

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE AIRPORT USERS ADVISORY GROUP
held on Friday 30 September at the Board Room, Olympic House, Manchester
Airport**

PRESENT:

Mrs S Matlow (in the Chair)
Mr N Duncan
Cllr D Neilson
Cllr J Pantall
Cllr D Quayle
Mr J Thomas

REPRESENTING MANCHESTER AIRPORT PLC:

S Deplitch
D King
C Longden
H Wienholt

SECRETARIAT:

M Flynn, Secretary
D French, Assistant Secretary

APOLOGIES:

Mrs D Parker
Cllr S Parish
Cllr K Whitmore

1 MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

RESOLVED: That

- (a) the Minutes of the meeting of the Group held on 3 June 2011 be confirmed as a correct record; and
- (b) the matters arising be dealt with during the meeting.

2 UK BORDERS AGENCY

The Chairman welcomed Jayne Cutler, from UK Borders Agency (UKBA) who was attending to talk about current developments and performance.

Ms Cutler explained that the UKBA had been formed in April 2008 from HM Revenue and Customs and the UK Border and Immigration Agency. Its annual budget was around £2 billion and 25000 staff were employed in the UK and abroad.

The purpose of the UKBA was to secure the border while facilitating travel and trade. This involved the physical protection of the border, in conjunction with

other agencies such as the police and the Serious and Organised Crime Agency, and through being involved in projects such as Cyclamen which aimed to detect radioactive material.

The UKBA met both people and goods on arrival into the country; every individual arriving at a UK border would be met in person and go through a security check. There were also UKBA staff operating border controls in Paris and Brussels, working at Eurostar terminals. However, goods that arrived at a UK border, would be dealt with on a risk basis depending on the country from which the goods had arrived eg goods arriving from certain countries would be examined to check for illegal trade in animals to ensure protection of endangered species etc.

One recent initiative was E Borders, an intelligence tool that would enable identification of people or goods prior to boarding a flight. This contrasted with the current system whereby UKBA would not be aware that suspicious people or goods were due to enter the country until they were already in transit. The current priorities for the UKBA were dealing with cocaine and heroin, people trafficking, terrorism, Cyclamen and passenger queuing.

The Chairman explained that the main reason Ms Cutler had been invited was to discuss the extensive queuing at times, and complaints regarding the UKBA had consistently appeared in the top two received by the Airport over the last few months. In relation to queuing, Ms Cutler explained that the aim of the system was to try to make it as smooth as possible for passengers. Measurements were taken of the time taken to get through security checks but these timings were taken from arrival in the Immigration Hall. Ms Cutler said it was not possible to measure at the point where the queue started along the pier. There were a number of variables that affected queuing time and not all of them were in UKBA's control – such as a change in Terminal used by an Airline (for example, Easyjet had moved from T1 to T3) or a flight arriving late. As the position was not always in UKBA's control, the Agency was reluctant to release queuing figures, as the data could be misleading.

Daniel King raised the possibility of using Bluetooth technology to monitor queues when they started along the pier. This option would be discussed with UKBA and fed back to the next meeting. He also suggested inviting Airport officers who manage capacity planning to the next meeting to give a perspective and explain the consultation procedures.

In discussing the item, Members made the following points:

- The impact of delays on business customers and whether working arrangements could be undertaken within the Schengen Agreement to address issues. In response the Group was advised that although this may have some advantages, there were a number of other issues that would still need to be addressed;
- Disappointment that despite requests made to UKBA in April, Which? had not been provided with queuing performance data. It seemed to be possible to do so at other Airports, eg. Gatwick. This issue was being pursued separately by Neville Duncan;

- The use of the electronic gates helped speed people through immigration more quickly and they were now well used. On some occasions lack of staff cover meant they could not be used as two staff were needed – one to monitor the computer screens and one to deal with those people rejected by the electronic system. If there were sufficient staff, then all five electronic gates could be used;
- It was noted that some Airports, eg Bangkok, had separate queues for certain categories of passengers such as the over 70s or families;
- The need for effective management of the queues in the Immigration Halls, involving duty managers and sharing feedback on problem areas, effective collaboration between the agencies concerned and with the aim of improving the customer experience.

RESOLVED: that

- (a) the update from Jayne Cutler be received and noted; and
- (b) a further report be made to the next meeting of the Group on various matters raised during discussion of this item, including the arrangements for consultation and collaboration between the Airport, UKBA and other agencies and the use of Bluetooth technology to monitor queuing; and
- (c) Capacity Planning Managers be invited to the next meeting to explain their work.

3 CUSTOMER FIRST

Daniel King reported on various issues

- Seating in Pier B – “flip down” seats had been ordered and were to be installed the following week, courtesy phones would also be installed, a report on progress would be made to the Customer First group and the next meeting of the Group;
- ABTA questionnaires – these were ready to be distributed to ABTA travel agencies in the North West; Daniel King was grateful to Doreen Parker for her input into this initiative;
- “How are we doing?” – these posters were now ready to be displayed within the next week.

A question was raised regarding the possible airside use of small trolleys for hand luggage. Daniel King explained that such trolleys were in stock and it may be possible to undertake a trial. He would update the next meeting of the Customer First group.

RESOLVED: that the report be noted.

4 DFT CONSULTATION “BETTER REGULATION OF AIRPORT SECURITY”

The Government was consulting on proposals to modernise the regulatory regime for aviation security. The proposals involved replacing the current direct and inspect regulatory regime with an outcome focused risk based approach. This would mean the Department for Transport would set overall requirements for security based on the level and nature of threat at the time;

Airports and the aviation industry would design security processes that would deliver those required outcomes.

Claire Longden explained that the Manchester Airport Group had responded formally with agreement in principle to the proposals but would like to see engagement with airports to assess the impact and viability of the proposals in practice, ideally by trialling new procedures at specific airports.

RESOLVED: that the report be noted.

5 CAR PARKING MATTERS

The Group considered the performance report in relation to car parking:

- Valet parking – two additional storage facilities had now been opened, with 400 spaces each. Both had been very successful to the extent that demand had exceeded availability on occasions;
- Moss Nook – this scheme, named JetParks 3, had been very successful and had already been extended to provide an additional 800 spaces. It was intended to keep the site open so that JetParks 1 and 2 could close during winter to enable maintenance works to be undertaken;
- JetParks Barrier trial and site wide tender process – the barrier system trial was continuing at JetParks 1, 2 and 3 and the site wide barrier tender process was due to begin shortly;
- Chip and Pin – all pay machines and exit barriers were due to be fitted with Chip and Pin devices over the forthcoming few months;
- Real time occupancy and Variable Message Signage – this project had been incorporated within the site-wide barrier project. The plan was to install counters on all car parks to feed real-time occupancy data to digital signs on the approach roads and onto the website;
- Extra spaces were being released by taking staff out of T1, T2 and T3 car parks, allowing more parking for passengers;
- In T3 (level 4) there were no signs in the parking area to advise where trolleys were available – was this the same on other levels and in other terminals?

Members of the Group raised concern about the number of complaints regarding car parks – the Group was advised that many people turned up without making any prior arrangements and this could cause difficulties. To address this the price of such parking had been increased; improved signage to areas where parking was available had been introduced; there were also times when parking attendants were under a lot of pressure but the increase in holding areas was hoped to alleviate this pressure.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

6 OUTSTANDING ISSUES AND AREAS OF CONCERN

Officers reported on outstanding issues and areas of concern raised at the last meeting:

- Contract tender for persons with reduced mobility – all documentation was ready to commence the tender process, however; it had been decided to extend the current OCS contract for 6 – 12 months to undertake a feasibility study to see whether the service could be run in-house. Claire Longden agreed to investigate whether Disabled Go would be interested in contributing to the process; Disabled Go had already undertaken a survey of the Airport site and any issues reported by airport users would be reported to Disabled Go for their views;
- Autowalks – there were now only 2 operational autowalks airside, which were on C Pier of Terminal 1; the remaining autowalks were obsolete, and consideration was being given as to future action and whether they should be removed. The Group felt strongly that they should be replaced as a service to passengers rather than they be removed;
- A new initiative had been launched “Report it and we’ll sort it” – which was for staff to report any issues and then receive feedback on action taken;
- A risk assessment of the steep steps at Pier C gates 22 – 26 had now been carried out and had been assessed as requiring medium to short term action. Members discussed possible ways to raise awareness and reduce risks including a physical barrier at the top of the stairwell to slow people down and warning signs and announcements. Consideration was also given to the risk assessment process and scoring. It was agreed that an Airport Health and safety representative should attend the next meeting to explain the procedure in more detail in particular the implications for Pier C; the Group were still concerned that the extra measures being taken would not prevent a serious accident happening as the stairs were too steep;
- Signage – Howard Weinholt agreed to check whether signs were now in place in T1 for the Toddler soft play Zone and Customer Services Desk.

RESOLVED: That the update reports be received and a representative from health and safety be invited to the next meeting to further report on risk assessment.

7 CLEANLINESS, TOILETS AND CLEANING PROGRAMMES

It was noted that the ASQ scores were down and placed the Airport sixth in its group. It was disappointing to note that complaints had increased with regard to cleanliness, especially in the toilet areas. Members were told that MITIE now had their own Customer Services team to check areas.

RESOLVED: that the report be noted.

8 GROUND TRANSPORT MATTERS

Although a written report had been circulated, Claire Longden explained that no-one from the Airport was available at this time to discuss Ground Transport matters with the Group, due to staff reorganisation. An update on the Rail

Station cross platform canopy would therefore be made at the next meeting. Members requested that future reports include a timescale for achievement of targets.

RESOLVED: that the report be noted.

9 PERFORMANCE

The Airport Company presented performance reports. Areas of decline included parking facilities particularly value for money. Officers reported that overall satisfaction was higher among leisure travellers than business travellers. To help address this two actions were to be taken – business areas were to be introduced in all terminals and complimentary desk areas provided for business people with free plug in computer terminals. Members requested that an agenda item for Business Travellers be included in future.

As usual, apart from car parking, the top three complaint categories were Baggage Reclaim, complaints about airlines and Control Agencies (UKBA).

It was reported that week commencing 3 October was National Customer Services Week. Customer Services surgeries would be held in all terminals during the week seeking passengers' views. An ideas wall at the Cheshire Show had generated many responses with one of the main issues raised being seating at the airport; as a result of this feedback a group had been set up to investigate seating facilities.

Members noted that many issues were with the airlines rather than the airport company and asked whether airline staff were participating in Customer Services Week? In response, the Group was advised that a Service Excellence Forum had been established to give and receive feedback and develop service standards.

Feedback could be submitted using social media; responses would be given quickly due to the introduction of an out of hours service, however, very low levels of feedback was currently given using this method.

A Customer Contact Centre was under development and would be operational in 2012. This was a Manchester Airport Group initiative which would be answered by staff asking which airport the caller required help with and then giving assistance, rather than an automated service whereby a caller would have to select various options. If complaints were made, the Customer Contact Centre would manage the whole complaint even if it was an airline issue, through appropriate liaison.

In relation to passengers with reduced mobility, there had been a slight increase in service failures for September; but this corresponded to a reduction in pre notification. In Terminal 1 some building work was to be carried out to improve the facilities in the departure area. A dog relief area was still being investigated; numbers of assistance dogs were low but slowly increasing in number. The 6 seater buggy originally based on the Emirates

pier T1 B was now available in Terminal 2 which had wider corridors than Terminal 1.

RESOLVED: that

- (a) the performance reports be noted;
- (b) a presentation be made to a future meeting on the Customer Contact Centre;
- (c) an item on customer experience for Business passengers be included in future agendas.

10 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

(a) Reduction in Carbon Footprint: Members had toured T2 and seen the projects achieved. They congratulated the Airport on its investment in air conditioning and lighting systems to achieve maximum energy savings, which in addition made the areas much brighter.

(b) Mrs Matlow reported on a letter of complaint sent to Mr Wilkinson, Chairman of the Consultative Committee, regarding cochlear implant users and security. The complainant had been in correspondence with Airport Officers over a number of months regarding this issue. Mr King explained that the Airport had worked with various groups including the Health Protection Agency, Department for Transport and the Cochlear Implant Society to try to answer the issues raised but was now unable to provide any further information on the matter. Andrew Harrison, the Managing Director, was also directly involved. Mr King was happy to share specific information on the matter with members of the Group.

RESOLVED: that

- (a) the report on energy saving measures be circulated to all members of the Consultative Committee; and
- (b) the complainant be advised in due course that, in the light of the extensive correspondence received on this matter, and subject to Neville Duncan perusing the correspondence to ensure that procedures have been followed, the Group does not feel it appropriate to be involved in the matter on the grounds that it is a technical issue.

11 NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Group would take place at 11am on 2 December 2011.