

EDINBURGH AIRPORT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE.

Minutes of the 194th meeting held on Monday 9th November 2020 via Zoom.

Present

Robert Carr (Chair)
Janice Hogarth (Secretary)
Gordon Robertson Director of Communications, EAL
Greg Maxwell Head of Corporate, EAL
Donald Spencer The Consumers Association
Lindsay Cole Edinburgh Airport Noise Advisory Board
Kate Watt Ratho & District Community Council
Kate Nowakowska 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
Cllr Carol Hamilton Scottish Borders Council
Rikki Christie Police Services Scotland
Cllr Colin Davidson Sestran
Cllr Russell Imrie Midlothian Council
Sandy Leggett Air Traffic Services
Cllr John McMillan East Lothian Council

Apologies

Gordon Dewar, Chief Executive EAL
David Hull Kirkliston Community Council
Frazer McKinstry Edinburgh Airport Operators Committee
Dr Sally Witcher Passenger Assist/PRM Service Users Representative
Sandy Smart STUC

1. Welcome

Robert opened the meeting and welcomed everyone on to this Zoom meeting.

2. The minutes of the previous meeting

The Minutes of the meeting of 10th August were approved including the amendment from Ken McNab.

3. Other matters arising from the Minutes

John Howison had raised a question relating to the ICCAN report which it was agreed would be covered under AOCB.

7. EANAB Task Force Update

This item was brought forward as Kevin Lang required to leave the meeting early.

As Joint Convener with Robert, Kevin gave an update on the progress of the Edinburgh Airport Noise Review Panel. The panel had been expanded with the recruitment of two new people from EANAB namely Bruce Finlayson and Pippa Plevin and the panel had also appointed Gordon Robertson of Edinburgh Airport as a member of the panel and not just an observer.

The agreed remit was broad in scope and was “ to review the effectiveness of the arrangements and practices currently in place through the Edinburgh Airport Noise Boards (“EANAB”) for Edinburgh Airport Limited (“EAL”) to engage with communities on minimising noise issues/impacts arising from operations, and to produce a Report to EANAB and EAL with recommendations to change.”.

The panel were near to settling on their questions to be asked as well as the consultees. A questionnaire with an introduction would be sent out with a more in-depth follow up as appropriate. It had been agreed that the outcome of the review would be a report with recommendations to EAL and EANAB.

The timescale for completion of the review had been extended into 2021 to make sure that the panel get it right. It was felt that it would be worthwhile to see the results of the ICCAN consultation, expected before Christmas 2020.

Tom Conn asked for clarification on Pippa Plevin’s involvement in the panel. Tom noted Pippa’s experience in relation to West Lothian Community Councils. Kevin explained that Pippa was one of the EANAB members who had applied to join the panel and had been successful. The panel had been anxious, when extending its membership from EANAB, to include EANAB representing interests outside of the Edinburgh city area. Bruce Finlayson was a member of North Queensferry Community Council.

4. Chief Executives Update (EAL)

In the absence of Gordon Dewar, Gordon Robertson gave the update on the CEO Report. He explained the huge drop in traffic numbers with fewer aircraft flying with , in the main, fewer passengers. He reported that cargo and mail flights were being maintained. He stated that in his view quarantine was a ban in all but name and the constant changes in countries in and out of quarantine had severely dented passenger confidence in booking air travel.

Ken McNab added that confidence in travel was further dented by the emphasis that the Government was placing on not travelling which put fear into people who may have been thinking of booking or travelling. IATA had produced a report that there was a 1 in 26 million chance of catching COVID-19 on a flight.

Tom Conn added that Edinburgh Airport had done a great job with the measures that they had introduced and how safe he had felt when travelling through the airport recently.

Gordon Robertson talked of the 250 staff that the airport had made redundant and a hope that there would not need to be a further reduction.

The Airport were continuing to finish the projects that they had started but that the plan to spend £75 million had been reduced to £15 million. He added that EAL would still be proceeding in December with its application for planning permission for the link road.

Community Funding

Community funding was continuing but at a reduced level with £50,000 given to charities, mostly COVID-19 related/ Most passengers were now turning up at the airports with their own face masks so EAL had a surplus which would be distributed to communities facing challenges around affordability of their own PPE. Maureen McGinn, Lady Elvidge, wife of EAL Chair Sir John Elvidge, who was convener of Children in Scotland Board had recently joined the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO as Honorary President) would be carrying out a review of EAL of community funding going forwards. EAL's support for its 2020 Charity of the Year, SAMH, would roll over into 2021.

Surface Access

Gordon reported that some bus services had stopped and that taxi levels and car parking levels were down. One of the car parks had been allocated as an NHS test centre and a car park had also been used as a drive-in cinema and will host the Christmas pantomime.

Noise Complaints & Satisfaction Levels

Gordon commented that noise complaints were down and the fact that a new category for helicopters had been added.

Kate Sherry had been appointed as the new Aviation Director having previously worked for Ryanair and she was bringing a new dimension to this role

Passenger satisfaction had been generally good of late with the only negative comments relating to security.

Traffic Commentary

Gordon reported that the airport was basically going into "hibernation" for the next few months as there were now no more than 50,000 passengers per month. They were taking the opportunity for mass training during this time to try and get everyone at a high level of competence for when business returned. Both Gordon Robertson and Greg Maxwell would be working on a 4-day week.

Capital Investment

The £7 million East Terminus project should be completed for the end of November which would see a completely new approach for taxis which should greatly improve the passenger experience as well as the opening up of the Plaza once again.

Changes to the cost of drop off and pick up had not brought about a great deal of reaction and Gordon pointed out that there would be discounts for households in neighbouring areas.

Talks were continuing with Scottish Government and Michael Matheson in relation to testing in conjunction with Gordon Dewar from Edinburgh and Derek Provan in Glasgow Airport to try and get a pilot in place. The two airports had presented modelling for the criteria to help get this crucial project off the ground. Gordon added that although Government moves slowly, there was a feeling that there was some traction and it was hoped that this would move further as soon as the UK Taskforce put forward their recommendations in the next week.

The potential loss in the changes for VAT and duty-free sales will have a massive impact on the airports. Gordon reported a possible of £7.6 million in lost revenue for EAL. This could also result in a loss of up to 100 jobs as the revenue will not be realised via the return of duty free to EU countries. Gordon added that lobbying was continuing with the Treasury by the airports and retailers as this would impact not only the airport but also shops such as Harvey Nichols.

Air Space Change

This has been paused as Gordon indicated the difficulty in predicting capacity going forwards. There currently was consultation with other airports and it had been agreed that funding would be required to enable this to be carried out and the Treasury had been approached for this funding.

Gordon completed his update advising that EAL had increased the information for passengers on its website and it had created a page to cover the up to date figures on COVID-19 rates in destination countries.

Ken McNab commented that the cost of testing was too high at the moment and a more affordable cost was needed and he added that airport departure testing was the way forward.

5. UKACC Update from Chairman - Colin Flack

Colin talked about his role as chair of UKACC and advised the meeting that he was currently reaching out to smaller airports to try and bring them into the group.

The UKACC try to help ACC's in varying ways from maintaining contact with other ACC's, updates and information on industry affairs. They send out weekly bulletins, generic information and advise ACC's on best practice, GDPR and has recently issued guidelines about meetings.

The UKACC is also working closely with ICCAN on forums and in feedback to their work and they act as a support for any ACC where there is an issue.

The UKACC has a working group which meets several times a year and includes Robert Carr as the EACC representative.

Colin continued to talk about his thoughts on increasing the profile of UKACC and working more closely with the Dft to get them to understand what the ACC's are and how they work. There would be an opportunity for the ACCs to work more closely with government as the ACCs are a critical friend of a critical friend and are impartial and neutral. The ACCs could spread best practice and a network to talk in a neutral environment.

Colin turned to the relationship with ICCAN which he said was strong. Robert endorsed this and added that EACC was keen to engage further with ICCAN via the forums that were being set up. Lindsay Cole suggested that ICCAN should maybe have greater roles which Colin agreed with.

Robert added that although aviation was not devolved in Scotland, and aviation had links with a number of ministerial portfolios, Michael Matheson MSP was the Scottish Minister with primary responsibility to aviation as Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Infrastructure and Connectivity.

6. Review of Rolling Action Plan

- Surface access – this had been covered by Gordon Robertson in CEO Report
- charity – this had been covered by Gordon Robertson in the CEO Report
- Greg confirmed that there were still no interns being taken on at the moment.
- Air Space Change – this was still on pause

- environment issues were being covered by ICCAN
- pick up and drop of – this had been covered by Gordon Robertson in the CEO Report.
- frequent flyer update – this will be covered later in the meeting
- action by EACC members this had been covered off by the new constitution

8. Application from Iain Mitchell QC, Chair of North Queensferry Community Council to join EACC as the frequent flyer representative

Robert reported that he had received an application for the frequent flyer position from Iain Mitchell QC, Chair of North Queensferry Community Council as per the e mail dated 10 October previously circulated to EACC members. The EACC noted the intended public advertisement of this position had been progressed in the wake of the COVID – 19 pandemic. The EACC decided that others should be given the opportunity to apply before a final selection is made.

The EACC resolved that that this would be best achieved, in the current circumstances, by the publication of a notice of the vacant position through Edinburgh Airport's social media channels with an invitation to interested persons to apply to the EACC Secretary Janice Hogarth with applications closing as at 31st December 2020. Janice is to liaise with Gordon Robertson and Greg Maxwell on the terms of that notice. All applications will be considered by the EACC at its next meeting on 8th February 2021.

9. AOCB

ICCAN views on the future of Airport Noise

John Howison had previously asked a question about representation on the focus groups by EACC and Adam Cumming had suggested that he was interested in representing EACC as an EANAB member. Lindsay Cole also had an interest as Chair of EANAB. It was agreed that Lindsay Cole and Adam Cumming would liaise and decide which of them would represent EACC at one of the focus group sessions. Janice would be advised so she can confirm to ICCAN who they would put forward as the EACC representative and will contact Janice Hogarth accordingly to register with ICCAN (since confirmed as Adam Cumming)

Robert ran through the questions and received consent on responses from EACC. EACC members should provide any additional comments to Janice by 30th November in time for the response by EACC to be submitted by the cut-off date of 18th December 2020. When going through the questions, Kate Watt observed that it was important for ICCAN to appreciate that there were different arrangements in relations to planning in Scotland from RUK, including in relation to noise. Kate would provide a note to Robert and Janice for inclusion in the ACC response to the ICCAN consultation paper. EAL would be sending its own separate response.

The meeting closed at 1230 and the next meeting will be on Monday 8th February 2021