EDINBURGH AIRPORT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE.

Minutes of the 195th meeting held on Monday 8th February 2021 via Zoom.

Present   Robert Carr (Chair)
Janice Hogarth (Secretary)
Gordon Robertson Communications Director EAL
Greg Maxwell Communications Manager EAL
Donald Spencer The Consumers Association
Lindsay Cole Edinburgh Airport Noise Advisory Board
Kate Watt Ratho & District Community Council
Alexia Haramis Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce
Cllr Dave Dempsey Fife Council
Cllr Tom Conn West Lothian Council
John Howison Cramond Community Council
Cllr Kevin Lang City of Edinburgh Council
Julian Slatter ABTA
Alan Mitchell Fife Chamber of Commerce
Adam Cumming Edinburgh Airport Amenities Group
Ken McNab SPAA
Jim Grieve Sestran
Nada Shawa Edinburgh Airport Accessibility Forum
David Hull Kirkliston Community Council
David Dunphy Frequent Flyer representative

Apologies   Gordon Dewar, Chief Executive EAL
Dave Fyvie Police Services Scotland
Cllr Carol Hamilton Scottish Borders Council
Cllr Russell Imrie Midlothian Council
Sandy Leggett Air Traffic Services
Frazer McKinstry Edinburgh Airport Operators Committee
Sandy Smart STUC
Cllr John McMilllan

1.Welcome

Robert opened the meeting and welcomed everyone on to this Zoom meeting including those attending for the first time.

Robert gave a background to the process that had been carried out with regard to the frequent flyer appointment where there had been a group of six EACC members who had met and created a shortlist of three people from the applications. Those three had been invited to provide a short written submission and when these were evaluated there had been unanimous agreement that David Dunphy be appointed and David had accepted. Robert asked David to introduce himself which he did.

This was followed by introductions by Nada Shawa who is a member of the Edinburgh Airport Accessibility Forum and who will be the substitute for Sally Witcher, Jim Grieve from Sestran and David Hull from Kirkliston Community Council.

Robert recorded congratulations to Edinburgh Airport on becoming the first airport in the UK to receive a 4-star Covid-19 Airport Safety Skytrax Award.

2. The minutes of the previous meeting

The Minutes of the meeting of 9th November 2020 were approve

3. Other matters arising from the Minutes

There were no matters arising.

Because of personal commitments the presentation by Peter Barnes was taken next.

4. Update on PRM provision at EAL

Peter Barnes had recently been appointed by Edinburgh Airport to head up PRM after the decision had been made to take this service back in house from AMB after the disappointment relating to the comments in the recent CAA Accessibility report. This had seen Edinburgh Airport slip from being very good to good with comments made that a robust programme of regular audits and oversight of the airport's service provider had not been implemented.

A decision had been made to take the control back to make improvements particularly concentrating on the quality of data and tracking of passengers through the airport which had been open to errors and was inconsistent in its reporting.

Peter advised that a new system had been recently approved which would automate the data as recommended by the CAA. Suppliers of these systems were being considered as well as the new hardware to be installed.

Staff training would focus on the customer experience. From the 1st April 2021, Ross Gilpin would become the project manager and work with the CAA with a view to the new process being deployed by the summer.

The car park and the vehicle maintenance arrangements had already been taken back in-house, so there was a successful model to be followed.

Kate Watt offered a comment she has received that passengers were left abandoned at the gate and asked whether this would be addressed with the new system. Peter confirmed it would. The accurate tracking of passengers would aid in improving this.

Robert asked if the Accessibility Forum had been engaged in the airport discussions and if not added suggested that they be consulted. Peter explained that he had only been in his role for a week but agreed that he would reach out to them.

Nada Shawa suggested that the new system be tailor-made rather than be a general system as there was a need for each passenger to be treated with respect so their specific requirements were met. Peter agreed.

Peter added that there would be digital tracking through the airport with training for customer services to enable passengers to be treated with respect.

Gordon Robertson commented that the service had been good but that the airport now needed to build the mechanics around this and make improvements to the whole experience as well as adding in the ability to collect data and carry out audits of this data.

Peter left the meeting.

5. Chief Executives Update (EAL)

In the absence of Gordon Dewar, Gordon Robertson gave a verbal CEO Report, illustrated with the attached slides. He explained the huge drop in traffic numbers with fewer aircraft flying. Edinburgh Airport had recorded 14.7 million passengers with 132,000 flights and 750 staff in 2019 but in 2020 passenger numbers were down by 76% and flight were currently operating at -91% and there were now 480 staff. When one factored in that the first few months of 2020 were relatively normal the reduction for the period from March to December was over 90%.

The airport in 2020 carried under 3.5 million passengers which was the lowest number of passengers since 1995 and the effect of this was a loss of an estimated £1 billion to the Scottish economy and an estimated loss of 21,000 jobs. Gordon added that it was currently costing the airport £3.5 million a month to remain open.

With so few passengers, the car parking revenue was also adversely affected but the airport had taken on a testing centre in one of the car parks which had been operation since July. In November, the airport had also introduced a facility for pre departure testing.

Gordon commented that to his knowledge there was no meaningful current data on how effective quarantine is. He emphasised the need for a route map to enable the airport and other stakeholders to be able to plan for the future.

The airport had been involved in a briefing from Scottish Government two weeks ago regarding the introduction of hotel quarantine but had heard nothing from Scottish Government since then to establish how passengers would get from the aircraft to the hotel and who would be in charge of this.

He commented that it was a question of policy before substance.

East Terminus

Gordon reported that this project had now been completed at a cost of £7 million and that this was making the pick-up and drop off experience a great deal better. Gordon also commented that there had recently been some changes in the pick-up and drop off charges.

Air Space Change

Dave Dempsey asked for an update on EDI's Air Space change and the new MOD ACP and Gordon commented that this had been paused and that they were waiting for the DfT to announce whether the funding for ACP it has requested from the Treasury had been approved therefore allowing cash strapped airports to continue.

The MOD had asked that ACP enable it to create some air space at the end of the Forth for war games. Lindsay Cole commented that EANAB were involved and were reviewing the design prin-

ciples but prioritising the air space for EAL. Gordon added that the proposed scheme could affect current arrival and departure routes and could constrain options for using the Forth in future airspace change

It was commented that this would need to be a red area but the MOD seemed to want to have the flexibility to turn this on and off and would possible only use this zone for two weeks of the year.

Kevin Lang asked Gordon how many staff were currently on furlough and how long could the airport keep going with the current restrictions and level of traffic. Gordon replied that the level was about 80% with people in his team on flexible furlough of 4-day weeks or 2 days. Gordon said that there would really be a need for furlough to be extended to the end of 2021,

Gordon added that they would maybe have to reconsider further redundancies but they said that they were just about managing their cost base.

There were three scenarios that Gordon was considering for the return of travel which would be the end of Summer 2021, Autumn 2021 or 2022 but whichever it was, it is hoped it would be a very fast recovery given the pent-up demand.

Ken McNab talked about the need to get the Track and Trace working far more effectively to help the revival of travel quoting recent predicted figures that by 2022 it would potentially only see passenger levels return to between a 40 – 60% level of 2019. Gordon agreed that was important.

Janice Hogarth asked Gordon about the sustainability and the opportunity to rebuild aviation in a greener way in accordance with the Scottish Government's aims which Gordon confirmed was definitely being addressed. Janice also asked whether the fact that the COP26 Climate Conference was in Glasgow in November could be a trigger for the government to open the borders for more flights.

Gordon commented that a challenge was that COP26 was in Glasgow but was a UN event hosted by the UK Government. Gordon understood that options that COP26 would be a scaled down version of the initially planned event were being considered and agreed that this event might influence the opening up of flights.

6. Union Connectivity – presentation from Ken McNab

Ken had prepared a presentation on "Rebuilding Aviation Better." He emphasised the need for a coordinated approach across all transport and travel channels. He referred to a recent article in Logistics and Transport Focus which will be forwarded to EACC members. (as per attached)

He added that in his opinion, the UKACC was London centric and he raised the thought that air traffic should be considered in a different way using Edinburgh Airport on a hub and spoke basis which would reduce noise and pollution.

He added that transportation links should be looked at together so that rail/road/air were a combined transport system.

He also commented that there were changes in the dynamics of travel with the use of zoom etc and that other airports such as Amsterdam, Dublin and Paris were challenging London for connectivity.

It will be difficult to get the same level of connectivity back to 2019 levels as we emerge from Covid-19 and some predictions think that it will be 2025 before that is reached.

Robert reiterated the comments from EACC members, regarding the short response timing for the Union Connectivity review and these feelings had been sent to UKACC to include with their submission to UK Government along with the views of EACC.

Robert added that sometime we agree with other ACCs but not always and that UKACC was a marketplace of ideas.

It was noted that the Scottish Government had not made any response to this document.

Full details of Ken McNab's presentation can be seen in the link below

https://ttce-my.sharepoint.com/:w:/p/ken/EZ8167hghlhFiF3YDYzrijQBLGr-bHDXYQEll8rhRzVA6w?e=5OduuV

7. UKACC Update and DfT review on Night Flights

The minutes of the recent virtual AGM had already been circulated which Robert added had been well attended and had been a good forum which they will probably look at repeating meetings every 6 months.

Robert & Janice had also recently joined a meeting with the DfT to listen to a presentation by the DfT on the night flights consultation. It would appear that although a number of key issues are devolved to Scotland, it was hoped that EACC would still send a submission by the due date.

Gordon had been asked to prepare an update on the situation at Edinburgh and he advised that the night flights were effective from 2330 – 0600. In 2019 there had been 6036 but this had dropped to 3675 in 2020 (40% drop). This drop arose because of the reduction in passenger flights as cargo flights had remained at about the same level as they included medical supplied, mail, air ambulances, repositioning, ad hoc , military, replacement parts for base aircraft and diversions.

Flight from countries such as China had previously arrived at around 0400.

Gordon commented that EAL were a 24-hour airport who were the first airport in Scotland to introduce a surcharge for night flights and added that they were creating a noise lab to create and understand how increased scrutiny and reporting could help in the future.

Moving forward, the airport would look at reviewing aircraft charging levels and he added that the noise action plan review for 2023 – 2028 would potentially change the angles of flying.

Kevin Lang asked if Edinburgh Airport needed to become a designated airport and if not, would it adopt the same standards. Gordon acknowledged this and agreed to forward the Airport response to the committee.

Lindsay Cole commented that the WHO look at different times for what are termed as night flights. He asked how communities can engage and how it could be controlled and agreeing that a designated status would help or maybe curfews.

Dave Dempsey added that types of aircrafts should be considered as the older ones were the noisier ones which were often used for cargo. Perhaps the airport could consider surcharges for older aircraft at night.

Robert confirmed that EAC would be sending a response and asked for comment to be forward to Janice within the next 14 days.

8. Report from EANRP

Kevin Lang as co-Chair of the Edinburgh Airport Noise Review Panel gave an update on the progress of the panel. An e-mail had been sent out pre-Christmas to consultees announcing the review. Questions and processes had been finalised early in the New Year and the survey had now been launched with a closing date of the 31st March 2021. This survey had been sent to a very large range of stakeholders including not only community councils but also local authorities, schools, MPS, MSPs and other relevant organisations.

Kevin stressed that the results of this review would form recommendations only and Dave Dempsey asked who would make the decision on the recommendations. Kevin explained the make up of the panel from both EANAB and EACC and advised that the results would be achieved with the independent analysis of the responses.

Kevin recorded his thanks to all those panel members who had taken part in this process from the EACC membership.

Robert added that the panel were now looking with EANAB at how the EANRP could best engage with it and at the questions that would be put to EAL as part of the review.

Kate Watt asked if responses should come as a combined response from a community council or whether individual responses would be applicable and it was confirmed that both would be welcome.

It was again stressed that the review was not about the reducing noise levels but about review the effectiveness of the Edinburgh Airport Noise Advisory Board (EANAB) as the means for Edinburgh Airport to engage on noise issues.

9 Review of Rolling Action

Robert suggested that the committee should look again at the topics that we should be looking to discuss at future meetings and it was suggested that the regional transport strategy mentioned by Jim Grieve earlier would be a good subject to pursue at a future meeting and possibly also Connectivity as per the discussion points raised by Ken McNab

10. AOCB

There being no other business the meeting closed at 1245