. Mr. Hart, DfT, advised that the Commission could only make recommendations to the Government but it was the Government's view that the policies contained in the Air Transport White Paper remained robust. He advised however that in the development of a National Policy Statement for aviation the Government would take into account the recommendations of the Commission but that they would be put into context with other wide ranging Government policies.

4. Delegates also commented on the extremely short consultation period adopted by the Competition Commission. A twelve week consultation period was now well established and should be observed by other bodies like the Competition Commission.

5. It was agreed, therefore, that on behalf of the Liaison Group the Conference Secretary would write to the Secretary of State for Transport and the Shadow Secretary of State to express concern about the conclusions reached by the Competition Commission and also to urge the Government to take steps to ensure that other bodies and agencies should adopt the standard practice of allowing a twelve week consultation period.

Review of Public Safety Zones (PSZs)

6. Delegates noted that the DfT had now commenced its review of existing PSZs and that the initial scope of the review would focus largely on those airports which had shown, from the CAA's airport statistics, the strongest increase in aircraft movements since the current PSZs were established. There was concern among delegates that as the number of flights at an airport increased the area covered by the PSZ also increased. This had given rise to concerns locally around airports that properties within a potential new area for a PSZ would be blighted reducing the value of homes. Mr. Evans, DfT, noted the concerns.

Planning Applications – Notification and Consultation

7. It was reported that the Liaison Group had now received a response from the *Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG)*, a copy of which had been circulated to all delegates prior to the meeting. It was agreed that as the response did not provide a satisfactory outcome, the Conference Secretary would write to the *Local Government Association* and the *Association of London Government*.

8. Mr. Smith advised that in the meantime it might be helpful to other Airport Consultative Committees to consider the arrangements in place at Gatwick Airport with the nine local authorities around the airport where a Memorandum of Understanding had been entered into which included common arrangements on the way in which planning applications and their publicity would be dealt with. A copy of the Memorandum of Understanding would be circulated to all delegates for consideration.

Wind Farms – Effect on Radar

9. The meeting was updated on the progress made by the Government and the CAA to address the effect of wind farms on radar installations. A number of airport consultative committees had continuing concerns about the costs borne by airport operators in dealing with planning applications for wind farms on a regular basis. The recent response from the DfT was noted and delegates were encouraged that the CAA had re-issued *CAP764 – CAA Policy and Guidelines on Wind Turbines*. However, it was disappointing that the issue of the significant costs placed on airport operators still needed to be addressed. It was agreed that

the Conference Secretary should respond to the DfT's letter to reiterate the Group's concerns about the significant costs to airport operators.

10. Delegates also noted that National Air Traffic Services (NATS) was seeking a solution to the potential problem of commercial and military aircraft disappearing in radar blackout zones caused by wind farms and the clutter they created on radar.

Aircraft Noise Monitoring Advisory Committee (ANMAC)

11. The meeting welcomed the DfT's decision to publish a summary of the conclusions reached by ANMAC. Given that ANMAC's remit was confined to the three London noise designated airports (Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted), it was noted that the DfT would ensure that other airports and the local airport consultative committees would be informed as and when ANMAC was considering a change in the management of aircraft noise or flight procedures which was of wider significance or applicability.

12. Particular reference was made to the case study by Eurocontrol of the arrivals procedures at Gatwick Airport. Delegates felt that the results of that study would be of interest to other airports. Mr. Evans advised that once Eurocontrol's final report had been received and reported to the Gatwick Committee, the DfT would give consideration to how best to disseminate the results of that study to other airports.

The Omega Project

13. Delegates noted that the Omega Project (a publicly funded partnership looking at environmental and sustainability issues) was considering noise matters including the key issue of trade-offs between aircraft noise and aircraft emissions/fuel burn. It was noted that a couple of airport consultative committees had been involved in an Omega Project workshop and that a presentation was also shortly to be made to the Heathrow Committee. It was agreed that the Secretariat would keep delegates informed of progress on this project.

Access to Air Travel for Disabled People

14. Delegates noted the updates provided by the individual airports on the implementation of the EC regulation 1107/2006 which dealt with the Rights of People with Reduced Mobility (PRMs) when travelling by air. From the responses received it appeared that a recurring theme was in the pre-notification of passengers requiring assistance at airports.

15. Mrs. Street reported that the CAA was seeking the views of airport consultative committees and others on the implementation of the regulations so that they could report back to the Government and the EC. It was explained that the CAA envisaged producing a report that would raise awareness of the issues faced by PRMs; describe how the PRM regulation had been implemented in the UK; identify issues or problems that had arisen since the regulation was implemented; provide advice and, where necessary, make recommendations as to how such problems could be addressed. Committees were encouraged to respond separately to the CAA.

Charges for Airport Services

16. Delegates reported on the recent trend among some airports introducing charges for services which were once provided free of charge as part of the airport service. Of particular concern was the charge that had been introduced at some airports for plastic bags required as part of the security check process. It was felt that as passengers had no choice in complying with security requirements, plastic bags should remain free of charge to passengers. As the introduction of charges was a growing trend it was agreed that the Secretariat would keep committees informed of where new charges had been introduced. Delegates also felt that airport consultative committees had an important role in raising awareness amongst travellers and should encourage their airports to clearly publicise on

their website the different charges in place at the airport as well as displaying such charges in airport terminals.

UK REGIONAL AIR SERVICES – PRESERVATION OF SLOTS AT LONDON AIRPORTS

17. The meeting received a presentation from James Cole, Director of Co-ordination at Airport Co-ordination Limited (ACL), who explained the current slot allocation rules.

18. Delegates also noted a paper providing background information on the current situation on the reduction in the number of slots available at London's airports, and especially Heathrow, for regional services. It was noted that the issue had been raised with the DfT who had suggested that the Liaison Group consider the issue as part of its response to the DfT's current consultation on the Economic Regulation of UK Airports.

19. The meeting noted that slots were especially constrained at these airports which were reaching capacity and the number of domestic routes had fallen from 16 in 1990 to 6 at present at London Heathrow although the London airports between them (Heathrow, Gatwick, Stansted, Luton and London City) handled around 220 departures a day serving the regions of the UK.

20. There was concern that the response from the DfT had re-emphasised the fact that the use of public service obligations (PSOs) was the appropriate means to protect life-line services such as those to the Scottish Highlands and Islands but not necessarily for services from the devolved parts of the UK and the English regions to London which were potentially commercially viable. Delegates highlighted that the use of a PSO to secure a link to a London airport was not the appropriate mechanism to preserve existing services and felt that the Government should seriously address the matter to establish what could be done to protect regional services from the far regions of the UK where rail links were not a suitable alternative. It was also emphasised that only airline operating companies could apply for a slot and that at present the EU Regulations did not permit a local authority or a regional development agency to do so in its own right.

21. It was agreed that a further letter should be sent to the DfT reiterating the need to protect air links between the far regions of the UK and London (principally Heathrow), not just for point-to-point services but also for interlining. It was also considered important to inform the new European Parliament, BERR and the Treasury of the Liaison Group's concerns and to urge all parties to seek a mechanism, either through planning negotiations or the introduction of ring fencing of slots under the slot allocation rules.

22. Local airport consultative committees were also encouraged to act alongside airport operators, airlines and regional development agencies in putting forward proposals to the Government to secure regional services to London.

REVIEW OF THE ECONOMIC REGULATION OF UK AIRPORTS

23. Delegates considered a paper summarising the DfT's proposed reforms for the regulation of UK airports which was currently the subject of public consultation. The proposed reforms were wide ranging and covered a number of aspects of the way in which airports were regulated and run. Mr. Hart, Head of International Network Analysis and Support, DfT, explained in greater detail the proposed reforms and emphasised that the consultation had been published following a review by an independent panel of experts which had heard evidence from passenger, business and environmental groups.

24. The Liaison Group acknowledged the need to modernise the existing regulatory framework as it had been in place for over 20 years. In particular, delegates welcomed the greater recognition given to environmental issues, the acceptance of the need for appropriate funding for the regime and a strong advocacy body for passengers. However, bearing the demands placed upon it by its other work on surface transport the Group did not

feel that the DfT's proposal to give additional responsibilities to *Passenger Focus* would provide the strong external advocacy role required.

25. Dr. Godfrey, Gatwick Committee, presented to the meeting an alternative proposal which advocated the reform and better resourcing of the existing *Air Transport Users' Council (AUC)* to enable it to embrace issues relating to the passenger experience at airports as well as in the air. The meeting confirmed that there was a compelling case for an adequately funded independent air passenger body with representation at the UK's major airports and endorsed, with amendment, the Gatwick alternative proposals. Delegates felt that the alternative proposal needed clearly to emphasise the role of Airport Consultative Committees in dealing with issues with their local airport management. There was also a need to highlight that the inability of *Passenger Focus* to deal with surface travel in London meant it could not provide an all embracing champion for passenger issues. This would be a major defect as London City Airport would lie wholly outside its purview as would parts of London Heathrow. Delegates also felt that the DfT in its review of air passenger representation should also consider the enhanced role that airport consultative committees could play in the process. Whilst not advocating that they should seek to resolve individual complaints consultative committees did have a role and provided a useful service in tackling with the airport management areas where facilities and procedures work to the detriment of passengers.

26. It was agreed, therefore, that a collective response would be submitted to the DfT incorporating the suggested alternative proposal.

CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEES – STRUCTURE AND MEMBERSHIP

27. The meeting considered a paper providing background information for a wide ranging discussion about the structure, membership and purpose of airport consultative committees. Delegates noted that a number of committees were reviewing their structures and sub-structures. Mr. Evans, DfT, commented that recent experience of a number of recent cases suggested that the DfT might usefully seek to review the 2003 guidelines. He sought views from delegates as to whether the DfT's guidelines were still pertinent and whether they required revision for example in the light of the proposals coming forward from the DfT's proposed reform of the economic regulation of UK airports.

28. Mr. Ashurst, Stansted Committee, briefed delegates on the review that his Committee was currently undertaking which had raised a number of issues concerning the purpose of airport consultative committees. Delegates were reminded of the Fairoaks judgment and of the need for a balance of representation across the various interest groups involved with the work of airport consultative committees. As was to be expected, there were differing practices across the member committees but the importance of retaining flexibility within any future guidelines was emphasised as this enabled local circumstances to be taken into consideration. Delegates felt that further consideration needed to be given to issues such as the provision of technical advice to committees, funding and also ways in which the airport management could use consultative committees as a "critical friend" in protecting and enhancing the interests of passengers. There was a need perhaps to review the provisions of section 35 of the Civil Aviation Act 1982 to see if they were still appropriate. Mr. Evans advised that as a first step he would produce a draft outline paper for preliminary discussion with the UKACCs Secretariat. This would hopefully clarify key issues prior to the preparation of detailed proposals. It was agreed that the Working Group would consider the individual views of committees on the draft proposals that emerged before a response was submitted to the DfT.

IMPROVING SURFACE ACCESS TO AIRPORTS

29. Delegates noted the paper which provided background information on the responsibility of airport operators to bring forward proposals to upgrade or enhance the road,

rail or transport network for services to support airport growth. Mrs. Street advised that it was the responsibility of the airport operator to bring forward surface access schemes but this could only be carried out with the support of transport providers, local authorities and the Government.

30. Delegates also noted the various Government initiatives and commitments across a range of transport modes and felt that these would help in encouraging greater use of public transport by air passengers.

31. The progress made by individual airports in delivering public transport schemes was noted.

EU ENVIRONMENTAL NOISE DIRECTIVE – NOISE ACTION PLANS

32. Delegates noted the paper providing an update on the implementation in *Environmental Noise (England) Regulations 2006* and the requirement placed on airport operators to produce a Noise Action Plan (NAP) to reflect the results the strategic noise maps published by Defra in December 2007. Mr. Innes explained that the aim of the NAPs was to manage and reduce environmental noise where necessary and to preserve environmental noise quality where it was good. Defra had published guidance for airport operators on the production of NAPs on 24th March and had set out a timetable according to which the plan should be processed and submitted to Defra.

33. Delegates were pleased to note that the Defra guidance required airport operators to engage with airport consultative committees in the development of the draft NAP. However because of the challenging timetable set down by Defra, some committees highlighted the problems for airport operators to engage with their committee as the timetable did not fit with the meeting cycle of the committee. Mr. Evans advised that if any committee had problems in meeting the Defra timetable to let the DfT or Defra know.

34. It was agreed that committees would be invited to share their experience of the process and any examples of best practice as well as commenting on any problems at next year's meeting.

UK SECURITY UPDATE

35. The meeting considered a paper providing an update on the current issues and developments with regard to airport security.

Foreign Nationals and Criminal Records Checks

36. Mr. Innes referred delegates to the consultation recently undertaken by the DfT seeking views on proposals to implement overseas criminal records checks for certain transport posts. The Liaison Group was disappointed that despite previous correspondence with the DfT neither the Liaison Group, nor those consultative committees who had previously expressed concerns to the DfT, had been included on the list of consultees.

37. It was generally felt that the DfT's proposals to introduce overseas criminal record checks were reasonably sensible but it was noted that the proposals would only apply to new members of staff. It was also questioned whether the records held overseas would be accurate and comprehensive as those records held in the UK but nonetheless the proposals were a positive step forward.

UK Identity Cards

38. Delegates noted that the Heathrow Committee had opposed the proposals to introduce ID cards at Heathrow and that BALPA, which represented British pilots, had written to Manchester and London City Airports warning that pilots would not co-operate with the introduction of the ID cards. The meeting generally felt that the introduction of such cards was a positive measure in the provision of a comprehensive security regime at airports.

EUROPEAN AVIATION UPDATE

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

REVIEW OF CONFERENCE ARRANGEMENTS

40. The meeting considered a paper setting out the deliberations and recommendations of the Working Group following its review of the criterion for membership of the Liaison Group, the subscriptions to be paid, the structure and arrangements for the annual meeting and secretariat support. The Liaison Group agreed the following:-

- (1) That the current criterion for membership of airports with a throughput of 0.6 mppa be maintained and reviewed again in three years time;
- (2) That the proposed revised scale of subscriptions set out in the annexe to this note be agreed;
- (3) That the salary for the part-time support post be raised to £7,132.43 for work undertaken in 2009/10 and £7,346.40 for work undertaken in 2010/11;
- (4) That any monies left in the UK ACC'S account at the end of the financial year be paid to West Sussex County Council to help contribute towards the County Council's costs of continuing to maintain the current level of support it gave to the Liaison Group;
- (5) That the membership of the Working Group be as follows:-

John Adshead (Chairman)	-	London City – Chairman
of the Working Group		
John Godfrey (Chairman)	-	Gatwick
Michael Goodwin (Chairman)	-	Leeds Bradford
Pat Hayden (Chairman)	-	Inverness
Mike Flynn (Secretary)	-	Manchester
Barrie Whyman (Chairman)	-	East Midlands
Tom Wright (Secretary)	-	Edinburgh
Maurice Hudson (Technical Adviser)	-	Heathrow
- (6) That the Liaison Group's working arrangements be reviewed again in three years i.e. at the 2012 annual meeting.

MEMBERSHIP OF UK ACCS LIAISON GROUP

41. Delegates considered a paper providing an update on the air traffic growth at UK airports and details of those airports which now fell within the Liaison Group's admission criterion. It was noted that there were no new airports where the consultative committee had become eligible for membership and that Coventry and Norwich airports no longer met the Liaison Group's criterion as passenger throughput at those airports had declined.

UK ACCS – SUPPORT SERVICE

42. 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

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

2010 - Durham Tees Valley (tbc)
 2011 - Aberdeen

44. Mrs. Street reported that confirmation had yet to be received from Durham Tees Valley to host next year's event. Should there be difficulties with the provisional offer, member committees would be contacted seeking offers for the 2010 annual meeting as well as those meetings beyond 2011.

VOTE OF THANKS

45. A vote of thanks was extended to the team at Belfast City Airport and to Alan Crowe for the generous hospitality and the excellent arrangements that had been made for the two-day event.

Conference Secretary

ANNEX

SCALE OF SUBSCRIPTIONS

	Subscription £	Total £
Under 3 million passengers per annum (mppa) (Belfast City, Bournemouth, Cardiff, Doncaster Sheffield, Durham Tees Valley, Glasgow Prestwick, Inverness, Leeds Bradford, Southampton,)	200	1,800
Over 3 mppa but under 6 mppa (Aberdeen, East Midlands, London City, Liverpool, Newcastle)	300	1,500
Over 6 mppa but under 10 mppa (Birmingham, Bristol, Edinburgh, Glasgow)	500	2,000
Over 10 mppa but under 20 mppa (Luton)	750	750
Over 20 mppa (Gatwick, Heathrow, Stansted, Manchester)	1000	4,000
		<u>10,050</u>