

EDINBURGH AIRPORT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE.

Minutes of the 199th meeting held on Monday 7th February 2022 via Zoom.

Present Robert Carr (Chair)
Janice Hogarth (Secretary)
Gordon Dewar (Chief Executive EAL)
Gordon Robertson (Communications Director EAL)
Greg Maxwell (Head of Corporate Affairs)
Donald Spencer The Consumers Association
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 & Barnton Community Council
Cllr Kevin Lang City of Edinburgh Council
Alan Mitchell Fife Chamber of Commerce
Adam Cumming Edinburgh Airport Amenities Group
Jimmy Martin ABTA
Lindsay Cole Edinburgh Airport Noise Advisory Board
Ken McNab SPAA
Anna Herriman Sestrán
David Hull Kirkliston Community Council
Clare Johnston Edinburgh Access Panel

Apologies David Dunphy Frequent Flyer Representative
Cllr Carol Hamilton Scottish Borders Council
Cllr Russell Imrie Midlothian Council
Sandy Leggett Air Traffic Services
Sandy Smart STUC
Cllr John McMillan
Gary Harrison Police Services Scotland

1. Welcome

Robert Carr opened the remote meeting being held by Zoom, adding a warm welcome to all including some observers who had joined the meeting. Robert Carr also welcomed Jimmy Martin to the committee as the new representative for ABTA and Clare Johnston from the Edinburgh Access Panel who was replacing Nada Shawa.

Frazer McKinstry would no longer be the representative for the Edinburgh Airport Operators as he no longer worked for an Ryanair and Gordon Robertson would advise the person who would be replacing him.

Robert Carr also noted that there would potentially be some further changes to the make up of the EACC for the May meeting dependent on the outcome of the May Council elections.

2. The minutes of the previous meeting

The Minutes of the meeting of 8th November 2021 were approved. Although it had been noted that Andy Jefferson would be attending this meeting, his attendance had been deferred to another meeting. Given the importance of the future of sustainable aviation, an extra meeting might be held just on this subject to suit Andy's availability.

It was also noted that the EANRP Panel Report had not yet been discussed by EANAB and so this could not be fully discussed at this meeting.

3. Other matters arising from the Minutes

Robert Carr thanked those who had been involved in the working party helping create the EACC response to the recent Scottish Government Aviation Strategy Paper.

4. Chief Executive's Report (EAL)

The CEO Report from EAL for the previous quarter had been circulated to EACC members in advance of the meeting and Gordon Dewar referred to the slides on his report.

Passenger traffic was still down but had been growing and in October had reached levels of about 60% of prior capacity but then when the restrictions were introduced, the figures just plummeted around Christmas. The result was that many airlines have stripped their capacity during January and February and are unlikely to pick this up before March.

Although things are improving things are far from back to normal and cash flow is still extremely tight and costs need to be kept to a minimum. Consumer confidence is returning slowly and hopefully this will accelerate on the 11th February when testing rules change again.

Gordon Dewar talked about the situation in Ireland and the money that the Irish Government had given to inbound tourism which was in contrast with the minimal help received in Scotland.

Other countries had also helped their aviation industry with a variety of help and again in Ireland, government help had enabled airport charges in Dublin to be reduced by 50% to encourage traffic and there was no APD as well.

Airlines were now returning back and North America was looking good with only the loss of Philadelphia as a route (which was due to the lack of available aircraft), Qatar Airways were returning to daily operations and Emirates flights were on hold (due to the runway repairs in Dubai)

Other routes were looking good although they were mainly leisure routes and now there was a need to get the inbound market going again.

Kevin Lang asked whether business travel was starting to return or whether virtual meetings were still the way forward. Gordon Dewar responded that people were really starting to want to meet face to face and there was a pent-up demand to go and conduct business in person but it would be a slow return and he added that he thought that London/Edinburgh could suffer due to the fact that there was less available office space. It would probably take 2 – 3 years for business travel to really return.

Alexia Haramis agreed with this and added although there was some movement starting again particularly with smaller companies, that some areas such as legal were not so keen to travel again.

Ken McNab added that SME market want to meet in person but there is resistance from banks and insurances sectors and there is also concern by employers over their corporate responsibilities if their employee falls ill with Covid.

Anna Herriman talked about how keen people were to return to travelling and commented that innovation need face to face engagement. There were European projects that needed to progress and these would hopefully involve meetings starting up again at the end of March.

Adam Cumming also reconfirmed that research requires face to face meetings to be creative. Most scientist have networks but younger scientists need to meet their peers and learn from them which requires face to face meetings especially in Europe.

Clare Johnston also agreed with this and added that the creative industry needed face to face but the problem was the underwriting and cover of employees required to be feature in travel policies to enable companies to plan ahead.

Robert Carr concluded with a comment that many young professionals were missing the opportunity to observe in-person how more experienced practitioners handled complex matters and were missing the cohesion and social interaction that comes from working together in an office environment.

Capital Investment

Gordon Dewar talked about £20 million which could not be put off due to compliance requirements

Signature Aviation Facility was a big investment which involved the preparing of a facility for hybrid flights.

Road Project

Gordon Dewar updated EACC on the fact that the road project had been refused and that it had now been referred to Government for an answer and they would take into account the Crosswinds development. There had been huge strides made with a co-ordinated approach and shared development but now there would be a need to wait and see what the response would be.

John Howison talked about the fact that the road does not add to traffic but would affect, via connection, the traffic entering the Gogar roundabout. He added that the roads capacity for other developments needs to be considered and there is a need for government to link these together

Kevin Lang agreed that the access road needs to be considered not just in isolation to the airport but also to new housing and schools as all cargo traffic would potentially be going past homes and schools which will become a community issue.

Community Fund

Gordon Robertson advised that applications would reopen on Tuesday 1 Feb. The Community Fund will have £100,000 to distribute to local groups and community organisations throughout 2022.

This year EAL Charity of the year would be the Larder

Surface Access

Gordon Robertson talked about the fact that passengers had generally been happier to take taxis or drive to the airport during Covid. The new taxi rank and access was working well and travel by bus and tram was starting to rise again.

Noise Report

There had been a small number of complaints over the last quarter with most of them from the same people.

Route Development

Gordon Dewar talked about the fact that EAL had been delighted with some of the new routes and airlines gained with airlines such as Virgin Atlantic to Barbados and Orland and Westjet to Canada.

Passenger Satisfaction

There had been changes in the way that this is handled and there is now more contact than before and the quality and speed of the data is now being identified far more quickly.

In May there will be a deep dive into the customer experience for those with mobility issues

5. Customer Support Update from Jessica Briggs - New Head of Sustainability

Jessica advised the meeting that since she had joined EAL on the 6th December and gave a background on her experience. She went on to say how well the 'Greater Good' project had worked since it had been introduced last summer.

People were now energised and understand the airport and now know how to contribute and deliver on commitments.

(Details of the Focuses and Deliverables are as per Jessica's slides attached) and Jessica concluded her presentation by advising that the first report is due in March

6. Edinburgh Air Space Change Engagement - Gordon Robertson

Simon Rhodes had been called into a meeting and Gordon Robertson stepped in to update the meeting asking about engagement on ACP and how the EACC would like to engage in the next stage Phase 2A which would be with stakeholders only and not the general public.

Sessions were being prepared led by Simon Rhodes via MS Teams and this would be followed by access to a virtual room to go and look at what had been discussed and give feedback.

Invitations would be sent out and this would give an opportunity to join under whichever organisation people were representing. There was a need for delivery of information followed by discussion.

Kevin Lang asked for a timeline as well as where EANAB sat within this process. Gordon Robertson responded that it was not a public consultation but just a sample and that EANAB had their own focus group which EAL hoped to use and Simon will be meeting with that group to make progress.

Adam Cumming pointed out that Cramond should be involved in these meetings.

Gordon Robertson agreed to forward the timeline and EACC will receive an invitation to attend one of the sessions which any member of EACC can also attend.

7. UKACC Updates

Robert Carr covered the details of the UKACC AGM which had been held in November virtually where the theme had been mainly about the model of ACCs and how they could interact further with Government.

UKACC weekly Updates continue to be sent to EACC members and there were two consultations on the horizon from the DfT. Robert Carr asked for volunteers to help on these.

DfT information Gathering on ACCs – due by 18th February
DfT Aviation Consumer Reform – due by 27th March

Lindsay Cole commented on the work being carried out regarding the effects of noise in relation to health where work had been paused. He commented that he had recently been talking to Christine Jardine about the fact that discussions are normally held with the airports but not the communities.

Gordon Robertson added that the CAA had not got its head together yet and he commented that a new sustainability committee was being formed so there was maybe a need for patience to allow time for this to settle in. There was a 6 monthly report on health impacts issued by the CAA which was on the website but he said that you needed to know where to look to find it

8. EANAB Report

Kevin Lang summarised the reasons beyond the decision to have an independent review. He explained that there had been a delay in the finalisation of the EANRP Report and its distribution to EANAB and EAL to address comments by the EANRP on its form and content.

Kevin Lang added that it was not appropriate at this time for the EACC to discuss the EANRP Report. EANAB and EAL should be given sufficient time to absorb and discuss the 35 recommendations relating to Purpose, Structure, Process and Culture. He reiterated that the Report was an advisory document and that it was now down to EANAB and EAL to take matters forward.

Lindsay Cole continued with a discussion on the sub groups of EANAB and in particular the Aviation sub group led by Tom Wylie whose main aim was to look at the use of quieter aircraft, reduction in night flights, mitigation of noise, compensation in relation to noise and Stage 2 flight paths. Lindsay Cole commented that Simon Rhodes had been great in his contribution since his appointment especially given that he had previously worked in Air Traffic Control.

With the demise of ICCAN, Lindsay Cole commented that the CAA needed to be called to account to explain how they would be fulfilling the procedures previously covered by ICCAN.

The EANRP panel had been an important step to take and now EANAB must decide on the way forward as one of only three noise boards in the UK. Any changes needed to be good for everyone including the communities

9. Update on report from EANRP

Kevin Lang talked about the decision to have an independent review and the fact that there had been an extension to the consultation which the panel decided was proper to create a final report.

Kevin Lang added that it was not appropriate at this time to review the content until EANAB had been given sufficient time to absorb and discuss the 35 recommendations relating to Purpose, Structure, Process and Culture. He reiterated that the report was an advisory document and that it was now down to EANAB to take things forward.

EANAB today, was not the same EANAB as when the review had started over 18 months ago, and some improvements had already taken place during the process of the review. It was clear to the panel that there was a need for more reforms, as EANAB had not been working as it should have been, but hopefully the panel report should give EANAB further momentum to make progress in creating a more successful EANAB.

Gordon Robertson recorded thanks to Robert Carr and Kevin Lang for their huge amount of work in Co-Chairing the panel and added that the delay in publishing it had been the right decision to ensure that it was right. Gordon Robertson also recorded thanks to Janice Hogarth as the secretary of the panel and for recording all the minutes

10. Rolling Action Plan

Robert Carr laid out the actions to appear on the Rolling Action Plan to create sub groups for the following : - Response to the DfT paper re ACCs - response due 18th Feb
Response to DfT Aviation Consumer Policy reform – response due 27th March
Update on Air Space Change consultation

The May meeting should focus on the customer experience in PRM, Sustainable Aviation (Although this may require a separate meeting) and also the results of the EANRP Panel Review and the reactions from EANAB.

11. AOCB

There was discussion on whether meeting should revert to being in person or whether they should continue on zoom or even a hybrid option giving members of the committee the options for attendance. Robert Carr asked members of EACC to forward their preferences to the secretary.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 1230